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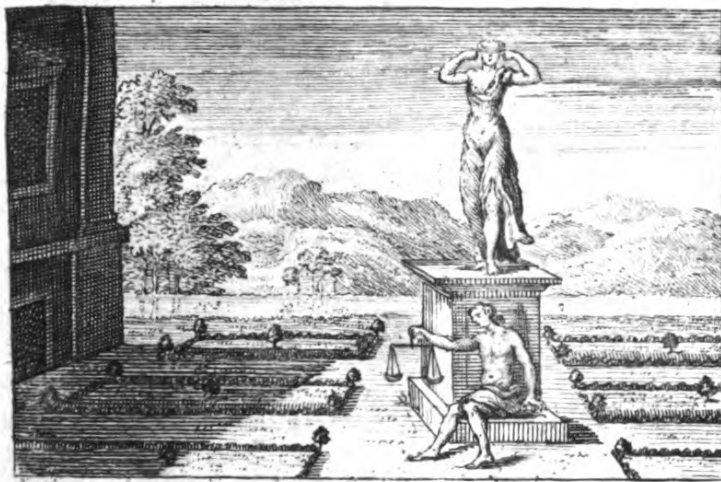
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ALCIPHRON:
OR, THE
MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.
IN
SEVEN DIALOGUES.

*Containing an APOLOGY for the Christian Religion,
against those who are called Free-thinkers.*

VOLUME *the* SECOND.



The Balances of Deceit are in his Hand. Hosea. xii. 7.

Τὸ Ἐξαπατᾶσθαι αὐτὸν ὑφ' αὐτοῦ πάντων χαλεπώτατον. Plato.

The SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. TONSON in the Strand. 1732.

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OF THE
SECOND VOLUME.

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T H E
MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.

THE SIXTH DIALOGUE.

- I. *Points agreed.* II. *Sundry Pretences to Revelation.* III. *Uncertainty of Tradition.* IV. *Object and Ground of Faith.* V. *Some Books disputed, others evidently spurious.* VI. *Style and Composition of Holy Scripture.* VII. *Difficulties occurring therein.* VIII. *Obscurity not always a Defect.* IX. *Inspiration neither impossible nor absurd.* X. *Objections from the Form and Matter of Divine Revelation, considered.* XI. *Infidelity an Effect of Narrowness and Prejudice.* XII. *Articles of Christian Faith not unreasonable.* XIII. *Guilt the natural Parent of Fear.* XIV. *Things unknown, reduced to the Standard of what Men know.* XV. *Prejudices against the Incarnation*
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of the Son of God. XVI. Ignorance of the divine Oeconomy, a Source of Difficulties. XVII. Wisdom of God, Foolishness to Man. XVIII. Reason, no blind Guide. XIX. Usefulness of Divine Revelation. XX. Prophecies, whence obscure. XXI. Eastern Accounts of Time older than the Mosaic. XXII. The Humour of Ægyptians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and other Nations extending their Antiquity beyond Truth, accounted for. XXIII. Reasons confirming the Mosaic Account. XXIV. Profane Historians inconsistent. XXV. Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian. XXVI. The Testimony of Josephus considered. XXVII. Attestation of Jews and Gentiles to Christianity. XXVIII. Forgeries and Heresies. XXIX. Judgment and Attention of Minute Philosophers. XXX. Faith and Miracles. XXXI. Probable Arguments a sufficient Ground of Faith. XXXII. The Christian Religion able to stand the Test of rational Inquiry.

I.



THE following Day being Sunday, our Philosophers lay long in Bed, while the rest of us went to Church in the neighbouring Town, where we dined at *Euphranor's*, and after Evening

ing Service returned to the two Philoso-DIAL
phers, whom we found in the Library. VI.

They told us, That, if there was a God, he was present every where, as well as at Church; and that if we had been serving him one way, they did not neglect to do as much another; inasmuch as a free Exercise of Reason must be allowed the most acceptable Service and Worship, that a rational Creature can offer to its Creator. However, said *Alciphron*, if you, Gentlemen, can but solve the Difficulties which I shall propose tomorrow Morning, I promise to go to Church next Sunday. After some general Conversation of this Kind, we sat down to a light Supper, and the next Morning assembled at the same Place as the Day before: where being all seated, I observed, that the foregoing Week our Conferences had been carried on for a longer Time, and with less Interruption than I had ever known, or well could be, in Town: where Mens Hours are so broken by Visits, Business, and Amusements, that whoever is content to form his Notions from Conversation only, must needs have them very shattered and imperfect. And what have we got, replied *Alciphron*, by all these continued Conferences? For my part, I think my self just where I was,

DIAL. with respect to the main Point that divides
VI. us, the Truth of the Christian Religion.

I answered: That so many Points had
• been examined, discussed, and agreed between him and his Adversaries, that I hoped to see them come to an intire Agreement in the end. For in the first Place, said I, the Principles and Opinions of those who are called Free-thinkers, or Minute Philosophers, have been pretty clearly explained. It hath been also agreed, That Vice is not of that Benefit to the Nation, which some Men imagine: That Virtue is highly useful to Mankind: But that the Beauty of Virtue is not alone sufficient to engage them in the Practice of it: That therefore the Belief of a God and Providence ought to be encouraged in the State, and tolerated in good Company, as a useful Notion. Further, it hath been proved that there is a God: That it is reasonable to worship him: And that the Worship, Faith, and Principles prescribed by the Christian Religion have a useful Tendency. Admit, replied *Alciphron*, addressing himself to *Crito*, all that *Dion* saith to be true: Yet this doth not hinder my being just where I was, with respect to the main Point. Since there is nothing in all this that proves the Truth of the Christian Religion: Though each of those
Par-

Particulars enumerated may, perhaps, pre-
 judice in its favour. I am therefore to
 suspect my self at present for a prejudiced
 Person; præjudiced, I say, in favour of
 Christianity. This, as I am a Lover of
 Truth, puts me upon my Guard against
 Deception. I must therefore look sharp,
 and well consider every Step I take.

II. *CRI.* You may remember, *Alci-*
phron, you propos'd for the Subject of our
 present Conference the Consideration of
 certain Difficulties and Objections, which
 you had to offer against the Christian Re-
 ligion. We are now ready to hear and
 consider whatever you shall think fit to
 produce of that Kind. Atheism, and a
 wrong Notion of Christianity, as of some-
 thing hurtful to Mankind, are great Pre-
 judices; the Removal of which may dis-
 pose a Man to argue with Candor, and sub-
 mit to reasonable Proof: But the remo-
 ving Prejudices against an Opinion, is not
 to be reckon'd prejudicing in its favour.
 It may be hop'd therefore, that you will
 be able to do justice to your Cause, with-
 out being fond of it. *ALC.* O *Crito!*
 that Man may thank his Stars to whom
 Nature hath given a sublime Soul, who
 can raise himself above popular Opinions,
 and, looking down on the Herd of Man-
 kind,

DIAL. kind, behold them scattered over the Surface of the whole Earth, divided and subdivided into numberless Nations and Tribes, differing in Notions and Tenets, as in Language, Manners, and Dress. The Man who takes a general View of the World and its Inhabitants, from this lofty Stand, above the Reach of Prejudice, seems to breathe a purer Air, and to see by a clearer Light: But how to impart this clear and extensive View to those who are wandering beneath in the narrow dark Paths of Error! This indeed is a hard Task: yet, hard as it is, I shall try if by any means,

Clara tuæ possim præpandere lumina menti.

Lucret.

Know then, that all the various Casts or Sects of the Sons of Men have each their Faith, and their religious System, germinating and sprouting forth from that common Grain of Enthusiasm, which is an original Ingredient in the Composition of Humane Nature. They shall each tell of Intercourse with the invisible World, Revelations from Heaven, divine Oracles, and the like. All which Pretensions, when I regard with an impartial Eye, it is impossible I should assent to all, and I find
within

within my self something that withholds DIAL.
 me from assenting to any of them. For VI.
 although I may be willing to follow, so
 far as common Sense and the Light of
 Nature lead; yet the same Reason, that
 bids me yield to rational Proof, forbids
 me to admit Opinions without Proof.
 This holds in general against all Revela-
 tions whatsoever. And be this my first
 Objection against the Christian in parti-
 cular. *CRI.* As this Objection supposes
 there is no Proof or Reason for believing
 the Christian Revelation; if good Reason
 can be assigned for such Belief, it comes to
 nothing. Now I presume you will grant,
 the Authority of the Reporter is a true
 and proper Reason for believing Reports:
 And the better this Authority, the juster
 Claim it hath to our Assent: But the Au-
 thority of God is on all Accounts the best:
 Whatever therefore comes from God, it
 is most reasonable to believe.

III. *ALC.* This I grant, but then it must
 be proved to come from God. *CRI.* And
 are not Miracles, and the Accomplish-
 ments of Prophecies, joined with the Ex-
 cellency of its Doctrine, a sufficient Proof
 that the Christian Religion came from
 God? *ALC.* Miracles, indeed, would
 prove something: But what Proof have

DIAL. we of these Miracles? CRI. Proof of
 VI. the same Kind that we have or can have
 of any Facts done a great way off, and a
 long time ago. We have authentic Ac-
 counts transmitted down to us from Eye-
 Witnesses, whom we cannot conceive
 tempted to impose upon us by any Hu-
 mane Motive whatsoever: inasmuch as
 they acted therein contrary to their In-
 terests, their Prejudices, and the very
 Principles in which they had been nursed
 and educated. These Accounts were
 confirmed by the unparallel'd Subversion
 of the City of *Jerusalem*, and the Disper-
 sion of the *Jewish* Nation, which is a
 standing Testimony to the Truth of the
 Gospel, particularly of the Predictions of
 our Blessed Saviour. These Accounts,
 within less than a Century, were spread
 throughout the World, and believed by
 great numbers of People. These same
 Accounts were committed to Writing,
 translated into several Languages, and
 handed down with the same Respect and
 Consent of Christians in the most distant
 Churches. Do you not see, said *Alci-
 phron*, staring full at *Crito*, that all this
 hangs by Tradition? And Tradition,
 take my Word for it, gives but a weak
 Hold: It is a Chain, whereof the first
 Links may be stronger than Steel, and yet
 the

the last weak as Wax, and brittle as DIAL.
 Glafs. Imagine a Picture copied succes- VI.
 sively by an hundred Painters, one from
 another; how like must the last Copy be
 to the Original! How lively and distinct
 will an Image be, after an hundred Re-
 flexions between two parallel Mirrours!
 Thus like, and thus lively do I think a
 faint vanishing Tradition, at the End of
 sixteen or seventeen hundred Years. Some
 Men have a false Heart, others a wrong
 Head: and where both are true, the Me-
 mory may be treacherous. Hence there is
 still something added, something omitted,
 and something varied from the Truth:
 And the Sum of many such Additions,
 Deductions, and Alterations, accumulated
 for several Ages, doth, at the Foot of the
 Account, make quite another Thing.
CRI. Ancient Facts we may know by
 Tradition, oral or written: And this lat-
 ter we may divide into two Kinds, private
 and public, as Writings are kept in the
 Hands of particular Men, or recorded in
 public Archives. Now all these three Sorts
 of Tradition, for ought I can see, concur
 to attest the genuine Antiquity of the
 Gospels. And they are strengthened by
 collateral Evidence from Rites institut-
 ed, Festivals observed, and Monuments
 erected by ancient Christians, such as
 Churches,

DIAL. Churches, Baptisteries, and Sepulchres.

VI. Now, allowing your Objection holds against oral Tradition, singly taken, yet I can think it no such difficult Thing to transcribe faithfully. And Things once committed to Writing, are secure from Slips of Memory, and may with common Care be preserved intire so long as the Manuscript lasts: And this, Experience shews may be above a thousand Years. The *Alexandrine* Manuscript is allowed to be above twelve hundred Years old: and it is highly probable there were then extant Copies four hundred Years old. A Tradition, therefore, of above sixteen hundred Years, need have only two or three Links in its Chain. And these Links, notwithstanding that great length of Time, may be very sound and intire. Since no reasonable Man will deny, that an ancient Manuscript may be of much the same Credit now, as when it was first written. We have it on good Authority, and it seems probable, that the primitive Christians were careful to transcribe Copies of the Gospels and Epistles for their private Use: and that other Copies were preserved as public Records, in the several Churches throughout the World: and that Portions thereof were constantly read in their Assemblies. Can more be said to
prove

prove the Writings of Classic Authors, or DIAL. ancient Records of any kind authentic? VI.

Alciphron, addressing his Discourse to *Euphranor*, said, It is one Thing to silence an Adversary, and another to convince him. What do you think, *Euphranor*? *EUPH.* Doubtless it is. *ALC.* But what I want, is to be convinced. *EUPH.* That Point is not so clear. *ALC.* But if a Man had ever so much mind, he cannot be convinced by probable Arguments against Demonstration. *EUPH.* I grant he cannot.

IV. *ALC.* Now it is as evident as Demonstration can make it, that no Divine Faith can possibly be built upon Tradition. Suppose an honest credulous Countryman catechised and lectured every Sunday by his Parish-Priest: It is plain he believes in the Parson, and not in God. He knows nothing of Revelations, and Doctrines, and Miracles, but what the Priest tells him. This he believes, and this Faith is purely humane. If you say he has the Liturgy and the Bible for the Foundation of his Faith, the Difficulty still recurs. For as to the Liturgy, he pins his Faith upon the civil Magistrate, as well as the Ecclesiastic: neither of which can pretend Divine Inspiration.

DIAL. Then for the Bible, he takes both that
 VI. and his Prayer-Book on Trust from the
 Printer, who, he believes, made true Editions from true Copies. You see then Faith, but what Faith? Faith in the Priest, in the Magistrate, in the Printer, Editor, Transcriber, none of which can with any Pretence be called Divine. I had the Hint from *Cratylus*: it is a Shaft out of his Quiver, and, believe me, a keen one. EUPH. Let me take and make trial of this same Shaft in my Hands. Suppose then your Countryman hears a Magistrate declare the Law from the Bench, or suppose he reads it in a Statute Book. What think you, is the Printer or the Justice the true and proper Object of his Faith and Submission? Or do you acknowledge a higher Authority whereon to found those loyal Acts, and in which they do really terminate? Again, suppose you read a Passage in *Tacitus* that you believe true; would you say you assented to it on the Authority of the Printer or Transcriber rather than the Historian? ALC. Perhaps I would, and perhaps I would not. I do not think my self obliged to answer these Points. What is this but transferring the Question from one Subject to another? That which we considered was neither Law nor profane History,

History, but religious Tradition, and Di-
 vine Faith. I see plainly what you aim
 at, but shall never take for an Answer
 to one Difficulty, the starting of another.
CRI. O *Alciphron*, there is no taking
 hold of you who expect that others should
 (as you were pleased to express it) hold
 fair and stand firm, while you plucked out
 their Prejudices: How shall he argue
 with you but from your Concessions, and
 how can he know what you grant except
 you will be pleased to tell him? *EUPH.*
 But to save you the Trouble, for once I
 will suppose an Answer. My Question
 admits but of two Answers: take your
 Choice. From the one it will follow, that
 by a Parity of Reason we can easily con-
 ceive, how a Man may have Divine Faith,
 though he never felt Inspiration or saw a
 Miracle: inasmuch as it is equally possible
 for the Mind, through whatever Conduit,
 oral or scriptural, Divine Revelation be de-
 rived, to carry its Thought and Submissi-
 on up to the Source, and terminate its
 Faith, not in Humane but Divine Autho-
 rity: not in the Instrument or Vessel of
 Conveyance, but in the great Origin it
 self as its proper and true Object. From
 the other Answer it will follow, that you
 introduce a general Scepticism into Hu-
 mane Knowledge, and break down the
 Hinges

DIAL.
VI.

DIAL. Hinges on which civil Government, and
 VI. all the Affairs of the World turn and
 depend : in a Word that you would de-
 stroy Humane Faith to get rid of Divine.
 And how this agrees with your professing
 that you want to be convinced, I leave
 you to consider.

V. *ALC.* I should in earnest be glad to
 be convinced one Way or other, and come
 to some Conclusion. But I have so many
 Objections in store, you are not to count
 much upon getting over one. Depend on
 it you shall find me behave like a Gentle-
 man and Lover of Truth. I will propose
 my Objections briefly and plainly, and ac-
 cept of reasonable Answers as fast as you
 can give them. Come, *Euphranor*, make
 the most of your Tradition : you can ne-
 ver make that a constant and universal
 one, which is acknowledged to have been
 unknown, or at best disputed in the
 Church for several Ages : And this is the
 Case of the Canon of the New Testament.
 For though we have now a Canon, as they
 call it, settled ; yet every one must see
 and own that Tradition cannot grow
 stronger by Age ; and that what was un-
 certain in the primitive Times cannot be
 undoubted in the subsequent. What say
 you to this, *Euphranor* ? *EUPH.* I should
 be

be glad to conceive your Meaning clearly before I return an Answer. It seems to me this Objection of yours supposeth that where a Tradition hath been constant and undisputed, such Tradition may be admitted as a Proof; but that where the Tradition is defective, the Proof must be so too. Is this your Meaning? *ALC.* It is. *EUPH.* Consequently the Gospels and Epistles of Saint *Paul*, which were universally received in the Beginning, and never since doubted of by the Church, must, notwithstanding this Objection, be in reason admitted for genuine. And if these Books contain, as they really do, all those Points that come into Controversy between you and me; what need I dispute with you about the Authority of some other Books of the New Testament, which came later to be generally known and received in the Church? If a Man assents to the undisputed Books he is no longer an Infidel: though he should not hold the Revelations, or the Epistle of Saint *James* or *Jude*, or the latter of Saint *Paul*, or the two last of Saint *John* to be Canonical. The additional Authority of these Portions of Holy Scripture may have its Weight, in particular Controversies between Christians, but can add nothing to Arguments against an Infidel as such.

DIAL.
VI.

DIAL. such. Wherefore, though I believe a

VI. subsequent Age might clear up what was
 obscure or dubious in a Foregoing, and
 that good Reasons may be assigned for
 receiving these Books, yet those Reasons
 seem now beside our Purpose. When you
 are a Christian it will be then Time e-
 nough to argue this Point. And you will
 be the nearer being so, if the Way be
 shorten'd by omitting it for the present.

ALC. Not so near neither, as you per-
 haps imagine: For, notwithstanding all
 the fair and plausible Things you may say
 about Tradition, when I consider the
 Spirit of Forgery which reigned in the
 primitive Times, and reflect on the sever-
 al Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, attributed
 to the Apostles, which yet are acknow-
 ledged to be spurious, I confess I cannot
 help suspecting the whole. EUPH. Tell
 me, *Alciphron*, do you suspect all *Plato's*
 Writings for spurious, because the Dia-
 logue upon Death, for instance, is allow-
 ed to be so? Or will you admit none of
Tully's Writings to be genuine, because
Sigonius imposed a Book of his own
 writing for *Tully's* Treatise *de Consolatione*,
 and the Imposture passed for some Time
 on the World? ALC. Suppose I admit
 for the Works of *Tully* and *Plato* those
 that commonly pass for such. What then?

EUPH.


EUPH. Why then I would fain know, *DIAL.*
 whether it be equal and impartial in a *VI.*
 Freethinker, to measure the Credibility
 of profane and sacred Books by a different
 Rule. Let us know upon what Foot we
 Christians are to argue with Minute Phi-
 losophers: whether we may be allowed
 the Benefit of common Maxims in Logic
 and Criticism? If we may, be pleased to
 assign a Reason why supposititious Writ-
 ings, which in the Style and Manner and
 Matter bear visible Marks of Imposture,
 and have accordingly been rejected by the
 Church, can be made an Argument a-
 gainst those which have been universally
 received, and handed down by an unani-
 mous constant Tradition. There have
 been in all Ages and in all great Societies
 of Men, many capricious, vain, or wick-
 ed Impostors, who for different Ends have
 abused the World by spurious Writings,
 and created Work for Critics both in
 profane and sacred Learning. And it
 would seem as silly to reject the True
 Writings of profane Authors for the sake
 of the spurious, as it would seem unrea-
 sonable to suppose, that among the He-
 retics and several Sects of Christians, there
 should be none capable of the like Im-
 posture. *ALC.* I see no means for judg-
 ing: it is all dark and doubtful, meer

DIAL. Guess-work, at so great distance of Time.

VI. *CRI.* But if I know, that a Number of fit
 } Persons met together in Council, did
 • examine and distinguish authentic Writ-
 ings from spurious, relating to a Point of
 the highest Concern, in an Age near the
 Date of those Writings; though I at the
 Distance of many more Centuries had
 no other Proof; yet their Decision may
 be of Weight to determine my Judgment.
 Since it is probable they might have had
 several Proofs and Reasons for what they
 did, and not at all improbable, that those
 Reasons might be lost in so long a Tract
 of Time *.

VI. *ALC.* But, be the Tradition ever
 so well attested, and the Books ever so
 genuine, yet I cannot suppose them wrote
 by Persons divinely inspired, so long as I
 see in them certain Characters inconsistent
 with such a Supposition. Surely the purest
 Language, the most perfect Style, the
 exactest Method, and in a Word all the
 Excellencies of good Writing, might be
 expected in a Piece composed or dictated
 by the Spirit of God: But Books, where-
 in we find the reverse of all this, it were
 impious, not, to reject, but to attribute
 to the Divinity. *EUPH.* Say, *Alciphron,*

* Vide Can. lx. Concil. Laodicea.

are the Lakes, the Rivers, or the Ocean **DIAL.**
 bounded by straight Lines? Are the Hills **VI.**
 and Mountains exact Cones or Pyramids? 
 Or the Stars cast into regular Figures?
ALC. They are not. *EUPH.* But in the
 Works of Insects, we may observe Figures
 as exact as if they were drawn by the
 Rule and Compass. *ALC.* We may.
EUPH. Should it not seem, therefore,
 that a regular Exactness, or scrupulous
 Attention to what Men call the Rules of
 Art, is not observed in the great Produc-
 tions of the Author of Nature? *ALC.*
 It should. *EUPH.* And when a great
 Prince declareth his Will in Laws and
 Edicts to his Subjects, is he careful about
 a pure Style or elegant Composition? Does
 he not leave his Secretaries and Clerks to
 express his Sense in their own Words?
 Is not the Phrase on such Occasions
 thought proper if it conveys as much as
 was intended? And would not the divine
 Strain of certain modern Critics be judged
 affected and improper for such Uses?
ALC. It must be owned, Laws and E-
 dicta and Grants, for Solœcism and Tau-
 tology, are very offensive to the harmoni-
 ous Ears of a fine Writer. *EUPH.* Why
 then should we expect in the Oracles of
 God an Exactness, that would be misbe-
 coming and beneath the Dignity of an
 C 2 Earth-


DIAL. Earthly Monarch, and which bears no
 VI. Proportion or Resemblance to the magnificent Works of the Creation? *ALC.* But granting that a nice Regard to Particles and critical Rules is a Thing too little and mean to be expected in Divine Revelations; and that there is more Force and Spirit, and true Greatness in a negligent unequal Style, than in the well turned Periods of a polite Writer: Yet what is all this to the bald and flat Compositions of those you call the divine Penmen? I can never be persuaded, the supreme Being would pick out the poorest and meanest of Scriblers for his Secretaries. *EUPH.* O *Alciphron*, if I durst follow my own Judgment, I should be apt to think there are noble Beauties in the Style of the Holy Scripture: in the narrative Parts a Strain so simple and unaffected: in the devotional and prophetic, so animated and sublime: and in the doctrinal Parts such an Air of Dignity and Authority as seems to speak their Original divine. But I shall not enter into a Dispute about Taste; much less set up my Judgment on so nice a Point against that of the Wits, and Men of Genius, with which your Sect abounds. And I have no Temptation to it, inasmuch as it seems to me, the Oracles of God are not the less so for being delivered in a plain Dress,

Dress, rather than in *the enticing Words of* DIAL. *Man's Wisdom.* ALC. This may perhaps VI. be an Apology for some Simplicity and Negligence in writing.

VII. But what Apology can be made for Nonsense, crude Nonsense? Of which I could easily assign many Instances, having once in my Life read the Scripture thorough with that very View. Look here, said he, opening a Bible, in the forty ninth Psalm, the Author begins very magnificently, calling upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth to give ear, and assuring them his Mouth shall speak of Wisdom, and the Meditation of his Heart shall be of Understanding.

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor biatu?

He hath no sooner done with his Preface, but he puts this senseless Question. 'Wherefore should I fear in the Days of Evil; when the Wickedness of my Heels shall compass me about?' The Iniquity of my Heels! What Nonsense after such a solemn Introduction! EUPH. For my own part, I have naturally weak Eyes, and know there are many Things that I cannot see, which are nevertheless distinctly seen by others. I do not there-

DIAL. fore conclude a Thing to be absolutely invisible ; because it is so to me. And since
VI.  it is possible it may be with my Understanding, as it is with my Eyes, I dare not pronounce a Thing to be Nonsense, because I do not understand it. Of this Passage many Interpretations are given. The Word render'd Heels may signify Fraud or Supplantation: By some it is translated past Wickedness, the Heel being the hinder Part of the Foot ; by others Iniquity in the End of my Days, the Heel being one Extremity of the Body ; by some the Iniquity of my Enemies that may supplant me ; by others my own Faults or Iniquities which I have passed over as light Matters, and trampled under my Feet. Some render it the Iniquity of my Ways: others my Transgressions which are like Slips and Slidings of the Heel. And after all might not this Expression so harsh and odd to *English* Ears have been very natural and obvious in the *Hebrew* Tongue, which, as every other Language, had its Idioms? the Force and Propriety whereof may as easily be conceived lost in a long Tract of Time, as the Signification of some *Hebrew* Words, which are not now intelligible, though no Body doubts but they had once a Meaning as well as the other Words of that Language. Granting, therefore, that
 certain

certain Passages in the Holy Scripture may not be understood, it will not thence follow that its Penmen wrote Nonsense: For I conceive Nonsense to be one Thing and Unintelligible another. *CRI.* An *Englisb* Gentleman of my Acquaintance one Day entertaining some Foreigners at his House, sent a Servant to know the Occasion of a sudden Tumult in the Yard, who brought him Word, the Horses were fallen together by the Ears: His Guests inquiring what the Matter was, he translates it literally; *Les Chevaux sont tombez ensemble par les oreilles.* Which made them stare; what expressed a very plain Sense in the Original *Englisb*, being incomprehensible when rendered Word for Word into *French*. And I remember to have heard a Man excuse the Bulls of his Countrymen, by supposing them so many literal Translations. *EUPH.* But not to grow tedious, I refer to the Critics and Commentators where you will find the Use of this Remark, which clearing up several obscure Passages you took for Nonsense, may possibly incline you to suspect your own Judgment of the rest. In this very Psalm you have pitched on, the good Sense and Moral contained in what follows, should, methinks, make a candid Reader judge favourably of the original Sense of the Author, in that

DIAL. Part which he could not understand. Say,
 VI. *Alciphron*, in reading the Classics, do you
 forthwith conclude every Passage to be
 Nonsense, that you cannot make Sense
 of? *ALC.* By no Means: Difficulties
 must be supposed to rise from different
 Idioms, old Customs, Hints, and Allu-
 sions, clear in one Time or Place, and ob-
 scure in another. *EUPH.* And why will
 you not judge of Scripture by the same
 Rule. Those Sources of Obscurity you
 mention are all common both to sacred
 and profane Writings: And there is no
 Doubt, but an exacter Knowledge in Lan-
 guage and Circumstances, would in both
 cause Difficulties to vanish like Shades be-
 fore the Light of the Sun. *Jeremiah*, to
 describe a furious Invader, saith: *Behold,*
he shall come up as a Lion from the Swel-
ling of Jordan against the Habitation of
the strong. One would be apt to think this
 Passage odd and improper, and that it had
 been more reasonable to have said, *a Lion*
from the Mountain or the Desert. But
 Travellers, as an ingenious Man observes,
 who have seen the River *Jordan* bound-
 ed by low Lands with many Reeds or
 Thickets affording Shelter to wild Beasts,
 (which being suddenly dislodged by a
 rapid Overflowing of the River, rush
 into the Upland Country) perceive the
 Force

Force and Propriety of the Compari-DIAL.
 son; and that the Difficulty proceeds, not VI.
 from Nonsense in the Writer, but from Ignorance in the Reader. It is needless to amass together Instances which may be found in every Commentator: I only beg leave to observe, that sometimes Men, looking deeper or higher than they need for a profound or remote Sense, overlook the natural obvious Sense, lying, if I may so say, at their Feet, and so make Difficulties instead of finding them. This seems to be the Case of that celebrated Passage, which hath created so much Work in *St. Paul's* first Epistle to the *Corinthians*.
 ' What shall they do which are baptized
 ' for the dead, if the dead rise not at
 ' all? Why are they then baptized for the
 ' dead?' I remember to have heard this Text explained by *Laches* the Vicar of our Parish to my Neighbour *Lycon*, who was much perplexed about its Meaning. If it had been translated, as it might very justly, *baptized for the sake of the dead*, I do not see, said *Laches*, why People should be puzzled about the Sense of this Passage; for tell me, I beseech you, for whose sake do you think those Christians were baptized? For whose sake, answered *Lycon*, but their own? How do you mean, for their own sake in this Life, or the next?

DIAL. next? Doubtless in the next, for it was

VI. plain they could get nothing by it in this.

They were then, replied *Laches*, baptized not for the sake of themselves while living, but for the sake of themselves when dead; not for the Living, but the Dead.

I grant it. Baptism therefore must have been to them a fruitless thing, if the Dead rise not at all. It must. Whence *Laches* inferred, That *St. Paul's* Argument was clear and pertinent for the Resurrection:

And *Lycon* allowed it to be *argumentum ad hominem* to those who had sought Baptism. There is then, concluded *Laches*, no Necessity for supposing, that living Men were in those Days baptized instead of those who died without Baptism, or of running into any other odd Suppositions, or strained and far-fetched Interpretations to make Sense of this Passage.

ALC. Here and there a difficult Passage may be cleared: But there are many which no Art or Wit of Man can account for. What say you to those Discoveries, made by some of our learned Writers, of false Citations from the Old Testament found in the Gospel? *EUPH.* That some few Passages are cited by the Writers of the New Testament, out of the Old, and by the Fathers out of the New, which are not in so many
Words

Words to be found in them, is no new **DIAL.**
 Discovery of Minute Philosophers, but **VI.**
 known and observed long before by **Christian Writers**; who have made no Scruple
 to grant, that some things might have been
 inserted by careless or mistaken Transcribers into the Text, from the Margin, others
 left out, and others altered; whence so
 many various Readings. But these are
 things of small moment, and that all other
 ancient Authors have been subject to; and
 upon which no Point of Doctrine depends,
 which may not be proved without them. Nay
 further, if it be any Advantage to your Cause,
 it hath been observed, That the eighteenth
Psalm, as recited in the twenty second
 Chapter of the Second Book of *Samuel*,
 varies in above forty Places, if you regard
 every little literal Difference: And that a
 Critic may now and then discover small
 Variations, is what no body can deny. But
 to make the most of these Concessions, What
 can you infer from them, more than that the
 Design of the Holy Scripture was not to make
 us exactly knowing in Circumstantials? And
 that the Spirit did not dictate every Particle
 and Syllable, or preserve them from every
 minute Alteration by Miracle? which to believe,
 would look like Rabbinical Superstition. *ALC.* But what
 Marks

DIAL. Marks of Divinity can possibly be in
VI. Writings which do not reach the Exact-
 ness even of Humane Art? *EUPH.* I
 never thought nor expected that the Ho-
 ly Scripture should shew it self divine, by
 a circumstantial Accuracy of Narration,
 by Exactness of Method, by strictly ob-
 serving the Rules of Rhetoric, Grammar,
 and Criticism, in harmonious Periods, in
 elegant and choice Expressions, or in tech-
 nical Definitions and Partitions. These
 things would look too like a Humane
 Composition. Methinks there is in that
 simple, unaffected, artless, unequal, bold,
 figurative Style of the Holy Scripture, a
 Character singularly great and majestic,
 and that looks more like Divine Inspira-
 tion, than any other Composition that I
 know. But, as I said before, I shall not
 dispute a Point of Criticism with the
 Gentlemen of your Sect, who, it seems,
 are the modern Standard for Wit and
 Taste. *ALC.* Well, I shall not insist on
 small Slips, or the Inaccuracy of citing
 or transcribing: And I freely own, that
 Repetitions, Want of Method, or Want
 of Exactness in Circumstances, are not
 the things that chiefly stick with me; no
 more than the plain patriarchal Manners,
 or the peculiar Usages and Customs of the
 Jews and first Christians so different from
 ours;

ours; and that to reject the Scripture on **DIAL.**
 such Accounts would be to act like those **VI.**
French Wits, who censure *Homer* because
 they do not find in him the Style, No-
 tions, and Manners of their own Age and
 Country. Was there nothing else to di-
 vide us, I should make no great Difficul-
 ty of owning, That a popular uncorrect
 Style might answer the general Ends of
 Revelation, as well, perhaps, as a more
 critical and exact one. But the Obscuri-
 ty still sticks with me. Methinks if the
 Supreme Being had spoke to Man, he
 would have spoke clearly to him, and that
 the Word of God should not need a
 Comment.

VIII. *EUPH.* You seem, *Alciphron*,
 to think Obscurity a Defect; but if it
 should prove to be no Defect, there would
 then be no Force in this Objection. *ALC.*
 I grant there would not. *EUPH.* Pray
 tell me, are not Speech and Style instru-
 mental to convey Thoughts and Notions,
 to beget Knowledge, Opinion, and Af-
 sent? *ALC.* This is true. *EUPH.* And
 is not the Perfection of an Instrument to
 be measured by the Use to which it is
 subservient? *ALC.* It is. *EUPH.* What
 therefore is a Defect in one Instrument,
 may be none in another. For Instance,
 edged

DIAL. edged Tools are in general designed to cut:

VI. but the Uses of an Axe and a Razor being different, it is no Defect in an Axe, that it hath not the keen Edge of a Razor: nor in the Razor, that it hath not the Weight or Strength of an Axe. *ALC.* I acknowledge this to be true. *EUPH.* And may we not say in general, that every Instrument is perfect which answers the Purpose or Intention of him who useth it? *ALC.* We may. *EUPH.* Hence it seems to follow, that no Man's Speech is defective in point of Clearness, though it should not be intelligible to all Men, if it be sufficiently so to those who, he intended, should understand it: or though it should not in all Parts be equally clear, or convey a perfect Knowledge, where he intended only an imperfect Hint. *ALC.* It seems so. *EUPH.* Ought we not therefore to know the Intention of the Speaker, to be able to know whether his Style be obscure through Defect or Design? *ALC.* We ought. *EUPH.* But is it possible for Man to know all the Ends and Purposes of God's Revelations? *ALC.* It is not. *EUPH.* How then can you tell, but the Obscurity of some Parts of Scripture may well consist with the Purpose which you know not, and consequently be no Argument against its coming from God? The
Books

Books of Holy Scripture were written in **DIAL.** ancient Languages, at distant Times, on **VI.** sundry Occasions, and very different Subjects. Is it not therefore reasonable to imagine, that some Parts or Passages might have been clearly enough understood by those, for whose proper Use they were principally designed, and yet seem obscure to us, who speak another Language, and live in other Times? Is it at all absurd or unsuitable to the Notion we have of God or Man, to suppose that God may reveal, and yet reveal with a Reserve, upon certain remote and sublime Subjects, content to give us Hints and Glimpses, rather than Views? May we not also suppose from the Reason of Things, and the Analogy of Nature, that some Points, which might otherwise have been more clearly explained, were left obscure merely to encourage our Diligence and Modesty? Two Virtues, which, if it might not seem disrespectful to such great Men, I would recommend to the Minute Philosophers. *Lysicles* replied, This indeed is excellent: You expect that Men of Sense and Spirit should in great Humility put out their Eyes, and blindly swallow all the Absurdities and Nonsense that shall be offered to them for Divine Revelation. **EUPH.** On the contrary, I would have them

DIAL. them open their Eyes, look sharply, and
VI. try the Spirit, whether it is of God: and
 not supinely and ignorantly condemn in
 the gross, all Religions together, Piety
 with Superstition, Truth for the sake of
 Error, Matter of Fact for the sake of
 Fiction: a Conduct, which at first Sight
 would seem absurd in History, Physic,
 or any other Branch of Humane In-
 quiry! But to compare the Christian Sys-
 tem, or Holy Scriptures, with other Pre-
 tences to Divine Revelation, to consider
 impartially the Doctrines, Precepts, and
 Events therein contained; weigh them
 in the balance with any other religious,
 natural, moral, or historical Accounts;
 and diligently to examine all those Proofs,
 internal and external, that for so many
 Ages have been able to influence and per-
 suade so many wise, learned, and inquisi-
 tive Men: Perhaps they might find in it
 certain peculiar Characters, which suffi-
 ciently distinguish it from all other Reli-
 gions and pretended Revelations, whereon
 to ground a reasonable Faith. In which
 Case I leave them to consider, whether it
 would be right to reject with peremptory
 Scorn a Revelation so distinguished and
 attested, upon account of Obscurity in
 some Parts of it? and whether it would
 seem beneath Men of their Sense and Spi-
 rit

rit to acknowledge, that, for ought they DIAL:
 know, a Light inadequate to things, may VI.
 yet be adequate to the Purpose of Provi-
 dence? and whether it might be unbecom-
 ing their Sagacity and critical Skill to own,
 that literal Translations from Books in an
 ancient Oriental Tongue, wherein there are
 so many Peculiarities, as to the Manner of
 Writing, the Figures of Speech, and Struc-
 ture of the Phrase, so remote from all our
 modern Idioms, and in which we have no
 other coæval Writings extant, might well
 be obscure in many Places, especially such
 as treat of Subjects sublime and difficult
 in their own Nature, or allude to Things,
 Customs, or Events, very distant from our
 Knowledge? And lastly, whether it might
 not become their Character, as impartial
 and unprejudiced Men, to consider the
 Bible in the same Light they would pro-
 fane Authors? Men are apt to make
 great Allowance for Transpositions, Omis-
 sions, and literal Errors of Transcribers in
 other ancient Books, and very great for
 the difference of Style and Manners, espe-
 cially in Eastern Writings, such as the Re-
 mains of *Zoroaster* and *Confucius*, and
 why not in the Prophets? In reading *Ho-
 race* or *Persius*, to make out the Sense, they
 will be at the pains to discover a hidden
Drama, and why not in *Solomon* or St.

DIAL. *Paul?* I hear there are certain ingenious
VI. Men who despise King *David's* Poetry,
 and yet profess to admire *Homer* and
Pindar. If there be no Prejudice or Af-
 fection in this, let them but make a
 literal Version from those Authors into
English Prose, and they will then be bet-
 ter able to judge of the Psalms. *ALC.*
 You may discourse and expatiate; but
 notwithstanding all you have said or shall
 say, it is a clear Point that a Revelation,
 which doth not reveal, can be no better
 than a Contradiction in Terms. *EUPH.*
 Tell me, *Alciphron*, do you not acknow-
 ledge the Light of the Sun to be the most
 glorious Production of Providence in this
 Natural World? *ALC.* Suppose I do.
EUPH. This Light, nevertheless, which
 you cannot deny to be of God's making,
 shines only on the Surface of Things,
 shines not at all in the Night, shines im-
 perfectly in the Twilight, is often inter-
 rupted, refracted, and obscured, represents
 distant things, and small things dubiously,
 imperfectly, or not at all. Is this true or
 no? *ALC.* It is. *EUPH.* Should it
 not follow therefore, that to expect in
 this World a constant uniform Light from
 God, without any Mixture of Shade or
 Mystery, would be departing from the
 Rule and Analogy of the Creation? and
 that

PHILOSOPHER.

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that consequently it is no Argument the **DIAL.**
Light of Revelation is not Divine, be- **VI.**
cause it may not be so clear and full as
you expect; or because it may not equal-
ly shine at all Times, or in all Places.
ALC. As I profess my self candid and
indifferent throughout this Debate, I must
needs own you say some plausible things,
as a Man of Argument will never fail to
do in vindication of his Prejudices.

IX. But, to deal plainly, I must tell
you once for all, that you may question
and answer, illustrate, and enlarge for ever,
without being able to convince me that
the Christian Religion is of Divine Reve-
lation. I have said several things, and
have many more to say, which, believe
me, have Weight not only with my self,
but with many great Men my very good
Friends, and will have Weight whatever
Euphranor can say to the contrary. *EUPH.*
O *Alciphron!* I envy you the Happiness of
such Acquaintance. But, as my Lot fallen
in this remote Corner deprives me of that
Advantage, I am obliged to make the most
of this Opportunity, which you and *Lysi-*
cles have put into my Hands. I consider
you as two able Chirurgeons, and you
were pleased to consider me as a Patient,
whose Cure you have generously under-
D 2 taken.

DIAL. taken. Now a Patient must have full
 VI. Liberty to explain his Case, and tell all his
 Symptoms, the concealing of which
 might prevent a perfect Cure. You will
 be pleased therefore to understand me, not
 as objecting to, or arguing against, either
 your Skill or Medicines, but only as set-
 ting forth my own Case, and the Effects
 they have upon me. Say, *Alciphron*, did
 you not give me to understand that you
 would extirpate my Prejudices? *ALC.* It
 is true: a good Physician eradicates every
 Fibre of the Disease. Come, you shall
 have a patient Hearing. *EUPH.* Pray,
 was it not the Opinion of *Plato*, that God
 inspired particular Men, as Organs or
 Trumpets, to proclaim and sound forth
 his Oracles to the World*? And was not
 the same Opinion also embraced by others
 the greatest Writers of Antiquity? *CRI.*
Socrates seems to have thought that all
 true Poets spoke by Inspiration; and *Tully*,
 that there was no extraordinary Genius
 without it. This hath made some of our
 affected Free-thinkers attempt to pass
 themselves upon the World for Enthusiasts.
ALC. What would you infer from all
 this? *EUPH.* I would infer, that Inspi-
 ration should seem nothing impossible or
 absurd, but rather agreeable to the Light

* *Plato in Ione.*

of Reason, and the Notions of Mankind. DIAL. VI.
 And this, I suppose, you will acknowledge, having made it an Objection against a particular Revelation, that there are so many Pretences to it throughout the World. ALC. O *Euphranor*, he who looks into the bottom of things, and resolves them into their first Principles, is not easily amused with Words. The Word *Inspiration* sounds indeed big, but let us, if you please, take an original View of the Thing signified by it. To inspire, is a Word borrowed from the *Latin*, and strictly taken means no more than to breathe or blow in: nothing therefore can be inspired but what can be blown or breathed, and nothing can be so but Wind or Vapour, which indeed may fill or puff up Men with fanatical and hypocondriacal Ravings. This sort of Inspiration I readily admit. EUPH. What you say is subtle, and I know not what Effect it might have upon me, if your profound Discourse did not hinder its own Operation. ALC. How so? EUPH. Tell me, *Alciphron*, do you discourse, or do you not? To me it seems that you discourse admirably. ALC. Be that as it will, it is certain I discourse. EUPH. But when I endeavour to look into the bottom of things, behold! a Scruple riseth


DIAL. in my Mind how this can be; for to *discourse* is a Word of *Latin* Derivation, which originally signifies to run about; and a Man cannot run about but he must change Place, and move his Legs; so long therefore as you sit on this Bench, you cannot be said to discourse. Solve me this Difficulty, and then perhaps I may be able to solve yours. *ALC.* You are to know, that Discourse is a Word borrowed from sensible Things, to express an invisible Action of the Mind, reasoning or inferring one Thing from another: and, in this translated Sense, we may be said to discourse, though we sit still. *EUPH.* And may we not as well conceive, that the Term Inspiration might be borrowed from sensible things to denote an Action of God, in an extraordinary manner, influencing, exciting, and enlightening the Mind of a Prophet or an Apostle? who, in this secondary, figurative, and translated Sense, may truly be said to be inspired, though there should be nothing in the Case of that Wind or Vapour implied in the original Sense of the Word? It seems to me, that we may by looking into our own Minds plainly perceive certain Instincts, Impulses, and Tendencies, which at proper Periods and Occasions spring up unaccountably in the Soul of Man. We observe
 very

very visible Signs of the same in all other **DIAL.**
 Animals. And these things being ordinary **VI.**
 and natural, what hinders but we may
 conceive it possible for the Humane
 Mind, upon an extraordinary Account, to
 be moved in an extraordinary manner, and
 its Faculties stirred up and actuated by a
 supernatural Power? That there are, and
 have been, and are likely to be wild Vi-
 sions, and hypochondriacal Ravings, no
 body can deny: but to infer from thence,
 that there are no true Inspirations would
 be too like concluding, that some Men are
 not in their Senses, because other Men are
 Fools. And though I am no Prophet, and
 consequently cannot pretend to a clear
 Notion of this Matter; yet I shall not
 therefore take upon me to deny, but a
 true Prophet or inspired Person might
 have had as certain Means of discerning
 between divine Inspiration and hypochon-
 driacal Fancy, as you can between Sleep-
 ing and Waking, till you have proved
 the contrary. You may meet in the Book
 of *Jeremiah* with this Passage: ‘ The
 ‘ Prophet that hath a dream let him tell
 ‘ a dream: and he that hath my word,
 ‘ let him speak my word faithfully: what
 ‘ is the chaff to the wheat, saith the
 ‘ Lord? Is not my word like as a Fire,
 ‘ saith the Lord, and like a hammer that
 D 4 ‘ breaketh

DIAL. 'breaketh the rock in pieces?*' You see
 VI. here a Distinction made between Wheat
 and Chaff, true and spurious, with the
 mighty Force and Power of the former.
 But I beg Pardon for quoting Scripture to
 you. I make my Appeal to the general
 Sense of Mankind, and the Opinion of the
 wisest Heathens, which seems sufficient
 to conclude Divine Inspiration possible,
 if not probable, at least till you prove
 the contrary.

X. *ALC.* The Possibility of Inspirations and Revelations I do not think it necessary to deny. Make the best you can of this Concession. *EUPH.* Now what is allowed possible we may suppose in fact. *ALC.* We may. *EUPH.* Let us then suppose, that God had been pleased to make a Revelation to Men; and that he inspired some as a means to instruct others. Having supposed this, can you deny, that their inspired Discourses and Revelations might have been committed to Writing, or that being written, after a long Tract of Time they might become in several Places obscure; that some of them might even originally have been less clear than others, or that they might suffer some Alteration by frequent Transcribing,

* Jerem. xxiii. 28, 29.

as other Writings are known to have **DIAL.**
 done? Is it not even very probable that **VI.**
 all these things would happen? *ALC.* I 
 grant it. *EUPH.* And granting this,
 with what Pretence can you reject the
 Holy Scriptures as not being divine, upon
 the account of such Signs or Marks, as
 you acknowledge would probably attend
 a Divine Revelation transmitted down to
 us through so many Ages? *ALC.* But
 allowing all that in reason you can de-
 sire, and granting that this may account
 for some Obscurity, may reconcile some
 small Differences, or satisfy us how some
 Difficulties might arise by inserting, omit-
 ting, or changing here and there a Letter,
 a Word, or perhaps a Sentence: Yet these
 are but small Matters, in respect of the
 much more considerable and weighty Ob-
 jections I could produce, against the con-
 fessed Doctrines, or subject Matter of those
 Writings. Let us see what is contained
 in these sacred Books, and then judge
 whether it is probable or possible, such
 Revelations should ever have been made
 by God? Now I defy the Wit of Man to
 contrive any thing more extravagant, than
 the Accounts we there find of Appari-
 tions, Devils, Miracles, God manifest in
 the Flesh, Regeneration, Grace, Self-de-
 nial, Resurrection of the Dead, and such
 like

DIAL. like *ægri somnia*: things so odd, unaccountable, and remote from the Apprehension of Mankind, you may as soon wash a Blackamore white, as clear them of Absurdity. No critical Skill can justify them, no Tradition recommend them, I will not say for Divine Revelations, but even for the Inventions of Men of Sense.

EUPH. I had always a great Opinion of your Sagacity, but now, *Alciphron*, I consider you as something more than Man: else how should it be possible for you to know, what or how far it may be proper for God to reveal? Methinks it may consist with all due Deference to the greatest of Humane Understandings, to suppose them ignorant of many things, which are not suited to their Faculties, or lie out of their Reach. Even the Counsels of Princes lie often beyond the Ken of their Subjects, who can only know so much as is revealed by those at the Helm; and are often unqualified to judge of the Usefulness and Tendency even of that, till in due Time the Scheme unfolds, and is accounted for by succeeding Events. That many Points contained in Holy Scripture are remote from the common Apprehensions of Mankind, cannot be denied. But I do not see, that it follows from thence, they are not of Divine Revelation.

tion. On the contrary, should it not seem D I A L.
 reasonable to suppose, that a Revelation VI.
 from God should contain something diffe-
 rent in Kind, or more excellent in Degree,
 than what lay open to the common Sense
 of Men, or could even be discovered by
 the most sagacious Philosopher? Accounts
 of separate Spirits, good or bad, Prophe-
 cies, Miracles, and such things, are un-
 doubtedly strange: but I would fain see
 how you can prove them impossible or
 absurd. *ALC.* Some things there are
 so evidently absurd, that it would be al-
 most as silly to disprove them as to be-
 lieve them: and I take these to be of
 that Class.

XI. EUPH. But is it not possible,
 some Men may shew as much Prejudice
 and Narrowness in rejecting all such Ac-
 counts, as others might Easiness and Cre-
 dularity in admitting them? I never durst
 make my own Observation or Experience
 the Rule and Measure of things Spiritual,
 Supernatural, or relating to another World,
 because I should think it a very bad one,
 even for the visible and natural things
 of this: It would be judging like the
Siamese, who was positive it did not
 freeze in *Holland*, because he had never
 known such a thing as hard Water or
 Ice

DIAL Ice in his own Country. I cannot com-
VI.prehend why any one, who admits the
 { Union of the Soul and Body, should pro-
 nounce it impossible for the Humane Na-
 ture to be united to the Divine, in a man-
 ner ineffable and incomprehensible by
 Reason. Neither can I see any Absurdity
 in admitting, that sinful Man may become
 Regenerate, or a New Creature, by the
 Grace of God reclaiming him from a
 carnal Life, to a spiritual Life of Virtue
 and Holiness. And since the being go-
 verned by Sense and Appetite is contrary
 to the Happiness and Perfection of a ra-
 tional Creature, I do not at all wonder
 that we are prescribed Self-denial. As for
 the Resurrection of the Dead, I do not
 conceive it so very contrary to the Ana-
 logy of Nature, when I behold Vegeta-
 bles left to rot in the Earth, rise up again
 with new Life and Vigour, or a Worm
 to all appearance dead, change its Nature,
 and that, which in its first Being crawled
 on the Earth, become a new Species, and
 fly abroad with Wings. And indeed
 when I consider, that the Soul and Body
 are things so very different and heteroge-
 neous, I can see no reason to be positive,
 that the one must necessarily be extin-
 guished upon the Dissolution of the other;
 especially since I find in my self a strong
 natural

natural Desire of Immortality, and I have not observed that natural Appetites are wont to be given in vain, or meerly to be frustrated. Upon the whole, those Points which you account extravagant and absurd, I dare not pronounce to be so till I see good Reason for it.

XII. *CRI.* No, *Alciphron*, your positive *Airs* must not pass for Proofs; nor will it suffice to say, things are contrary to common Sense, to make us think they are so: By common Sense, I suppose, should be meant either the general Sense of Mankind, or the improved Reason of thinking Men. Now I believe that all those Articles, you have with so much Capacity and Fire at once summed up and exploded, may be shewn to be not disagreeable, much less contrary to common Sense in one or other of these Acceptations. That the Gods might appear and converse among Men, and that the Divinity might inhabit Humane Nature, were Points allowed by the Heathens; and for this I appeal to their Poets and Philosophers, whose Testimonies are so numerous and clear, that it would be an Affront to repeat them to a Man of any Education. And though the Notion of a Devil may not be so obvious, or so fully described, yet there appear plain
Traces

DIAL. VI. Traces of it, either from Reason or Tradition. The latter *Platonists*, as *Porphyry* and *Iamblichus*, are very clear in the Point, allowing that evil Dæmons delude and tempt, hurt and possess Mankind. That the ancient *Greeks*, *Chaldæans*, and *Ægyptians*, believed both good and bad Angels, may be plainly collected from *Plato*, *Plutarch*, and the *Chaldæan* Oracles. *Origen* observes, That almost all the Gentiles, who held the Being of Dæmons, allowed there were bad ones*. There is even something as early as *Homer*, that is thought by the learned Cardinal *Bessarion* † to allude to the Fall of Satan, in the Account of *Ate*, whom the Poet represents as cast down from Heaven by *Jove*, and then wandering about the Earth, doing Mischief to Mankind. This same *Ate* is said by *Hesiod*, to be the Daughter of *Discord*; and by *Euripides*, in his *Hippolytus*, is mentioned as a Tempter to Evil. And it is very remarkable, that *Plutarch*, in his Book, *De vitando ære alieno*, speaks after *Empedocles*, of certain Dæmons that fell from Heaven, and were banished by God, Δαίμονες θεήλατοι καὶ ἐρανοπέτεϊς. Nor is that less remarkable which is observed

* *Origen*. l. 7. contra *Celsum*.

† In *calumniat. Platonis*, l. 3. c. 7.

by *Ficinus* from *Pherecydes Syrus*, That DIAL.
 there had been a Downfal of Dæmons VI.
 who revolted from God: and that *Ophio-*
neus (the old Serpent) was Head of that
 rebellious Crew *. Then as to other Ar-
 ticles, let any one confider what the *Py-*
thagoreans taught, of the Purgation and
 λύσις, or Deliverance of the Soul: What
 most Philosophers, but especially the *Sto-*
ics, of subduing our Passions: What *Plato*
 and *Hierocles* have said of forgiving Inju-
 ries: What the acute and sagacious *Aristo-*
tle writes, in his *Ethics* to *Nicomachus*, of
 the Spiritual and Divine Life, that Life,
 which, according to him, is too excellent
 to be thought Humane; insomuch as Man,
 so far forth as Man, cannot attain to it;
 but only so far forth as he hath some-
 thing Divine in him: And particularly,
 let him reflect' on what *Socrates* taught,
 to wit, That Virtue is not to be learn-
 ed from Men, that it is the Gift of
 God, and that good Men are not good
 by virtue of Humane Care or Diligence,
 ἔκ εἶναι ἀνθρωπίνῳ ἐπιμέλειαν ἢ ἀγαθοὶ ἀγα-
 θοὶ γίνονται †. Let any Man, who re-
 ally thinks, but confider what other
 thinking Men have thought, who cannot

* Vid. Argum. in Phædrum Platonis.

† Vid. Plat. in Protag. & alibi passim.


DIAL. be supposed prejudiced in favour of Re-
 VI. vealed Religion; and he will see cause, if
 not to think with Reverence of the Chri-
 stian Doctrines of Grace, Self-denial, Re-
 generation, Sanctification, and the rest,
 even the most mysterious, at least to judge
 more modestly and warily, than he who
 shall, with a confident Air, pronounce
 them absurd, and repugnant to the Rea-
 son of Mankind. And in regard to a fu-
 ture State, the common Sense of the Gen-
 tile World, modern or ancient, and the
 Opinions of the wisest Men of Antiquity,
 are things so well known, that I need
 say nothing about them. To me it seems,
 the Minute Philosophers, when they ap-
 peal to Reason and common Sense, mean
 only the Sense of their own Party: A
 Coin, how current soever among them-
 selves, that other Men will bring to the
 Touchstone, and pass for no more than
 it is worth. *LYS.* Be those Notions a-
 greeable to what or whose Sense they
 may, they are not agreeable to mine.
 And if I am thought ignorant for this,
 I pity those who think me so.

XIII. I enjoy my self, and follow my
 own Courses, without Remorse or Fear;
 which I should not do, if my Head were
 filled with Enthusiasm; whether Gen-
 tile

tile or Christian, Philosophical or Revealed, it is all one to me. Let others know or believe what they can, and make the best on't, I, for my part, am happy and safe in my Ignorance, *CRI.* Perhaps not so safe neither. *LYS.* Why, surely you won't pretend that Ignorance is criminal? *CRI.* Ignorance alone is not a Crime. But that wilful Ignorance, affected Ignorance, Ignorance from Sloth, or conceited Ignorance, is a Fault, might easily be proved by the Testimony of Heathen Writers: and it needs no Proof to shew that if Ignorance be our Fault, we cannot be secure in it as an Excuse, *LYS.* Honest *Crito* seems to hint, that a Man should take care to inform himself, while alive, lest his Neglect be punished when he is dead. Nothing is so pusillanimous and unbecoming a Gentleman, as Fear: Nor could you take a likelier Course to fix and rivet a Man of Honour in Guilt, than by attempting to frighten him out of it. This is the stale, absurd Stratagem of Priests, and that which makes them, and their Religion, more odious and contemptible to me than all the other Articles put together. *CRI.* I would fain know why it may not be reasonable for a Man of Honour, or any Man who has done amiss to fear? Guilt

DIAL. is the natural Parent of Fear ; and Nature
VI. is not used to make Men fear where there
 is no Oceaſion. That impious and pro-
 fane Men ſhould expect divine Punish-
 ment, doth not ſeem ſo abſurd to con-
 ceive : and that under this Expectation
 they ſhould be uneaſy and even afraid,
 how conſiſtent ſoever it may or may not
 be with Honour, I am ſure conſiſts with
 Reaſon. *LYS.* That Thing of Hell and
 Eternal Punishment is the moſt abſurd,
 as well as the moſt diſagreeable Thought
 that ever entered into the Head of Mor-
 tal Man. *CRI.* But you muſt own that
 it is not an Abſurdity peculiar to Chriſti-
 ans, ſince *Socrates*, that great Free-think-
 er of *Athens*, thought it probable there
 may be ſuch a Thing as impious Men for
 ever puniſhed in Hell*. It is recorded
 of this ſame *Socrates*, that he has been
 often known to think for Four and
 Twenty Hours together, fixed in the ſame
 Poſture, and wrap'd up in Meditation.
LYS. Our modern Free-thinkers are a
 more lively Sort of Men. Thoſe old
 Philoſophers were moſt of them whimfi-
 cal. They had in my Judgment a nar-
 row, timorous way of thinking, which
 by no means came up to the frank Hu-
 mour of our Times. *CRI.* But I appeal

* Vid. Platon. in Georgia.

to your own Judgment, if a Man, who DIAL.
 knows not the Nature of the Soul, can be VI.
 assured by the Light of Reason, whether 
 it is mortal or immortal?

*An simul intereat nobiscum morte perempta,
 An tenebras orci visat vastasque lacunas?*

LYS. But what if I know the Nature of the Soul? What if I have been taught that whole Secret by a modern Free-thinker? a Man of Science who discovered it not by a tiresome Introversion of his Faculties, not by amusing himself in a Labyrinth of Notions, or stupidly thinking for whole Days and Nights together, but by looking into Things, and observing the Analogy of Nature.

XIV. This great Man is a Philosopher by Fire, who has made many Processes upon Vegetables. It is his Opinion that Men and Vegetables are really of the same Species; that Animals are moving Vegetables, and Vegetables fixed Animals; that the Mouths of the one and the Roots of the other serve to the same Use, differing only in Position; that Blossoms and Flowers answer to the most indecent and concealed Parts in the humane Body; that Vegetable and Animal Bodies are both

DIAL. alike organized, and that in both there
 VI. is Life or a certain Motion and Circulation of Juices through proper Tubes or Vessels. I shall never forget this able Man's unfolding the Nature of the Soul in the following manner. The Soul, said he, is that specific Form or Principle from whence proceed the distinct Qualities or Properties of Things. Now, as Vegetables are a more simple and less perfect Compound, and consequently more easily analysed than Animals, we will begin with the Contemplation of the Souls of Vegetables. Know then, that the Soul of any Plant, Rosemary for instance, is neither more nor less than its essential Oil. Upon this depends its peculiar Fragrance, Taste, and Medicinal Virtues, or in other Words its Life and Operations. Separate or extract this essential Oil by Chymic Art, and you get the Soul of the Plant: what remains being a dead Carcase, without any one Property or Virtue of the Plant, which is preserved entire in the Oil, a Drachm whereof goes further than several Pounds of the Plant. Now this same essential Oil is it self a Composition of Sulphur and Salt, or of a gross unctuous Substance, and a fine subtle Principle or volatile Salt imprisoned therein. This volatile Salt is properly
 the

the Effence of the Soul of the Plant, containing all its Virtue, and the Oil is the Vehicle of this most subtile Part of the Soul, or that which fixes and individuates it. And as, upon Separation of this Oil from the Plant, the Plant died, so a second Death or Death of the Soul ensues upon the Resolution of this essential Oil into its Principles; as appears by leaving it exposed for some Time to the open Air, so that the volatile Salt or Spirit may fly off; after which the Oil remains dead and insipid, but without any sensible Diminution of its Weight, by the Loss of that volatile Effence of the Soul, that Æthereal Aura, that Spark of Entity; which returns and mixes with the Solar Light, the universal Soul of the World, and only Source of Life, whether Vegetable, Animal, or Intellectual; which differ only according to the Grossness or Fineness of the Vehicles, and the different Textures of the natural Alembics, or in other Words, the organized Bodies, where the abovementioned volatile Effence inhabits and is elaborated, where it acts and is acted upon. This Chymical System lets you at once into the Nature of the Soul, and accounts for all its Phænomena. In that Compound which is called Man, the Soul or essential Oil is what

DIAL.
VI.

DIAL. commonly goes by the Name of Animal

VI. Spirit: For you must know, it is a Point

agreed by Chymists, that Spirits are nothing but the more subtile Oils. Now in proportion, as the essential Oil of the vegetable Man is more subtile than that of other Vegetables, the volatile Salt that impregnates it is more at Liberty to act: which accounts for those specific Properties and Actions of Humane Kind, which distinguish them above other Creatures. Hence you may learn why among the wise Ancients, Salt was another Name for Wit, and in our Times a dull Man is said to be insipid or insulse. Aromatic Oils maturated by great Length of Time turn to Salts: this shews why Humane Kind grow wiser by Age. And what I have said of the twofold Death or Dissolution, first of the Compound, by separating the Soul from the organical Body, and secondly of the Soul it self, by dividing the volatile Salt from the Oil, illustrates and explains that Notion of certain ancient Philosophers: that as the Man was a Compound of Soul and Body, so the Soul was compounded of the Mind or Intellect, and its Æthereal Vehicle: and that the Separation of Soul and Body or Death of the Man is, after a long Tract of Time, succeeded by a second

cond Death of the Soul it self; to wit, **DIAL.**
 the Separation or Deliverance of the In- **VI.**
 tellect from its Vehicle, and Reunion
 with the Sun. *EUPH.* O *Lyficles*, your
 ingenious Friend has opened a new Scene,
 and explained the most obscure and diffi-
 cult Points in the clearest and easiest Man-
 ner. *LYS.* I must own this Account of
 Things struck my Fancy. I am no great
 Lover of Creeds or Systems: but when
 a Notion is reasonable and grounded on
 Experience I know how to value it. *CRI.*
 In good earnest, *Lyficles*, do you believe
 this Account to be true? *LYS.* Why
 then in good earnest I do not know whe-
 ther I do or no. But I can assure you the
 ingenious Artist himself has not the least
 Doubt about it. And to believe an Artist
 in his Art is a just Maxim and short Way
 to Science. *CRI.* But what relation hath
 the Soul of Man to Chymic Art? The
 same Reason, that bids me trust a skilful
 Artist in his Art, inclines me to suspect
 him out of his Art. Men are too apt to
 reduce unknown Things to the Standard
 of what they know, and bring a Preju-
 dice or Tincture from Things they have
 been conversant in, to judge thereby of
 Things in which they have not been con-
 versant. I have known a Fidler gravely
 teach that the Soul was Harmony; a Geo-

DIAL. metrician very positive that the Soul must
VI. be extended; and a Physician, who hav-
 ing pickled half a Dozen Embryos and
 dissected as many Rats and Frogs, grew
 conceited and affirmed there was no Soul
 at all, and that it was a vulgar Error.
LYS. My Notions sit easy. I shall not en-
 gage in pedantic Disputes about them.
 They who don't like them may leave
 them. *EUPH.* This, I suppose, is said
 much like a Gentleman.

XV. But pray, *Lysicles*, tell me whe-
 ther the Clergy come within that general
 Rule of yours: that an Artist may be
 trusted in his Art? *LYS.* By no Means.
EUPH. Why so? *LYS.* Because I take
 my self to know as much of those Mat-
 ters as they do. *EUPH.* But you allow,
 that in any other Profession; one who
 hath spent much Time and Pains may at-
 tain more Knowledge, than a Man of
 equal or better Parts, who never made it
 his particular Business. *LYS.* I do.
EUPH. And nevertheless in Things re-
 ligious and divine you think all Men e-
 qually knowing. *LYS.* I do not say all
 Men. But I think all Men of Sense com-
 petent Judges. *EUPH.* What! are the
 Divine Attributes and Dispensations to
 Mankind, the true End and Happiness
 of

of rational Creatures, with the Means of D I A L.
 improving and perfecting their Beings, VI.
 more easy and obvious Points than those
 which make the Subject of every common
 Profession? *LYS.* Perhaps not: but one
 Thing I know, some Things are so ma-
 nifestly absurd, that no Authority shall
 make me give into them. For instance,
 if all Mankind should pretend to persuade
 me that the Son of God was born upon
 Earth in a poor Family, was spit upon,
 buffeted, and crucified, lived like a Beggar,
 and died like a Thief, I should never be-
 lieve one Syllable of it. Common Sense
 shews every one, what Figure it would
 be decent for an Earthly Prince or Ambaf-
 sador to make; and the Son of God, up-
 on an Ambassy from Heaven, must needs
 have made an Appearance beyond all o-
 thers of great *eclat*, and in all respects the
 very reverse of that which Jesus Christ is
 reported to have made, even by his own
 Historians. *EUPH.* O *Lysicles*, though
 I had ever so much Mind to approve and
 applaud your ingenious Reasoning, yet I
 dare not assent to this for fear of *Crito*.
LYS. Why so? *EUPH.* Because he ob-
 served just now, that Men judge of things
 they do not know, by Prejudices from
 things they do know. And I fear he
 would object that you, who have been
 con-

DIAL. conversant in the *grand Monde*, having
 VI. your Head filled with a Notion of
 Attendants and Equipage and Liveries,
 the familiar Badges of Humane Grandeur,
 are less able to judge of that which is
 truly Divine; and that one who had seen
 less, and thought more, would be apt to
 imagine a pompous Parade of worldly
 Greatness, not the most becoming the
 Author of a spiritual Religion, that was
 designed to wean Men from the World,
 and raise them above it. CRI. Do you
 think, *Lysicles*, if a Man should make his
 Entrance into *London* in a rich Suit of
 Clothes, with a hundred gilt Coaches,
 and a thousand laced Footmen; that this
 would be a more divine Appearance, and
 have more of true Grandeur in it, than
 if he had Power with a Word to heal all
 manner of Diseases, to raise the dead to
 Life, and still the raging of the Winds
 and Sea? LYS. Without all doubt it
 must be very agreeable to common Sense
 to suppose, that he could restore others to
 Life who could not save his own. You
 tell us, indeed, that he rose again from
 the dead: but what Occasion was there
 for him to die, the just for the unjust, the
 Son of God for wicked Men? And why
 in that individual Place? Why at that
 very Time above all others? Why did he
 not

not make his Appearance earlier, and DIAL.
 preach in all Parts of the World, that the VI.
 Benefit might have been more extensive
 and equal? Account for all these Points
 and reconcile them, if you can, to the
 common Notions and plain Sense of Man-
 kind. *CRI.* And what if those, as well
 as many other Points, should lie out of
 the Road that we are acquainted with;
 must we therefore explode them, and make
 it a Rule to condemn every Proceeding as
 senseless, that doth not square with the
 vulgar Sense of Man? That, indeed,
 which evidently contradicts Sense and
 Reason you have a Right to disbelieve.
 And when you are unjustly treated you
 have the same Right to complain. But I
 think you should distinguish between
 Matter of Debt and Matter of Favour.
 Thus much is observed in all Intercourse
 between Man and Man: wherein Acts of
 meer Benevolence are never insisted on, or
 examined and measured with the same
 accurate Line as Matters of Justice. Who
 but a Minute Philosopher would, upon a
 gratuitous Distribution of Favours, in-
 quire, why at this Time, and not before?
 why to these Persons, and not to others?
 Various are the natural Abilities and Op-
 portunities of Humane Kind. How wide
 a Difference is there in respect of the Law
 of

DIAL. of Nature, between one of our stupid
 VI. Plowmen and a Minute Philosopher! Be-
 tween a Laplander and an Athenian! That
 Conduct, therefore, which seems to you
 partial or unequal, may be found as well
 in the Dispensation of Natural Religion as
 of Revealed, And if so, why it should be
 made an Objection against the one more
 than the other, I leave you to account
 for the rest. If the Precepts and certain
 primary Tenets of Religion appear in the
 Eye of Reason good and useful; and if
 they are also found to be so by their Ef-
 fects; we may, for the sake of them, ad-
 mit certain other Points or Doctrines re-
 commended with them, to have a good
 Tendency, to be right and true; although
 we cannot discern their Goodness or Truth
 by the meer Light of Humane Reason,
 which may well be supposed an insuffi-
 cient Judge of the Proceedings, Counsels,
 and Designs of Providence, and this suf-
 ficeth to make our Conviction reasonable.

XVI. It is an allowed Point that no
 Man can judge of this or that Part of a
 Machine taken by it self, without know-
 ing the whole, the mutual Relation or
 Dependence of its Parts, and the End for
 which it was made. And, as this is a
 Point acknowledged in corporeal and na-
 tural

tural Things, ought we not by a Parity of **DIAL.**
Reason to suspend our Judgment concern- **VI.**
ing the moral Fitness of a single unaccount-
able Part of the Divine Oeconomy, till we
are more fully acquainted with the moral
System, or World of Spirits, and are let
into the Designs of God's Providence, and
have an extensive View of his Dispensa-
tions past, present, and future? Alas!
Lyficles, what do you know even of your
self, whence you come, what you are, or
whither you are going? To me it seems,
that a Minute Philosopher is like a con-
ceited Spectator, who never looked be-
hind the Scenes, and yet would judge of
the Machinery; who from a transient
Glimpse of a Part only of some one Scene,
would take upon him to censure the Plot
of a Play. *LYS.* As to the Plot I won't
say; but in half a Scene a Man may judge
of an absurd Actor. With what Colour
or Pretext can you justify the vindictive,
froward, whimsical Behaviour of some
inspired Teachers or Prophets? Particu-
lars that serve neither for Profit nor Plea-
sure I make a shift to forget: but in ge-
neral the Truth of this Charge I do very
well remember. *CRI.* You need be at no
Pains to prove a Point I shall neither justi-
fy nor deny. That there have been Hu-
mane Passions, Infirmities, and Defects in

DIAL. Persons inspired by God, I freely own;

VI. nay, that very wicked Men have been inspired, as *Balaam*, for instance, and *Caia-*

phas, cannot be denied. But what will you infer from thence? Can you prove it impossible, that a weak or sinful Man should become an Instrument to the Spirit of God, for conveying his Purpose to other Sinners, or that Divine Light may not, as well as the Light of the Sun, shine on a foul Vessel without polluting its Rays?

LYS. To make short Work, the right Way would be to put out our Eyes, and not judge at all. *CRI.* I do not say so,

but I think it would be right, if some sanguine Persons upon certain Points suspected their own Judgment. *ALC.* But the

very Things said to be inspired, taken by themselves and in their own Nature, are sometimes so wrong, to say no worse, that

a Man may pronounce them not to be divine at first Sight; without troubling his Head about the System of Providence or

Connexion of Events: As one may say that Grass is green, without knowing or considering how it grows, what Uses it is

subservient to, or how it is connected with the mundane System. Thus for instance, the spoiling of the *Ægyptians*, and the

Extirpation of the *Canaanites*, every one at first Glance sees to be cruel and unjust, and

and may therefore without deliberating DIAL.
pronounce them unworthy of God. CRI. VI.

But, *Alciphron*, to judge rightly of these Things, may it not be proper to consider, how long the *Israelites* had wrought under those severe Task-masters of *Egypt*, what Injuries and Hardships they had sustained from them, what Crimes and Abominations the *Canaanites* had been guilty of, what Right God hath to dispose of the Things of this World, to punish Delinquents, and to appoint both the Manner and the Instruments of his Justice? Man, who has not such Right over his Fellow-Creatures, who is himself a Fellow-sinner with them, who is liable to Error as well as Passion, whose Views are imperfect, who is governed more by Prejudice than the Truth of Things, may not improbably deceive himself, when he sets up for a Judge of the Proceedings of the holy, omniscient, impassive Creator and Governor of all Things.

XVII. *ALC.* Believe me, *Crito*, Men are never so industrious to deceive themselves, as when they engage to defend their Prejudices. You would fain reason us out of all Use of our Reason: Can any Thing be more irrational? To forbid us to reason on the Divine Dispensations, is to suppose,

DIAL. pose, they will not bear the Test of Reason; or, in other Words, that God acts without Reason, which ought not to be admitted, no, not in any single instance: For if in one, why not in another? Whoever, therefore, allows a God, must allow that he always acts reasonably. I will not therefore attribute to him Actions and Proceedings that are unreasonable. He hath given me Reason to judge withal: and I will judge by that unerring Light, lighted from the universal Lamp of Nature. *CRI.* O *Alciphron!* as I frankly own the common Remark to be true, That when a Man is against Reason, it is a shrewd Sign Reason is against him; so I should never go about to dissuade any one, much less one who so well knew the Value of it, from using that noble Talent. On the contrary, upon all Subjects of Moment, in my Opinion, a Man ought to use his Reason; but then, whether it may not be reasonable to use it with some Deference to superior Reason, it will not, perhaps, be amiss to consider. He who hath an exact View of the Measure, and of the Thing to be measured, if he applies the one to the other, may, I grant, measure exactly. But he, who undertakes

takes to measure without knowing ei-DIAL:
 ther, can be no more exact than he is VI.
 modest. It may not, nevertheless, be im-
 possible to find a Man, who, having nei-
 ther an abstract Idea of moral Fitness,
 nor an adequate Idea of the Divine Oeco-
 nomy, shall yet pretend to measure the
 one by the other. *ALC.* It must surely
 derogate from the Wisdom of God, to
 suppose his Conduct cannot bear being
 inspected, not even by the Twilight of
 Humane Reason. *EUPH.* You allow,
 then, God to be wise? *ALC.* I do.
EUPH. What! infinitely wise? *ALC.*
 Even infinitely. *EUPH.* His Wisdom,
 then, far exceeds that of Man. *ALC.*
 Vastly. *EUPH.* Probably more than
 the Wisdom of Man, that of a Child.
ALC. Without all question. *EUPH.* What
 think you, *Alciphron*, must not the Con-
 duct of a Parent seem very unaccountable
 to a Child, when its Inclinations are
 thwarted, when it is put to learn the
 Letters, when it is obliged to swallow
 bitter Physic, to part with what it likes,
 and to suffer, and do, and see many
 things done contrary to its own Judg-
 ment, however reasonable or agreeable to
 that of others? *ALC.* This I grant.
EUPH. Will it not therefore follow
 from hence by a parity of Reason, that

DIAL. the little Child, Man, when it takes up-
 VI. on it to judge of the Schemes of Parental
 Providence; and a Thing of Yesterday, to criticise the Oeconomy of the Ancient of Days; will it not follow, I say, that such a Judge, of such Matters, must be apt to make very erroneous Judgments? esteeming those things in themselves unaccountable, which he cannot account for, and concluding of some certain Points, from an appearance of arbitrary Carriage towards him, which is suited to his Infancy and Ignorance, that they are in themselves capricious or absurd, and cannot proceed from a wise, just, and benevolent God. This single Consideration, if duly attended to and applied, would, I verily think, put an end to many conceited Reasonings against Revealed Religion. *ALC.* You would have us then conclude, that things, to our Wisdom unaccountable, may nevertheless proceed from an Abyss of Wisdom which our Line cannot fathom: and that Prospects viewed but in part, and by the broken tinged Light of our Intellects, though to us they may seem disproportionate and monstrous, may nevertheless appear quite otherwise to another Eye, and in a different Situation: In a word, that as Humane Wisdom is but childish Folly, in
 respect

respect of the Divine, so the Wisdom of DIAL.
 God may sometimes seem Foolishness to VI.
 Man.

XVIII. *EUPH.* I would not have you make these Conclusions, unless in reason you ought to make them: But if they are reasonable, why should you not make them? *ALC.* Some things may seem reasonable at one Time, and not at another: And I take this very Apology you make, for Credulity and Superstition, to be one of those Things. When I view it in its Principles, it seems naturally to follow from just Concessions: but when I consider its Consequences, I cannot agree to it. A Man had as good abdicate his Nature, as disclaim the Use of Reason. A Doctrine is unaccountable, therefore it must be Divine! *EUPH.* Credulity and Superstition are Qualities so disagreeable and degrading to Humane Nature, so surely an Effect of Weakness, and so frequently a Cause of Wickedness, that I should be very much surpris'd to find a just Course of Reasoning lead to them. I can never think that Reason is a blind Guide to Folly, or that there is any Connexion between Truth and Falshood, no more than I can think a Thing's being unaccountable a Proof that it is Divine: Though at the

DIAL. same time I cannot help acknowledging,
 VI. it follows from your own avow'd Principles, that a Thing's being unaccountable or incomprehensible to our Reason, is no sure Argument to conclude it is not Divine; especially when there are collateral Proofs of its being so. A Child is influenced by the many sensible Effects it hath felt, of Paternal Love and Care and superior Wisdom, to believe and do several things with an implicate Faith and Obedience: And if we in the same manner, from the Truth and Reasonableness which we plainly see in so many Points within our Cognisance, and the Advantages which we experience from the Seed of the Gospel sown in good Ground, were disposed to an implicit Belief of certain other Points, relating to Schemes we do not know, or Subjects to which our Talents are perhaps disproportionate, I am tempted to think it might become our Duty without dishonouring our Reason; which is never so much dishonoured as when it is foiled, and never in more danger of being foiled, than by judging where it hath neither Means nor Right to judge. *LYS.* I would give a good deal to see that ingenious Gamester *Glaucus* have the handling of *Euphranor* one Night at our Club. I own he is a Peg too high for me in some
 of

of his Notions: But then he is admirable at vindicating Humane Reason against the Impositions of Priestcraft.

DIAL.
VI.

XIX. *ALC.* He would undertake to make it as clear as Day Light, that there was nothing worth a Straw in Christianity, but what every one knew, or might know, as well without as with it, before as since *Jesus Christ*. *CRI.* That great Man, it seems, teacheth, that common Sense alone is the Pole-Star, by which Mankind ought to steer: and that what is called Revelation must be ridiculous, because it is unnecessary and useless, the natural Talents of every Man being sufficient, to make him happy, good, and wise, without any further Correspondence with Heaven either for Light or Aid. *EUPH.* I have already acknowledged how sensible I am, that my Situation in this obscure Corner of the Country deprives me of many Advantages, to be had from the Conversation of ingenious Men in Town. To make my self some Amends, I am obliged to converse with the Dead and my own Thoughts, which last I know are of little Weight against the Authority of *Glaucus*, or such like great Men in the Minute Philosophy. But what shall we say to *Socrates*, for he too was of an Opinion

DIAL. nion very different from that ascribed to
 VI. *Glaucus*? *ALC.* For the present we need
 not insist on Authorities, ancient or modern, or inquire which was the greater Man *Socrates* or *Glaucus*. Though, methinks, for so much as Authority can signify, the present Times, gray and hoary with Age and Experience, have a manifest Advantage over those that are falsely called *ancient*. But not to dwell on Authorities, I tell you in plain *English*, *Euphranor*, we do not want your Revelations: and that for this plain Reason, those that are clear every Body knew before, and those that are obscure no Body is the better for. *EUPH.* As it is impossible, that a Man should believe the practic Principles of the Christian Religion, and not be the better for them: So it is evident, that those Principles may be much more easily taught as Points of Faith, than demonstrated or discovered as Points of Science. This I call evident, because it is plain Fact. Since we daily see that many are instructed in Matters of Faith; that few are taught by Scientific Demonstration; and that there are still fewer who can discover Truth for themselves. Did Minute Philosophers but reflect: How rarely Men are sway'd
 or

or governed by meer Ratiocination, and **DIAL.**
 how often by Faith, in the natural, or **VI.**
 civil Concerns of the World! how little
 they know, and how much they believe!
 How uncommon it is to meet with a
 Man who argues justly, who is in Truth
 a Master of Reason, or walks by that Rule!
 How much better (as the World goes)
 Men are qualified to judge of Facts than
 of Reasonings, to receive Truth upon
 Testimony than to deduce it from Prin-
 ciples! How general a Spirit of Trust
 or Reliance runs through the whole Sys-
 tem of Life and Opinion! And at the same
 Time how seldom the dry Light of un-
 prejudiced Nature is followed or to be
 found! I say, did our thinking Men but
 bethink themselves of these Things, they
 would perhaps find it difficult to assign a
 good Reason, why Faith, which hath so
 great a Share in every Thing else, should
 yet have none in Religion. But to come
 more closely to your Point, Whether
 it was possible for Mankind to have known
 all Parts of the Christian Religion, besides
 Mysteries and positive Institutions, is not
 the Question between us; and that they
 actually did not know them, is too plain
 to be denied. This, perhaps, was for
 Want of making a due Use of Reason.
 But, as to the Usefulness of Revelation,

DIAL. it seems much the same Thing whether
VI. they could not know, or would not be at
 the Pains to know, the Doctrines Revealed.
 And as for those Doctrines which were too obscure to penetrate, or too sublime to reach, by Natural Reason; how far Mankind may be the better for them is more, I had almost said, than even you or *Glaucus* can tell.

XX. ALC. But whatever may be pretended as to obscure Doctrines and Dispensations, all this hath nothing to do with Prophecies; which, being altogether relative to Mankind, and the Events of this World, to which our Faculties are surely well enough proportioned, one might expect should be very clear, and such as might inform instead of puzzling us. **EUPH.** And yet it must be allowed that as some Prophecies are clear, there are others very obscure: but left to myself, I doubt I should never have inferred from thence that they were not Divine. In my own way of thinking I should have been apt to conclude, that the Prophecies we understand are a Proof for Inspiration; but that those we do not understand are no Proof against it. Inasmuch as for the latter our Ignorance or the Reserve of the Holy Spirit may account; but for the
 other

other Nothing, for ought that I see, can DIAL.
 account but Inspiration. *ALC.* Now I VI.
 know several sagacious Men, who con-
 clude very differently from you, to wit,
 that the one Sort of Prophecies are Non-
 sense, and the other contrived after the
 Events. Behold the Difference between a
 Man of free Thought and one of narrow
 Principles! *EUPH.* It seems then they
 reject the Revelations because they are ob-
 scure, and *Daniel's* Prophecies because
 they are clear. *ALC.* Either way a Man
 of Sense sees Cause to suspect there has
 been foul Play. *EUPH.* Your Men of
 Sense are, it seems, hard to please. *ALC.*
 Our Philosophers are Men of piercing
 Eyes. *EUPH.* I suppose such Men ne-
 ver make transient Judgments from tran-
 sient Views, but always establish fixed
 Conclusions upon a thorough Inspection
 of Things. For my own part, I dare not
 engage with a Man, who has examined
 those Points so nicely, as it may be pre-
 sumed you have done: But I could name
 some eminent Writers of our own, now
 living, whose Books on the Subject of
 Prophecy have given great Satisfaction to
 Gentlemen, who pass for Men of Sense
 and Learning, here in the Country. *ALC.*
 You must know, *Euphranor*, I am not at
 Leisure to peruse the learned Writings of
 Di-

DIAL. Divines, on a Subject which a Man may
 VI. see through with half an Eye. To me it
 is sufficient, that the Point it self is odd
 and out of the Road of Nature. For the
 rest, I leave them to dispute and settle a-
 mong themselves, where to fix the precise
 Time when the Sceptre departed from
Judah: or whether in *Daniel's* Prophecy
 of the *Messiah* we should compute by the
Chaldæan or the *Julian* Year. My only
 Conclusion concerning all such Matters
 is, that I will never trouble my self about
 them. *EUPH.* To an extraordinary Ge-
 nius, who sees Things with half an Eye,
 I know not what to say: But for the
 rest of Mankind, one would think it
 should be very rash in them to conclude,
 without much and exact Inquiry, on the
 unsafe Side of a Question which concerns
 their chief Interest. *ALC.* Mark it well:
 a true Genius in pursuit of Truth makes
 swift Advances on the Wings of general
 Maxims, while little Minds creep and
 grovel amidst mean Particularities. I lay
 it down for a certain Truth: that by the
 fallacious Arts of Logic and Criticism,
 straining and forcing, palliating, patching
 and distinguishing, a Man may justify or
 make out any Thing: and this Remark,
 with one or two about Prejudice, saves
 me a world of Trouble. *EUPH.* You
Alci-

Alciphron, who soar sublime on strong DIAL.
 and free Pinions, vouchsafe to lend a VI.
 helping Hand to those whom you behold
 entangled in the Birdlime of Prejudice.
 For my part, I find it very possible to sup-
 pose Prophecy may be Divine, although
 there should be some Obscurity at this
 Distance, with respect to Dates of Time
 or Kinds of Years. You your self own
 Revelation possible : and allowing this I
 can very easily conceive it may be odd,
 and out of the Road of Nature. I can,
 without Amazement, meet in Holy Scrip-
 ture divers Prophecies, whereof I do not
 see the Completion, divers Texts I do not
 understand, divers Mysteries above my
 Comprehension, and Ways of God to me
 unaccountable. Why may not some Pro-
 phecies relate to Parts of History I am not
 well enough acquainted with, or to E-
 vents not yet come to pass? It seems to
 me that Prophecies unfathomed by the
 Hearer, or even the Speaker himself,
 have been afterward verified and under-
 stood in the Event: and it is one of my
 Maxims, That, *what hath been may be.*
 Though I rub mine Eyes, and do mine
 utmost to extricate my self from Preju-
 dice, yet it still seems very possible to me,
 that, what I do not, a more acute, more
 attentive, or more learned Man may un-
 derstand:

DIAL. derstand: At least thus much is plain:

VI. the Difficulty of some Points or Passages

doth not hinder the Clearness of others: and those Parts of Scripture which we cannot interpret, we are not bound to know the Sense of. What Evil or what Inconvenience, if we cannot comprehend what we are not obliged to comprehend, or if we cannot account for those Things which it doth not belong to us to account for? Scriptures not understood, at one Time, or by one Person, may be understood at another Time, or by other Persons. May we not perceive, by Retrospect on what is past, a certain Progress from darker to lighter, in the Series of the Divine Oeconomy towards Man? And may not future Events clear up such Points as at present exercise the Faith of Believers? Now, I cannot help thinking (such is the Force either of Truth or Prejudice) that in all this, there is nothing strained or forced, or which is not reasonable and natural to suppose.

XXI. *ALC.* Well, *Euphranor*, I will lend you a helping Hand, since you desire it, but think fit to alter my Method: For you must know, the main Points of Christian Belief have been infused so early, and inculcated so often, by Nurses,
Pæda-

Pædagogues, and Priests: that, be the **DIAL.**
 Proofs ever so plain, it is a hard Matter **VI.**
 to convince a Mind thus tinctured and
 stained, by arguing against Revealed Re-
 ligion from its internal Characters, I shall
 therefore set my self to consider Things in
 another Light, and examine your Religion
 by certain external Characters or Cir-
 cumstantials, comparing the System of
 Revelation with collateral Accounts of an-
 cient Heathen Writers, and shewing how
 ill it consists with them. Know then,
 that the Christian Revelation supposing
 the *Jewish*, it follows, that if the *Jew-*
ish be destroyed, the Christian must of
 Course fall to the Ground. Now, to
 make short Work, I shall attack this *Jew-*
ish Revelation in its Head. Tell me, are
 we not obliged, if we believe the *Mosaic*
 Account of Things, to hold the World
 was created not quite six thousand Years
 ago? *EUPH.* I grant we are. *ALC.*
 What will you say now, if other ancient
 Records carry up the History of the World
 many thousand Years beyond this Period?
 What if the *Ægyptians* and *Chinese* have
 Accounts extending to thirty or forty
 thousand Years? What if the former of
 these Nations have observed twelve hund-
 red Eclipses, during the space of forty eight
 thousand Years, before the Time of *Alex-*
ander

DIAL. *ander* the Great? What if the *Chinese*
 VI. have also many Observations antecedent to
 the *Jewish* Account of the Creation?
 What if the *Chaldæans* had been observ-
 ing the Stars for above four hundred
 thousand Years? And what shall we say
 if we have Successions of Kings and their
 Reigns, marked for several thousand Years
 before the Beginning of the World, af-
 signed by *Moses*? Shall we reject the Ac-
 counts and Records of all other Nations,
 the most famous, ancient, and learned
 in the World, and preserve a blind Reve-
 rence for the Legislator of the *Jews*?
EUPH. And pray if they deserve to be
 rejected, why should we not reject them?
 What if those monstrous Chronologies
 contain nothing but Names without Acti-
 ons and manifest Fables? What if those
 pretended Observations of *Ægyptians* and
Chaldæans were unknown or unregarded by
 ancient Astronomers? What if the *Jesuits*
 have shewn the Inconsistency of the like
Chinese Pretensions with the Truth of
Ephemerides? What if the most ancient
Chinese Observations allow'd to be authen-
 tic, are those of two fixed Stars, one in
 the Winter Solstice, the other in the Ver-
 nal Equinox, in the Reign of their King
Yao, which was since the Flood *? *ALC.*

* Bianchini *Histor. Univers.* c. 17.

You

You must give me Leave to observe, the DIAL.
Romish Missionaries are of small Credit in VI.
 this Point. *EUPH.* But what Knowledge
 have we, or can we have, of those *Chinese*
 Affairs, but by their Means? The same
 Persons that tell us of these Accounts re-
 fute them: if we reject their Authority
 in one Case, what Right have we to build
 upon it in another? *ALC.* When I con-
 sider that the *Chinese* have Annals of more
 than forty thousand Years, and that they
 are a learned ingenious and acute People,
 very curious and addicted to Arts and Sci-
 ences, I profess I cannot help paying some
 Regard to their Accounts of Time. *EUPH.*
 Whatever Advantage their Situation and
 political Maxims may have given them,
 it doth not appear they are so learned or
 so acute in point of Science as the *Europe-
 ans.* The general Character of the *Chi-
 nese*, if we may believe *Trigaltius* and
 other Writers, is that they are Men of a
 trifling and credulous Curiosity, addicted
 to search after the Philosophers Stone, and
 a Medicine to make Men immortal, to
 Astrology, Fortune-telling, and Presages
 of all Kinds. Their Ignorance in Nature
 and Mathematics is evident, from the
 great Hand the *Jesuits* make of that Kind
 of Knowledge among them. But what
 shall we think of those extraordinary An-
 nals,

DIAL. nals, if the very *Chinese* themselves give
 VI. no Credit to them for more than three
 thousand Years before *Jesus Christ*? If
 they do not pretend to have begun to
 write History above four thousand Years
 ago? And if the oldest Books they have
 now extant in an intelligible Character,
 are not above two thousand Years old?
 One would think a Man of your Sagacity,
 so apt to suspect every Thing out of the
 common Road of Nature, should not
 without the clearest Proof admit those
 Annals for authentic, which record such
 strange Things as the Sun's not setting for
 ten Days, and Gold raining three Days
 together. Tell me, *Alciphron*, can you
 really believe these Things without in-
 quiring by what Means the Tradition was
 preserved, through what Hands it passed,
 or what Reception it met with, or who
 first committed it to Writing? *ALC.*
 To omit the *Chinese* and their Story, it
 will serve my Purpose as well to build on
 the Authority of *Manetho* that learned
Ægyptian Priest, who had such Opportu-
 nities of searching into the most ancient
 Accounts of Time, and copying into his
 Dynasties the most venerable and au-
 thentic Records inscribed on the Pillars
 of *Hermes*. *EUPH.* Pray, *Alciphron*,
 where were those Chronological Pillars

to be seen? *ALC.* In the *Seriadical* Land. *DIAL.*

EUPH. And where is that Country? *VI.*

ALC. I don't know. *EUPH.* How were

those Records preserved for so many Ages down to the Time of this *Hermes*, who is said to have been the first Inventor of Letters? *ALC.* I do not know. *EUPH.*

Did any other Writers, before or since *Manetho*, pretend to have seen, or transcribed, or known any Thing about these Pillars? *ALC.* Not that I know. *EUPH.*

Or about the Place where they are said to have been? *ALC.* If they did, it is more than I know. *EUPH.* Do the *Greek*

Authors that went into *Ægypt*, and consulted the *Ægyptian* Priests, agree with these Accounts of *Manetho*? *ALC.* Suppose they do not. *EUPH.* Doth *Diodo-*

rus, who lived since *Manetho*, follow, cite, or so much as mention this same *Manetho*? *ALC.* What will you infer from all this? *EUPH.* If I did not know

you and your Principles, and how vigilantly you guard against Imposture, I should infer that you were a very credu-

lous Man. For what can we call it but Credulity to believe most incredible things

on most slender Authority, such as Fragments of an obscure Writer, disagreeing with all other Historians, supported by an obscure Authority of *Hermes's* Pillars,

DIAL. for which you must take his Word, and

VI. which contain Things so improbable as

Successions of Gods and Demi-gods, for many thousand Years, *Vulcan* alone having reigned nine Thousand? There is little in these venerable Dynasties of *Manetho*, besides Names and Numbers: and yet in that little we meet with very strange Things, that would be thought Roman-tick in another Writer: For instance, the *Nile* overflowing with Honey, the Moon grown bigger, a speaking Lamb, seventy Kings who reigned as many Days one after another, a King a Day*. If you are known, *Alciphron*, to give credit to these Things, I fear you will lose the Honour of being thought incredulous.

ALC. And yet these ridiculous Fragments, as you would represent them, have been thought worth the Pains and Lucubrations of very learned Men. How can you account for the Work that the great *Joseph Scaliger* and Sir *John Marsham* make about them? EUPH. I do not pretend to account for it. To see *Scaliger* add another *Julian* Period to make room for such Things as *Manetho's* Dynasties, and Sir *John Marsham* take so much learned Pains to piece, patch, and mend those obscure Fragments, to range them in Synchronisms,

* Scal. Can. Ifag. l. 2.

and try to adjust them with sacred Chro-DIAL.
nology, or make them consistent with VI.
themselves and other Accounts, is to me
very strange and unaccountable. Why
they, or *Eusebius*, or your self, or any
other learned Man should imagine those
Things deserve any Regard I leave you to
explain.

XXII. *ALC.* After all it is not easy to
conceive what should move, not only *Ma-
netho*, but also other *Ægyptian* Priests,
long before his Time, to set up such great
Pretences to Antiquity, all which, how-
ever differing one from another, agree in
this, that they overthrow the *Mosaic* His-
tory. How can this be accounted for
without some real Foundation? What
Point of Pleasure, or Profit, or Power,
could set Men on forging Successions of
ancient Names, and Periods of Time for
Ages before the World began? *EUPH.*
Pray, *Alciphron*, is there any Thing so
strange or singular in this vain Humour
of extending the Antiquity of Nations
beyond the Truth? Hath it not been
observed in most Parts of the World?
Doth it not even in our own Times shew
it self, especially among those dependent
and subdued People, who have little else
to boast of. To pass over others of our

DIAL. Fellow-Subjects, who, in proportion as
 VI. they are below their Neighbours in
 Wealth and Power, lay claim to a more
 remote Antiquity; are not the Pretensions
 of *Irishmen* in this Way known to be ve-
 ry great? If I may trust my Memory
 O *Flaberty*, in his *Ogygia*, mentions some
 Transactions in *Ireland* before the Flood.
 The same Humour, and from the same
 Cause, appears to have prevailed in *Sicily*,
 a Country, for some Centuries past, sub-
 ject to the Dominion of Foreigners: dur-
 ing which Time, the *Sicilians* have pub-
 lished divers fabulous Accounts, concern-
 ing the Original and Antiquity of their
 Cities, wherein they vye with each other.
 It is pretended to be proved by ancient
 Inscriptions, whose Existence or Authori-
 ty seems on a Level with that of *Hermes's*
 Pillars, that *Palermo* was founded in the
 Days of the Patriarch *Isaac* by a Colony
 of *Hebrews*, *Phœnicians*, and *Syrians*, and
 that a Grandson of *Esau* had been Go-
 vernor of a Tower subsisting within these
 two hundred Years in that City *. The
 Antiquity of *Messina* hath been carried
 still higher, by some who would have us
 think it was enlarged by *Nimrod* †. The
 like Pretensions are made by *Catania*, and

* Fazelli Hist. Sicul. decad. 1. l. 8.

† Reina Notizie Istoriche di Messina.

other Towns of that Island, who have found Authors of as good Credit as *Manetho* to support them. Now I should be glad to know why the *Ægyptians*, a subdued People, may not probably be supposed to have invented fabulous Accounts from the same Motive, and like others valued themselves on extravagant Pretensions to Antiquity, when in all other Respects they were so much inferior to their Masters? That People had been successively conquered by *Æthiopians*, *Assyrians*, *Babylonians*, *Persians*, and *Grecians*, before it appears that those wonderful Dynasties of *Manetho* and the Pillars of *Hermes* were ever heard of; as they had been by the two first of those Nations before the Time of *Solon* himself, the earliest *Greek* that is known to have consulted the Priests of *Ægypt*: Whose Accounts were so extravagant that even the *Greek* Historians, though unacquainted with Holy Scripture, were far from giving an intire Credit to them. *Herodotus* making a Report upon their Authority, saith, Those to whom such Things seem credible may make the best of them, for himself declaring that it was his Purpose to write what he heard*. And both he and *Diodorus* do, on divers Occasions,

* Herodotus in Euterpe.

DIAL. shew the same Diffidence in the Nar-
 VI. ratives of those *Ægyptian* Priests. And
 as we observed of the *Ægyptians*, it is no
 less certain that the *Phœnicians*, *Assyrians*,
 and *Chaldæans* were each a conquered and
 reduced People, before the rest of the
 World appear to have heard any Thing
 of their Pretensions to so remote Anti-
 quity. CRI. But what Occasion is there
 to be at any Pains to account for the
 Humour of fabulous Writers? Is it not
 sufficient to see that they relate Absurdi-
 ties: that they are unsupported by any
 foreign Evidence: that they do not ap-
 pear to have been in Credit, even among
 their own Countrymen, and that they are
 inconsistent one with another? That Men
 should have the Vanity to impose on the
 World by false Accounts, is nothing
 strange: it is much more so, that after
 what hath been done towards undeceiving
 the World by so many learned Critics,
 there should be Men found capable of
 being abused by those paltry Scraps of
Manetho, *Berosus*, *Ctesias*, or the like fa-
 bulous or counterfeit Writers. ALC.
 Give me Leave to observe, those learned
 Critics may prove to be Ecclesiastics,
 perhaps some of them Papists. CRI.
 What do you think of Sir *Isaac Newton*,
 was he either Papist or Ecclesiastic? Per-
 haps

haps you may not allow him to have DIAL.
 been in Sagacity, or Force of Mind, e- VI.
 qual to the great Men of the Minute Phi- —
 losophy: But it cannot be denied that —
 he had read and thought much upon the
 Subject, and that the Result of his In-
 quiry was a perfect Contempt of all those
 celebrated Rivals to *Moses*. *ALC.* It hath
 been observed by ingenious Men, that Sir
Isaac Newton, though a Layman, was
 deeply prejudiced, witness his great Re-
 gard to the Bible. *CRI.* And the same
 may be said of Mr. *Locke*, Mr. *Boyle*,
 Lord *Bacon*, and other famous Lay-
 men, who, however knowing in some
 Points, must nevertheless be allowed not
 to have attained that keen Discernment,
 which is the peculiar Distinction of your
 Sect.

XXIII. But perhaps there may be o-
 ther Reasons beside Prejudice, to incline
 a Man to give *Moses* the Preference, on
 the Truth of whose History the Govern-
 ment, Manners, and Religion of his Coun-
 trymen were founded and framed; of
 whose History there are manifest Traces
 in the most ancient Books and Traditi-
 ons of the *Gentiles*, particularly of the
Brachmans and *Persees*; whose History is
 confirmed by the late Invention of Arts

DIAL. and Sciences, the gradual Peopling of the
 VI. World, the very Names of ancient Nations, and even by the Authority and Arguments of that renowned Philosopher *Lucretius*, who, on other Points, is so much admired and followed by those of your Sect. Not to mention that the continual Decrease of Fluids, the Sinking of Hills, and the Retardation of Planetary Motions afford so many natural Proofs, which shew this World had a Beginning; as the Civil or Historical Proofs above-mentioned do plainly point out this Beginning, to have been about the Time assigned in Holy Scripture. After all which I beg Leave to add one Observation more. To any one who considers that, on digging into the Earth, such Quantities of Shells, and, in some Places, Bones and Horns of Animals are found, found and intire after having lain there in all Probability some thousands of Years; it should seem probable, that Gems, Medals, and Implements in Metal or Stone, might have lasted intire, buried under Ground forty or fifty thousand Years, if the World had been so old. How comes it then to pass that no Remains are found, no Antiquities of those numerous Ages preceding the Scripture Accounts of Time; no Fragments of Buildings, no
 8 publick

publick Monuments, no Intaglias, Cameo-
meoes, Statues, Basso Relievos, Medals,
Inscriptions, Utensils, or Artificial Works
of any kind are ever discovered, which
might bear Testimony to the Existence
of those mighty Empires, those Successi-
ons of Monarchs, Heroes, and Demi-gods,
for so many thousand Years? Let us look
forward and suppose ten or twenty thou-
sand Years to come; during which Time
we will suppose, that Plagues, Famines,
Wars, and Earthquakes shall have made
great Havock in the World; is it not
highly probable that at the End of such
Period, Pillars, Vases, and Statues now
in being of Granite, or Porphyry, or Jas-
per, (Stones of such Hardness, as we
know them to have lasted two thousand
Years above Ground, without any consi-
derable Alteration) would bear Record of
these and past Ages? Or, that some of our
current Coins might then be dug up, or
old Walls and the Foundations of Build-
ings shew themselves, as well as the Shells
and Stones of the Primæval World are
preserved down to our Times? To me it
seems to follow from these Considerations,
which common Sense and Experience
make all Men Judges of, that we may
see good Reason to conclude, the World
was created about the Time recorded in
Holy

DIAL.
VI.

DIAL. Holy Scripture. And if we admit a
 VI. Thing so extraordinary as the Creation of
 this World, it should seem that we admit
 something strange, and odd, and new to
 Humane Apprehension, beyond any other
 Miracle whatsoever.

XXIV. *Alciphron* sat musing and made no Answer, whereupon *Lysicles* expressed himself in the following Manner. I must own I should rather suppose with *Lucretius*, that the World was made by Chance, and that Men grew out of the Earth, like Pumpions, than pin my Faith on those wretched fabulous Fragments of Oriental History. And as for the learned Men, who have taken pains to illustrate and piece them together, they appear to me no better than so many musty Pedants. An ingenious Free-thinker may, perhaps, now and then make some Use of their Lucubrations, and play one Absurdity against another. But you are not, therefore, to think, he pays any real Regard to the Authority of such apocryphal Writers, or believes one Syllable of the *Chinese*, *Babylonian*, or *Ægyptian* Traditions. If we seem to give them a Preference before the Bible, it is only because they are not established by Law. This is my plain Sense of the Matter, and I dare say it is the general Sense of our Sect; who are
 too

too rational to be in earnest on such Trifles, DIAL.
 though they sometimes give Hints of deep VI.
 Erudition, and put on a grave Face to
 divert themselves with Bigots. ALC.
 Since *Lyficles* will have it so, I am con-
 tent not to build on Accounts of Time
 preceding the *Mosaic*. I must neverthe-
 less beg Leave to observe, there is another
 Point of a different Nature, against which
 there do not lie the same Exceptions, that
 deserves to be considered, and may serve
 our Purpose as well. I presume it will
 be allowed that Historians, treating of
 Times within the *Mosaic* Account, ought
 by impartial Men to be placed on the
 same Foot with *Moses*. It may therefore
 be expected, that those, who pretend to
 vindicate his Writings, should reconcile
 them with parallel Accounts of other Au-
 thors, treating of the same Times, Things,
 and Persons. And, if we are not at-
 tached singly to *Moses*, but take our No-
 tions from other Writers, and the Proba-
 bility of Things, we shall see good Cause
 to believe, the *Jews* were only a Crew of
 leprous *Ægyptians*, driven from their
 Country on Account of that loathsome
 Distemper; and that their Religion, pre-
 tended to have been delivered from Hea-
 ven at Mount *Sinai*, was in Truth learn-
 ed in *Ægypt*, and brought from thence.

CRI.

DIAL. CRI. Not to insist, on what cannot be denied, that an Historian writing of his own Times is to be believed, before others who treat of the same Subject several Ages after, it seems to me that it is absurd to expect we should reconcile *Moses* with profane Historians, till you have first reconcil'd them one with another. In answer therefore to what you observe, I desire you would consider in the first Place, that *Manetho*, *Chæremon*, and *Lysimachus* had published inconsistent Accounts of the *Jews*, and their going forth from *Ægypt**: In the second place, that their Language is a plain Proof they were not of *Ægyptian*, but either of *Phœnician*, of *Syrian*, or of *Chaldæan* Original: and in the third place, that it doth not seem very probable to suppose, their Religion, the Basis or Fundamental Principle of which was the Worship of one only Supreme God, and the principal Design of which was to abolish Idolatry, could be derived from *Ægypt*, the most Idolatrous of all Nations. It must be owned, the separate Situation and Institutions of the *Jews*, occasioned their being treated by some Foreigners, with great Ignorance and Contempt of them and their Original. But *Strabo*, who is allowed to have been a

* Joseph. contra Apion. l. 1.

judicious

judicious and inquisitive Writer, though he was not acquainted with their true History, makes more honourable mention of them. He relates that *Moses*, with many other Worshippers of one infinite God, not approving the Image Worship of the *Ægyptians* and other Nations, went out from *Ægypt* and settled in *Jerusalem*, where they built a Temple to one only God without Images*.


XXV. *ALC.* We who assert the Cause of Liberty against Religion, in these later Ages of the World, lie under great Disadvantages, from the Loss of ancient Books, which cleared up many Points to the Eyes of those great Men, *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, and *Julian*, which at a greater Distance and with less Help cannot so easily be made out by us: but, had we those Records, I doubt not we might demolish the whole System at once. *CRI.* And yet I make some Doubt of this; because those great Men, as you call them, with all those Advantages could not do it. *ALC.* That must needs have been owing to the Dulness and Stupidity of the World in those Days, when the Art of Reasoning was not so much known and cultivated as of late: But those Men of true Genius saw through

* Strab. 1. 16.

DIAL. the Deceit themselves, and were very clear
 VI. in their Opinion, which convinces me they
 had good reason on their Side. CRI. And
 yet that great Man *Celsus* seems to have
 had very slight and inconstant Notions :
 one while, he talks like a thorough *Epicu-
 rean* ; another, he admits Miracles, Pro-
 phecies, and a future State of Rewards
 and Punishments. What think you, *Alci-
 phron*, is it not something capricious in so
 great a Man, among other Advantages
 which he ascribes to Brutes above Humane
 Kind, to suppose they are Magicians and
 Prophets ; that they have a nearer Com-
 merce and Union with the Divinity ; that
 they know more than Men ; and that E-
 lephants, in particular, are of all others
 most religious Animals and strict Observers
 of an Oath *. ALC. A great Genius will
 be sometimes whimsical. But what do you
 say to the Emperor *Julian*, was not he an
 extraordinary Man ? CRI. He seems by
 his Writings to have been lively and fa-
 tyrical. Further, I make no Difficulty
 of owning that he was a generous, tempe-
 rate, gallant, and facetious Emperor : But
 at the same time it must be allowed, be-
 cause his own Heathen Panegyrist *Ammi-
 anus Marcellinus* † allows it, that he was

* Origen. contra Celsum. l. 4.

† Am. Marcellin. l. 25.

a prating, light, vain, superstitious Sort DIAL.
of Man. And therefore his Judgment or VI.
Authority can be but of small Weight with 
those, who are not prejudiced in his Fa-
vour. *ALC.* But of all the great Men who
wrote against Revealed Religion, the
greatest without question was that truly
great Man *Porphyry*, the Loss of whose
invaluable Work can never be sufficiently
lamented. This profound Philosopher
went to the Bottom and Original of
Things. He most learnedly confuted the
Scriptures, shew'd the Absurdity of the
Mosaic Accounts, undermined and ex-
posed the Prophecies, and ridiculed alle-
gorical Interpretations *. The Moderns,
it must be owned, have done great Things
and shewn themselves able Men: yet I
cannot but regret the Loss of what was
done by a Person of such vast Abilities,
and who lived so much nearer the Foun-
tain-head; though his Authority survives
his Writings, and must still have its Weight
with impartial Men, in spite of the Ene-
mies of Truth. *CRI. Porphyry*, I grant,
was a thorough Infidel, though he ap-
pears by no means to have been incre-
dulous. It seems he had a great Opinion
of Wizards and Necromancers, and be-

* Luc. Holstenius de vita & scriptis Porphyrii.

lieved

DIAL. lieved the Myſteries, Miracles, and Pro-
 VI. phecies of *Theurgists* and *Ægyptian*
 Priests. He was far from being an E-
 nemy to obscure Jargon, and pretended
 to extraordinary Extasies. In a word,
 this great Man appears to have been as
 unintelligible as a Schoolman, as super-
 stitious as a Monk, and as fanatical as
 any Quietist or Quaker: and, to com-
 plet his Character as a Minute Phi-
 losopher, he was under strong Temp-
 tations to lay violent Hands on him-
 self. We may frame a Notion of this
 Patriarch of Infidelity, by his judici-
 ous Way of thinking upon other Points
 as well as the Christian Religion. So
 sagacious was he as to find out, that
 the Souls of Insects, when separated
 from their Bodies, become rational:
 that Dæmons of a thousand Shapes as-
 sist in making Philtrums and Charms,
 whose spiritual Bodies are nourished and
 fattened by the Streams of Libations
 and Sacrifices: That the Ghosts of
 those, who died violent Deaths, use to
 haunt and appear about their Sepulchres.
 This same egregious Philosopher adviseth
 a wise Man not to eat Flesh, lest the im-
 pure Soul of the Brute that was put to
 violent Death should enter, along with the
 Flesh, into those who eat it. He adds, as
 a Mat-

a Matter of Fact confirmed by many Ex-DIAL. periments, that those who would insinuate VI. into themselves the Souls of such Animals, as have the Gift of foretelling Things to come, need only eat a principal Part, the Heart, for instance, of a Stag or a Mole, and so receive the Soul of the Animal, which will prophesy in them like a God*. No wonder if Men whose Minds were preoccupied by Faith and Tenets of such a peculiar Kind, should be averse from the Reception of the Gospel. Upon the whole, we desire to be excused if we do not pay the same Deference to the Judgment of Men, that appear to us whimsical, superstitious, weak, and visionary, which those impartial Gentlemen do, who admire their Talents, and are proud to tread in their Footsteps. *ALC.* Men see Things in different Views: what one admires another contemns: it is even possible for a prejudiced Mind, whose Attention is turned towards the Faults and Blemishes of Things, to fancy some Shadow of Defect in those great Lights, which in our own Days have enlightened, and still continue to enlighten the World.

* Vide Porphyrium de abstinencia, de sacrificiis, de diis, & demonibus.

DIAL. XXVI. But pray tell me, *Crito*, what
 VI. you think of *Josephus*? He is allowed to
 have been a Man of Learning and Judgment. He was himself an Asserter of Revealed Religion. And Christians, when his Authority serves their Turn, are used to cite him with Respect. *CRI.* All this I acknowledge. *ALC.* Must it not then seem very strange, and very suspicious to every impartial Inquirer, that this learned *Jew* writing the History of his own Country, of that very Place, and those very Times, where and when *Jesus Christ* made his Appearance, should yet say nothing of the Character, Miracles, and Doctrine of that Extraordinary Person? Some ancient Christians were so sensible of this, that, to make amends, they inserted a famous Passage in that Historian; which Imposture hath been sufficiently detected by able Critics in the last Age. *CRI.* Though there are not wanting able Critics on the other side of the Question, yet, not to enter upon the Discussion of that celebrated Passage, I am content to give you all you can desire, and suppose it not genuine, but the pious Fraud of some wrong-headed Christian, who could not brook the Omission in *Josephus*: But this will never make such Omission a real Objection against Christianity. Nor is there,
 for

for ought I can see, any thing in it where-DIAL
 on to ground either Admiration or Sus- VI.
 picion; inasmuch as it should seem very
 natural, supposing the Gospel Account ex-
 actly true, for *Josephus* to have said no-
 thing of it; considering that the View of
 that Writer was to give his Country some
 Figure in the Eye of the World, which
 had been greatly prejudiced against the
Jews, and knew little of their History,
 to which end the Life and Death of our
 Saviour would not in any wise have con-
 duced; considering that *Josephus* could
 not have been an Eye-Witness of our Sa-
 viour, or his Miracles; considering that he
 was a *Pharisee* of Quality and Learning,
 foreign as well as *Jewish*, one of great Em-
 ployment in the State, and that the Gos-
 pel was preached to the Poor; that the
 first Instruments of spreading it, and the
 first Converts to it were mean and illite-
 rate, that it might not seem the Work of
 Man, or beholden to Humane Interest or
 Power; considering the general Prejudice
 of the *Jews*, who expected in the *Messiah*
 a temporal and conquering Prince; which
 Prejudice was so strong, that they chose
 rather to attribute our Saviour's Miracles
 to the Devil, than to acknowledge him to
 be the Christ: Considering also the hellish
 Disorder and Confusion of the *Jewish*

DIAL. State in the Days of *Josephus*: when
 VI. Mens Minds were filled and astonish'd
 with unparallel'd Wars, Diffensions, Maf-
 facres, and Seditions of that devoted Peo-
 ple. Laying all these things together, I
 do not think it strange, that such a Man,
 writing with such a View, at such a Time,
 and in such Circumstances, should omit to
 describe our Blessed Saviour's Life and
 Death, or to mention his Miracles, or to
 take notice of the State of the Christian
 Church, which was then as a Grain of
 Mustard-Seed, beginning to take Root and
 germinate. And this will seem still less
 strange, if it be considered, that the Apo-
 stles in a few Years after our Saviour's
 Death departed from *Jerusalem*, setting
 themselves to convert the *Gentiles*, and
 were disperfed throughout the World; that
 the Converts in *Jerusalem* were, not only
 of the meanest of the People, but also few;
 the three thousand, added to the Church
 in one Day upon *Peter's* preaching in that
 City, appearing to have been not Inhabi-
 tants but Strangers from all parts assembled
 to celebrate the Feast of *Pentecost*; and that
 all the Time of *Josephus*, and for several
 Years after, during a Succession of fifteen
 Bishops, the Christians at *Jerusalem* ob-
 served the *Mosaic Law**, and were conse-
 quently,

* Sulp. Sever. Sac. Hist. l. 2. & Euseb. Chron. lib. poster.

quently, in outward Appearance, one Peo-
 ple with the rest of the *Jews*, which must
 have made them less observable. I would
 fain know what Reason we have to sup-
 pose, that the Gospel, which in its first
 Propagation seemed to overlook the great
 or considerable Men of this World, might
 not also have been overlooked by them,
 as a thing not suited to their Apprehen-
 sions and way of thinking? Besides, in
 those early Times might not other learned
Jews, as well as † *Gamaliel*, suspend their
 Judgment of this new way, as not know-
 ing what to make or say of it, being on
 one hand unable to quit the Notions and
 Traditions in which they were brought
 up, and, on the other, not daring to resist
 or speak against the Gospel, lest they should
 be found to fight against God? Surely at
 all Events, it could never be expected,
 that an unconverted *Jew* should give the
 same Account of the Life, Miracles, and
 Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, as might be-
 come a Christian to have given: Nor on
 the other hand was it at all improbable,
 that a Man of Sense should beware to
 lessen or traduce what, for ought he knew,
 might have been a heavenly Dispensation:
 between which two Courses the middle
 was to say nothing, but pass it over in a

† Acts v.

DIAL. doubtful or a respectful Silence. And it is
VI. observable, that where this Historian occasionally mentions *Jesus Christ* in his Account of St. *James's* Death, he doth it without any Reflection, or saying either Good or Bad, though at the same time he shews a Regard for the Apostle. It is observable, I say, that speaking of *Jesus* his Expression is, who was called the Christ, not who pretended to be the Christ, or who was falsely called the Christ, but simply τὸ λεγομένον Χριστῶ*. It is evident *Josephus* knew there was such a Man as *Jesus*, and that he was said to be the Christ, and yet he condemns neither him nor his Followers; which to me seems an Argument in their favour. Certainly if we suppose *Josephus* to have known or been persuaded that he was an Impostor, it will be difficult to account for his not saying so in plain terms. But if we suppose him in *Gamaliel's* way of thinking, who suspended his Judgment, and was afraid of being found to fight against God, it should seem natural for him to behave in that very manner, which according to you makes against our Faith, but I verily think makes for it. But what if *Josephus* had been a Bigot, or even a *Sadducee*, an Infidel, an Atheist? What then! we readily grant there might have


* *Jos. Ant.* l. 20. c. 8.

been

been Persons of Rank, Politicians, Generals, and Men of Letters, then as well as now, *Jews* as well as *Englishmen*, who believed no Revealed Religion: And that some such Persons might possibly have heard of a Man in low Life, who performed Miracles by Magic, without informing themselves, or perhaps ever inquiring, about his Mission and Doctrine. Upon the whole, I cannot comprehend why any Man should conclude against the Truth of the Gospel, from *Josephus's* omitting to speak of it, any more than from his omitting to embrace it. Had the first Christians been Chief Priests and Rulers, or Men of Science and Learning, like *Philo* and *Josephus*, it might perhaps with better Colour have been objected, that their Religion was of Humane Contrivance, than now that it hath pleased God by weak things to confound the Strong. This I think sufficiently accounts, why in the beginning the Gospel might overlook or be overlooked by Men of a certain Rank and Character.

XXVII. *ALC.* And yet it seems an odd Argument in proof of any Doctrine, that it was preached by simple People to simple People. *CRI.* Indeed if there was no other Attestation to the Truth of the

DIAL. Christian Religion, this must be owned a
VI. very weak one. But if a Doctrine begun
 by Instruments, mean, as to all Humane
 Advantages, and making its first Progress
 among those, who had neither Wealth nor
 Art nor Power to grace or encourage it,
 should in a short time by its own innate
 Excellency, the mighty Force of Miracles,
 and the Demonstration of the Spirit, not
 only without, but against, all worldly Mo-
 tives spread through the World, and sub-
 due Men of all Ranks and Conditions of
 Life, would it not be very unreasonable to
 reject or suspect it, for the want of Humane
 Means? And might not this with much
 better reason be thought an Argument of
 its coming from God? *ALC.* But still
 an inquisitive Man will want the Testimo-
 ny of Men of Learning and Knowledge.
CRI. But from the first Century onwards,
 there was never wanting the Testimony of
 such Men who wrote learnedly in defence
 of the Christian Religion, who lived, many
 of them, when the Memory of things was
 fresh, who had Abilities to judge and
 Means to know, and who gave the clearest
 Proofs of their Conviction and Sincerity.
ALC. But all the while these Men were
 Christians, prejudiced Christians, and
 therefore their Testimony is to be sus-
 pected. *CRI.* It seems then you would
 have

have *Jews* or Heathens attest to the Truths D I A L.
of Christianity. *ALC.* That is the very VI.
Thing I want. *CRI.* But how can this 
be? or if it could, would not any rational
Man be apt to suspect such Evidence, and
ask, how it was possible for a Man really to
believe such things himself, and not be-
come a Christian? The Apostles and
first Converts were themselves *Jews*, and
brought up in a Veneration for the Law
of *Moses*, and in all the Prejudices of that
People: many Fathers, Christian Philoso-
phers, and learned Apologists for the
Faith, who had been bred *Gentiles*, were
without doubt imbued with Prejudices
of Education: and if the Finger of God
and Force of Truth converted both the one
and the other from *Judaism* or *Gentilism*, in
spite of their Prejudices to Christianity,
is not their Testimony so much the stronger?
You have then the Suffrages of both *Jews*
and *Gentiles*, attesting to the Truth of our
Religion, in the earliest Ages. But to ex-
pect or desire the Attestation of *Jews* re-
maining *Jews*, or of *Gentiles* remaining
Gentiles, seems unreasonable: nor can it
be imagined that the Testimony of Men,
who were not converted themselves,
should be the likeliest to convert others.
We have indeed the Testimony of Heathen
Writers to prove, That about the time of
our

DIAL. our Saviour's Birth, there was a general Expectation in the East of a *Messiah* or Prince, who should found a new Dominion: That there were such People as Christians: That they were cruelly persecuted and put to Death: That they were innocent and holy in Life and Worship: And that there did really exist in that time, certain Persons and Facts mentioned in the New Testament: and for other Points, we have learned Fathers, several of whom had been, as I already observed, bred Heathens, to attest their Truth. *ALC.* For my part, I have no great Opinion of the Capacity or Learning of the Fathers, and many learned Men, especially of the Reformed Churches abroad, are of the same mind, which saves me the trouble of looking my self into their voluminous Writings. *CRI.* I shall not take upon me to say, with the Minute Philosopher *Pomponatius**, that *Origen*, *Basil*, *Augustine*, and divers other Fathers, were equal to *Plato*, *Aristotle*, and the greatest of the *Gentiles* in Humane Knowledge. But, if I may be allowed to make a Judgment from what I have seen of their Writings, I should think several of them Men of great Parts, Eloquence, and Learning, and much superior to those who seem to undervalue them. Without any Affront to

* Lib. de immortalitate animæ.

certain

certain modern Critics or Translators, DIAL.
Erasmus may be allowed a Man of fine VI.
 Taste, and a fit Judge of Sense and good }
 Writing, though his Judgment in this Point
 was very different from theirs. Some of
 our Reformed Brethren, because the *Ro-*
manists attribute too much, seem to have
 attributed too little to them, from a very
 usual, though no very judicious Opposition:
 which is apt to lead Men to remark De-
 fects, without making proper Allowances,
 and to say things which neither Piety, Can-
 dour, nor good Sense require them to say.

XXVIII. *ALC.* But though I should
 acknowledge, that a concurring Testimony
 of many learned and able Men throughout
 the first Ages of Christianity may have its
 Weight, yet when I consider the great
 number of Forgeries and Hæresies that
 sprung up in those Times, it very much
 weakens their Credit. *CRI.* Pray, *Alci-*
phron, would it be allowed a good Argu-
 ment in the Mouth of a Papist against the
 Reformation, that many absurd Sects sprung
 up at the same time with it? Are we to
 wonder, that, when good Seed is sowing,
 the Enemy should sow Tares? But at once
 to cut off several Objections, let us suppose
 in fact, what you do not deny possible, that
 there is a God, a Devil, and a Revelation
from

DIAL. from Heaven committed to Writing many

VI. Centuries ago. Do but take a view of Humane Nature, and consider, what would probably follow upon such a Supposition: and whether it is not very likely, there should be Half-believers, mistaken Bigots, holy Frauds, ambitious, interested, disputing, conceited, schismatical, hæretical, absurd Men among the Professors of such Revealed Religion, as well as after a course of Ages, various Readings, Omissions, Transpositions, and Obscurities in the Text of the sacred Oracles? And if so, I leave you to judge, whether it be reasonable to make those Events an Objection against the Being of a Thing, which would probably and naturally follow upon the Supposal of its Being. *ALC.* After all, say what you will, this Variety of Opinions must needs shake the Faith of a reasonable Man. Where there are so many different Opinions on the same Point, it is very certain they cannot all be true, but it is certain they may all be false. And the Means to find out the Truth! When a Man of Sense sets about this Inquiry, he finds himself on a sudden startled and amused with hard Words and knotty Questions. This makes him abandon the Pursuit, thinking the Game not worth the Chace. *CRI.* But would not this Man of Sense do well to consider, it must

must argue want of Discernment, to reject DIAL.
 divine Truths for the sake of Humane Fol- VI.
 lies? Use but the same Candour and Im- ~
 partiality in treating of Religion, that you
 would think proper on other Subjects. We
 desire no more, and expect no less. In
 Law, in Physic, in Politics, wherever Men
 have refined, is it not evident they have
 been always apt to run into Disputes and
 Chicane? But will that hinder you from
 admitting there are many good Rules and
 just Notions, and useful Truths in all those
 Professions. Physicians may dispute, per-
 haps vainly and unintelligibly, about the
 Animal System: They may assign different
 Causes of Distempers, some explaining them
 by the elementary Qualities, hot and cold,
 moist and dry, others by chymical, others
 by mechanical Principles: Yet this doth
 not hinder but the Bark may be good for
 an Ague, and Rhubarb for a Flux. Nor
 can it be inferred from the different Sects,
 which from time to time have sprung up
 in that Profession, the Dogmatic, for
 instance, Empiric, Methodic, Galenic,
 Paracelsian, or the hard Words and knotty
 Questions and idle Theories which have
 grown from them, or been engrafted on
 them, that therefore we should deny the
 Circulation of the Blood, or reject their ex-
 cellent Rules about Exercise, Air, and Diet.

ALC.

DIAL. ALC. It seems you would screen Religion
VI. by the Example of other Professions, all
 which have produced Sects and Disputes as
 well as Christianity, which may in it self
 be true and useful, notwithstanding many
 false and fruitless Notions engrafted on it by
 the Wit of Man. Certainly if this had been
 observed or believed by many acute Reason-
 ers, they would never have made the Mul-
 tiplicity of Religious Opinions and Contro-
 versies, an Argument against Religion in ge-
 neral. **CRI.** How such an obvious Truth
 should escape Men of Sense and Inquiry I
 leave you to account: But I can very ea-
 sily account for gross Mistakes in those,
 who pass for Free-thinkers, without ever
 thinking: or, if they do think, whose
 Meditations are employ'd on other Points
 of a very different Nature, from a serious
 and impartial Inquiry about Religion.

XXIX. But to return: What or where
 is the Profession of Men, who never
 split into Schisms, or never talk Nonsense?
 Is it not evident, that out of all the kinds
 of Knowledge, on which the Humane
 Mind is employ'd, there grow certain Ex-
 crescences, which may be pared off like
 the Clippings of Hair or Nails in the Body,
 and with no worse Consequence. What-
 ever Bigots or Enthusiasts, whatever notio-
 nal




nal or scholastic Divines may say or think, **DIAL.**
 it is certain the Faith derived from Christ **VI.**
 and his Apostles, was not a piece of
 empty Sophistry : They did not deliver and
 transmit down to us *κενῶ ἀπάτην* but
γυμνῶ γνώμῳ, to use the Expression of a
 holy Confessor *. And to pretend to de-
 molish their Foundation for the sake of
 Humane Superstructure, be it Hay or Stubble
 or what it will, is no Argument of just
 Thought or Reason ; any more than it is of
 Fairness, to suppose a doubtful Sense fixed,
 and argue from one side of the Question
 in disputed Points. Whether, for instance,
 the beginning of *Genesis* is to be under-
 stood in a literal or allegorical Sense ?
 Whether the Book of *Job* be an Histo-
 ry or a Parable ? Being Points disputed
 between Christians, an Infidel can have
 no right to argue from one side of the
 Question in those or the like Cases. This
 or that Tenet of a Sect, this or that con-
 troverted Notion is not what we contend
 for at present, but the general Faith taught
 by Christ and his Apostles, and preserved
 by universal and perpetual Tradition in all
 the Churches down to our own Times. To
 tax or strike at this Divine Doctrine, on ac-
 count of things foreign and adventitious,
 the Speculations and Disputes of curious

* Socr. *Histor. Eccles.* l. 1.

Men,

DIAL. Men, is in my Mind an Absurdity of the
 VI. same kind, as it wou'd be to cut down a
 fine Tree yielding Fruit and Shade, be-
 cause its Leaves afforded Nourishment to
 Caterpillers, or because Spiders may now
 and then weave Cobwebs among the Bran-
 ches. *ALC.* To divide and distinguish
 would take time. We have several Gentle-
 men very capable of judging in the gross,
 but that want Attention for irksome and
 dry Studies or minute Inquiries. To which
 as it would be very hard to oblige
 Men against their Will, so it must be a
 great Wrong to the World, as well as them-
 selves, to debar them from the Right
 of deciding according to their natural Sense
 of things. *CRI.* It were to be wished
 those capable Men would employ their
 Judgment and Attention on the same Ob-
 jects. If theological Inquiries are unpalat-
 able, the Field of Nature is wide. How
 many Discoveries to be made! How many
 Errors to be corrected in Arts and Sciences!
 How many Vices to be reformed in Life and
 Manners! Why do Men single out such
 Points as are innocent and useful, when
 there are so many pernicious Mistakes to
 be amended? Why fet themselves to de-
 stroy the Hopes of Humane Kind and En-
 couragements to Virtue? Why delight to
 judge where they disdain to inquire? Why
 not


not employ their noble Talents on the Lon-DIAL.
gitude or perpetual Motion? *ALC.* I VI.
wonder you should not see the Difference 
between Points of Curiosity and Religion.
Those employ only Men of a Genius or
Humour suited to them: But all Mankind
have a right to censure, and are concerned
to judge of these, except they will blindly
submit to be governed, by the stale Wis-
dom of their Ancestors and the established
Laws of their Country. *CRI.* It should
seem, if they are concerned to judge, they
are not less concerned to examine before
they judge. *ALC.* But after all the Exa-
mination and Inquiry that mortal Man
can make about Revealed Religion, it is
impossible to come at any rational sure
footing.

XXX. There is, indeed, a deal of spe-
cious Talk about Faith founded upon Mi-
racles: But when I examine this Matter
thoroughly, and trace Christian Faith up
to its Original, I find it rests upon much
Darkness and Scruple and Uncertainty. In-
stead of Points evident or agreeable to
Humane Reason, I find a wonderful Nar-
rative of the Son of God tempted in the
Wilderness by the Devil, a thing utterly
unaccountable, without any End, or Use, or
Reason whatsoever. I meet with strange


DIAL. Histories of Apparitions of Angels and
 VI. Voices from Heaven, with surprizing ac-
 ~~~~~ counts of Dæmoniacs, things quite out of  
 the Road of common Sense or Observation,  
 with several incredible Feats said to have  
 been done by Divine Power, but more  
 probably the Inventions of Men: nor the  
 less likely to be so, because I cannot pre-  
 tend to say with what View they were in-  
 vented. Designs deeply laid are dark, and  
 the less we know the more we suspect:  
 But, admitting them for true, I shall not  
 allow them to be miraculous, until I tho-  
 roughly know the Power of what are called  
 second Causes and the Force of Magic.  
 CRI. You seem, *Alciphron*, to analyse  
 not Faith, but Infidelity, and trace it to  
 its Principles; which, from your own  
 Account, I collect to be dark and doubtful  
 Scruples and Surmises, Hastiness in judging,  
 and Narrowness in thinking, grounded on  
 a fanciful Notion which over-rates the lit-  
 tle Scantling of your own Experience, and  
 on real Ignorance of the Views of Provi-  
 dence, and of the Qualities, Operations,  
 and mutual Respects of the several kinds  
 of Beings, which are, or may be, for  
 ought you know, in the Universe. Thus  
 obscure, uncertain, conceited, and con-  
 jectural are the Principles of Infidelity.  
 Whereas on the other hand, the Principles  
 of

of Faith seem to me Points plain and clear. It is a clear Point, that this Faith in Christ was spread abroad throughout the World soon after his Death. It is a clear Point, that this was not effected by humane Learning, Politics, or Power. It is a clear Point, that in the early Times of the Church there were several Men of Knowledge and Integrity, who embraced this Faith not from any, but against all, temporal Motives. It is a clear Point, that, the nearer they were to the Fountain-head, the more Opportunity they had to satisfy themselves, as to the Truth of those Facts which they believed. It is a clear Point, that the less Interest there was to persuade, the more need there was of Evidence to convince them. It is a clear Point, that they relied on the Authority of those who declared themselves Eye-witnesses of the Miracles and Resurrection of Christ. It is a clear Point, that those professed Eye-witnesses suffer'd much for this their Attestation, and finally sealed it with their Blood. It is a clear Point, that these Witnesses, weak and contemptible as they were, overcame the World, spread more Light, preached purer Morals, and did more Benefit to Mankind, than all the Philosophers and Sages put together. These Points appear to me clear and sure, and,

**DIAL.** being allow'd such, they are plain, just,  
**VI.** and reasonable Motives of Assent: They  
 stand upon no fallacious Ground, they contain nothing beyond our Sphere, neither supposing more Knowledge nor other Faculties than we are really Masters of: and if they should not be admitted for morally certain, as I believe they will by fair and unprejudic'd Inquirers, yet the allowing them to be only probable is sufficient to stop the Mouth of an Infidel. These plain Points, I say, are the Pillars of our Faith, and not those obscure ones by you supposed; which are in truth the unsound, uncertain Principles of Infidelity, to a rash, prejudic'd, and assuming Spirit. To raise an Argument, or answer an Objection, from hidden Powers of Nature or Magic is groping in the dark: But by the evident Light of Sense, Men might be sufficiently certified of sensible Effects, and Matters of Fact, such as the Miracles and Resurrection of Christ; and the Testimony of such Men might be transmitted to After-ages, with the same moral Certainty as other historical Narrations: and those same miraculous Facts, compared by Reason with the Doctrines they were brought to prove, may afford to an unbiaffed Mind strong Indications of their coming from God, or a superior Principle, whose Goodness retrieved

trieved the Moral World, whose Power DIAL.  
 commanded the natural, and whose Pro- VI.  
 vidence extended over both. Give me   
 leave to say, that nothing dark, nothing  
 incomprehensible, or mysterious, or un-  
 accountable, is the Ground or Motive,  
 the Principle or Foundation, the Proof or  
 Reason of our Faith, although it may be  
 the Object of it. For it must be owned,  
 that, if by clear and sure Principles we  
 are rationally led to believe a Point less  
 clear; we do not therefore reject such  
 Point, because it is mysterious to con-  
 ceive, or difficult to account for; nor  
 would it be right so to do. As for *Jews*  
 and *Gentiles*, anciently attributing our  
 Saviour's Miracles to Magic, this is so far  
 from being a Proof against them, that to  
 me it seems rather a Proof of the Facts,  
 without disproving the Cause to which  
 we ascribe them. As we do not pretend  
 to know the Nature and Operations of  
 Dæmons, the History, Laws, and System  
 of rational Beings, and the Schemes or  
 Views of Providence, so far as to account  
 for every Action and Appearance recorded  
 in the Gospel: so neither do you know  
 enough of those Things, to be able from  
 that Knowledge of yours to object a-  
 gainst Accounts so well attested. It is  
 an easy Matter to raise Scruples upon

**DIAL.** many authentic Parts of Civil History,  
**VI.** which, requiring a more perfect Knowledge of Facts, Circumstances, and Councils, than we can come at to explain them, must be to us inexplicable. And this is still more easy with respect to the History of Nature; in which, if Surmises were admitted for Proofs against Things odd, strange, and unaccountable; if our scanty Experience were made the Rule and Measure of Truth, and all those Phænomena rejected, that we, through Ignorance of the Principles, and Laws, and System of Nature, could not explain; we should indeed make Discoveries, but it would be only of our own Blindness and Presumption. And why Men that are so easily and so often gravelled in common Points, in Things natural and visible, should yet be so sharp-sighted and dogmatical about the invisible World, and its Mysteries, is to me a Point utterly unaccountable by all the Rules of Logic and good Sense. Upon the whole, therefore, I cannot help thinking there are Points sufficiently plain, and clear, and full, whereon a Man may ground a reasonable Faith in Christ: but that the Attacks of Minute Philosophers against this Faith are grounded upon Darkness, Ignorance, and Presumption. *ALC.*  
 I

I doubt I shall still remain in the dark **DIAL.**  
 as to the Proofs of the Christian Religi- **VI.**  
 on, and always presume there is nothing   
 in them.

**XXXI.** For how is it possible, at this remote Distance, to arrive at any Knowledge, or frame any Demonstration about it? **CRI.** What then? Knowledge, I grant, in a strict Sense cannot be had without Evidence or Demonstration: but probable Arguments are a sufficient Ground of Faith. Who ever supposed that scientific Proofs were necessary to make a Christian? Faith alone is required: and provided that, in the main and upon the whole, Men are persuaded, this saving Faith may consist with some Degrees of Obscurity, Scruple, and Error. For although the Light of Truth be unchangeable, and the same in its eternal Source, the Father of Lights: Yet, with respect to us, it is variously weakened and obscured, by passing through a long Distance or gross Medium, where it is intercepted, distorted, or tinged by the Prejudices and Passions of Men. But all this notwithstanding, he that will use his Eyes may see enough for the Purposes either of Nature, or of Grace; though by a Light, dimmer indeed, or clearer,

DIAL. according to the Place, or the Distance,  
 VI. or the Hour, or the Medium. And it  
 will be sufficient, if such Analogy appears  
 between the Dispensations of Grace and  
 Nature, as may make it probable (al-  
 though much should be unaccountable in  
 both) to suppose them derived from the  
 same Author, and the Workmanship of  
 one and the same Hand. *ALC.* Those  
 who saw and touched and handled *Jesus*  
*Christ* after his Resurrection, if there were  
 any such, may be said to have seen by a  
 clear Light : But to us the Light is very  
 dim, and yet it is expected we should  
 believe this Point as well as they. For  
 my part, I believe, with *Spinoza*, that  
 Christ's Death was Literal, but his Re-  
 surrection Allegorical \*. *CRI.* And for  
 my part, I can see nothing in this cele-  
 brated Infidel, that should make me desert  
 Matters of Fact, and moral Evidence, to  
 adopt his Notions. Though I must needs  
 own I admit an allegorical Resurrection  
 that proves the real : to wit, a Resurrec-  
 tion of Christ's Disciples from Weakness  
 to Resolution, from Fear to Courage,  
 from Despair to Hope : of which, for  
 ought I can see, no rational Account can  
 be given, but the sensible Evidence that  
 our Lord was truly, really, and literally

\* V. *Spinosæ* Epist. ad Oldenburgium.

risen

risen from the dead : But as it cannot be denied that his Disciples, who were Eye-Witneffes of his Miracles and Resurrection, had stronger Evidence than we can have of those Points : So it cannot be denied, that such Evidence was then more necessary, to induce Men to embrace a new Institution, contrary to the whole System of their Education, their Prejudices, their Passions, their Interests, and every Humane Motive. Though to me it seems, the moral Evidence and probable Arguments within our Reach, are abundantly sufficient to make prudent thinking Men adhere to the Faith, handed down to us from our Ancestors, established by the Laws of our Country, requiring Submission in Points above our Knowledge, and for the rest recommending Doctrines the most agreeable to our Interest and our Reason. And, however strong the Light might have been at the Fountain-Head, yet its long Continuance and Propagation, by such unpromising Instruments throughout the World, have been very wonderful. We may now take a more comprehensive View of the Connexion, Order, and Progress of the divine Dispensations, and by a Retrospect on a long Series of past Ages, perceive a Unity of Design running throughout the Whole,


a grad-

DIAL.  
VI.




**DIAL.** a gradual disclosing and fulfilling the Pur-  
**VI.** poses of Providence, a regular Progress  
 from Types to Antitypes, from Things  
 Carnal, to Things Spiritual, from Earth  
 to Heaven. We may behold Christ cru-  
 cified, that Stumbling-block to the *Jews*,  
 and Foolishness to the *Greeks*, putting a  
 final Period to the Temple Worship of  
 the one, and the Idolatry of the other,  
 and that Stone, which was cut out of the  
 Mountain without Hands, and brake in  
 Pieces all other Kingdoms, become it self  
 a great Mountain.

**XXXII.** If a due Reflexion on these  
 Things be not sufficient to beget a Reve-  
 rence for the Christian Faith in the Minds  
 of Men, I should rather impute it to any  
 other Cause, than a wise and cautious In-  
 credulity: When I see their Easiness of  
 Faith in the common Concerns of Life,  
 where there is no Prejudice or Appetite  
 to bias or disturb their natural Judgment:  
 When I see those very Men that in Reli-  
 gion will not stir a Step without Evidence,  
 and at every Turn expect Demonstration,  
 trust their Health to a Physician, and  
 their Lives to a Sailor with an implicit  
 Faith, I cannot think they deserve the  
 Honour of being thought more incredu-  
 lous than other Men: or that they are  
 more

more accustomed to know, and for this **DIAL.**  
Reason less inclined to believe. On the **VI.**  
contrary, one is tempted to suspect, that   
Ignorance hath a greater Share than  
Science in our modern Infidelity: and that  
it proceeds more from a wrong Head, or  
an irregular Will, than from deep Re-  
searches. *LYS.* We do not, it must be  
owned, think that Learning or deep Re-  
searches are necessary to pass a right Judg-  
ment upon Things. I sometimes suspect  
that Learning is apt to produce and justify  
Whims, and sincerely believe we should  
do better without it. Our Sect are divided  
on this Point, but much the greater Part  
think with me. I have heard more than  
once very observing Men remark, that  
Learning was the true Humane Means  
which preserved Religion in the World:  
and that, if we had it in our Power to  
prefer Blockheads in the Church, all  
would soon be right. *CRI.* Men must  
be strangely in Love with their Opinions,  
to put out their Eyes rather than part  
with them. But it has been often re-  
marked, by observing Men that there are  
no greater Bigots than Infidels. *LYS.*  
What! a Free-thinker and a Bigot, im-  
possible! *CRI.* Not so impossible neither,  
that an Infidel should be bigoted to his  
Infidelity. Methinks I see a Bigot, where-  
ever

**DIAL.** ever I see a Man over-bearing and positive  
**VI.** without knowing why, laying the greatest  
 Strefs on Points of smallest Moment, hasty to judge of the Conscience, Thoughts, and inward Views of other Men, impatient of reasoning against his own Opinions, and choosing them with Inclination rather than Judgment, an Enemy to Learning, and attached to mean Authorities. How far our modern Infidels agree with this Description, I leave to be considered by those who really consider and think for themselves. *LYS.* We are no Bigots, we are Men that discover Difficulties in Religion, that tie Knots and raise Scruples, which disturb the Repose and interrupt the golden Dreams of Bigots, who therefore cannot endure us. *CRI.* They who cast about for Difficulties, will be sure to find or make them upon every Subject: But he that would, upon the Foot of Reason, erect himself into a Judge, in order to make a wise Judgment on a Subject of that Nature, will not only consider the doubtful and difficult Parts of it, but take a comprehensive View of the whole, consider it in all its Parts and Relations, trace it to its Original, examine its Principles, Effects, and Tendencies, its Proofs internal and external: he will distinguish  
 between

between the clear Points and the obscure, **DIAL.**  
the certain and the uncertain, the essential **VI.**  
and the circumstantial, between what is   
genuine and what foreign. He will con-  
sider the different Sorts of Proof, that be-  
long to different Things: where Evidence  
is to be expected: where Probability may  
suffice: and where it is reasonable to sup-  
pose there should be Doubts and Scruples.  
He will proportion his Pains and Exact-  
ness to the Importance of the Inquiry,  
and check that Disposition of his Mind  
to conclude all those Notions, groundless  
Prejudices, with which it was imbued be-  
fore it knew the Reason of them. He  
will silence his Passions, and listen to  
Truth. He will endeavour to untie Knots  
as well as to tie them, and dwell rather  
on the light Parts of Things than the ob-  
scure. He will balance the Force of his  
Understanding with the Difficulty of the  
Subject, and to render his Judgment im-  
partial, hear Evidence on all Sides, and  
so far as he is led by Authority, choose to  
follow that of the honestest and wisest  
Men. Now it is my sincere Opinion,  
the Christian Religion may well stand the  
Test of such an Inquiry. *LYS.* But such  
an Inquiry would cost too much Pains and  
Time. We have thought of another Me-  
thod, the bringing Religion to the Test of  
Wit

DIAL. Wit and Humour: This we find a much  
VI. shorter, easier, and more effectual Way.

And, as all Enemies are at Liberty to choose their Weapons, we make choice of those we are most expert at: And we are the better pleased with this Choice, having observed that of all Things a solid Divine hates a Jest. *EUPH.* To consider the whole of the Subject, to read and think on all Sides, to object plainly, and answer directly, upon the Foot of dry Reason and Argument, would be a very tedious and troublesome Affair. Besides it is attacking Pedants at their own Weapons. How much more delicate and artful is it, to give a Hint, to cover one's self with an *Ænigma*, to drop a *double Entendre*, to keep it in one's Power to recover, and slip aside, and leave his Antagonist beating the Air? *LYS.* This hath been practised with great Success, and I believe it the Top Method to gain Profelytes, and confound Pedants. *CRI.* I have seen several Things written in this Way, which, I suppose, were copied from the Behaviour of a sly Sort of Scorers one may sometimes meet with. Suppose a conceited Man that would pass for witty, tipping the Wink upon one, thrusting out his Tongue at another; one while waggishly smiling, another with a grave  
Mouth


Mouth and ludicrous Eyes; often affect-  
 ing the Countenance of one who smother-  
 ed a Jest, and sometimes bursting out in  
 a Horse-laugh: What a Figure would  
 this be, I will not say in the Senate or  
 Council, but in a private Visit among  
 well-bred Men? And yet this is the Fi-  
 gure that certain great Authors, who in  
 this Age would pass for Models, and  
 do pass for Models, make in their  
 polite and elaborate Writings on the  
 most weighty Points. *ALC.* I who pro-  
 fess my self an Admirer, an Adorer of  
 Reason, am obliged to own, that in some  
 Cases the Sharpness of Ridicule can do no  
 more than the Strength of Argument. But  
 if we exert our selves in the Use of Mirth  
 and Humour, it is not for want of other  
 Weapons. It shall never be said that a  
 Free-thinker was afraid of Reasoning.  
 No, *Crito*, we have Reasons in store, the  
 best are yet to come: and if we can  
 find an Hour for another Conference be-  
 fore we set out to morrow Morning, I'll  
 undertake you shall be plied with Rea-  
 sons, as clear, and home, and close to the  
 Point as you could wish.



## THE SEVENTH DIALOGUE.

- I. *Christian Faith impossible.* II. *Words stand for Ideas.* III. *No Knowledge or Faith without Ideas.* IV. *Grace, no Idea of it.* V. *Abstract Ideas what and how made.* VI. *Abstract general Ideas impossible.* VII. *In what Sense there may be general Ideas.* VIII. *Suggesting Ideas not the only Use of Words.* IX. *Force as difficult to form an Idea of as Grace.* X. *Notwithstanding which, useful Propositions may be formed concerning it.* XI. *Belief of the Trinity and other Mysteries not absurd.* XII. *Mistakes about Faith an Occasion of profane Raillery.* XIII. *Faith, its true Nature and Effects.* XIV. *Illustrated by Science.* XV. *By Arithmetic in particular.* XVI. *Sciences conversant about Signs.* XVII. *The true End of Speech, Reason, Science, and Faith.* XVIII. *Metaphysical Objections as strong against Humane Sciences as Articles of Faith.* XIX. *No Religion, because no Humane Liberty.* XX. *Farther Proof against Humane Liberty.* XXI. *Fatalism a Consequence of erroneous Suppositions.*

*sitions.* XXII. *Man an accountable A-DIAL.*  
*gent.* XXIII. *Inconsistency, Singularity, VII.*  
*and Credulity of Minute Philosophers.* ~~~~~  
 XXIV. *Untrodden Paths and new Light*  
*of the Minute Philosophers.* XXV. *So-*  
*phistry of the Minute Philosophers.* XXVI.  
*Minute Philosophers ambiguous, ænigma-*  
*tical, unfathomable.* XXVII. *Scepticism*  
*of the Minute Philosophers.* XXVIII.  
*How a Sceptic ought to behave.* XXIX.  
*Minute Philosophers, why difficult to con-*  
*vince.* XXX. *Thinking, not the epidemi-*  
*cal Evil of these Times.* XXXI. *Infide-*  
*lity, not an Effect of Reason or Thought,*  
*its true Motives assigned.* XXXII. *Va-*  
*riety of Opinions about Religion, Effects*  
*thereof.* XXXIII. *Method for proceed-*  
*ing with Minute Philosophers.* XXXIV.  
*Want of Thought and want of Education*  
*Defects of the present Age.*

I.  HE Philosophers having re-  
 solved to set out for *London*  
 next Morning, we assembled at  
 break of Day in the Library.  
*Alciphron* began with a Decla-  
 ration of his Sincerity, assuring us he had very  
 maturely and with a most unbiaſſed Mind  
 considered all that had been said the Day  
 before. He added that, upon the whole,  
 he could not deny several probable Reasons  
 VOL. II. K were



**DIAL.** were produced for embracing the Christian  
**VII.** Faith. But, said he, those Reasons being  
 only probable can never prevail against absolute Certainty and Demonstration. If therefore I can demonstrate your Religion to be a thing altogether absurd and inconsistent, your probable Arguments in its Defence do from that Moment lose their Force, and with it all Right to be answered or considered. The concurring Testimony of sincere and able Witnesses hath without question great Weight in Humane Affairs. I will even grant that things odd and unaccountable to Humane Judgment or Experience, may sometimes claim our Assent on that sole Motive. And I will also grant it possible, for a Tradition to be convey'd with moral Evidence through many Centuries. But at the same time you will grant to me, that a thing demonstrably and palpably false is not to be admitted on any Testimony whatever, which at best can never amount to Demonstration. To be plain, no Testimony can make Nonsense Sense: no moral Evidence can make Contradictions consistent. Know then, that as the Strength of our Cause doth not depend upon, so neither is it to be decided by any critical Points of History, Chronology, or Languages. You are not to wonder, if the same sort of Tradition

**tion**

tion and moral Proof, which governs our **DIAL.**  
 Assent with respect to Facts in civil or na- **VII.**  
 tural History is not admitted as a suffici-  
 ent Voucher for metaphysical Absurdities  
 and absolute Impossibilities. Things ob-  
 scure and unaccountable in Humane Af-  
 fairs, or the Operations of Nature, may  
 yet be possible, and, if well attested, may  
 be assented unto: but religious Assent or  
 Faith can be evidently shewn in its own  
 nature to be impracticable, impossible, and  
 absurd. This is the primary Motive to  
 Infidelity. This is our Citadel and For-  
 tress, which may, indeed, be graced with  
 Outwarks of various Erudition, but, if  
 those are demolish'd, remains in it self  
 and of its own proper Strength impregna-  
 ble. *EUPH.* This, it must be owned,  
 reduceth our Inquiry within a narrow Com-  
 pass: do but make out this, and I shall  
 have nothing more to say. *ALC.* Know  
 then, that the shallow Mind of the Vul-  
 gar, as it dwells only on the outward Sur-  
 face of things, and considers them in the  
 gross, may be easily imposed on. Hence  
 a blind Reverence for religious Faith and  
 Mystery. But when an acute Philosopher  
 comes to dissect and analyse these Points,  
 the Imposture plainly appears: and as he  
 has no Blindness, so he has no Reverence  
 for empty Notions, or, to speak more

DIAL. properly, for meer Forms of Speech, which  
 VII. mean nothing, and are of no use to Man-  
 kind.

II. Words are Signs: they do or should stand for Ideas; which so far as they suggest they are significant. But Words that suggest no Ideas are insignificant. He who annexeth a clear Idea to every Word he makes use of speaks Sense: but where such Ideas are wanting, the Speaker utters Nonsense. In order therefore to know whether any Man's Speech be senseless and insignificant, we have nothing to do but lay aside the Words and consider the Ideas suggested by them. Men, not being able immediately to communicate their Ideas one to another, are obliged to make use of sensible Signs or Words; the use of which is to raise those Ideas in the Hearer, which are in the Mind of the Speaker: and if they fail of this End they serve to no Purpose. He who really thinks hath a Train of Ideas succeeding each other and connected in his Mind: and when he expresseth himself by Discourse, each Word suggests a distinct Idea to the Hearer or Reader; who by that means hath the same Train of Ideas in his, which was in the Mind of the Speaker or Writer. As far as this Effect is produced, so far the Discourse

course is intelligible, hath Sense and Mean-  
 ing. Hence it follows, that whoever can  
 be supposed to understand what he reads  
 or hears, must have a Train of Ideas  
 raised in his Mind, correspondent to the  
 Train of Words read or heard. These  
 plain Truths, to which Men readily as-  
 sent in Theory, are but little attended  
 to in Practice, and therefore deserve to  
 be enlarged on and inculcated however  
 obvious and undeniable. Mankind are  
 generally averse from Thinking though  
 apt enough to entertain Discourse either  
 in themselves or others: the Effect where-  
 of is, that their Minds are rather sto-  
 red with Names than Ideas, the Husk  
 of Science rather than the Thing. And  
 yet these Words without Meaning do of-  
 ten make Distinctions of Parties, the Sub-  
 ject Matter of their Disputes, and the  
 Object of their Zeal. This is the most  
 general Cause of Error, which doth not  
 influence ordinary Minds alone, but  
 even those who pass for acute and learn-  
 ed Philosophers are often employ'd a-  
 bout Names instead of Things or Ideas,  
 and are supposed to know when they  
 only pronounce hard Words without a  
 Meaning.

**DIAL.** III. Though it is evident that, as  
**VII.** Knowledge is the Perception of the Con-  
 nexion or Disagreement between Ideas, he  
 who doth not distinctly perceive the Ideas  
 marked by the Terms, so as to form a  
 mental Proposition answering to the Ver-  
 bal, cannot possibly have Knowledge: No  
 more can he be said to have Opinion or  
 Faith which imply a weaker Assent, but  
 still it must be to a Proposition, the Terms  
 of which are understood as clearly, al-  
 though the Agreement or Disagreement of  
 the Ideas may not be so evident, as in the  
 Case of Knowledge. I say, all Degrees of  
 Assent whether founded on Reason or Au-  
 thority, more or less cogent, are internal  
 Acts of the Mind which alike terminate  
 in Ideas as their proper Object: without  
 which there can be really no such thing  
 as Knowledge, Faith, or Opinion. We  
 may perhaps raise a Dust and Dispute a-  
 bout Tenets purely verbal: but what is  
 this at bottom more than meer Trifling?  
 All which will be easily admitted with re-  
 spect to Humane Learning and Science;  
 wherein it is an allowed Method to expose  
 any Doctrine or Tenet by stripping them  
 of the Words, and examining what Ideas  
 are underneath, or whether any Ideas at  
 all? This is often found the shortest way  
 8 to

to end Disputes, which might otherwise grow and multiply without end, the Litigants neither understanding one another nor themselves. It were needless to illustrate what shines by its own Light, and is admitted by all thinking Men. My Endeavour shall be only to apply it in the present Case. I suppose I need not be at any pains to prove, that the same Rules of Reason and good Sense which obtain in all other Subjects ought to take place in Religion. As for those who consider Faith and Reason as two distinct Provinces, and would have us think good Sense has nothing to do where it is most concerned, I am resolved never to argue with such Men, but leave them in quiet possession of their Prejudices. And now, for the particular Application of what I have said, I shall not single out any nice disputed Points of School Divinity, or those that relate to the Nature and Essence of God, which being allowed infinite you might pretend to screen them, under the general Notion of Difficulties attending the Nature of Infinity.

IV. Grace is the main Point in the Christian Dispensation, nothing is oftner mentioned or more considered throughout the New Testament; wherein it is repre-

DIAL. sented as somewhat of a very particular  
 VII. Kind, distinct from any thing revealed to  
 the *Jews*, or known by the Light of Nature. This same Grace is spoken of as the Gift of God, as coming by *Jesus Christ*, as reigning, as abounding, as operating. Men are said to speak through Grace, to believe through Grace. Mention is made of the Glory of Grace, the Riches of Grace, the Stewards of Grace. Christians are said to be Heirs of Grace, to receive Grace, grow in Grace, be strong in Grace, to stand in Grace, and to fall from Grace. And lastly, Grace is said to justify and to save them. Hence Christianity is styled the Covenant or Dispensation of Grace. And it is well known that no Point hath created more Controversy in the Church than this Doctrine of Grace. What Disputes about its Nature, Extent, and Effects, about universal, efficacious, sufficient, preventing, irresistible Grace, have employ'd the Pens of Protestant as well as Popish Divines, of *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, of *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, and *Arminians*, as I have not the least Curiosity to know, so I need not say. It sufficeth to observe, that there have been and are still subsisting great Contests upon these Points. Only one thing I should desire to be informed of, to wit, What is the clear  
 and

and distinct Idea marked by the Word **DIAL.**  
 Grace? I presume a Man may know the **VII.**  
 bare meaning of a Term, without going  
 into the Depth of all those learned Inqui-  
 ries. This surely is an easy Matter, pro-  
 vided there is an Idea annexed to such  
 Term. And if there is not, it can be  
 neither the Subject of a rational Dispute,  
 nor the Object of real Faith. Men may  
 indeed impose upon themselves or others,  
 and pretend to argue and believe, when at  
 bottom there is no Argument or Belief,  
 farther than meer verbal Trifling. Grace  
 taken in the vulgar Sense, either for Beau-  
 ty, or Favour, I can easily understand. But  
 when it denotes an active, vital, ruling  
 Principle, influencing and operating on  
 the Mind of Man, distinct from every  
 natural Power or Motive, I profess my  
 self altogether unable to understand it, or  
 frame any distinct Idea of it: and there-  
 fore I cannot assent to any Proposition con-  
 cerning it, nor consequently have any  
 Faith about it: and it is a self-evident  
 Truth, That God obligeth no Man to Im-  
 possibilities. At the Request of a Philoso-  
 phical Friend, I did cast an Eye on the  
 Writings he shew'd me of some Divines,  
 and talked with others on this Subject, but  
 after all I had read or heard could make  
 nothing of it, having always found when-  
 ever




DIAL. ever I laid aside the Word *Grace*, and  
 VII. looked into my own Mind, a perfect Vacuity or Privation of all Ideas. And, as I am apt to think Mens Minds and Faculties are made much alike, I suspect that other Men, if they examined what they call *Grace* with the same Exactness and Indifference, would agree with me that there was nothing in it but an empty Name. This is not the only Instance, where a Word often heard and pronounced is believed intelligible, for no other Reason but because it is familiar. Of the same Kind are many other Points reputed necessary Articles of Faith. That which in the present Case imposeth upon Mankind I take to be partly this. Men speak of this holy Principle as of something that acts, moves, and determines, taking their Ideas from corporeal things, from Motion and the Force or *Momentum* of Bodies, which being of an obvious and sensible Nature they substitute in place of a thing spiritual and incomprehensible, which is a manifest Delusion. For though the Idea of corporeal Force be ever so clear and intelligible, it will not therefore follow that the Idea of *Grace*, a thing perfectly incorporeal, must be so too. And though we may reason distinctly, perceive, assent, and form Opinions about the one, it will  
 by

by no means follow that we can do so of **DIAL.**  
 the other. Thus it comes to pass, that a **VII.**  
 clear sensible Idea of what is real produ-  
 ceth, or rather is made a Pretence for, an  
 imaginary spiritual Faith that terminates  
 in no Object; a thing impossible! For  
 there can be no Assent where there are no  
 Ideas: and where there is no Assent there  
 can be no Faith: And what cannot be,  
 that no Man is obliged to. This is as  
 clear as any thing in *Euclid*.

V. The same Method of Reasoning  
 may be applied by any Man of Sense to  
 confute all other the most essential Articles  
 of the Christian Faith. You are not there-  
 fore to wonder that a Man who proceeds  
 on such solid Grounds, such clear and  
 evident Principles, should be deaf to all  
 you can say from moral Evidence, or pro-  
 bable Arguments, which are nothing in the  
 Balance against Demonstration. *EUPH.*  
 The more Light and Force there is in this  
 Discourse, the more you are to blame for  
 not having produced it sooner. For my  
 part I should never have said one Word  
 against Evidence. But let me see whether  
 I understand you rightly. You say, every  
 Word in an intelligible Discourse must  
 stand for an Idea; which Ideas as far as  
 they are clearly and distinctly apprehend-  
 ed,

DIAL. ed, so far the Discourse hath Meaning,  
 VII. without which it is useless and insignificant. *ALC.* I do. *EUPH.* For Instance, when I hear the Words *Man, Triangle, Colour*, pronounced; they must excite in my Mind distinct Ideas of those things whereof they are Signs, otherwise I cannot be said to understand them. *ALC.* Right. *EUPH.* And this is the only true Use of Language. *ALC.* That is what I affirm. *EUPH.* But every time the Word *Man* occurs in Reading or Conversation, I am not conscious that the particular distinct Idea of a Man is excited in my Mind. For Instance, when I read in *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* these Words: *If a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.* Methinks I comprehend the Force and Meaning of this Proposition, although I do not frame to my self the particular distinct Idea of a Man. *ALC.* It is very true, you do not form in your Mind the particular Idea of *Peter, James, or John*, of a fair or a black, a tall or a low, a fat or a lean, a straight or a crooked, a wise or a foolish, a sleeping or waking Man, but the abstract general Idea of *Man*, prescinding from, and exclusive of all particular Shape, Size, Complexion, Passions, Faculties, and every individual  
 Cir-

Circumstance. To explain this Matter DIAL.  
 more fully, you are to understand there is VII.  
 in the Humane Mind, a Faculty of con-   
 templating the general Nature of things,  
 separate from all those Particularities  
 which distinguish the Individuals one from  
 another. For Example, in *Peter, James,*  
 and *John*, you may observe in each a cer-  
 tain Collection of Stature, Figure, Co-  
 lour, and other peculiar Properties by  
 which they are known asunder, distin-  
 guished from all other Men, and, if I  
 may so say, individuated. Now leaving  
 out of the Idea of a Man, that which is  
 peculiar to the Individual, and retaining  
 only that which is common to all Men,  
 you form an abstract universal Idea of *Man*  
 or *Humane Nature*, which includes no  
 particular Stature, Shape, Colour, or o-  
 ther Quality whether of Mind or Body.  
 After the same manner you may observe  
 particular Triangles to differ one from a-  
 nother, as their Sides are equal or unequal,  
 and their Angles greater or lesser: whence  
 they are denominated æquilateral, æqui-  
 crural, or scalenum, obtusangular, acu-  
 tangular, or rectangular. But the Mind,  
 excluding out of its Idea all these peculiar  
 Properties and Distinctions, frameth the  
 general abstract Idea of a Triangle; which  
 is neither æquilateral, æquicrural, nor sca-  
 lenum,

DIAL. lenum, neither obtufangular, acutangular,  
 VII. nor rectangular, but all and none of these  
 at once\*. The fame may be faid of the  
 general abstract Idea of Colour, which is  
 fomewhat diftinct from and exclusive of  
 Blue, Red, Green, Yellow, and every  
 other particular Colour, including only  
 that general Effence in which they all  
 agree. And what has been faid of these  
 three general Names. and the abstract ge-  
 neral Ideas they ftand for may be applied  
 to all others. For you muft know, that,  
 particular Things or Ideas being infinite,  
 if each were marked or fignified by a  
 diftinct proper Name, Words muft have  
 been innumerable, and Language an end-  
 lefs impoffible thing. Hence it comes to  
 pafs, that appellative or general Names  
 ftand, immediately and properly, not for  
 particular but for abstract general Ideas,  
 which they never fail to excite in the  
 Mind, as oft as they are ufed to any fig-  
 nificant Purpose. And without this, there  
 could be no Communication or Enlarge-  
 ment of Knowledge, no fuch thing as  
 univerfal Science or Theorems of any  
 kind. Now for understanding any Propo-  
 fition or Difcourfe, it is fufficient that  
 diftinct Ideas are thereby raifed in your  
 Mind, correspondent to thofe in the

\* See *Locke on Humane Understanding*, b. 4. c. 7.

Speaker's, whether the Ideas so raised are DIAL. particular or only abstract and general VII. Ideas. Forasmuch, nevertheless, as these are not so obvious and familiar to vulgar Minds, it happens that some Men may think they have no Idea at all, when they have not a particular Idea: but the Truth is, you had the abstract general Idea of Man, in the Instance assigned, wherein you thought you had none. After the same manner, when it is said, that the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right ones; or, that Colour is the Object of Sight; it is evident the Words do not stand for this or that Triangle or Colour, but for abstract general Ideas, excluding every thing peculiar to the Individuals, and including only the universal Nature common to the whole kind of Triangles or of Colours.

VI. EUPH. Tell me, *Alciphron*, are those abstract general Ideas clear and distinct? ALC. They are above all others clear and distinct, being the only proper Object of Science, which is altogether conversant about Universals. EUPH. And do you not think it very possible for any Man to know, whether he has this or that clear and distinct Idea or no? ALC. Doubtless. To know this he needs only  
examine

DIAL. examine his own Thoughts and look into  
 VII. his own Mind. *EUPH.* But upon look-  
 icking into my own Mind, I do not find that  
 I have or can have these general abstract  
 Ideas of a Man or a Triangle abovementioned, or of Colour prescinded from all particular Colours\*. Though I shut mine Eyes, and use mine utmost Efforts, and reflect on all that passeth in my own Mind I find it utterly impossible to form such Ideas. *ALC.* To reflect with due Attention and turn the Mind inward upon it self, is a difficult Task, and not every one's Talent. *EUPH.* Not to insist on what you allowed, that every one might easily know for himself whether he has this or that Idea or no: I am tempted to think no body else can form those Ideas any more than I can. Pray, *Alcipbron*, which are those things you would call absolutely impossible? *ALC.* Such as include a Contradiction. *EUPH.* Can you frame an Idea of what includes a Contradiction? *ALC.* I cannot. *EUPH.* Consequently whatever is absolutely impossible you cannot form an Idea of. *ALC.* This I grant. *EUPH.* But can a Colour or Triangle, such as you describe their

\* See the Introduction to a Treatise concerning the Principles of Humane Knowledge, Printed in the Year MDCCX. where the Absurdity of abstract Ideas is fully considered.

abstract general Ideas, really exist? *ALC. DIAL.* It is absolutely impossible such things VII. should exist in Nature. *EUPH.* Should it not follow then that they cannot exist in your Mind, or in other Words that you cannot conceive or frame an Idea of them? *ALC.* You seem, *Euphranor*, not to distinguish between pure Intellect and Imagination. Abstract general Ideas I take to be the Object of pure Intellect, which may conceive them although they cannot perhaps be imagined. *EUPH.* I do not perceive that I can by any Faculty, whether of Intellect or Imagination, conceive or frame an Idea of that which is impossible and includes a Contradiction. And I am very much at a loss to account for your admitting that in common Instances, which you would make an Argument against Divine Faith and Mysteries.

VII. *ALC.* There must be some Mistake in this. How is it possible there should be general Knowledge without general Propositions, or these without general Names, which cannot be without general Ideas by standing for which they become general? *EUPH.* But may not Words become general, by being made to stand indiscriminately for all particular




DIAL. Ideas, which from a mutual Resemblance  
 VII. belong to the same Kind, without the  
 { Intervention of any abstract general Idea?

*ALC.* Is there then no such thing as a general Idea? *EUPH.* May we not admit general Ideas, though we should not admit them to be made by Abstraction, or though we should not allow of general abstract Ideas? To me it seems, a particular Idea may become general by being used to stand for or represent other Ideas; and that general Knowledge is conversant about Signs or general Ideas made such by their Signification; and which are considered rather in their relative Capacity, and as substituted for others, than in their own Nature, or for their own sake. A Black Line, for instance, an Inch long, though in it self particular, may yet become Universal, being used as a Sign to stand for any Line whatsoever. *ALC.* It is your Opinion then, that Words become general by representing an indefinite Number of particular Ideas. *EUPH.* It seems so to me. *ALC.* Whenever therefore I hear a general Name, it must be supposed to excite some one or other particular Idea of that Species in my Mind. *EUPH.* I cannot say so neither. Pray, *Alciphron*, doth it seem to you necessary, that as often as the Word Man occurs in Reading  
 or

or Discourse, you must form in your Mind DIAL.  
 the Idea of a particular Man? *ALC.* I own VII.  
 it doth not: and not finding particular  
 Ideas always suggested by the Words, I  
 was led to think I had abstract general  
 Ideas suggested by them. And this is the  
 Opinion of all Thinking Men who are  
 agreed, the only Use of Words is to sug-  
 gest Ideas. And indeed what other Use can  
 we assign them?

VIII. *EUPH.* Be the Use of Words or  
 Names what it will, I can never think it  
 is to do things impossible. Let us then  
 inquire what it is? and see if we can make  
 Sense of our daily Practice. Words, it is  
 agreed, are Signs: it may not therefore be  
 amiss to examine the Use of other  
 Signs, in order to know that of Words.  
 Counters, for instance, at a Card-Table  
 are used, not for their own sake, but only  
 as Signs substituted for Money, as Words  
 are for Ideas. Say now, *Alciphron*, is it  
 necessary every time these Counters are  
 used throughout the whole Progress of a  
 Game, to frame an Idea of the distinct  
 Sum or Value that each represents?  
*ALC.* By no means: it is sufficient the  
 Players at first agree on their respective  
 Values, and at last substitute those Va-  
 lues in their stead. *EUPH.* And in  
 L 2 casting

**DIAL.** casting up a Sum, where the Figures stand  
**VII.** for Pounds, Shillings, and Pence, do you  
 think it necessary, throughout the whole  
 Progress of the Operation, in each Step  
 to form Ideas of Pounds, Shillings, and  
 Pence? *ALC.* I do not, it will suffice if  
 in the Conclusion those Figures direct our  
 Actions with respect to Things. *EUPH.*  
 From hence it seems to follow that  
 Words may not be insignificant, although  
 they should not, every time they are used,  
 excite the Ideas they signify in our Minds,  
 it being sufficient, that we have it in our  
 Power to substitute Things or Ideas for  
 their Signs when there is Occasion. It  
 seems also to follow, that there may be  
 another Use of Words, besides that of  
 marking and suggesting distinct Ideas, to  
 wit, the influencing our Conduct and  
 Actions; which may be done either by form-  
 ing Rules for us to act by, or by raising  
 certain Passions, Dispositions, and Emo-  
 tions in our Minds. A Discourse, there-  
 fore, that directs how to act or excites to  
 the Doing or Forbearance of an Action  
 may, it seems, be useful and significant,  
 although the Words whereof it is com-  
 posed should not bring each a distinct  
 Idea into our Minds. *ALC.* It seems so.  
*EUPH.* Pray tell me, *Alciphron*, is not  
 an Idea altogether inactive? *ALC.* It is.  
*EUPH.*

**EUPH.** An Agent therefore, an active **DIAL.**  
Mind; or Spirit cannot be an Idea or like **VII.**  
an Idea. Whence it should seem to follow,   
that those Words, which denote an active  
Principle, Soul, or Spirit, do not, in a  
strict and proper Sense, stand for Ideas:  
And yet they are not insignificant neither:  
since I understand what is signified by the  
Term *I*, or *my self*, or know what it  
means although it be no Idea, nor like an  
Idea, but that which thinks and wills and  
apprehends Ideas and operates about them.

**ALC.** What would you infer from this?

**EUPH.** What hath been inferred already,  
that Words may be significant although  
they do not stand for Ideas \*. The con-  
trary whereof having been presumed  
seems to have produced the Doctrine of  
abstract Ideas. **ALC.** Will you not al-

low then that the Mind can abstract?  
**EUPH.** I do not deny it may abstract in  
a certain Sense; inasmuch as those Things  
that can really exist, or be really perceiv-  
ed asunder, may be conceived asunder,  
or abstracted one from the other; for in-  
stance a Man's Head from his Body, Co-  
lour from Motion, Figure from Weight.  
But it will not thence follow, that the  
Mind can frame abstract general Ideas,

\* See the Principles of Humane Knowledge. Sect. 135.  
and the Introduction. Sect. 20.

DIAL. which appear to be impossible. *ALC.*

VII. And yet it is a current Opinion, that every substantive Name marks out and exhibits to the Mind one distinct Idea separate from all others. *EUPH.* Pray, *Alciphron*, is not the Word *Number* such a substantive Name? *ALC.* It is. *EUPH.* Do but try now whether you can frame an Idea of Number in abstract exclusive of all Signs, Words, and Things numbered. I profess, for my own part, I cannot. *ALC.* Can it be so hard a Matter to form a simple Idea of Number, the Object of a most evident demonstrable Science? Hold, let me see, if I can't abstract the Idea of Number, from the numeral Names and Characters, and all particular numerable Things. Upon which *Alciphron* paused a While and then said: To confess the Truth I do not find that I can. *EUPH.* But though, it seems, neither you nor I can form distinct simple Ideas of Number, we can nevertheless make a very proper and significant Use of numeral Names. They direct us in the Disposition and Management of our Affairs, and are of such necessary Use, that we should not know how to do without them. And yet, if other Mens Faculties may be judged of by mine, to attain a precise simple abstract

Idea of Number, is as difficult as to comprehend any Mystery in Religion.

DIAL.  
VII.

IX. But to come to your own Instance, let us examine what Idea we can frame of Force abstracted from Body, Motion, and outward sensible Effects. For my self, I do not find that I have or can have any such Idea. *ALC.* Surely every one knows what is meant by Force. *EUPH.* And yet I question whether every one can form a distinct Idea of Force. Let me intreat you, *Alciphron*, be not amused by Terms, lay aside the Word *Force*, and exclude every other Thing from your Thoughts, and then see what precise Idea you have of Force. *ALC.* Force is that in Bodies which produceth Motion and other sensible Effects. *EUPH.* It is then something distinct from those Effects. *ALC.* It is. *EUPH.* Be pleased now to exclude the Consideration of its Subject and Effects, and contemplate Force it self in its own precise Idea. *ALC.* I profess I find it no such easy Matter. *EUPH.* Take your own Advice, and shut your Eyes to assist your Meditation. Upon this *Alciphron* having closed his Eyes, and mused a few Minutes, declared he could make nothing of it. And that, replied *Euphranor*, which it seems neither you nor I

DIAL. can frame an Idea of, by your own Remark of Mens Minds and Faculties being made much alike, we may suppose others have no more an Idea of than we. *ALC.* We may. *EUPH.* But, notwithstanding all this, it is certain there are many Speculations, Reasonings, and Disputes, refined Subtilties and nice Distinctions about this same Force. And to explain its Nature, and distinguish the several Notions or Kinds of it, the Terms, *Gravity, Reaction, vis inertiae, vis insita, vis impressa, vis mortua, vis viva, impetus, momentum, sollicitatio, conatus,* and divers other such like Expressions have been used by learned Men: and no small Controversies have arisen about the Notions or Definitions of these Terms. It has puzzled Men to know whether Force is spiritual or corporeal, whether it remains after Action, how it is transferred from one Body to another. Strange Paradoxes have been framed about its Nature, Properties, and Proportions: For instance, that contrary Forces may at once subsist in the same quiescent Body: That the Force of Percussion in a small Particle is infinite: For which, and other Curiosities of the same sort, you may consult *Borellus de vi percussionis,* the *Lezioni Accademiche of Toricelli,* the Exercitations of

of *Hermanus*, and other Writers. It is well known to the learned World, what a Controversy hath been carried on between Mathematicians, particularly Monsieur *Leibnitz* and Monsieur *Papin* in the *Leipfic Acta Eruditorum*, about the Proportion of Forces : whether they be each to other in a Proportion compounded of the simple Proportions of the Bodies and the Celerities, or in one compounded of the simple Proportion of the Bodies and the duplicate Proportion of the Celerities? A Point, it seems, not yet agreed : as indeed the Reality of the Thing it self is made a Question. *Leibnitz* distinguisheth between the *nifus elementaris* and the *impetus*, which is formed by a Repetition of the *nifus elementaris*, and seems to think they do not exist in Nature, but are made only by an Abstraction of the Mind. The same Author treating of original, active Force, to illustrate his Subject hath Recourse to the substantial Forms and *Entelecheia* of *Aristotle*. And the ingenious *Toricelli* saith of Force and *Impetus*, that they are subtile Abstracts and spiritual Quintessences : and concerning the *momentum* and the Velocity of heavy Bodies falling, he saith they are *uncerto che*, and *un non so che*, that is in plain *English* he knows not what to make of them. Upon the



DIAL. the whole therefore, may we not pro-  
 VII. nounce, that excluding Body, Time,  
 { Space, Motion and all its sensible Mea-  
 { sures and Effects, we shall find it as diffi-  
 { cult to form an Idea of Force as of Grace?  
 ALC. I do not know what to think  
 of it.

X. EUPH. And yet, I presume, you allow there are very evident Propositions or Theorems relating to Force, which contain useful Truths: for instance, that a Body with conjunct Forces describes the Diagonal of a Parallelogram, in the same time that it would the Sides with separate. Is not this a Principle of very extensive Use? Doth not the Doctrine of the Composition and Resolution of Forces depend upon it, and in Consequence thereof, numberless Rules and Theorems directing Men how to act, and explaining *Phænomena* throughout the Mechanics and mathematical Philosophy? And if, by considering this Doctrine of Force, Men arrive at the Knowledge of many Inventions in Mechanics, and are taught to frame Engines, by means of which Things difficult and otherwise impossible may be performed; and if the same Doctrine, which is so beneficial here below, serveth also as a Key to discover the Nature

ture of the Celestial Motions; shall we deny that it is of Use, either in Practice or Speculation, because we have no distinct Idea of Force? Or that which we admit with Regard to *Force*, upon what Pretence can we deny concerning *Grace*? If there are Queries, Disputes, Perplexities, Diversity of Notions and Opinions about the one, so there are about the other also: if we can form no precise distinct Idea of the one, so neither can we of the other. Ought we not therefore by a Parity of Reason to conclude, there may be divers true and useful Proportions concerning the one as well as the other? And that Grace may be an Object of our Faith, and influence our Life and Actions, as a Principle destructive of evil Habits and productive of good ones, although we cannot attain a distinct Idea of it, separate or abstracted from God the Author, from Man the Subject, and from Virtue and Piety its Effects?


XI. Shall we not admit the same Method of arguing, the same Rules of Logic, Reason, and good Sense to obtain in Things Spiritual and Things Corporeal, in Faith and Science? and shall we not use the same Candour, and make the same Allowances in examining the Revelations  
of

DIAL. of God and the Inventions of Men? For  
 VII. ought I see, that Philosopher cannot be  
 free from Bias and Prejudice, or be said  
 to weigh Things in an equal Balance,  
 who shall maintain the Doctrine of Force  
 and reject that of Grace, who shall admit  
 the abstract Idea of a Triangle, and at  
 the same Time ridicule the Holy Trinity.  
 But, however partial or prejudiced other  
 Minute Philosophers might be, you have  
 laid it down for a Maxim, that the same  
 Logic, which obtains in other Matters,  
 must be admitted in Religion. *LYS.* I  
 think, *Alciphron*, it would be more pru-  
 dent to abide by the Way of Wit and  
 Humour, than thus to try Religion by  
 the dry Test of Reason and Logic. *ALC.*  
 Fear not: by all the Rules of right Rea-  
 son, it is absolutely impossible that any  
 Mystery, and least of all the Trinity,  
 should really be the Object of Man's  
 Faith. *EUPH.* I do not wonder you  
 thought so, as long as you maintained  
 that no Man could assent to a Proposition  
 without perceiving or framing in his  
 Mind distinct Ideas marked by the Terms  
 of it. But although Terms are Signs,  
 yet having granted that those Signs  
 may be significant, though they should  
 not suggest Ideas represented by them,  
 provided they serve to regulate and in-  
 fluence


fluence our Wills, Passions, or Conduct, DIAL. you have consequently granted, that the Mind of Man may assent to Propositions containing such Terms, when it is so directed or affected by them, notwithstanding it should not perceive distinct Ideas marked by those Terms. Whence it seems to follow, that a Man may believe the Doctrine of the Trinity, if he finds it revealed in Holy Scripture, That the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are God, and that there is but one God? Although he doth not frame in his Mind, any abstract or distinct Ideas of Trinity, Substance, or Personality, provided, that this Doctrine of a Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier makes proper Impressions on his Mind, producing therein, Love, Hope, Gratitude, and Obedience, and thereby becomes a lively operative Principle influencing his Life and Actions, agreeably to that Notion of saving Faith which is required in a Christian. This, I say whether right or wrong, seems to follow from your own Principles and Concessions. But for further Satisfaction, it may not be amiss to inquire, whether there be any Thing parallel to this Christian Faith in the Minute Philosophy. Suppose, a fine Gentleman or Lady of Fashion, who are too much employed to think

VII.

**DIAL.** think for themselves, and are only Free-  
**VII.** thinkers at second Hand, have the Ad-  
 vantage of being betimes initiated in the  
 Principles of your Sect, by conversing  
 with Men of Depth and Genius, who  
 have often declared it to be their Opini-  
 on, the World is governed either by Fate  
 or by Chance, it matters not which: will  
 you deny it possible for such Persons to  
 yield their Assent to either of these Pro-  
 positions? *ALC.* I will not. *EUPH.*  
 And may not such their Assent be pro-  
 perly called *Faith*? *ALC.* It may.  
*EUPH.* And yet it is possible, those Dis-  
 ciples of the Minute Philosophy may not  
 dive so deep, as to be able to frame any  
 abstract, or precise, or any determinate  
 Idea whatsoever, either of Fate or of  
 Chance. *ALC.* This too I grant. *EUPH.*  
 So that according to you, this same  
 Gentleman or Lady may be said to be-  
 lieve or have Faith, where they have not  
 Ideas. *ALC.* They may. *EUPH.* And  
 may not this Faith or Persuasion produce  
 real Effects, and shew it self in the Con-  
 duct and Tenor of their Lives, freeing  
 them from the Fears of Superstition, and  
 giving them a true Relish of the World,  
 with a noble Indolence or Indifference  
 about what comes after. *ALC.* It may.  
*EUPH.* And may not Christians, with  
 equal

equal Reason, be allowed to believe the DIAL.  
 Divinity of our Saviour, or that in him VII.  
 God and Man make one Person, and be   
 verily persuaded thereof, so far as for  
 such Faith or Belief to become a real  
 Principle of Life and Conduct? inasmuch  
 as by virtue of such Persuasion they sub-  
 mit to his Government, believe his Doc-  
 trine, and practise his Precepts, although  
 they frame no abstract Idea of the Union  
 between the Divine and Humane Nature;  
 nor may be able to clear up the Notion of  
 Person to the Contentment of a Minute  
 Philosopher. To me it seems evident,  
 that if none but those who had nicely ex-  
 amined, and could themselves explain,  
 the Principle of Individuation in Man, or  
 untie the Knots and answer the Objec-  
 tions, which may be raised even about  
 Humane Personal Identity, would require  
 of us to explain the Divine Mysteries,  
 we should not be often called upon for a  
 clear and distinct Idea of *Person* in rela-  
 tion to the Trinity, nor would the Dif-  
 ficulties on that Head be often objected to  
 our Faith. *ALC.* Methinks, there is  
 no such Mystery in Personal Identity.  
*EUPH.* Pray in what do you take it to  
 consist? *ALC.* In Conscioufness. *EUPH.*  
 Whatever is possible may be suppo-  
 sed. *ALC.* It may. *EUPH.* We will  
 sup-

**DIAL.** suppose now (which is possible in the **VII.** Nature of Things, and reported to be **Fact**) that a Person, through some violent Accident or Distemper, should fall into such a total Oblivion, as to lose all Consciousness of his past Life, and former Ideas. I ask, is he not still the same Person? **ALC.** He is the same Man, but not the same Person. Indeed you ought not to suppose that a Person loseth its former Consciousness; for this is impossible, though a Man perhaps may; but then he becomes another Person. In the same Person, it must be owned, some old Ideas may be lost, and some new ones got: but a total Change is inconsistent with Identity of Person. **EUPH.** Let us then suppose that a Person hath Ideas, and is conscious during a certain Space of Time, which we will divide into three equal Parts, whereof the later Terms are marked by the Letters, A, B, C. In the first part of Time, the Person gets a certain Number of Ideas, which are retained in A: during the second part of Time, he retains one Half of his old Ideas, and loseth the other Half, in place of which he acquires as many new ones: So that in B his Ideas are half old and half new. And in the third Part, we suppose him to lose the Remainder of the Ideas acquired in the  
First,

First, and to get new ones in their stead, **DIAL.**  
 which are retained in C, together with **VII.**  
 those acquired in the second Part of Time.   
 Is this a possible fair Supposition? **ALC.**  
 It is. **EUPH.** Upon these Premisses I am  
 tempted to think, one may demonstrate,  
 that Personal Identity doth not consist in  
 Conscioufness. **ALC.** As how? **EUPH.**  
 You shall judge; but thus it seems to me.  
 The Persons in A and B are the same, be-  
 ing conscious of common Ideas by Suppo-  
 sition. The Person in B is (for the same  
 Reason) one and the same with the Per-  
 son in C. Therefore the Person in A, is  
 the same with the Person in C, by that  
 undoubted Axiom, *Quæ conveniunt uni ter-  
 tio conveniunt inter se.* But the Person in  
 C hath no Idea in common with the Per-  
 son in A. Therefore Personal Identity  
 doth not consist in Conscioufness. What  
 do you think, *Alciphron*, is not this a plain  
 Inference? **ALC.** I tell you what I think :  
 You will never assist my Faith, by puzzling  
 my Knowledge.

XII. **EUPH.** There is, if I mistake  
 not, a Practical Faith, or Assent, which  
 sheweth it self in the Will and Actions of  
 a Man, although his Understanding may  
 not be furnished with those abstract, pre-  
 cise, distinct Ideas, which, whatever, a



DIAL. Philosopher may pretend, are acknowledged to be above the Talents of common Men; among whom, nevertheless, may be found, even according to your own Concession, many Instances of such practical Faith, in other Matters which do not concern Religion. What should hinder therefore, but that Doctrines relating to Heavenly Mysteries, might be taught in this saving Sense to vulgar Minds, which you may well think incapable of all Teaching and Faith in the Sense you suppose. Which mistaken Sense, said *Crito*, has given occasion to much profane and misapplied Raillery. But all this may very justly be retorted on the Minute Philosophers themselves, who confound Scholasticism with Christianity, and impute to other Men those Perplexities, Chimæras, and inconsistent Ideas, which are often the Workmanship of their own Brains, and proceed from their own wrong way of Thinking. Who doth not see that such an ideal abstracted Faith is never thought of by the Bulk of Christians, Husbandmen, for instance, Artisans, or Servants? Or what Footsteps are there in the Holy Scripture to make us think, that the Wiredrawing of abstract Ideas was a Task enjoined either Jews or Christians? Is there any thing in the Law or the Prophets, the  
Evan-

Evangelists or Apostles, that looks like it? DIAL. VII.  
 Everyone, whose Understanding is not perverted by Science falsely so called, may see the saving Faith of Christians is quite of another Kind, a vital operative Principle, productive of Charity and Obedience. ALC. What are we to think then of the Disputes and Decisions of the famous Council of *Nice*, and so many subsequent Councils? What was the Intention of those venerable Fathers the *Homoousians* and the *Homoiousians*? Why did they disturb themselves and the World with hard Words, and subtile Controversies? CRI. Whatever their Intention was, it could not be to beget nice abstracted Ideas of Mysteries in the Minds of common Christians, this being evidently impossible: Nor doth it appear that the Bulk of Christian Men did in those Days think it any part of their Duty, to lay aside the Words, shut their Eyes, and frame those abstract Ideas; any more than Men now do of Force, Time, Number, or several other things, about which they nevertheless believe, know, argue, and dispute. To me it seems, that, whatever was the Source of those Controversies, and howsoever they were managed, wherein Humane Infirmary must be supposed to have had its Share, the main End was not, on


DIAL. either side, to convey precise positive Ideas  
 VII. to the Minds of Men, by the use of those  
 } contested Terms, but rather a negative  
 Sense, tending to exclude Polytheism on  
 the one hand, and Sabellianism on the o-  
 ther \*. *ALC.* But what shall we say of  
 so many learned and ingenious Divines,  
 who from time to time have obliged the  
 World with new Explications of Myste-  
 ries, who, having themselves professedly  
 laboured to acquire accurate Ideas, would  
 recommend their Discoveries and Specula-  
 tions to others for Articles of Faith?  
*CRI.* To all such Innovators in Religion  
 I would say with *Jerome*, “ Why after  
 “ so many Centuries do you pretend to  
 “ teach us what was untaught before?  
 “ Why explain what neither *Peter* nor  
 “ *Paul* thought necessary to be ex-  
 “ plained? † ” And it must be owned,  
 that the Explication of Mysteries in Di-  
 vinity, allowing the Attempt as fruit-  
 less as the Pursuit of the Philosopher’s  
 Stone in Chymistry, or the Perpetual  
 Motion in Mechanics, is no more than  
 they, chargeable on the Profession it  
 self, but only on the wrongheaded Pro-  
 fessors of it.

\* Vid. Sozomen. l. 2. c. 8.

† Hieronym. ad Pammachium & Oceanum de erroribus Origenis.


XIII. It seems, that what hath been DIAL.  
 now said, may be applied to other My- VII.  
 steries of our Religion. Original Sin, for  
 instance, a Man may find it impossible to  
 form an Idea of in abstract, or of the  
 manner of its Transmiffion, and yet the  
 Belief thereof may produce in his Mind  
 a salutary Sense of his own Unworthi-  
 ness, and the Goodness of his Redeemer:  
 from whence may follow good Habits,  
 and from them good Actions, the genu-  
 ine Effects of Faith: which considered in  
 its true Light, is a thing neither repug-  
 nant nor incomprehensible, as some Men  
 would persuade us, but suited even to  
 vulgar Capacities, placed in the Will and  
 Affections rather than in the Understand-  
 ing, and producing holy Lives, rather than  
 subtile Theories. Faith, I say, is not an  
 indolent Perception, but an operative Per-  
 suasion of Mind, which ever worketh  
 some suitable Action, Disposition, or Emo-  
 tion in those who have it: as it were easy  
 to prove and illustrate by innumerable In-  
 stances taken from Humane Affairs. And,  
 indeed, while the Christian Religion is  
 considered as an Institution fitted to ordi-  
 nary Minds, rather than to the nicer Ta-  
 lents, whether improved or puzzled, of  
 speculative Men; and our Notions about  
 Faith are accordingly taken from the

DIAL. Commerce of the World, and Practice of  
 VII. Mankind, rather than from the peculiar  
 Systems of Refiners; it will, I think, be  
 no difficult Matter to conceive and justify  
 the Meaning and Use of our Belief of  
 Mysteries, against the most confident Af-  
 fertions and Objections of the Minute Phi-  
 losophers, who are easily to be caught in  
 those very Snares, which they have spun  
 and spread for others. And that Humour  
 of Controversy, the Mother and Nurse of  
 Heresies, would doubtless very much a-  
 bate, if it was considered that things are  
 to be rated, not by the Colour, Shape, or  
 Stamp, so truly as by the Weight. If the  
 Moment of Opinions had been by some  
 litigious Divines made the Measure of  
 their Zeal, it might have spared much  
 Trouble both to themselves and others.  
 Certainly one that takes his Notions of  
 Faith, Opinion, and Assent from Com-  
 mon Sense, and Common Use, and has  
 maturely weighed the Nature of Signs  
 and Language, will not be so apt to con-  
 trovert the Wording of a Mystery, or to  
 break the Peace of the Church, for the  
 sake of retaining or rejecting a Term.  
 But, to convince you, by a plain Instance,  
 of the efficacious necessary Use of Faith  
 without Ideas: we will suppose a Man  
 of the World, a Minute Philosopher,  
 prodigal

prodigal and rapacious, one of large Ap-DIAL.  
 petites and narrow Circumstances, who VII.  
 shall have it in his Power at once to seise   
 upon a great Fortune by one villanous Act,  
 a single Breach of Trust, which he can  
 commit with Impunity and Secrecy:  
 Is it not natural to suppose him arguing in  
 this manner? All Mankind in their Senses  
 pursue their Interest. The Interests of  
 this present Life are either of Mind, Bo-  
 dy, or Fortune. If I commit this Fact  
 my Mind will be easy (having nought to  
 fear here or hereafter) my bodily Plea-  
 sures will be multiplied, and my Fortune  
 enlarged. Suppose now, one of your re-  
 fined Theorists talks to him about the  
 Harmony of Mind and Affections, inward  
 Worth, Truth of Character, in one Word,  
 the Beauty of Virtue; which is the only  
 Interest he can propose, to turn the Scale  
 against all other secular Interests and sen-  
 sual Pleasures; would it not, think you,  
 be a vain Attempt? On the other hand,  
 possess him with a thorough Belief or Per-  
 suasion, that he shall forfeit eternal Hap-  
 piness, and incur eternal Misery: and this  
 alone may suffice to turn the Scale. I say,  
 in such a Juncture what can the most  
 plausible and refined Philosophy of your  
 Sect offer, to dissuade such a Man from  
 his Purpose, more than assuring him that

DIAL. abstracted Delight of the Mind, the Enjoyments of an interior moral Sense, the *Το καλόν* are what constitute his true Interest? And what Effect can this have on a Mind callous to all those things, and at the same time strongly affected with a Sense of corporeal Pleasures, and the outward Interest, Ornaments, and Conveniencies of Life? Whereas that very Man, do but produce in him a sincere Belief of a future State, although it be a Mystery, although it be what Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive, he shall nevertheless, by virtue of such Belief, be withheld from executing his wicked Project: and that for Reasons which all Men can comprehend; though no body can the Object of them. I will allow the Points insisted on by your refined Moralists to be as lovely and excellent as you please to a reasonable, reflecting, philosophical Mind. But I will venture to say, That, as the World goes, few, very few, would be influenced by them. We see, therefore, the necessary Use as well as the powerful Effects of Faith, even where we have not Ideas,

XIV. *ALC.*

XIV. *ALC.* It seems, *Euphranor* and *DIAL.*  
 you would persuade me into an Opinion, VII.  
 that there is nothing so singularly absurd   
 as we are apt to think, in the Belief of  
 Mysteries: and that a Man need not re-  
 nounce his Reason to maintain his Reli-  
 gion. But if this were true, how comes  
 it to pass, that, in proportion as Men  
 abound in Knowledge, they dwindle in  
 Faith? *EUPH.* O *Alciphron*, I have  
 learned from you, that there is nothing  
 like going to the Bottom of things, and  
 analysing them into their first Principles.  
 I shall therefore make an Essay of this Me-  
 thod, for clearing up the Nature of Faith:  
 with what Success, I shall leave you to  
 determine: for I dare not pronounce my  
 self on my own Judgment, whether it be  
 right or wrong: But thus it seems to me.  
 The Objections made to Faith are by  
 no means an Effect of Knowledge, but  
 proceed rather from an Ignorance of what  
 Knowledge is: which Ignorance may pos-  
 sibly be found even in those who pass for  
 Masters of this or that particular Branch  
 of Knowledge. Science and Faith agree in  
 this, that they both imply an Assent of the  
 Mind: And, as the Nature of the First is  
 most clear and evident, it should be first  
 considered in order to cast a Light on the  
 other. To trace things from their Original,  
 nal,




DIAL. VII. nal, it seems that the Humane Mind, naturally furnished with the Ideas of things particular and concrete, and being design'd, not for the bare Intuition of Ideas, but for Action or Operation about them, and pursuing her own Happiness therein, stands in need of certain general Rules or Theorems to direct her Operations in this Pursuit: the supplying which Want is the true, original, reasonable End of studying the Arts and Sciences. Now these Rules being general, it follows, that they are not to be obtained by the meer Consideration of the original Ideas, or particular Things, but by the means of Marks or Signs, which, being so far forth universal, become the immediate Instruments and Materials of Science. It is not therefore by meer Contemplation of particular Things, and much less of their abstract general Ideas, that the Mind makes her Progress, but by an apposite Choice and skilful Management of Signs: For instance, Force and Number, taken in concrete with their Adjuncts, Subjects, and Signs, are what every one knows: and considered in abstract, so as making precise Ideas of themselves, they are what no Body can comprehend. That their abstract Nature, therefore, is not the Foundation of Science, is plain: And that  
barely

barely considering their Ideas in concrete, DIAL. is not the Method to advance in the re- VII. spective Sciences, is what every one that reflects may see; nothing being more evident, than that one, who can neither write nor read, in common Use understands the Meaning of Numeral Words, as well as the best Philosopher or Mathematician.

XV. But here lies the Difference: the one who understands the Notation of Numbers, by means thereof is able to express briefly and distinctly all the Variety and Degrees of Number, and to perform with Ease and Dispatch several Arithmetical Operations, by the help of general Rules. Of all which Operations as the Use in Humane Life is very evident, so it is no less evident, that the performing them depends on the Aptness of the Notation. If we suppose rude Mankind without the Use of Language, it may be presumed, they would be ignorant of Arithmetic: But the Use of Names, by the Repetition whereof in a certain Order they might express endless Degrees of Number, would be the first Step towards that Science. The next Step would be, to devise proper Marks of a permanent Nature, and visible to the Eye, the Kind and

DIAL. and Order whereof must be chose with  
 VII. Judgment, and accommodated to the  
 Names. Which Marking or Notation  
 would, in proportion as it was apt and  
 regular, facilitate the Invention and Ap-  
 plication of general Rules, to assist the  
 Mind in reasoning and judging, in ex-  
 tending, recording and communicating  
 its Knowledge about Numbers: in which  
 Theory and Operations, the Mind is im-  
 mediately occupied about the Signs or  
 Notes, by Mediation of which it is di-  
 rected to act about Things, or Number in  
 concrete (as the Logicians call it) without  
 ever considering the simple, abstract, in-  
 tellectual, general Idea of Number. I ima-  
 gine one need not think much to be con-  
 vinced, that the Science of Arithmetic, in  
 its Rise, Operations, Rules, and Theo-  
 rems, is altogether conversant about the  
 artificial Use of Signs, Names, and Cha-  
 racters. These Names and Characters are  
 universal, inasmuch as they are Signs.  
 The Names are referred to Things, the  
 Characters to Names, and both to Opera-  
 tion. The Names being few, and pro-  
 ceeding by a certain Analogy, the Cha-  
 racters will be more useful, the simpler  
 they are, and the more aptly they express  
 this Analogy. Hence the old Notation by  
 Letters was more useful than Words writ-  
 ten

ten at length: And the modern Notation DIAL.  
 by Figures, expressing the Progression or VII.  
 Analogy of the Names by their simple   
 Places, is much preferable to that for Ease  
 and Expedition, as the Invention of Al-  
 gebraical Symbols is to this for extensive  
 and general Use. As Arithmetic and Al-  
 gebra are Sciences of great Clearness, Cer-  
 tainty, and Extent, which are immedi-  
 ately conversant about Signs, upon the  
 skilful Use and Management whereof  
 they intirely depend, so a little Attention  
 to them may possibly help us to judge  
 of the Progress of the Mind in other  
 Sciences; which, though differing in Na-  
 ture, Design, and Object, may yet agree  
 in the general Methods of Proof and In-  
 quiry.

XVI. If I mistake not, all Sciences, so  
 far as they are universal and demonstra-  
 ble by Humane Reason, will be found  
 conversant about Signs as their immediate  
 Object, though these in the Application  
 are referred to Things: The Reason where-  
 of is not difficult to conceive. For as  
 the Mind is better acquainted with some  
 sort of Objects, which are earlier suggested  
 to it, strike it more sensibly, or are more  
 easily comprehended than others, it is na-  
 turally led to substitute these Objects for  
 such

DIAL. such as are more subtile, fleeting, or difficult to conceive. Nothing, I say, is more natural, than to make the Things we know, a Step towards those we do not know; and to explain and represent Things less familiar by others which are more so. Now, it is certain we imagine before we reflect, and we perceive by Sense before we imagine: and of all our Senses the Sight is the most clear, distinct, various, agreeable, and comprehensive. Hence it is natural to assist the Intellect by the Imagination, the Imagination by Sense, and the other Senses by Sight. Hence, Figures, Metaphors, and Types. We illustrate spiritual Things by corporeal: we substitute Sounds for Thoughts, and written Letters for Sounds, Emblems, Symbols, and Hieroglyphics for Things too obscure to strike, and too various or too fleeting to be retained. We substitute Things imaginable for things intelligible, sensible Things for imaginable, smaller Things for those that are too great to comprehend easily, and greater Things for such as are too small to be discerned distinctly, present Things for absent, permanent for perishing, and visible for invisible. Hence the Use of Models and Diagrams. Hence right Lines are substituted for Time, Velocity, and other things

things of very different Natures. Hence DIAL. we speak of Spirits in a figurative Style, VII. expressing the Operations of the Mind by Allusions and Terms, borrowed from sensible Things, such as *apprehend, conceive, reflect, discourse*, and such like: And hence those Allegories which illustrate Things intellectual by Visions exhibited to the Fancy. *Plato*, for instance, represents the Mind presiding in her Vehicle by the Driver of a winged Chariot, which sometimes moults and droops and is drawn by two Horses, the one good and of a good Race, the other of a contrary Kind; symbolically expressing the Tendency of the Mind towards the Divinity, as she soars or is born aloft by two Instincts like Wings, the one in the Intellect towards Truth, the other in the Will towards Excellence, which Instincts moult or are weaken'd by sensual Inclinations; expressing also her alternate Elevations and Depressions, the Struggles between Reason and Appetite, like Horses that go an unequal Pace, or draw different ways, embarrassing the Soul in her Progress to Perfection. I am inclined to think the Doctrine of Signs a Point of great Importance, and general Extent, which, if duly considered, would cast no small Light upon Things, and afford

DIAL. ford a just and genuine Solution of many  
VII. Difficulties.


XVII. Thus much, upon the whole, may be said of all Signs: that they do not always suggest Ideas signified to the Mind: that when they suggest Ideas, they are not general abstract Ideas: that they have other Uses besides barely standing for and exhibiting Ideas, such as raising proper Emotions, producing certain Dispositions or Habits of Mind, and directing our Actions in pursuit of that Happiness, which is the ultimate End and Design, the primary Spring and Motive, that sets rational Agents at work: that the true End of Speech, Reason, Science, Faith, Assent, in all its different Degrees, is not meerly, or principally, or always the imparting or acquiring of Ideas, but rather something of an active, operative Nature, tending to a conceived Good; which may sometimes be obtained, not only although the Ideas marked are not offered to the Mind, but even although there should be no Possibility of offering or exhibiting any such Idea to the Mind: for instance, the Algebraic Mark, which denotes the Root of a negative Square, hath its Use in Logistic Operations, although it be impossible to form an Idea of any such

such Quantity. And what is true of ALGEBRAIC Signs, is also true of Words or Language, modern Algebra being in fact a more short, apposite, and artificial Sort of Language, and it being possible to express by Words at length, though less conveniently, all the Steps of an Algebraical Process. And it must be confessed, that even the Mathematical Sciences themselves, which above all others are reckoned the most clear and certain; if they are considered, not as Instruments to direct our Practice, but as Speculations to employ our Curiosity; will be found to fall short in many Instances of those clear and distinct Ideas, which, it seems, the Minute Philosophers of this Age, whether knowingly or ignorantly, expect and insist upon in the Mysteries of Religion.

XVIII. Be the Science or Subject what it will, whensoever Men quit Particulars for Generalities; things Concrete for Abstractions, when they forsake practical Views, and the useful Purposes of Knowledge for barren Speculation, considering Means and Instruments as ultimate Ends, and labouring to obtain precise Ideas which they suppose indiscriminately annexed to all Terms, they will be sure to embarrass themselves with Difficulties and Dis-



**DIAL.** putes. Such are those which have sprung  
**VII.** up in Geometry about the Nature of the  
 { Angle of Contact, the Doctrine of Pro-  
 portions, of Indivisibles, Infinitesimals, and  
 divers other Points; notwithstanding all  
 which, that Science is very rightly es-  
 teemed an excellent and useful one, and  
 is really found to be so in many Occa-  
 sions of Humane Life; wherein it go-  
 verns and directs the Actions of Men, so  
 that by the Aid or Influence thereof those  
 Operations become just and accurate, which  
 would otherwise be faulty and uncertain.  
 And from a parity of Reason, we should  
 not conclude any other Doctrines which  
 govern, influence, or direct the Mind of  
 Man to be, any more than that, the less  
 true or excellent, because they afford Mat-  
 ter of Controversy and useless Specula-  
 tion to curious and licentious Wits: par-  
 ticularly those Articles of our Christian  
 Faith, which, in proportion as they are  
 believed, persuade, and, as they persuade,  
 influence the Lives and Actions of Men.  
 As to the Perplexity of Contradictions and  
 abstracted Notions, in all parts whether  
 of Humane Science or Divine Faith, Ca-  
 villiers may equally object, and unwary  
 Persons incur, while the judicious avoid  
 it. There is no need to depart from the  
 received Rules of Reasoning to justify the  
 Belief


Belief of Christians. And if any pious DIAL.  
 Men think otherwise, it may be supposed VII.  
 an Effect, not of Religion or of Reason,   
 but only of Humane Weakness. If this  
 Age be singularly productive of Infidels, I  
 shall not therefore conclude it to be more  
 knowing, but only more presuming, than  
 former Ages: And their Conceit, I doubt,  
 is not the Effect of Consideration. To  
 me it seems, that the more thoroughly  
 and extensively any Man shall consider  
 and scan the Principles, Objects, and Me-  
 thods of proceeding in Arts and Sciences,  
 the more he will be convinced, there is no  
 Weight in those plausible Objections that  
 are made against the Mysteries of Faith,  
 which it will be no difficult Matter for  
 him to maintain or justify in the received  
 Method of arguing, on the common Prin-  
 ciples of Logic, and by numberless avow'd  
 parallel Cases, throughout the several  
 Branches of Humane Knowledge, in all  
 which the Supposition of abstract Ideas  
 creates the same Difficulties. *ALC.* Ac-  
 cording to this Doctrine, all Points may  
 be alike maintained. There will be no-  
 thing absurd in Popery, not even Tran-  
 substantiation. *CRI.* Pardon me. This  
 Doctrine justifies no Article of Faith  
 which is not contained in Scripture, or  
 which is repugnant to Humane Reason,  
 N 2 which

DIAL. which implies a Contradiction, or which  
 VII. leads to Idolatry or Wickedness of any  
 Kind: all which is very different from  
 our not having a distinct or an abstract Idea  
 of a Point.

XIX. *ALC.* I will allow, *Euphranor*,  
 this Reasoning of yours to have all the  
 Force you meant it should have. I freely  
 own there may be Mysteries: that we may  
 believe, where we do not understand: and  
 that Faith may be of use although its  
 Object is not distinctly apprehended. In  
 a word, I grant there may be Faith and  
 Mysteries in other things but not in Reli-  
 gion: And that for this plain Reason:  
 because it is absurd to suppose, there should  
 be any such thing as Religion: and if  
 there be no Religion it follows there can-  
 not be Religious Faith or Mysteries. Re-  
 ligion, it is evident, implies the Worship  
 of a God, which Worship supposeth Re-  
 wards and Punishments, which suppose  
 Merits and Demerits, Actions good and  
 evil, and these suppose Humane Liberty,  
 a thing impossible: and consequently Re-  
 ligion a thing built thereon must be an  
 unreasonable absurd thing. There can be  
 no rational Hopes or Fears where there is  
 no Guilt, nor any Guilt where there is  
 nothing done, but what unavoidably fol-  
 lows

flows from the Structure of the World DIAL.  
 and the Laws of Motion. Corporeal Ob- VII.  
 jects strike on the Organs of Sense, whence  
 ensues a Vibration in the Nerves, which,  
 being communicated to the Soul or Ani-  
 mal Spirit in the Brain or Root of the  
 Nerves, produceth therein that Motion  
 called Volition: And this produceth a new  
 Determination in the Spirits, causing them  
 to flow into such Nerves as must necessarily  
 by the Laws of Mechanism produce such  
 certain Actions. This being the Case, it  
 follows that those things, which vulgarly  
 pass for Humane Actions, are to be esteemed  
 Mechanical, and that they are falsely as-  
 cribed to a free Principle. There is there-  
 fore no Foundation for Praise or Blame,  
 Fear or Hope, Reward or Punishment,  
 nor consequently for Religion, which, as  
 I observed before, is built upon and sup-  
 poseth those things. *EUPH.* You ima-  
 gine, *Alciphron*, if I rightly understand  
 you, that Man is a sort of Organ played  
 on by outward Objects, which according  
 to the different Shape and Texture of the  
 Nerves produce different Motions and  
 Effects therein. *ALC.* Man may, indeed,  
 be fitly compared to an Organ: but a Pup-  
 pet is the very Thing. You must know,  
 that certain Particles issuing forth in  
 right Lines from all sensible Objects

DIAL. compose so many Rays, or Filaments,  
 VII. which drive, draw, and actuate every part  
 of the Soul and Body of Man, just as  
 Threads or Wires do the Joints of that  
 little wooden Machine vulgarly called a  
*Puppet*: with this only Difference that  
 the latter are gross and visible to common  
 Eyes, whereas the former are too fine and  
 subtile to be discerned by any but a sagacious  
 Free-thinker. This admirably accounts for all those  
 Operations, which we have been taught to ascribe  
 to a thinking Principle within us. *EUPH.* This is an  
 ingenious Thought, and must be of great Use in  
 freeing Men from all Anxiety about moral Notions,  
 as it transfers the Principle of Action from the  
 Humane Soul to things outward and foreign. But  
 I have my Scruples about it. For you suppose the  
 Mind in a literal Sense to be moved, and its  
 Volitions to be meer Motions. Now, if another  
 should affirm, as it is not impossible some or  
 other may, that the Soul is incorporeal, and that  
 Motion is one thing and Volition another, I  
 would fain know how you could make your Point  
 clear to such a one. It must be owned very  
 clear to those who admit the Soul to be corporeal,  
 and all her Acts to be but so many Motions.  
 Upon this Supposition, indeed, the Light wherein  
 you

you place Humane Nature is no less true, **DIAL.**  
 than it is fine and new. But let any one **VII.**  
 deny this Supposition, which is easily done,   
 and the whole Superstructure falls to the  
 Ground. If we grant the abovemention-  
 ed Points, I will not deny a fatal Necessi-  
 ty must ensue. But I see no reason for  
 granting them. On the contrary it seems  
 plain, that Motion and Thought are two  
 things as really and as manifestly distinct  
 as a Triangle and a Sound. It seems there-  
 fore, that in Order to prove the Necessity  
 of Humane Actions, you suppose what  
 wants Proof as much as the very Point to  
 be proved.

XX. *ALC.* But supposing the Mind  
 incorporeal, I shall, nevertheless, be able  
 to prove my Point. Not to amuse you  
 with far-fetched Arguments, I shall only  
 desire you to look into your own Breast  
 and observe how things pass there, when  
 an Object offers it self to the Mind. First  
 the Understanding considers it: in the  
 next place the Judgment decrees about it,  
 as a thing to be chosen or rejected, to be  
 omitted or done, in this or that manner:  
 And this Decree of the Judgment doth  
 necessarily determine the Will, whose  
 Office is meerly to execute what is or-  
 dained by another Faculty: Consequently  
 N 4 there

**DIAL.** there is no such thing as Freedom of the  
**VII.** Will. For that which is necessary cannot  
be free. In Freedom there should be an  
Indifference to either side of the Question,  
a Power to act or not to act, without  
Prescription or Control: and without  
this Indifference and this Power, it is evi-  
dent the Will cannot be free. But it is  
no less evident, that the Will is not indif-  
ferent in its Actions, being absolutely de-  
termined and governed by the Judgment.  
Now whatever moves the Judgment,  
whether the greatest present Uneasiness, or  
the greatest apparent Good, or whatever  
else it be, it is all one to the Point in  
hand. The Will being ever concluded  
and controlled by the Judgment is in all  
Cases alike under Necessity. There is, in-  
deed, throughout the whole of Humane  
Nature, nothing like a Principle of Free-  
dom, every Faculty being determined in  
all its Acts by something foreign to it. The  
Understanding, for instance, cannot alter  
its Idea, but must necessarily see it such  
as it presents it self. The Appetites by a  
natural Necessity are carried towards their  
respective Objects. Reason cannot infer  
indifferently any thing from any thing,  
but is limited by the Nature and Connexi-  
on of Things, and the eternal Rules of  
Reasoning. And as this is confessedly the  
Case

Case of all other Faculties, so it equally DIAL. holds with respect to the Will it self, as VII. hath been already shewn. And if we may credit the Divine Characterizer of our Times, this above all others must be allowed the most slavish Faculty. “Appetite (saith that noble Writer) which is elder Brother to Reason, being the Lad of stronger Growth, is sure on every Contest to take the Advantage of drawing all to his own Side: And Will, so highly boasted, is but at best a Football or Top between those Youngsters who prove very unfortunately matched, till the youngest, instead of now and then a Kick or Lash bestow’d to little purpose, forsakes the Ball or Top it self, and begins to lay about his elder Brother.” CRI. This beautiful Parable for Style and Manner might equal those of a known *English* Writer, in low Life renowned for Allegory, were it not a little incorrect, making the weaker Lad find his Account in laying about the stronger. ALC. This is helped by supposing the stronger Lad the greater Coward. But, be that as it will, so far as it relates to the Point in hand, this is a clear State of the Case. The same Point may be also proved from the Prescience of God. That which is certainly foreknown



**DIAL.** foreknown will certainly be. And what is  
**VII.** certain is necessary. And necessary Actions  
 cannot be the Effect of Free-will. Thus  
 you have this fundamental Point of our  
 Free-thinking Philosophy demonstrated  
 different ways. *EUPH.* Tell me, *Alci-*  
*phron*, do you think it implies a Contra-  
 diction, that God should make a Crea-  
 ture Free? *ALC.* I do not. *EUPH.* It  
 is then possible there may be such a thing.  
*ALC.* This I do not deny. *EUPH.* You  
 can therefore conceive and suppose such a  
 Free Agent. *ALC.* Admitting that I can;  
 what then? *EUPH.* Would not such an  
 one think that he acted? *ALC.* He  
 would. *EUPH.* And condemn himself  
 for some Actions and approve himself  
 for others? *ALC.* This too I grant.  
*EUPH.* Would he not think he deserved  
 Reward or Punishment? *ALC.* He would.  
*EUPH.* And are not all these Characters  
 actually found in Man? *ALC.* They are,  
*EUPH.* Tell me now, what other Cha-  
 racter of your supposed Free Agent may  
 not actually be found in Man? For if  
 there is none such, we must conclude that  
 Man hath all the Marks of a Free Agent.  
*ALC.* Let me see! I was certainly over-  
 seen in granting it possible, even for Al-  
 mighty Power, to make such a thing as a  
 Free Agent. I wonder how I came to  
 make

make such an absurd Concession, after **DIAL.** what had been, as I observed before, **VII.** demonstrated so many different ways. *EUPH.* Certainly whatever is possible may be supposed: And whatever doth not imply a Contradiction is possible to an infinite Power: Therefore if a rational Agent implieth no Contradiction, such a Being may be supposed. Perhaps from this Supposition I might infer Man to be free: But I will not suppose him that free Agent; since, it seems, you pretend to have demonstrated the contrary. *O Alciphron,* it is vulgarly observed that Men judge of others by themselves. But in judging of me by this Rule, you may be mistaken. Many things are plain to one of your Sagacity, which are not so to me, who am often puzzled rather than enlightened by those very Proofs, that with you pass for clear and evident. And, indeed, be the Inference never so just, yet so long as the Premises are not clear, I cannot be thoroughly convinced. You must give me leave therefore to propose some Questions, the Solution of which may pethaps shew what at present I am not able to discern. *A L C.* I shall leave what hath been said with you, to consider and ruminare upon. It is now time to set out on our Journey: there is,

DIAL. therefore, no room for a long String of  
 VII. Question and Answer.

XXI. *EUPH.* I shall then only beg leave in a summary Manner, to make a Remark or two on what you have advanced. In the first place I observe, you take that for granted which I cannot grant, when you assert whatever is certain the same to be necessary. To me, certain and necessary seem very different; there being nothing in the former Notion that implies Constraint, nor consequently which may not consist with a Man's being accountable for his Actions. If it is foreseen that such an Action shall be done: may it not also be foreseen that it shall be an Effect of humane Choice and Liberty? In the next place I observe, that you very nicely abstract and distinguish the Actions of the Mind, Judgment, and Will: That you make use of such Terms as Power, Faculty, Act, Determination, Indifference, Freedom, Necessity, and the like, as if they stood for distinct abstract Ideas: And that this Supposition seems to ensnare the Mind into the same Perplexities and Errors, which, in all other Instances, are observed to attend the Doctrine of Abstraction. It is self evident, that there is such a thing as Motion; and yet there have been found  
 Philo-

Philosophers, who, by refined Reasoning, DIAL.  
 wou'd undertake to prove there was no VII.  
 such thing. Walking before them was  
 thought the proper Way to confute those  
 ingenious Men. It is no less evident, that  
 Man is a free Agent : and though by ab-  
 stracted Reasonings you shou'd puzzle me,  
 and seem to prove the contrary, yet so  
 long as I am conscious of my own Actions,  
 this inward Evidence of plain Fact will  
 bear me up against all your Reasonings,  
 however subtile and refined. The confuting  
 plain Points by obscure ones, may perhaps  
 convince me of the Ability of your Philo-  
 sophers, but never of their Tenets. I can-  
 not conceive why the acute *Cratylus* should  
 suppose a Power of Acting in the Appetite  
 and Reason, and none at all in the Will?  
 Allowing, I say, the Distinction of three  
 such Beings in the Mind, I do not see how  
 this could be true. But if I cannot ab-  
 stract and distinguish so many Beings in  
 the Soul of Man so accurately as you do,  
 I do not find it necessary, since it is evi-  
 dent to me in the gross and concrete that  
 I am a free Agent. Nor will it avail to  
 say, the Will is governed by the Judgment,  
 or determined by the Object, while, in  
 every sudden common Cause, I cannot  
 discern nor abstract the Decree of the  
 Judgment from the Command of the Will ;  
 while

DIAL. while I know the sensible Object to be ab-  
 VII. solutely inert: And lastly, while I am con-  
 scious that I am an active Being, who can  
 and do determine my self. If I should  
 suppose things spiritual to be corporeal,  
 or refine things actual and real into gene-  
 ral abstracted Notions, or by metaphy-  
 sical Skill split things simple and indivi-  
 dual into manifold Parts, I do not know  
 what may follow: But if I take things as  
 they are, and ask any plain untutored  
 Man, whether he acts or is free in this or  
 that particular Action, he readily assents,  
 and I as readily believe him from what I  
 find within. And thus, by an Induction  
 of Particulars, I may conclude Man to be  
 a free Agent, although I may be puzzled  
 to define or conceive a Notion of Freedom  
 in general and abstract. And if Man be  
 free, he is plainly accountable. But if you  
 shall define, abstract, suppose, and it shall  
 follow that according to your Definitions,  
 Abstractions, and Suppositions, there can  
 be no Freedom in Man, and you shall  
 thence infer that he is not accountable, I  
 shall make bold to depart from your me-  
 taphysical abstracted Sense, and appeal to  
 the common Sense of Mankind.

XXII. If we consider the Notions that  
 obtain in the World of Guilt and Merit,  
 Praise

Praise and Blame, accountable and unac-  
 countable, we shall find the common Que-  
 stion in order to applaud or censure, ac-  
 quit or condemn a Man, is, whether he  
 did such an Action? and whether he was  
 himself when he did it? which comes to  
 the same thing. It should seem therefore  
 that in the ordinary Commerce of Man-  
 kind, any Person is esteemed accountable  
 simply as he is an Agent. And though  
 you should tell me that Man is inactive,  
 and that the sensible Objects act upon him,  
 yet my own Experience assures me of the  
 contrary. I know I act, and what I act I  
 am accountable for. And if this be true,  
 the Foundation of Religion and Morality  
 remains unshaken: Religion, I say, is con-  
 cerned no farther than that Man should be  
 accountable: And this he is according to  
 my Sense, and the common Sense of the  
 World, if he acts: and that he doth act is  
 self evident. The Grounds, therefore, and  
 Ends of Religion are secured: whether  
 your philosophic Notion of Liberty agrees  
 with Man's Actions or no; and whether  
 his Actions are certain or contingent; the  
 Question being not whether he did it with  
 a Free Will? or what determin'd his Will?  
 not; whether it was certain or foreknown  
 that he would do it? but only whether he  
 did it wilfully? as what must entitle him  
 to

DIAL. to the Guilt or Merit of it. *ALC.* But VII. still, the Question recurs, whether Man be Free? *EUPH.* To determine this Question, ought we not first to determine what is meant by the word *Free*? *ALC.* We ought. *EUPH.* In my Opinion, a Man is said to be Free, so far forth as he can do what he will. Is this so, or is it not? *ALC.* It seems so. *EUPH.* Man therefore acting according to his Will, is to be accounted Free. *ALC.* This I admit to be true in the Vulgar Sense. But a Philosopher goes higher, and inquires whether Man be free to will? *EUPH.* That is, whether he can will as he wills? I know not how Philosophical it may be to ask this Question, but it seems very idle. The Notions of Guilt, and Merit, Justice and Reward are in the Minds of Men, antecedent to all Metaphysical Disquisitions: And according to those received natural Notions, it is not doubted that Man is accountable, that he acts, and is self-determined.


XXIII. But a Minute Philosopher shall, in virtue of wrong Suppositions, confound things most evidently distinct; Body, for instance, with Spirit, Motion with Volition, Certainty with Necessity; and an Abstracter or Refiner shall so analyse the most simple

simple instantaneous Act of the Mind, as DIAL. VII.  
 to distinguish therein divers Faculties and Tendencies, Principles and Operations, Causes and Effects; and having abstracted, supposed, and reasoned upon Principles gratuitous and obscure, he will conclude it is no Act at all, and Man no Agent, but a Puppet, or an Organ play'd on by outward Objects, and his Will a Top or a Foot-ball. And this passeth for Philosophy and Free-thinking. Perhaps this may be what it passeth for; but it by no means seems a natural or just way of thinking. To me it seems, that if we begin from Things particular and concrete, and thence proceed to general Notions and Conclusions, there will be no Difficulty in this Matter. But if we begin with Generalities, and lay our Foundation in abstract Ideas, we shall find our selves entangled and lost in a Labyrinth of our own making. I need not observe, what every one must see, the ridicule of proving Man no Agent, and yet pleading for Free Thought and Action, of setting up at once for Advocates of Liberty and Necessity. I have hastily thrown together these Hints or Remarks, on what you call a fundamental Article of the Minute Philosophy, and your Method of proving it, which seems to furnish an admirable Specimen of the

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DIAL. Sophistry of abstract Ideas. If in this sum-  
 VII. mary way I have been more dogmatical  
 than became me, you must excuse what  
 you occasioned, by declining a joint and  
 leisurely Examination of the Truth. *ALC.*  
 I think we have examined Matters suffi-  
 ciently. *CRI.* To all you have said a-  
 gainst humane Liberty, it is a sufficient  
 Answer to observe that your Arguments  
 proceed upon an erroneous Supposition,  
 either of the Soul's being corporeal, or of  
 abstract Ideas: not to mention other gross  
 Mistakes and gratuitous Principles. You  
 might as well suppose, that the Soul is  
 red or blue, as that it is solid. You might  
 as well make the Will any thing else as  
 Motion. And whatever you infer from  
 such Premises, which (to speak in the  
 softest manner) are neither proved nor  
 probable, I make no difficulty to reject.  
 You distinguish in all humane Actions be-  
 tween the last Decree of the Judgment  
 and the Act of the Will. You confound  
 Certainty with Necessity: you inquire,  
 and your Inquiry amounts to an absurd  
 Question: whether Man can will as he  
 wills? As evidently true as is this identi-  
 cal Proposition, so evidently false must  
 that way of thinking be, which led you  
 to make a Question of it. You take for  
 granted, that the Mind is inactive, but  
 that

that its Ideas act upon it: as if the con-DIAL.  
 trary were not evident to every Man of VII.  
 common Sense, who cannot but know,   
 that it is the Mind which considers its  
 Ideas, chooses, rejects, examines, delibe-  
 rates, decrees, in one word acts about  
 them, and not they about it. Upon the  
 whole, your Premises being obscure and  
 false, the fundamental Point, which you  
 pretend to demonstrate so many different  
 ways, proves neither Sense nor Truth in  
 any. And on the other hand, there is  
 not need of much Inquiry to be con-  
 vinced of two Points, than which none  
 are more evident, more obvious, and  
 more universally admitted by Men of  
 all sorts, learned or unlearned, in all  
 Times and Places, to wit, that Man acts  
 and is accountable for his Actions. What-  
 ever Abstracters, Refiners, or Men pre-  
 judiced to a false Hypothesis may pre-  
 tend, it is, if I mistake not, evident to  
 every thinking Man of common Sense,  
 that humane Minds are so far from be-  
 ing Engines or Foot-balls, acted upon and  
 bandied about by corporeal Objects, with-  
 out any inward Principle of Freedom or  
 Action, that the only original true Notions  
 that we have of Freedom, Agent, or Action,  
 are obtained by reflecting on our selves, and  
 the Operations of our own Minds. The  
 Singularity and Credulity of Minute Phi-

DIAL. osophers, who suffer themselves to be  
 VII. abused by the Paralogisms of three or four  
 } eminent Patriarchs of Infidelity in the  
 last Age, is, I think, not to be matched;  
 there being no Instance of bigoted Super-  
 stition, the Ringleaders whereof have been  
 able to seduce their Followers, more open-  
 ly and more widely from the plain Dic-  
 tates of Nature and common Sense.

XXIV. *ALC.* It has been always  
 an Objection against the Discoverers of  
 Truth, that they depart from received  
 Opinions. The Character of Singularity  
 is a Tax on Free-thinking: And as  
 such we most willingly bear it, and glo-  
 ry in it. A Genuine Philosopher is ne-  
 ver modest in a false Sense, to the pre-  
 ferring Authority before Reason, or an old  
 and common Opinion before a true one.  
 Which false Modesty, as it discourages  
 Men from treading in untrodden Paths,  
 or striking out new Light, is above all  
 other Qualities the greatest Enemy to Free-  
 thinking. *CR I.* Authority in disputable  
 Points will have its Weight with a judi-  
 cious Mind, which yet will follow Evi-  
 dence wherever it leads. Without prefer-  
 ring we may allow it a good Second to  
 Reason. Your Gentlemen, therefore, of  
 the Minute Philosophy, may spare a World  
 of Common-Place upon Reason, and Light,  
 and

and Discoveries. We are not attached to DIAL. Authority against Reason, nor afraid of VII. untrodden Paths that lead to Truth, and are ready to follow a new Light when we are sure it is no *ignis fatuus*. Reason may oblige a Man to believe against his Inclinations: but why should a Man quit salutary Notions for others not less unreasonable than pernicious? Your Schemes, and Principles, and boasted Demonstrations have been at large proposed and examined. You have shifted your Notions, successively retreated from one Scheme to another, and in the End renounced them all. Your Objections have been treated in the same Manner, and with the same Event. If we except all that relates to the Errors and Faults of particular Persons, and Difficulties which, from the Nature of Things, we are not obliged to explain; it is surprising to see, after such magnificent Threats, how little remains, that can amount to a pertinent Objection against the Christian Religion. What you have produced has been tried by the fair Test of Reason: and though you should hope to prevail by Ridicule when you cannot by Reason, yet in the upshot I apprehend you will find it impracticable to destroy all Sense of Religion. Make your Countrymen ever so vicious, ignorant,


DIAL. rant, and profane, Men will still be disposed to look up to a supreme Being. Religion, right or wrong, will subsist in some Shape or other, and some Worship there will surely be either of God or the Creature. As for your Ridicule, can any thing be more ridiculous, than to see the most unmeaning Men of the Age set up for Free-thinkers, Men so strong in Assertion, and yet so weak in Argument; Advocates for Freedom introducing a Fatality, Patriots trampling on the Laws of their Country, and Pretenders to Virtue, destroying the Motives of it? Let any impartial Man but cast an Eye on the Opinions of the Minute Philosophers, and then say if any thing can be more ridiculous, than to believe such things, and at the same time laugh at Credulity.

XXV. *LRS.* Say what you will, we have the Laughters on our side: And as for your Reasoning I take it to be another Name for Sophistry. *CRI.* And I suppose by the same Rule you take your own Sophisms for Arguments. To speak plainly, I know no sort of Sophism that is not employed by Minute Philosophers against Religion. They are guilty of a *Petitio Principii*, in taking for granted that we believe Contradictions; of *non*  
5 *Causa*

*Causa pro Causa*, in affirming that uncharitable Feuds and Discords are the Effects of Christianity; of *Ignoratio elenchi*, in expecting Demonstration where we pretend only to Faith. If I was not afraid to offend the Delicacy of polite Ears, nothing were easier than to assign Instances of every kind of Sophism, which would shew how skilful your own Philosophers are in the Practice of that Sophistry you impute to others. *EUPH.* For my own part, if Sophistry be the Art or Faculty of deceiving other Men, I must acquit these Gentlemen of it. They seem to have led me a Progress through Atheism, Libertinism, Enthusiasm, Fatalism, not to convince me of the Truth of any of them, so much as to confirm me in my own way of thinking. They have exposed their fairy Ware not to cheat but divert us. As I know them to be professed Masters of Ridicule, so in a serious Sense I know not what to make of them. *ALC.* You do not know what to make of us! I should be sorry you did. He must be a superficial Philosopher that is soon fathomed.

XXVI. *CRI.* The ambiguous Character is, it seems, the sure way to Fame and Esteem in the learned World, as it stands constituted

DIAL. tuted at present. When the Ingenious  
 VII. Reader is at a Loss to determine whether his Author be Atheist or Deist or Polytheist, Stoic or Epicurean, Sceptic or Dogmatist, Infidel or Enthusiast, in jest or in earnest, he concludes him without Hesitation to be ænigmatical and profound. In fact, it is true of the most admired Writers of the Age, That no Man alive can tell what to make of them, or what they would be at. *ALC.* We have among us Moles that dig deep under Ground, and Eagles that soar out of sight. We can act all Parts and become all Opinions, putting them on or off with great freedom of Wit and Humour. *EUPH.* It seems then you are a Pair of inscrutable, unfathomable, fashionable Philosophers. *ALC.* It cannot be denied. *EUPH.* But, I remember, you set out with an open dogmatical Air, and talked of plain Principles and evident Reasoning, promised to make things as clear as Noon-day, to extirpate wrong Notions and plant right in their stead. Soon after, you began to recede from your first Notions and adopt others: you advanced one while and retreated another, yielded and retracted, said and unsaid: And after having followed you through so many untrodden Paths and intricate Mazes I find my self never the nearer.

nearer. *ALC.* Did we not tell you the *DIAL.*  
 Gentlemen of our Sect are great Profi- VII.  
 cients in Raillery? *EUPH.* But, me-   
 thinks, it is a vain Attempt, for a plain  
 Man of any settled Belief or Principles to  
 engage with such slippery, fugitive, chan-  
 geable Philosophers. It seems as if a  
 Man should stand still in the same place,  
 while his Adversary chooses and changes  
 his Situation, has full Range and Liberty to  
 traverse the Field, and attack him on all  
 Sides and in all Shapes, from a nearer or  
 farther distance, on Horse-back or on Foot,  
 in light or heavy Armour, in close Fight  
 or with missive Weapons. *ALC.* It must  
 be owned, a Gentleman hath great Ad-  
 vantage over a strait-laced Pedant or Bi-  
 got. *EUPH.* But after all, what am I the  
 better for the Conversation of two such  
 knowing Gentlemen? I hoped to have un-  
 learned my Errors, and to have learned  
 Truths from you, but, to my great Dis-  
 appointment, I do not find that I am  
 either untaught or taught. *ALC.* To  
 unteach Men their Prejudices is a difficult  
 Task: And this must first be done, before  
 we can pretend to teach them the Truth.  
 Besides, we have at present no Time to  
 prove and argue. *EUPH.* But suppose  
 my Mind white Paper, and without be-  
 ing at any Pains to extirpate my Opini-  
 ons




DIAL. ons, or prove your own, only say what  
 VII. you would write thereon, or what you  
 would teach me in case I were teachable.  
 Be for once in earnest, and let me know  
 some one Conclusion of yours before we  
 part: or I shall intreat *Crito* to violate  
 the Laws of Hospitality towards those,  
 who have violated the Laws of Philoso-  
 phy, by hanging out false Lights to one  
 benighted in Ignorance and Error. I ap-  
 peal to you (said he turning to *Crito*)  
 whether these Philosophical Knight-  
 errants should not be confined in this  
 Castle of yours, till they make Repara-  
 tion. *Euphranor* has Reason, said *Crito*,  
 and my Sentence is that you remain here  
 in durance, till you have done something  
 towards satisfiing the Engagement I am  
 under, having promised, he should know  
 your Opinions from your selves, which  
 you also agreed to.

XXVII. *ALC.* Since it must be so, I  
 will now reveal what I take to be the Sum  
 and Substance, the grand Arcanum and  
 ultimate Conclusion of our Sect, and that  
 in two Words, ΠΑΝΤΑ ΥΠΟΛΗΨΙΣ.  
*CRI.* You are then a downright Sceptic.  
 But, Sceptic as you are, you own it, proba-  
 ble there is a God, certain that the Christian  
 Religion is useful, possible it may be true,  
 certain

certain that if it be, the Minute Philosophers D I A L.  
 are in a bad way. This being the Case, how VII.  
 can it be questioned what Course a wise }  
 Man should take? Whether the Princi-  
 ples of Christians or Infidels are truest  
 may be made a Question, but which are  
 safest can be none. Certainly if you doubt  
 of all Opinions you must doubt of your  
 own: and then, for ought you know, the  
 Christian may be true. The more doubt,  
 the more room there is for Faith, a  
 Sceptic of all Men having the least Right  
 to demand Evidence. But, whatever Un-  
 certainty there may be in other Points,  
 thus much is certain: either there is or is  
 not a God: there is or is not a Revelation:  
 Man either is or is not an Agent: the Soul  
 is or is not Immortal. If the Negatives are  
 not sure, the Affirmatives are possible. If the  
 Negatives are improbable, the Affirmatives  
 are probable. In Proportion, as any of  
 your ingenious Men finds himself unable  
 to prove any one of these Negatives, he  
 hath grounds to suspect he may be mis-  
 taken. A Minute Philosopher, therefore,  
 that would act a consistent part, should  
 have the Diffidence, the Modesty, and the  
 Timidity, as well as the Doubts, of a  
 Sceptic; not pretend to an Ocean of Light,  
 and then lead us to an Abyfs of Darkness.  
 If I have any Notion of Ridicule, this  
is

DIAL. is most ridiculous. But your ridiculing  
 VII. what, for ought you know, may be true,  
 I can make no Sense of it. It is neither  
 acting as a wise Man with regard to your  
 own Interest, nor as a good Man with  
 regard to that of your Country.

XXVIII. *Tully* saith somewhere, *aut undique religionem tolle aut usquequaque conserva*: Either let us have no Religion at all, or let it be respected. If any single Instance can be shewn of a People that ever prospered without some Religion, or if there be any Religion better than the Christian, propose it in the grand Assembly of the Nation to change our Constitution, and either live without Religion, or introduce that new Religion. A Sceptic, as well as other Men, is Member of a Community, and can distinguish between Good and Evil, Natural or Political. Be this then his Guide as a Patriot, though he be no Christian. Or, if he doth not pretend even to this Discernment, let him not pretend to correct or alter what he knows nothing of: Neither let him that only doubts behave as if he could demonstrate. *Timagoras* is wont to say, I find my Country in possession of certain Tenets: they appear to have an useful Tendency, and, as such, are encouraged by the Legislature:

gislature: they make a main part of our DIAL.  
 Constitution: I do not find these Innova- VII.  
 tors can disprove them, or substitute things  
 more useful and certain in their stead:   
 out of Regard therefore to the Good of  
 Mankind, and the Laws of my Country, I  
 shall acquiesce in them. I do not say *Ti-*  
*magoras* is a Christian, but I reckon him a  
 Patriot. Not to inquire in a Point of so  
 great Concern is Folly, but it is still a  
 higher degree of Folly to condemn without  
 inquiring. *Lyficles* seemed heartily tired  
 of this Conversation. It is now late, said  
 he to *Alciphron*, and all things are ready  
 for our Departure. Every one hath his  
 own way of thinking: and it is as im-  
 possible for me to adopt another Man's,  
 as to make his Complexion and Features  
 mine. *Alciphron* pleaded that, having  
 complied with *Euphranor's* Conditions,  
 they were now at Liberty: And *Euphra-*  
*nor* answered that, all he desired having  
 been to know their Tenets, he had nothing  
 further to pretend.

XXIX. The Philosophers being gone,  
 I observed to *Crito* how unaccountable it  
 was, that Men so easy to confute should  
 yet be so difficult to convince. This, said  
*Crito*, is accounted for by *Aristotle*, who  
 tells us that Arguments have not an Ef-  
 fect

DIAL. feēt on all Men, but only on them whose  
 VII. Minds are prepared by Education and  
 ~~~~~ Custom, as Land is for Seed \*. Make a  
 Point never so clear, it is great odds, that
 a Man, whose Habits and the Bent of
 whose Mind lie a contray way, shall be
 unable to comprehend it. So weak a
 thing is Reason in Competition with In-
 clination. I replied, this Answer might
 hold with respect to other Persons and
 other Times: but when the Question was
 of inquisitive Men, in an Age wherein
 Reason was so much cultivated, and Think-
 ing so much in Vogue, it did not seem
 satisfactory. I have known it remarked,
 said *Crito*, by a Man of much Observa-
 tion, that in the present Age Thinking
 is more talk'd of but less practised than in
 ancient times: and that since the Revival
 of Learning, Men have read much and
 wrote much, but thought little: inso-
 much that with us to think closely and
 justly is the least part of a learned Man,
 and none at all of a polite Man. The
 Free-thinkers, it must be owned, make
 great Pretensions to Thinking, and yet
 they shew but little Exactness in it. A
 lively Man, and what the World calls
 a Man of Sense are often destitute of
 this Talent; which is not a mere Gift

* Ethic. ad Nicom. l. 10. c. 9.

of Nature, but must be improved and perfected, by much Attention and Exercise on very different Subjects; a thing of more Pains and Time than the hasty Men of Parts in our Age care to take. Such were the Sentiments of a judicious Friend of mine: And, if you are not already sufficiently convinced of these Truths, you need only cast an Eye on the dark and confused, but nevertheless admired, Writers of this famous Sect: And then you will be able to judge, whether those who are led by Men of such wrong Heads can have very good ones of their own. Such, for instance, was *Spinoza*, the great Leader of our modern Infidels, in whom are to be found many Schemes and Notions much admired and followed of late Years: Such as undermining Religion, under the Pretence of vindicating and explaining it: The maintaining it not necessary to believe in Christ according to the Flesh: The persuading Men that Miracles are to be understood only in a spiritual and allegorical Sense: That Vice is not so bad a thing as we are apt to think: That Men are mere Machines impelled by fatal Necessity. I have heard, said I, *Spinoza* represented as a Man of close Argument and Demonstration. He did, replied *Crito*, demonstrate: but it was

DIAL. VII. 

DIAL. was after such a manner, as any one may
 VII. demonstrate any thing. Allow a Man the
 Privilege to make his own Definitions
 of common Words, and it will be no hard
 matter for him to infer Conclusions,
 which in one Sense shall be true and in
 another false, at once seeming Paradoxes
 and manifest Truisms. For Example, let
 but *Spinoza* define natural Right to be
 natural Power, and he will easily de-
 monstrate, that *whatever a Man can do*
 he hath a right to do *. Nothing can be
 plainer than the Folly of this Proceeding:
 but our Pretenders to the *lumen siccum* are
 so passionately prejudiced against Reli-
 gion, as to swallow the grossest Nonsense
 and Sophistry of weak and wicked Writers
 for Demonstration.

XXX. And so great a Noise do these Men
 make, with their thinking, reasoning, and
 demonstrating, as to prejudice some well-
 meaning Persons against all Use and Im-
 provement of Reason. Honest *Demea*, ha-
 ving seen a Neighbour of his ruined by the
 Vices of a Free-thinking Son, contracted
 such a Prejudice against Thinking, that
 he would not suffer his own to read *Eu-
 clid*, being told it might teach him to
 think; till a Friend convinced him the

* Tractat. Politic. c. 2.



epide-

epidemical Distemper was not Thinking, DIAL.
 but only the Want and Affectation of it. VII.
 I know an eminent Free-thinker, who never goes to bed, without a Gallon of Wine in his Belly, and is sure to replenish before the Fumes are off his Brain, by which means he has not had one sober Thought these seven Years; another, that would not for the World lose the Privilege and Reputation of Free-thinking, who games all Night, and lies in Bed all Day: And as for the Outside or Appearance of Thought in that meagre Minute Philosopher *Ibycus*, it is an Effect, not of thinking, but of carking, cheating, and writing in an Office. Strange, said he, that such Men should set up for Free-thinkers! But it is yet more strange that other Men should be out of Conceit with Thinking and Reasoning, for the sake of such Pretenders. I answered, that some good Men conceived an Opposition between Reason and Religion, Faith and Knowledge, Nature and Grace; and that, consequently, the way to promote Religion was to quench the Light of Nature, and discourage all rational Inquiry.


XXXI. How right the Intentions of these Men may be, replied *Crito*, I shall not say; but surely their Notions are very
 VOL. II. P wrong.

DIAL. wrong. Can any thing be more dishonour-
 VII. able to Religion, than the representing it
 as an unreasonable, unnatural, ignorant In-
 stitution? God is the Father of all Lights,
 whether natural or revealed. Natural Con-
 cupiscence is one thing, and the Light of
 Nature another. You cannot therefore argue
 from the former against the latter: Neither
 can you from Science falsely so called,
 against real Knowledge. Whatever there-
 fore is said of the one in Holy Scripture
 is not to be interpreted of the other. I in-
 sisted that Humane Learning in the Hands
 of Divines, had, from time to time, cre-
 ated great Disputes and Divisions in the
 Church. As abstracted Metaphysics, re-
 plied *Crito*, have always had a Tendency
 to produce Disputes among Christians, as
 well as other Men; so it should seem that
 genuine Truth and Knowledge would al-
 lay this Humour, which makes Men sa-
 crifice the undisputed Duties of Peace and
 Charity to disputable Notions. After all,
 said I, whatever may be said for Reason,
 it is plain, the Sceptics and Infidels of the
 Age are not to be cured by it. I will not
 dispute this Point, said *Crito*: in order to
 cure a Distemper, you should consider
 what produced it. Had Men reasoned
 themselves into a wrong Opinion, one
 might hope to reason them out of it. But

this is not the Case; the Infidelity of most **DIAL.**
 Minute Philosophers seeming an Effect of **VII.**
 very different Motives from Thought and
 Reason. Little Incidents, Vanity, Dis-
 gust, Humour, Inclination, without the least
 Assistance from Reason, are often known
 to make Infidels. Where the general Ten-
 dency of a Doctrine is disagreeable, the
 Mind is prepared to relish and improve
 every thing that with the least Pretence
 seems to make against it. Hence the
 coarse Manners of a Country Curate, the
 polite Manners of a Chaplain, the Wit of
 a Minute Philosopher, a Jest, a Song, a
 Tale can serve instead of a Reason for In-
 fidelity. *Bupalus* preferred a Rake in
 the Church, and then made use of him
 as an Argument against it. Vice, Indo-
 lence, Faction, and Fashion, produce
 Minute Philosophers, and mere Petulancy
 not a few. Who then can expect a thing
 so irrational and capricious should yield to
 Reason? It may, nevertheless, be worth
 while to argue against such Men, and ex-
 pose their Fallacies, if not for their own
 sake, yet for the sake of others; as it may
 lessen their Credit, and prevent the growth
 of their Sect, by removing a Prejudice in
 their Favour, which sometimes inclines
 others as well as themselves to think
 they have made a Monopoly of Humane
 Reason.

DIAL. XXXII. The most general Pretext which
VII. looks like Reason, is taken from the Variety of Opinions about Religion. This is a resting Stone to a lazy and superficial Mind. But one of more Spirit and a juster way of Thinking, makes it a Step whence he looks about, and proceeds to examine, and compare the differing Institutions of Religion. He will observe, which of these is the most sublime and rational in its Doctrines, most venerable in its Mysteries, most useful in its Precepts, most decent in its Worship? Which createth the noblest Hopes, and most worthy Views? He will consider their Rise and Progress: which oweth least to Humane Arts or Arms? Which flatters the Senses and gross Inclinations of Men? Which adorns and improves the most excellent Part of our Nature? Which hath been propagated in the most wonderful Manner? Which hath surmounted the greatest Difficulties, or shew'd the most disinterested Zeal and Sincerity in its Professors? He will inquire, which best accords with Nature and History? He will consider, what favours of the World, and what looks like Wisdom from above? He will be careful to separate Humane Allay from that which is Divine; and upon the whole, form his Judgment like a reasonable Free-thinker.

But

But instead of taking such a rational Course, **DIAL.**
 one of those hafty Sceptics shall conclude **VII.**
 without demurring, there is no Wisdom 
 in Politics, no Honesty in Dealings, no
 Knowledge in Philosophy, no Truth in
 Religion: And all by one and the same
 sort of Inference, from the numerous
 Examples of Folly, Knavery, Ignorance,
 and Error, which are to be met with in
 the World. But, as those who are un-
 knowing in every thing else, imagine
 themselves sharpfighted in Religion, this
 learned Sophism is ofteneft levelled against
 Christianity.

XXXIII. In my Opinion, he that would
 convince an Infidel who can be brought to
 Reason, ought in the first place clearly to
 convince him of the Being of a God, it
 seeming to me, that any Man who is real-
 ly a Theist, cannot be an Enemy to the
 Christian Religion: And that the Igno-
 rance or Disbelief of this fundamental
 Point, is that which at bottom constitutes
 the Minute Philosopher. I imagine they,
 who are acquainted with the great Au-
 thors in the Minute Philosophy, need not
 be told of this. The Being of a God is capable
 of clear Proof, and a proper Object of Hu-
 mane Reason: whereas the Mysteries of his
 Nature, and indeed whatever there is of

DIAL. Mystery in Religion, to endeavour to explain and prove by Reason, is a vain Attempt. It is sufficient if we can shew there is nothing absurd or repugnant in our Belief of those Points, and, instead of framing Hypotheses to explain them, we use our Reason only for answering the Objections, brought against them. But on all Occasions, we ought to distinguish the serious, modest, ingenuous Man of Sense, who hath Scruples about Religion, and behaves like a prudent Man in doubt, from the Minute Philosophers, those profane and conceited Men, who must needs profelyte others to their own Doubts. When one of this Stamp presents himself, we should consider what Species he is of: Whether a first or a second-hand Philosopher, a Libertine, Scornor, or Sceptic? Each Character requiring a peculiar Treatment. Some Men are too ignorant to be humble, without which there can be no Docility: But though a Man must in some Degree have Thought, and considered to be capable of being convinced, yet it is possible the most ignorant may be laugh'd out of his Opinions. I knew a Woman of Sense reduce two Minute Philosophers, who had long been a Nuisance to the Neighbourhood, by taking her Cue from their predominant Affectations.

tions. The one set up for the most in-DIAL.
 credulous Man upon Earth, the other for VII.
 the most unbounded Freedom. She ob-
 served to the first, that he who had Cre-
 dulity sufficient to trust the most valuable
 Things, his Life and Fortune, to his A-
 pothecary and Lawyer, ridiculously affec-
 ted the Character of Incredulous, by refu-
 sing to trust his Soul, a Thing in his own
 Account but a mere Trifle, to his Parish-
 Priest. The other, being what you call
 a Beau, she made sensible how absolute
 a Slave he was in point of Dress, to him
 the most important thing in the World,
 while he was earnestly contending for a
 Liberty of Thinking, with which he ne-
 ver troubled his Head: and how much
 more it concerned and became him to
 assert an Independency on Fashion, and
 obtain Scope for his Genius, where it
 was best qualified to exert it self. The
 Minute Philosophers at first hand are very
 few, and considered in themselves, of
 small Consequence: But their Followers,
 who pin their Faith upon them, are nu-
 merous, and not less confident than cre-
 dulous; there being something in the Air
 and Manner of these second-hand Philo-
 sophers, very apt to disconcert a Man of
 Gravity and Argument, and much more
 difficult to be born than the Weight of their
 Objections.

DIAL. XXXIV. *Crito* having made an end,
 VII. *Euphranor* declared it to be his Opinion:
 that it would much conduce to the public Benefit, if, instead of discouraging Free-thinking, there was erected in the midst of this free Country a Dianoetic Academy, or Seminary for Free-thinkers, provided with retired Chambers, and Galleries, and shady Walks and Groves: where, after seven Years spent in Silence and Meditation, a Man might commence a genuine Free-thinker, and from that time forward, have Licence to think what he pleased, and a Badge to distinguish him from Counterfeits. In good earnest, said *Crito*, I imagine that Thinking is the great *Desideratum* of the present Age: and that the real Cause of whatever is amiss, may justly be reckoned the general Neglect of Education, in those who need it most, the People of Fashion. What can be expected where those who have the most Influence, have the least Sense, and those who are sure to be followed, set the worst Example? Where Youth so uneducated are yet so forward? Where Modesty is esteemed Pusillanimity, and a Deference to Years, Knowledge, Religion, Laws, want of Sense and Spirit? Such untimely Growth of Genius would not have been valued or encouraged by
 the

the wise Men of Antiquity; whose Sentiments on this Point are so ill suited to the Genius of our Times, that it is to be feared modern Ears could not bear them. But, however ridiculous such Maxims might seem to our *British* Youth, who are so capable and so forward to try Experiments and mend the Constitution of their Country: I believe it will be admitted by Men of Sense, that if the Governing part of Mankind would in these Days, for Experiment's sake, consider themselves in that old *Homerical* Light as Pastors of the People; whose Duty it was to improve their Flock, they would soon find that this is to be done by an Education very different from the Modern, and otherguess Maxims than those of the Minute Philosophy. If our Youth were really inured to Thought and Reflection, and an Acquaintance with the excellent Writers of Antiquity: we should soon see that licentious Humour, vulgarly called *Free-thinking*, banished from the Presence of Gentlemen, together with Ignorance and ill Taste: which as they are inseparable from Vice, so Men follow Vice for the sake of Pleasure, and fly from Virtue through an Abhorrence of Pain. Their Minds therefore betimes should be formed and accustomed

to

DIAL. to receive Pleasure and Pain from proper
 VII. Objects, or, which is the same thing, to
 have their Inclinations and Aversions
 rightly placed. Καλῶς χαίρειν ἢ μισεῖν.
 This, according to *Plato* and *Aristotle*,
 was the ὀρθὴ παιδεία, the right Educa-
 tion *. And those who, in their own
 Minds, their Health, or their Fortunes,
 feel the cursed Effects of a wrong one,
 would do well to consider, they cannot
 better make amends for what was amiss
 in themselves, than by preventing the
 same in their Posterity. While *Crito* was
 saying this, Company came in, which put
 an End to our Conversation.

* *Plato* in *Protag.* & *Aristot.* ethic. ad *Nicom.* 1. 2.
 c. 2. & 1. 10. c. 9.

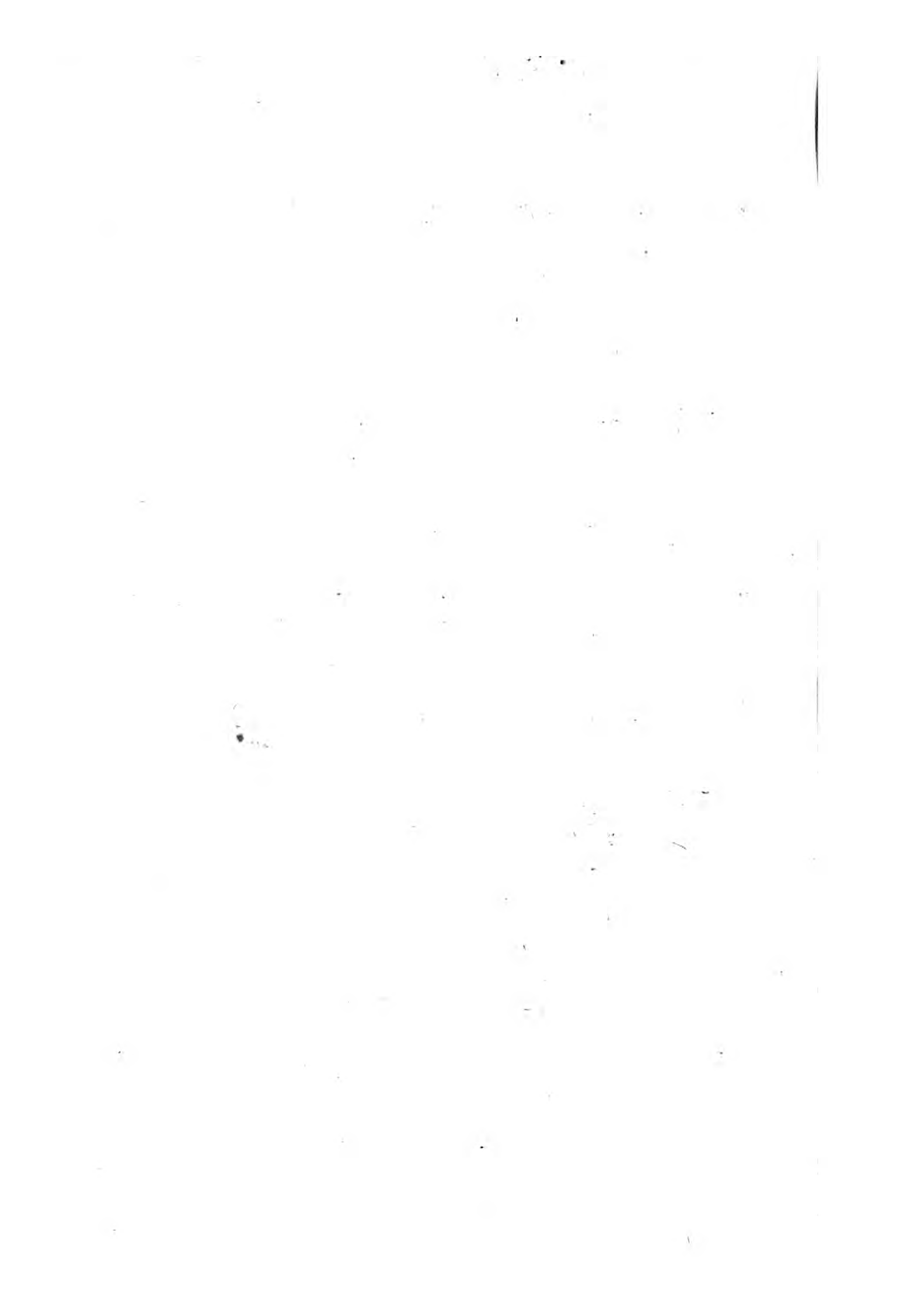


A N
E S S A Y
T O W A R D S A
N E W T H E O R Y
O F
V I S I O N .

First Published in the Year M D C C I X .



L O N D O N :
Printed in the Year M D C C X X X I I .





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A N

ESSAY

TOWARDS

A New Theory of Vision.

I. Y Design is to shew the Manner, wherein we perceive by Sight the Distance, Magnitude, and Situation of Objects. Also to consider the Difference there is betwixt the Ideas of Sight and Touch, and whether there be any Idea common to both Senses.

II. It is, I think, agreed by all, that Distance, of it self and immediately, cannot be seen. For Distance being a Line directed end-wise to the Eye, it projects only one Point in the Fund of the Eye, which Point remains invariably the same,

whether the Distance be longer or shorter.

III. I find it also acknowledged, that the Estimate we make of the Distance of Objects considerably remote, is rather an Act of Judgment grounded on Experience, than of Sense. For Example, when I perceive a great Number of intermediate Objects, such as Houses, Fields, Rivers, and the like, which I have experienced to take up a considerable Space, I thence form a Judgment or Conclusion, that the Object I see beyond them is at a great Distance. Again, when an Object appears faint and small, which at a near Distance I have experienced to make a vigorous and large Appearance, I instantly conclude it to be far off; And this, 'tis evident is the result of Experience; without which, from the Faintness and Littleness I should not have inferred any thing concerning the Distance of Objects.

IV. But when an Object is placed at so near a Distance, as that the Interval between the Eyes bears any sensible Proportion to it, the Opinion of speculative Men is, that the two Optic Axes (the Fancy that we see only with one Eye at once being exploded) concurring at the Object do
there

there make an Angle, by means of which, according as it is greater or lesser, the Object is perceived to be nearer or farther off *.

V. Betwixt which, and the foregoing Manner of estimating Distance, there is this remarkable Difference: That, whereas there was no apparent, necessary Connexion between small Distance and a large and strong Appearance, or between great Distance and a little and faint Appearance, there appears a very necessary Connexion between an obtuse Angle and near Distance, and an acute Angle and farther Distance. It does not in the least depend upon Experience, but may be evidently known by any one before he had experienced it, that the nearer the Concurrence of the Optic Axes, the greater the Angle, and the remoter their Concurrence is, the lesser will be the Angle comprehended by them.

VI. There is another way mentioned by Optic Writers, whereby they will have us judge of those Distances, in respect of which the Breadth of the Pupil hath any sensible Bigness: And that is the greater or lesser Divergency of the

* See what Descartes and others have written on this Subject.

A NEW THEORY

Rays, which iffuing from the vifible Point, do fall on the Pupil: That Point being judged neareft, which is feen by moft diverging Rays: and that remoter which is feen by lefs diverging Rays: And fo on, the apparent Distance ftill increafing, as the Divergency of the Rays decreafes, till at length it becomes infinite, when the Rays that fall on the Pupil are to Sense Parallel. And after this manner it is faid we perceive Distance when we look only with one Eye.

VII. In this Cafe alfo, it is plain we are not beholding to Experience: It being a certain, neceffary Truth, that the nearer the direct Rays falling on the Eye approach to a Parallelifm, the farther off is the Point of their Interfection, or the vifible Point from whence they flow.

VIII. Now though the Accounts here given of perceivving near Distance by Sight are received for true, and accordingly made ufe of in determining the apparent Places of Objects, they do nevertheless feem very unfatisfactory: And that for thefe following Reafons.

IX. It is evident that when the Mind perceives any Idea, not immediately
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and of it self, it must be by the means of some other Idea: Thus, for Instance, the Passions which are in the Mind of another, are of themselves to me invifible. I may nevertheless perceive them by Sight, though not immediately, yet by means of the Colours they produce in the Countenance. We often see Shame or Fear in the Looks of a Man, by perceiving the Changes of his Countenance to Red or Pale.

X. Moreover it is evident that no Idea, which is not it self perceived, can be the means of perceiving any other Idea. If I do not perceive the Redness or Paleness of a Man's Face themselves, it is impossible I should perceive by them the Passions which are in his Mind.

XI. Now from SECT. II. it is plain that Distance is in its own Nature imperceptible, and yet it is perceived by Sight. It remains, therefore, that it be brought into View by means of some other Idea, that is it self immediately perceived in the Act of Vision.

XII. But those Lines and Angles, by means whereof some Men pretend to explain the Perception of Distance, are themselves not at all perceived, nor are they

in truth ever thought of by those unskilful in Optics. I appeal to any ones Experience, whether upon Sight of an Object, he computes its Distance by the Bigness of the Angle, made by the meeting of the two Optic Axes? Or whether he ever thinks of the greater or lesser Divergency of the Rays, which arrive from any Point to his Pupil? Every one is himself the best Judge of what he perceives, and what not. In vain shall any Man tell me, that I perceive certain Lines and Angles which introduce into my Mind the various Ideas of Distance, so long as I my self am conscious of no such thing.

XIII. Since therefore those Angles and Lines are not themselves perceived by Sight, it follows from S E C T. X. that the Mind doth not by them judge of the Distance of Objects.

XIV. The Truth of this Assertion will be, yet, farther evident to any one that considers those Lines and Angles have no real Existence in Nature, being only an Hypothesis framed by the Mathematicians, and by them introduced into Optics, that they might treat of that Science in a Geometrical way.

XV. The

XV. The last Reason I shall give for rejecting that Doctrine, is, that though we should grant the real Existence of those Optic Angles, &c. and that it was possible for the Mind to perceive them; yet these Principles would not be found sufficient to explain the *Phænomena* of Distance, as shall be shewn hereafter.

XVI. Now, it being already shewn that Distance is suggested to the Mind, by the Mediation of some other Idea which is it self perceived in the Act of Seeing; it remains that we inquire what Ideas, or Sensations there be that attend Vision, unto which we may suppose the Ideas of Distance are connected, and by which they are introduced into the Mind. And *First*, It is certain by Experience, that when we look at a near Object with both Eyes, according as it approaches, or recedes from us, we alter the Disposition of our Eyes, by lessening or widening the Interval between the Pupils. This Disposition or Turn of the Eyes is attended with a Sensation, which seems to me to be that which in this Case brings the Idea of greater or lesser Distance into the Mind.

XVII. Not that there is any natural or necessary Connexion between the Sensation

fation we perceive by the Turn of the Eyes, and greater or lesser Distance: but because the Mind has by constant Experience found the different Sensations corresponding to the different Dispositions of the Eyes, to be attended each with a different Degree of Distance in the Object; There has grown an Habitual or Customary Connexion between those two sorts of Ideas, so that the Mind no sooner perceives the Sensation arising from the different Turn it gives the Eyes, in order to bring the Pupils nearer, or farther asunder, but it withal perceives the different Idea of Distance which was wont to be connected with that Sensation: Just as upon hearing a certain Sound, the Idea is immediately suggested to the Understanding, which Custom had united with it.

XVIII. Nor do I see, how I can easily be mistaken in this Matter. I know evidently that Distance is not perceived of it self. That by Consequence, it must be perceived by means of some other Idea which is immediately perceived, and varies with the different Degrees of Distance. I know also that the Sensation arising from the Turn of the Eyes is of it self immediately perceived, and various Degrees thereof are connected with different Distances,

stances, which never fail to accompany them into my Mind, when I view an Object distinctly with both Eyes, whose Distance is so small that in respect of it the Interval between the Eyes has any considerable Magnitude.

XIX. I know it is a received Opinion, that by altering the Disposition of the Eyes, the Mind perceives whether the Angle of the Optic Axes, or the lateral Angles comprehended between the Interval of the Eyes and the Optic Axes, are made greater or lesser; and that accordingly by a kind of Natural Geometry, it judges the Point of their Interfection to be nearer, or farther off. But that this is not true, I am convinced by my own Experience, since I am not conscious, that I make any such use of the Perception I have by the Turn of my Eyes. And for me to make those Judgments, and draw those Conclusions from it, without knowing that I do so, seems altogether incomprehensible.

XX. From all which it follows, that the Judgment we make of the Distance of an Object, viewed with both Eyes, is entirely the Result of Experience. If we had not constantly found certain Sensations arising from the various Disposition of
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the Eyes, attended with certain Degrees of Distance, we should never make those sudden Judgments from them, concerning the Distance of Objects: no more than we would pretend to judge of a Man's Thoughts by his pronouncing Words we had never heard before.

XXI. *Secondly*, An Object placed at a certain Distance from the Eye, to which the Breadth of the Pupil bears a considerable Proportion, being made to approach, is seen more confusedly: And the nearer it is brought, the more confused Appearance it makes. And this being found constantly to be so, there ariseth in the Mind an Habitual Connexion between the several Degrees of Confusion and Distance; the greater Confusion still implying the lesser Distance, and the lesser Confusion, the greater Distance of the Object.

XXII. This confused Appearance of the Object doth therefore seem to be the Medium, whereby the Mind judgeth of Distance in those Cases, wherein the most approved Writers of Optics will have it judge by the different Divergency, with which the Rays flowing from the Radiating Point fall on the Pupil. No Man, I believe, will pretend to see or feel those
ima-

imaginary Angles, that the Rays are supposed to form according to their various Inclinations on his Eye. But he cannot choose Seeing whether the Object appear more or less confused. It is therefore a manifest Consequence from what hath been demonstrated, that instead of the greater, or lesser Divergency of the Rays, the Mind makes use of the greater or lesser Confusedness of the Appearance, thereby to determine the apparent Place of an Object.

XXIII. Nor doth it avail to say, there is not any necessary Connexion between confused Vision and Distance, great or small. For I ask any Man, what necessary Connexion he sees between the Redness of a Blush and Shame? And yet no sooner shall he behold that Colour to arise in the Face of another, but it brings into his Mind the Idea of that Passion which hath been observed to accompany it.

XXIV. What seems to have misled the Writers of Optics in this Matter is, that they imagine Men judge of Distance, as they do of a Conclusion in Mathematics; betwixt which and the Premises it is indeed absolutely requisite there be an apparent, necessary Connexion: But it is far otherwise, in the sudden Judgments Men

make of Distance. We are not to think, that Brutes and Children, or even grown reasonable Men, whenever they perceive an Object to approach, or depart from them, do it by virtue of Geometry and Demonstration.

XXV. That one Idea may suggest another to the Mind, it will suffice that they have been observed to go together, without any Demonstration of the Necessity of their Coexistence, or without so much as knowing what it is that makes them so to coexist. Of this there are innumerable Instances, of which no one can be ignorant.

XXVI. Thus, greater Confusion having been constantly attended with nearer Distance, no sooner is the former Idea perceived, but it suggests the latter to our Thoughts. And if it had been the ordinary Course of Nature, that the farther off an Object were placed, the more confused it should appear, it is certain, the very same Perception, that now makes us think an Object approaches, would then have made us to imagine it went farther off. That Perception, abstracting from Custom and Experience, being equally fitted to produce the Idea of great Distance, or small Distance, or no Distance at all.

XXVII.

XXVII. *Thirdly*, An Object being placed at the Distance above specified, and brought nearer to the Eye, we may nevertheless prevent, at least for some time, the Appearances growing more confused, by straining the Eye. In which Case, that Sensation supplies the place of confused Vision, in aiding the Mind to judge of the Distance of the Object; it being esteemed so much the nearer, by how much the Effort or Straining of the Eye in order to distinct Vision is greater.

XXVIII. I have here set down those Sensations or Ideas, that seem to be the constant and general Occasions of introducing into the Mind the different Ideas of near Distance. It is true in most Cases, that divers other Circumstances contribute to frame our Idea of Distance, to wit, the particular Number, Size, Kind, &c. of the things seen. Concerning which, as well as all other the fore-mentioned Occasions which suggest Distance, I shall only observe, they have none of them, in their own Nature, any Relation or Connexion with it: Nor is it possible, they should ever signify the various Degrees thereof, otherwise than as by Experience they have been found to be connected with them.

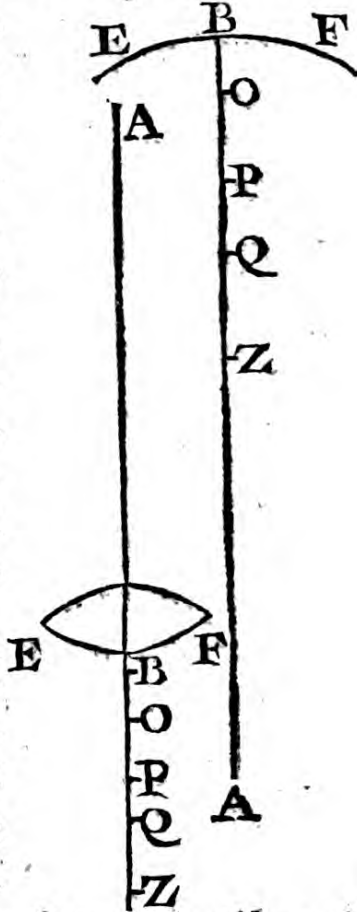
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XXIX. I shall proceed upon these Principles to account for a Phænomenon, which has hitherto strangely puzzled the Writers of Optics, and is so far from being accounted for by any of their Theories of Vision, that it is, by their own Confession, plainly repugnant to them: And of Consequence, if nothing else could be objected, were alone sufficient to bring their Credit in Question. The whole Difficulty I shall lay before you in the Words of the learned Dr. *Barrow*, with which he concludes his Optic Lectures.

Hæc sunt, quæ circa partem Opticæ præcipue Mathematicam dicenda mihi suggestit meditatio. Circa reliquas, (quæ quomodo erant sunt, adeoque sæpiusculè pro certis principiis plausibiles conjecturas venditare necessum habent) nihil fere quicquam admodum verisimile succurrit, a pervulgatis (ab iis, inquam, quæ Keplerus, Scheinerus, Cartesius, & post illos alii tradiderunt) alienum aut diversum. Atqui tacere malo, quam toties oblatam cramben reponere. Proinde receptui cano; nec ita tamen ut prorsus discedam anteaquam improbam quandam difficultatem (pro sinceritate quam & vobis & veritati debeo minime dissimulandam) in medium protulero, quæ

quæ doctrinæ nostræ, hætenus inculcatæ, se objicit adversam, ab ea saltem nullam admittit solutionem. Illa, breviter, talis est: Lenti vel Speculo cavo

EBF exponatur punctum visibile A, ita Distans ut Radii ex A manantes ex inflexione versus axem AB cogantur. Sitque radiationis Limes (seu puncti A imago, qualem supra passim statuimus) punctum Z. Inter hoc autem & inflectentis verticem Buspiciam positus concipiatur Oculus. Quæri jam potest ubi loci debeat punctum A apparere? Retrorsum ad punctum Z videri non fert Natura (cum omnis impressio sen-



sum afficiens proveniat a partibus A) ac experientia reclamant. Nostris autem e placitis consequi videtur, ipsum ad partes anticas apparens ab intervallo longissime dissito, (quod & maximum sensibile quodvis Intervallum quodammodo exsuperet) apparere. Cum enim quo Radiis minus divergentibus attingitur Objectum, eo (seclusis utique

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*prænotionibus & præjudiciis) longius
 abesse sentiatur; et quod Parellelos ad
 Oculum Radios projicit, remotissime po-
 situm æstimetur. Exigere Ratio vide-
 tur, ut quod convergentibus radiis ap-
 prehenditur, adhuc magis, si fieri pos-
 set, quoad apparentiam elongetur. Quin
 & circa Casum hunc generatim inquiri
 possit, quidnam omnino sit, quod appa-
 rentem puncti A locum determinet,
 faciatque quod constanti ratione nunc
 propius, nunc remotius appareat? Cui
 itidem dubio, nihil quicquam ex hæc-
 tenus dictorum Analogia, responderi posse
 videtur, nisi debere punctum A perpetuo
 longissime semotum videri. Verum expe-
 rientia secus attestatur, illud pro di-
 versa Oculi inter puncta B, Z, positione
 varie distans; nunquam fere (si un-
 quam) longinquius ipso A libere spectato,
 subinde vero multo propinquius adpa-
 rere; quinimo, quo oculum appellentes
 radii magis convergunt eo speciem Ob-
 jecti propius accedere. Nempe, si
 puncto B admoveatur Oculus, suo (ad-
 lentem) fere nativo in loco conspicitur
 punctum A (vel æque distans, ad Spe-
 culum;) ad O reductus oculus ejusce
 speciem appropinquantem cernit; ad
 P adhuc vicinius ipsum existimat; ac
 ita sensim, donec alicubi tandem, velut
 ad*

ad Q, constituto oculo objectum summe propinquum apparens, in meram confusionem incipiat evanescere. Quæ sane cuncta rationibus atque decretis nostris repugnare videntur, aut cum iis saltem parum amice conspirant. Neque nostram tantum sententiam pulsat hoc experimentum; at ex æquo cæteras quas norim omnes, veterem imprimis ac vulgatam nostræ præ reliquis affinem ita convellere videtur, ut ejus vi coactus doctissimus A. Tacquetus isti principio (cui pene soli totam inædificaverat Catoptricam suam) ceu infido ac inconstanti renunciavit, adeoque suam ipse doctrinam labefecerit; id tamen, opinor, minime facturum, si rem totam inspexisset penitus, atque difficultatis fundum attigisset. Apud me vero non ita pollet hæc, nec eousque præpollebit ulla difficultas, ut abis, quæ manifeste rationi consentanea video, discedam; præsertim quum ut hic accidit, ejusmodi difficultas in singularis cujuscumque casus disparitate fundetur. Nimirum in præsentem casu peculiare quiddam, naturæ subtilitati involutum, delitescit, ægre fortassis, nisi perfectius explorato videndi modo, detegendum. Circa quod nil, fateor, hætenus excogitare potui, quod adblan-

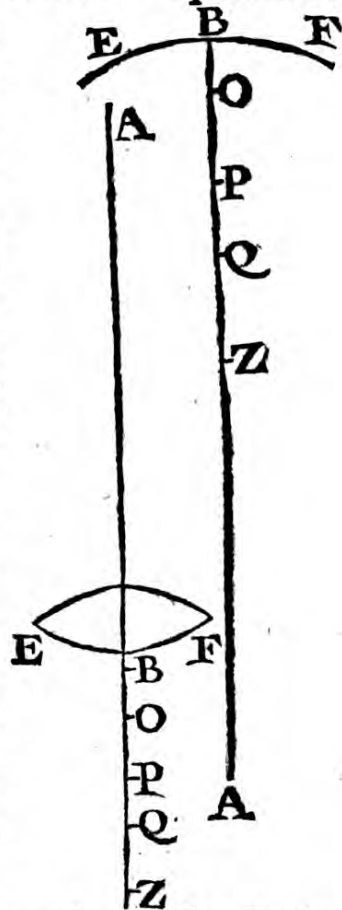
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directur animo meo, nedum plane satisfaceret. Vobis itaque nodum hunc, utinam feliciore conatu, resolvendum committo.

In English as follows.

‘ I have here delivered what my
 ‘ Thoughts have suggested to me, con-
 ‘ cerning that part of Optics which is
 ‘ more properly Mathematical. As for
 ‘ the other Parts of that Science (which
 ‘ being rather Physical, do consequently
 ‘ abound with plausible Conjectures in-
 ‘ stead of certain Principles) there has in
 ‘ them scarce any thing occur’d to my
 ‘ Observation, different from what has
 ‘ been already said by *Kepler, Scheinerus,*
 ‘ *Descartes,* and others. And methinks,
 ‘ I had better say nothing at all, than
 ‘ repeat that which has been so often
 ‘ said by others. I think it therefore
 ‘ high time to take my leave of this Sub-
 ‘ ject: But before I quit it for good and
 ‘ all, the fair and ingenuous Dealing that
 ‘ I owe both to You and to Truth, ob-
 ‘ ligeth me to acquaint you with a cer-
 ‘ tain untoward Difficulty, which seems
 ‘ directly opposite to the Doctrine I have
 ‘ been hitherto inculcating, at least, ad-
 ‘ mits of no Solution from it. In short
 ‘ it

it is this. Before the double Con-
 vex Glas or Concave Speculum
 EBF, let the Point
 A be placed, at such a
 Distance that the Rays
 proceeding from A,
 after Refraction or
 Reflexion, be brought
 to Unite somewhere
 in the Ax AB. And
 suppose the Point of
 Union (*i. e.* the I-
 mage of the Point A,
 as hath been already
 set forth) to be Z;
 between which and B,
 the Vertex of the
 Glas or Speculum,
 conceive the Eye to
 be any where placed.



The Question now is, where the Point
 A ought to appear? Experience shews
 that it doth not appear behind at the
 Point Z, and it were contrary to Na-
 ture that it should; since all the Im-
 pression which affects the Sense comes
 from towards A. But from our Tenets
 it should seem to follow that it would
 appear before the Eye at a vast Distance
 off, so great as should in some Sort
 surpass all sensible Distance. For since
 if

‘ if we exclude all Anticipations and Pre-
‘ judices, every Object appears by so
‘ much the farther off, by how much
‘ the Rays it sends to the Eye are less
‘ diverging. And that Object is thought
‘ to be most remote, from which Parallel
‘ Rays proceed unto the Eye. Reason
‘ would make one think, that Object
‘ should appear, at yet a greater Distance,
‘ which is seen by converging Rays.
‘ Moreover it may in general be asked
‘ concerning this Case, what it is that de-
‘ termines the apparent Place of the
‘ Point A, and maketh it to appear af-
‘ ter a constant manner, sometimes nearer,
‘ at other times farther off? To which
‘ Doubt, I see nothing that can be answered
‘ agreeable to the Principles we have laid
‘ down except only that the Point A
‘ ought always to appear extremely re-
‘ mote. But on the contrary, we are as-
‘ sured by Experience that the Point A
‘ appears variously distant, according to
‘ the different Situations of the Eye be-
‘ tween the Point B and Z. And that it
‘ doth never (if at all) seem farther off,
‘ than it would if it were beheld by
‘ the naked Eye, but on the contrary, it
‘ doth sometimes appear much nearer.
‘ Nay, it is even certain, that by how
‘ much the Rays falling on the Eye do
more

more converge, by so much the nearer
 doth the Object seem to approach. For
 the Eye being placed close to the Point
 B, the Object A appears nearly in its
 own natural Place, if the Point B is
 taken in the Glafs, or at the same Di-
 stance, if in the Speculum. The Eye
 being brought back to O, the Object
 seems to draw near: and being come
 to P it beholds it still nearer. And so on
 by little and little, till at length the Eye
 being placed somewhere, suppose at Q,
 the Object appearing extremely near,
 begins to vanish into mere Confusion.
 All which doth seem repugnant to our
 Principles, at least, not rightly to agree
 with them. Nor is our Tenet alone
 struck at by this Experiment, but like-
 wise all others that ever came to my
 Knowledge are, every whit as much,
 endangered by it. The ancient one
 especially (which is most commonly re-
 ceived, and comes nearest to mine)
 seems to be so effectually overthrown
 thereby, that the most learned *Tacquet*
 has been forced to reject that Principle,
 as false and uncertain, on which alone he
 had built almost his whole *Catoptrics*;
 and consequently by taking away the
 Foundation, hath himself pulled down
 the Superstructure he had raised on it.
 Which

‘ Which, nevertheless, I do not believe he
 ‘ would have done, had he but considered
 ‘ the whole Matter more thoroughly, and
 ‘ examined the Difficulty to the Bottom.
 ‘ But as for me, neither this, nor any
 ‘ other Difficulty shall have so great an
 ‘ Influence on me, as to make me re-
 ‘ nounce that which I know to be ma-
 ‘ nifestly agreeable to Reason: Especially
 ‘ when, as it here falls out, the Difficulty
 ‘ is founded in the peculiar Nature of a
 ‘ certain odd and particular Case. For in
 ‘ the present Case something peculiar lies
 ‘ hid, which being involved in the Sub-
 ‘ tility of Nature will, perhaps, hardly
 ‘ be discovered till such time, as the
 ‘ Manner of Vision is more perfectly
 ‘ made known. Concerning which, I
 ‘ must own, I have hitherto been able
 ‘ to find out nothing that has the least
 ‘ shew of Probability, not to mention
 ‘ Certainty. I shall, therefore, leave this
 ‘ Knot to be untied by you, wishing
 ‘ you may have better Success in it than I
 ‘ have had.

XXX. The ancient and received Prin-
 ciple, which Dr. *Barrow* here mentions as
 the main Foundation of *Tacquet's* Catop-
 trics, is that *every visible Point seen by*
Reflexion from a Speculum, shall appear
placed

placed at the Interfection of the reflected Ray, and the Perpendicular of Incidence. Which Interfection in the present Case, happening to be behind the Eye, it greatly shakes the Authority of that Principle, whereon the aforementioned Author proceeds throughout his whole Catoptrics, in determining the apparent Place of Objects seen by Reflexion from any kind of Speculum.

XXXI. Let us now see how this Phænomenon agrees with our Tenets. The Eye the nearer it is placed to the Point B in the foregoing Figures, the more distinct is the Appearance of the Object; but as it recedes to O, the Appearance grows more confused; and at P it sees the Object yet more confused; and so on till the Eye being brought back to Z, sees the Object in the greatest Confusion of all. Wherefore by Sect. XXI. the Object should seem to approach the Eye gradually, as it recedes from the Point B, that is at O it should (in Consequence of the Principle I have laid down in the aforesaid Section) seem nearer than it did at B, and at P nearer than at O, and at Q nearer than at P; and so on, till it quite vanishes at Z. Which is the very matter of Fact, as any one
that

that pleases may easily satisfy himself by Experiment.

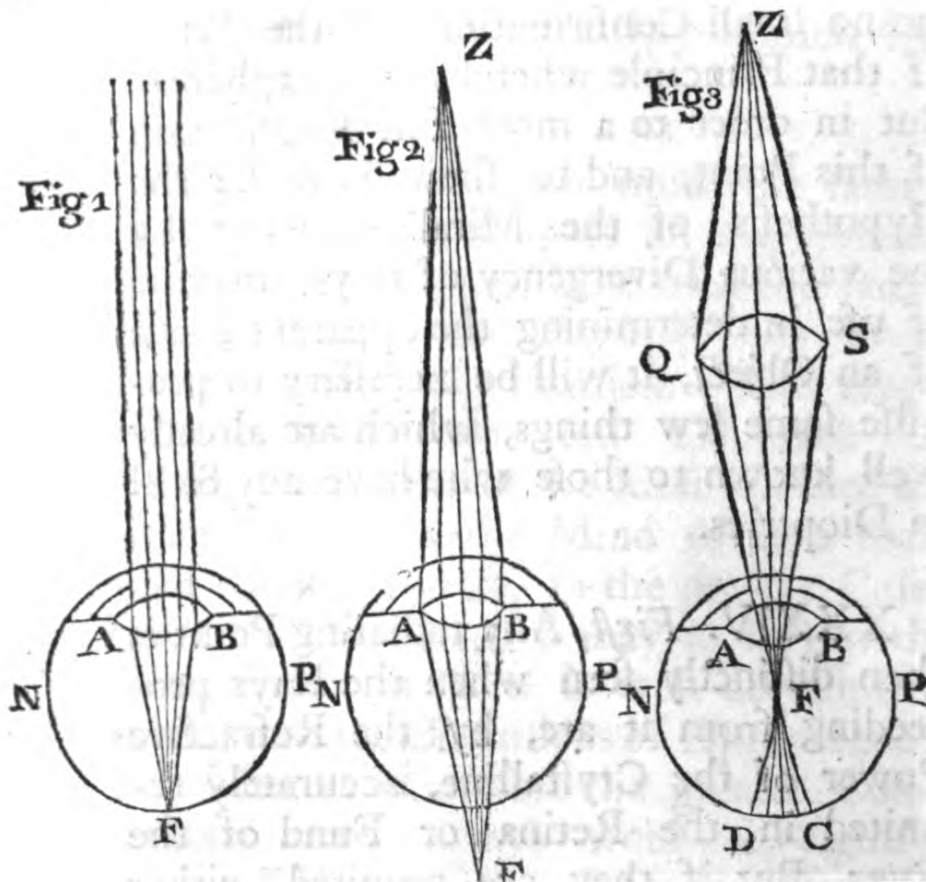
XXXII. This Case is much the same, as if we should suppose an *Englishman* to meet a Foreigner, who used the same Words with the *English*, but in a direct contrary Signification. The *Englishman* would not fail to make a wrong Judgment, of the Ideas annexed to those Sounds, in the Mind of him that used them. Just so, in the present Case the Object speaks (if I may so say) with Words that the Eye is well acquainted with, that is, Confusions of Appearance; but whereas heretofore the greater Confusions were always wont to signify nearer Distances, they have in this Case a direct, contrary Signification, being connected with the greater Distances. Whence it follows, that the Eye must unavoidably be mistaken, since it will take the Confusions in the Sense it has been used to, which is directly opposed to the True.

XXXIII. This Phænomenon as it entirely subverts the Opinion of those, who will have us judge of Distance by Lines and Angles, on which Supposition it is altogether inexplicable, so it seems to me

me no small Confirmation, of the Truth of that Principle whereby it is explained. But in order to a more full Explication of this Point, and to shew how far the Hypothesis of the Mind's judging by the various Divergency of Rays, may be of use in determining the apparent Place of an Object, it will be necessary to premise some few things, which are already well known to those who have any Skill in Dioptrics.

XXXIV. *First,* Any radiating Point is then distinctly seen when the Rays proceeding from it are, by the Refractive Power of the Crystalline, accurately reunited in the Retina or Fund of the Eye: But if they are reunited, either before they arrive at the Retina, or after they have past it, then there is confused Vision.

XXXV. *Secondly,* Suppose in the adjacent Figures NP represent an Eye duly framed, and retaining its natural Figure. In Fig. 1. the Rays falling nearly Parallel on the Eye, are by the Crystalline AB refracted, so as their Focus or Point of Union F falls exactly on the Retina: But if the Rays fall sensibly diverging on the Eye, as in Fig. 2. then their Focus falls beyond the
Retina:



Retina: Or if the Rays are made to converge by the Lens $Q S$, before they come at the Eye, as in Fig. 3. their Focus F will fall before the Retina. In which two last Cases, it is evident from the foregoing Section, that the Appearance of the Point Z is confused. And by how much the greater is the Convergency, or Divergency of the Rays falling on the Pupil, by so much the farther will the Point of their Reunion be from the Retina, either before or behind it, and consequently the Point Z will appear, by so much the more confused.

fused. And this, by the bye, may shew us the Difference between confused, and faint Vision. Confused Vision is, when the Rays proceeding from each distinct Point of the Object are not accurately recollected in one corresponding Point on the Retina, but take up some Space thereon: So that Rays from different Points become mixed, and confused together. This is opposed to a distinct Vision, and attends near Objects. Faint Vision is, when by reason of the Distance of the Object or Grossness of the interjacent Medium few Rays arrive from the Object to the Eye. This is opposed to vigorous or clear Vision, and attends remote Objects. But to return.

XXXVI. The Eye, or (to speak truly) the Mind perceiving only the Confusion it self, without ever considering the Cause from which it proceeds, doth constantly annex the same Degree of Distance to the same Degree of Confusion. Whether that Confusion be occasioned by converging, or by diverging Rays, it matters not. Whence it follows, that the Eye viewing the Object Z through the Glass QS (which by Refraction causeth the Rays ZQ, ZS, &c. to converge) should judge it to be at such a Nearness, at which if it were placed, it

would radiate on the Eye with Rays diverging to that Degree, as would produce the same Confusion, which is now produced by converging Rays, *i. e.* would cover a Portion of the Retina equal to DC. *vid.* Fig. 3. *supra.* But then this must be understood (to use Dr. Barrow's Phrase) *seclusis prænotionibus & præjudiciis*, in case we abstract from all other Circumstances of Vision, such as the Figure, Size, Faintness, &c. of the visible Objects; all which do ordinarily concur to form our Idea of Distance, the Mind having by frequent Experience observed their several Sorts or Degrees, to be connected with various Distances.

XXXVII. It plainly follows from what hath been said, that a Person perfectly Purlind (*i. e.* that could not see an Object distinctly, but when placed close to his Eye) would not make the same wrong Judgment that others do, in the forementioned Case. For, to him, greater Confusions constantly suggesting greater Distances, he must, as he recedes from the Glass, and the Object grows more Confused, judge it to be at a farther Distance, contrary to what they do, who have had the Perception of the Objects growing
more

more confused, connected with the Idea of Approach.

XXXVIII. Hence also it doth appear, there may be good use of Computation by Lines and Angles in Optics; not that the Mind judgeth of Distance immediately by them, but because it judgeth by somewhat which is connected with them, and to the Determination whereof they may be subservient. Thus the Mind judging of the Distance of an Object, by the Confusedness of its Appearance, and this Confusedness being greater or lesser to the naked Eye, according as the Object is seen by Rays more or less diverging, it follows, that a Man may make use of the Divergency of the Rays in computing the apparent Distance, though not for its own sake, yet on account of the Confusion with which it is connected. But, so it is, the Confusion it self is entirely neglected by Mathematicians, as having no necessary Relation with Distance, such as the greater or lesser Angles of Divergency are conceived to have. And these (especially for that they fall under Mathematical Computation) are alone regarded, in determining the apparent Places of Objects, as though they were the sole and immediate Cause of the Judgments the Mind makes of Distance.

Whereas, in truth, they should not at all be regarded in themselves, or any otherwise, than as they are supposed to be the Cause of confused Vision.

XXXIX. The not considering of this has been a fundamental and perplexing Oversight. For Proof whereof, we need go no farther than the Case before us. It having been observed, that the most diverging Rays brought into the Mind the Idea of nearest Distance, and that still, as the Divergency decreased, the Distance increased: and it being thought, the Connexion between the various Degrees of Divergency and Distance, was immediate; this naturally leads one to conclude, from an ill grounded Analogy, that converging Rays shall make an Object appear at an immense Distance: And that, as the Convergence increases, the Distance (if it were possible) should do so likewise. That this was the Cause of Dr. *Barrow's* Mistake, is evident from his own Words which we have quoted. Whereas had the learned Doctor observed, that diverging and converging Rays, how opposite soever they may seem, do nevertheless agree in producing the same Effect, to wit, Confusedness of Vision, greater Degrees whereof are produced indifferently, either as the Divergency or

Convergency of the Rays increaseth. And that it is by this Effect, which is the same in both, that either the Divergency or Convergency is perceived by the Eye; I say, had he but consider'd this, it is certain he would have made a quite contrary Judgment, and rightly concluded, that those Rays which fall on the Eye with greater Degrees of Convergency should make the Object from whence they proceed, appear by so much the nearer. But it is plain, it was impossible for any Man to attain to a right Notion of this Matter, so long as he had regard only to Lines and Angles, and did not apprehend the true Nature of Vision, and how far it was of Mathematical Consideration.

XL. Before we dismiss this Subject, it is fit we take notice of a Query relating thereto, proposed by the ingenious Mr. *Molyneux*, in his Treatise of Dioptrics *, where speaking of this Difficulty, he has these Words: ‘ And so he (*i. e.* Dr. *Barrow*) leaves this Difficulty to the
‘ Solution of others, which I (after so
‘ great an Example) shall do like-
‘ wise; but with the Resolution of the
‘ same admirable Author of not quitting
‘ the evident Doctrine which we have
‘ before

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* Par. I. Prop. 31. Sect. 9.

' before laid down, for determining the
 ' *Locus Objecti*, on account of being press'd
 ' by one Difficulty, which seems inexplic-
 ' cable till a more intimate Knowledge of
 ' the Visive Faculty be obtained by Mor-
 ' tals. In the mean time, I propose it to
 ' the Consideration of the Ingenious, Whe-
 ' ther the *Locus Apparens* of an Object
 ' placed as in this 9th Section, be not as
 ' much before the Eye, as the distinct
 ' Base is behind the Eye?' To which Que-
 ry we may venture to answer in the Ne-
 gative. For in the present Case, the Rule
 for determining the Distance of the dis-
 tinct Base, or respective Focus from the
 Glass is this: *As the Difference between*
the Distance of the Object and Focus is to
the Focus or Focal Length, so the Distance of
the Object from the Glass is to the Distance
of the respective Focus or distinct Base from
the Glass *. Let us now suppose the Ob-
 ject to be placed at the Distance of the Fo-
 cal Length, and one half of the Focal
 Length from the Glass, and the Eye close
 to the Glass, hence it will follow by the
 Rule, that the Distance of the distinct
 Base behind the Eye is double the true
 Distance of the Object before the Eye.
 If therefore Mr. *Molyneux's* Conjecture
 held good, it wou'd follow that the Eye
 should see the Object, twice as far off as
 it

* *Molyneux Dioptr. Par. I. Prop. 5.*

it really is; and in other Cases at three or four times its due Distance, or more. But this manifestly contradicts Experience, the Object never appearing, at farthest, beyond its due Distance. What ever therefore is built on this Supposition (*vid. Corol. 1. Prop. 57, ibid.*) comes to the Ground along with it.

XLI. From what hath been premis'd, it is a manifest Consequence, that a Man born blind, being made to see, would, at first, have no Idea of Distance by Sight; The Sun and Stars, the remotest Objects as well as the nearer would all seem to be in his Eye, or rather in his Mind. The Objects intromitted by Sight, would seem to him (as in truth they are) no other than a new Set of Thoughts or Sensations, each whereof is as near to him, as the Perceptions of Pain or Pleasure, or the most inward Passions of his Soul. For our judging Objects perceiv'd by Sight to be at any Distance, or without the Mind, is (*vid. SECT. XXVIII.*) intirely the Effect of Experience, which one in those Circumstances could not yet have attained to,

XLII. It is indeed otherwise upon the common Supposition, that Men judge of Distance by the Angle of the Optic Axes,

just as one in the Dark, or a Blind-man by the Angle comprehended by two Sticks, one whereof he held in each Hand. For if this were true, it would follow that one blind from his Birth being made to see, should stand in need of no new Experience, in order to perceive Distance by Sight. But that this is false, has, I think, been sufficiently demonstrated.

XLIII. And perhaps upon a strict Inquiry, we shall not find that even those, who from their Birth have grown up in a continu'd Habit of Seeing, are irrecoverably prejudiced on the other side, to wit, in thinking what they see to be at a Distance from them. For at this time it seems agreed on all hands, by those who have had any Thoughts of that Matter, that Colours, which are the proper and immediate Object of Sight, are not without the Mind. But then it will be said, by Sight we have also the Ideas of Extension, and Figure, and Motion; all which may well be thought without, and at some Distance from the Mind, though Colour should not. In answer to this, I appeal to any Man's Experience, whether the visible Extension of any Object doth not appear as near to him, as the Colour of that Object; Nay, whether they do not both seem

seem to be in the very same Place. Is not the Extension we see coloured, and is it possible for us, so much as in Thought, to separate and abstract Colour from Extension? Now, where the Extension is, there surely is the Figure, and there the Motion too. I speak of those which are perceived by Sight.

XLIV. But for a fuller Explication of this Point, and to shew that the immediate Objects of Sight are not so much as the Ideas or Resemblances of things placed at a Distance, it is requisite that we look nearer into the Matter, and carefully observe what is meant in common Discourse, when one says, that which he sees is at a Distance from him. Suppose, for Example, that looking at the Moon I should say it were fifty or sixty Semidiameters of the Earth distant from me. Let us see what Moon this is spoken of: It is plain it cannot be the visible Moon, or any thing like the visible Moon, or that which I see, which is only a round, luminous Plain, of about thirty visible Points in Diameter. For in case I am carried from the Place where I stand directly towards the Moon, it is manifest the Object varies, still as I go on; and by the time that I am advanced fifty or sixty Semidiameters of the
Earth,

Earth, I shall be so far from being near a small, round, luminous Flat, that I shall perceive nothing like it; this Object having long since disappeared, and if I would recover it, it must be by going back to the Earth from whence I set out. Again, suppose I perceive by Sight the faint and obscure Idea of something, which I doubt whether it be a Man, or a Tree, or a Tower, but judge it to be at the Distance of about a Mile. It is plain I cannot mean, that what I see is a Mile off, or that it is the Image or Likeness of any thing which is a Mile off, since that every Step I take towards it, the Appearance alters, and from being obscure, small, and faint, grows clear, large, and vigorous. And when I come to the Mile's end, that which I saw first is quite lost, neither do I find any thing in the likeness of it.

XLV. In these and the like Instances, the Truth of the Matter stands thus: Having of a long time experienced certain Ideas, perceivable by Touch, as Distance, tangible Figure, and Solidity, to have been connected with certain Ideas of Sight, I do upon perceiving these Ideas of Sight, forthwith conclude what Tangible Ideas are, by the wonted ordinary course of Nature, like to follow. Looking at an Object I per-

perceive a certain visible Figure and Colour, with some degree of Faintness and other Circumstances, which from what I have formerly observed, determine me to think, that if I advance forward so many Paces or Miles, I shall be affected with such and such Ideas of Touch: So that in truth and strictness of Speech, I neither see Distance it self, nor any thing that I take to be at a Distance. I say, neither Distance, nor things placed at a Distance are themselves, or their Ideas, truly perceived by Sight. This I am persuaded of, as to what concerns my self: and I believe whoever will look narrowly into his own Thoughts, and examine what he means by saying, he sees this or that thing at a Distance, will agree with me, that what he sees only suggests to his Understanding, that after having passed a certain Distance, to be measured by the Motion of his Body, which is perceivable by Touch, he shall come to perceive such and such tangible Ideas which have been usually connected with such and such visible Ideas. But that one might be deceived by these Suggestions of Sense, and that there is no necessary Connexion between visible and tangible Ideas suggested by them, we need go no farther than the next Looking-glass or Picture to be convinced. Note, that

that when I speak of Tangible Ideas, I take the word Idea for any the immediate Object of Sense, or Understanding, in which large Signification it is commonly used by the Moderns.

XLVI. From what we have shewn it is a manifest Consequence, that the Ideas of Space, Outness, and Things placed at a Distance, are not, strictly speaking, the Object of Sight; they are not otherwise perceived by the Eye than by the Ear. Sitting in my Study I hear a Coach drive along the Street; I look through the Casement and see it; I walk out and enter into it; thus, common Speech would incline one to think, I heard, saw, and touch'd the same thing, to wit, the Coach. It is nevertheless certain, the Ideas intromitted by each Sense are widely different, and distinct from each other; but having been observed constantly to go together, they are spoken of as one and the same thing. By the Variation of the Noise I perceive the different Distances of the Coach, and know that it approaches before I look out. Thus by the Ear I perceive Distance, just after the same manner as I do by the Eye.

XLVII.

XLVII. I do not nevertheless say, I hear Distance in like manner as I say that I see it, the Ideas perceived by Hearing not being so apt to be confounded with the Ideas of Touch, as those of Sight are. So likewise a Man is easily convinced that Bodies and external Things are not properly the Object of Hearing ; but only Sounds, by the Mediation whereof the Idea of this or that Body, or Distance is suggested to his Thoughts. But then one is with more Difficulty brought to discern the Difference there is betwixt the Ideas of Sight and Touch: Though it be certain, a Man no more sees and feels the same thing, than he hears and feels the same thing.

XLVIII. One Reason of which seems to be this. It is thought a great Absurdity to imagine, that one and the same thing should have any more than one Extension, and one Figure. But the Extension and Figure of a Body, being let into the Mind two ways, and that indifferently, either by Sight or Touch, it seems to follow that we see the same Extension and the same Figure which we feel.

XLIX. But if we take a close and accurate View of Things, it must be acknowledged

known that we never see and feel one and the same Object. That which is seen is one thing, and that which is felt is another. If the visible Figure and Extension be not the same with the tangible Figure and Extension, we are not to infer that one and the same thing has divers Extensions. The true Consequence is, that the Objects of Sight and Touch are two distinct things. It may perhaps require some Thought rightly to conceive this Distinction. And the Difficulty seems not a little increased, because the Combination of Visible Ideas hath constantly the same Name, as the Combination of Tangible Ideas wherewith it is connected: Which doth of Necessity arise from the use and end of Language.

L. In order therefore to treat accurately and unconfusedly of Vision, we must bear in mind, that there are two Sorts of Objects apprehended by the Eye, the one primarily and immediately, the other secondarily and by Intervention of the former. Those of the first sort neither are, nor appear to be without the Mind, or at any Distance off: they may indeed grow greater, or smaller, more confused, or more clear, or more faint, but they do not, cannot approach or recede from us. Whenever
we

we say an Object is at a Distance, whenever we say it draws near, or goes farther off, we must always mean it of the latter sort, which properly belong to the Touch, and are not so truly perceived, as suggested by the Eye in like manner as Thoughts by the Ear.

LI. No sooner do we hear the Words of a familiar Language pronounced in our Ears, but the Ideas corresponding thereto present themselves to our Minds: in the very same Instant the Sound and the Meaning enter the Understanding: So closely are they united, that it is not in our Power to keep out the one, except we exclude the other also. We even act in all respects as if we heard the very Thoughts themselves. So likewise the secondary Objects, or those which are only suggested by Sight, do often more strongly affect us, and are more regarded than the proper Objects of that Sense; along with which they enter into the Mind, and with which they have a far more strict Connexion, than Ideas have with Words. Hence it is, we find it so difficult to discriminate between the immediate and mediate Objects of Sight, and are so prone to attribute to the former, what belongs only to the latter. They are, as it were, most closely twisted, blended,

blended, and incorporated together. And the Prejudice is confirmed and riveted in our Thoughts by a long Tract of Time, by the use of Language, and want of Reflexion. However, I believe any one that shall attentively consider what we have already said, and shall say upon this Subject before we have done, (especially if he pursue it in his own Thoughts) may be able to deliver himself from that Prejudice. Sure I am it is worth some Attention, to whoever would understand the true Nature of Vision.

LII. I have now done with Distance, and proceed to shew how it is, that we perceive by Sight the Magnitude of Objects. It is the Opinion of some that we do it by Angles, or by Angles in conjunction with Distance: but neither Angles, nor Distance being perceivable by Sight, and the things we see being in truth at no Distance from us, it follows that as we have shewn Lines and Angles not to be the Medium, the Mind makes use of in apprehending the apparent Place, so neither are they the Medium whereby it apprehends the apparent Magnitude of Objects.

LIII. It is well known that the same Extension at a near Distance shall sub-
tend

tend a greater Angle, and at a farther Distance, a lesser Angle. And by this Principle (we are told) the Mind estimates the Magnitude of an Object comparing the Angle under which it is seen with its Distance, and thence inferring the Magnitude thereof. What inclines Men to this Mistake (beside the Humour of making one see by Geometry) is, that the same Perceptions or Ideas which suggest Distance, do also suggest Magnitude. But if we examine it, we shall find they suggest the latter, as immediately as the former. I say, they do not first suggest Distance, and then leave it to the Judgment to use that as a Medium, whereby to collect the Magnitude; but they have as close, and immediate a Connexion with the Magnitude, as with the Distance; and suggest Magnitude as independently of Distance, as they do Distance independently of Magnitude. All which will be evident to whoever considers what hath been already said, and what follows.

LIV. It hath been shewn, there are two sorts of Objects apprehended by Sight; each whereof hath its distinct Magnitude, or Extension. The one, properly Tangible, *i. e.* to be perceived and measured by Touch, and not immediately falling

under the Sense of Seeing: The other, properly and immediately visible, by Mediation of which the former is brought in view: Each of these Magnitudes are greater or lesser, according as they contain in them more or fewer Points, they being made up of Points or Minimums. For, whatever may be said of Extension in Abstract, it is certain sensible Extension is not infinitely Divisible. There is a *Minimum Tangible*, and a *Minimum Visible*, beyond which Sense cannot perceive. This every ones Experience will inform him.

LV. The Magnitude of the Object which exists without the Mind, and is at a Distance, continues always invariably the same: But the visible Object still changing as you approach to, or recede from the Tangible Object, it hath no fixed and determinate Greatness. Whenever therefore, we speak of the Magnitude of any thing, for Instance a Tree or a House, we must mean the Tangible Magnitude, otherwise there can be nothing steady and free from Ambiguity spoken of it. But though the Tangible and Visible Magnitude in truth belong to two distinct Objects: I shall nevertheless (especially since those Objects are called by the same Name, and are observed to coexist)

to avoid Tedioufness and Singularity of Speech, sometimes speak of them, as belonging to one and the same thing.

LVI. Now in order to discover by what means, the Magnitude of Tangible Objects is perceived by Sight; I need only reflect on what passes in my own Mind, and observe what those things be, which introduce the Ideas of greater or lesser into my Thoughts, when I look on any Object. And these I find to be, First, the Magnitude or Extension of the Visible Object, which being immediately perceived by Sight, is connected with that other which is Tangible, and placed at a Distance. Secondly, The Confusion or Distinctness. And Thirdly, The Vigoroufness or Faintness of the aforesaid visible Appearance. *Cæteris paribus*, by how much the greater or lesser, the Visible Object is, by so much the greater or lesser, do I conclude the Tangible Object to be. But, be the Idea immediately perceived by Sight never so large, yet if it be withal confused, I judge the Magnitude of the thing to be but small. If it be distinct and clear, I judge it greater. And if it be faint, I apprehend it to be yet greater. What is here meant, by Confusion and Faintness, hath been explained in Sect. XXXV.

LVII. Moreover the Judgments we make of Greatness do, in like manner as those of Distance, depend on the Disposition of the Eye, also on the Figure, Number, and Situation of Objects and other Circumstances that have been observed to attend great or small Tangible Magnitudes. Thus, for Instance, the very same Quantity of Visible Extension, which in the Figure of a Tower, doth suggest the Idea of great Magnitude, shall, in the Figure of a Man suggest the Idea of much smaller Magnitude. That this is owing to the Experience we have had of the usual Bigness of a Tower and a Man, no one, I suppose, need be told.

LVIII. It is also evident, that Confusion or Faintness, have no more a necessary Connexion with little or great Magnitude, than they have with little or great Distance. As they suggest the latter, so they suggest the former to our Minds. And by Consequence, if it were not for Experience, we should no more judge a faint or confused Appearance to be connected with great or little Magnitude, than we should that it was connected with great or little Distance.

LIX. Nor

LIX. Nor will it be found, that great or small visible Magnitude hath any necessary Relation to great or small Tangible Magnitude: So that the one may certainly be infer'd from the other. But, before we come to the Proof of this, it is fit we consider the Difference there is betwixt the Extension and Figure which is the proper Object of Touch, and that other which is termed Visible; and how the former is principally, though not immediately taken notice of, when we look at any Object. This has been before mentioned, but we shall here inquire into the Cause thereof. We regard the Objects that environ us, in proportion as they are adapted to benefit or injure our own Bodies, and thereby produce in our Minds the Sensations of Pleasure or Pain. Now Bodies operating on our Organs, by an immediate Application, and the Hurt or Advantage arising there-from, depending altogether on the Tangible, and not at all on the Visible, Qualities of any Object: This is a plain Reason, why those should be regarded by us much more than these: and for this End, the Visive Sense seems to have been bestowed on Animals, to wit, that by the Perception of Visible Ideas (which in themselves are not capable of affecting, or any wise altering the

Frame of their Bodies) they may be able to foresee (from the Experience they have had, what Tangible Ideas are connected with such, and such Visible Ideas) the Damage or Benefit which is like to ensue, upon the Application of their own Bodies to this or that Body which is at a Distance. Which Foresight, how necessary it is to the Preservation of an Animal, every ones Experience can inform him. Hence it is that, when we look at an Object, the Tangible Figure and Extension thereof are principally attended to; whilst there is small heed taken of the Visible Figure and Magnitude, which, though more immediately perceived, do less concern us, and are not fitted to produce any Alteration in our Bodies.

LX. That the matter of Fact is true, will be evident to any one, who considers that a Man placed at ten Foot Distance, is thought as great, as if he were placed at the Distance only of five Foot: which is true, not with relation to the Visible, but Tangible Greatness of the Object: The Visible Magnitude being far greater, at one Station, than it is at the other.

LXI. Inches, Feet, &c. are settled, stated Lengths, whereby we measure Objects,
and

and estimate their Magnitude: we say, for Example, an Object appears to be six Inches or six Foot long. Now, that this cannot be meant of visible Inches, &c. is evident, because a visible Inch is it self no constant, determinate Magnitude, and cannot therefore serve to mark out, and determine the Magnitude of any other thing. Take an Inch mark'd upon a Ruler: view it, successively, at the distance of Half a Foot, a Foot, a Foot and a Half, &c. from the Eye: at each of which, and at all the intermediate Distances, the Inch shall have a different visible Extension, *i. e.* there shall be more or fewer Points discerned in it. Now I ask which of all these various Extensions, is that stated, determinate one, that is agreed on, for a common Measure of other Magnitudes? No Reason can be assigned, why we should pitch on one, more than another: And except there be some invariable, determinate Extension fixed on to be marked by the Word Inch, it is plain, it can be used to little purpose: and to say, a Thing contains this or that Number of Inches, shall imply no more than that it is extended, without bringing any particular Idea of that Extension into the Mind. Farther, an Inch and a Foot, from different Distances, shall

both exhibit the same visible Magnitude, and yet at the same time, you shall say, that one seems several times greater than the other. From all which it is manifest, that the Judgments we make of the Magnitude of Objects by Sight, are altogether in reference to their Tangible Extension. Whenever we say an Object is great, or small, of this or that determinate Measure, I say, it must be meant of the Tangible, and not the Visible Extension, which, though immediately perceived, is nevertheless little taken notice of.

LXII. Now, that there is no necessary Connexion, between these two distinct Extensions is evident from hence: Because our Eyes might have been framed in such a manner, as to be able to see nothing but what were less than the *Minimum Tangibile*. In which Case, it is not impossible we might have perceived all the immediate Objects of Sight, the very same that we do now: But unto those visible Appearances, there would not be connected those different Tangible Magnitudes, that are now. Which shews, the Judgments we make of the Magnitude of Things placed at a distance, from the various Greatness of the immediate Objects of Sight, do not arise from any essential or
 necessary

necessary, but only a customary Tye, which has been observed between them.

LXIV. Moreover, it is not only certain, that any Idea of Sight might not have been connected with this or that Idea of Touch, which we now observe to accompany it: But also, that the greater visible Magnitudes might have been connected with, and introduced into our Minds lesser Tangible Magnitudes, and the lesser Visible Magnitudes greater Tangible Magnitudes. Nay, that it actually is so, we have daily Experience; that Object which makes a strong and large Appearance, not seeming near so great as another, the Visible Magnitude whereof is much less, but more faint, and the Appearance upper, or which is the same thing painted lower on the *Retina*, which Faintness and Situation suggest both greater Magnitude and greater Distance.

LXIV. From which, and from Sect. LVII. and LVIII. it is manifest, that as we do not perceive the Magnitudes of Objects immediately by Sight, so neither do we perceive them, by the Mediation of any thing which has a necessary Connexion with them. Those Ideas that now suggest unto us the various Magnitudes

tudes of external Objects, before we touch them, might possibly have suggested no such thing: Or they might have signified them, in a direct contrary manner: so that the very same Ideas, on the Perception whereof we judge an Object to be small, might as well have served to make us conclude it great. Those Ideas being in their own Nature equally fitted to bring into our Minds the Idea of Small or Great, or no Size at all of outward Objects; just as the Words of any Language are in their own Nature indifferent to signify this or that thing, or nothing at all.

LXV. As we see Distance, so we see Magnitude. And we see both, in the same way that we see Shame or Anger in the Looks of a Man. Those Passions are themselves invisible, they are nevertheless let in by the Eye along with Colours and Alterations of Countenance, which are the immediate Object of Vision: And which signify them for no other Reason, than barely because they have been observed to accompany them. Without which Experience, we should no more have taken Blushing for a Sign of Shame, than of Gladness.

LXVI. We

LXVI. We are nevertheless exceeding prone to imagine those things, which are perceived only by the Mediation of others, to be themselves the immediate Objects of Sight; or, at least, to have in their own Nature a Fitness to be suggested by them, before ever they had been experienced to coexist with them. From which Prejudice every one, perhaps, will not find it easy to emancipate himself, by any the clearest Convictions of Reason. And there are some Grounds to think, that if there was one only invariable and universal Language in the World, and that Men were born with the Faculty of speaking it, it would be the Opinion of many, that the Ideas of other Mens Minds were properly perceived by the Ear, or had at least a necessary and inseparable Tye with the Sounds that were affixed to them. All which seems to arise from want of a due Application of our discerning Faculty, thereby to discriminate between the Ideas that are in our Understandings, and consider them apart from each other; which would preserve us from confounding those that are different, and make us see what Ideas do, and what do not include or imply this or that other Idea.

LXVII. There

LXVIII. There is a celebrated Phænomenon, the Solution whereof I shall attempt to give, by the Principles that have been laid down, in reference to the manner wherein we apprehend by Sight the Magnitude of Objects. The apparent Magnitude of the Moon when placed in the Horizon, is much greater than when it is in the Meridian. Though the Angle under which the Diameter of the Moon is seen, be not observed greater in the former Case, than in the latter: And the horizontal Moon doth not constantly appear of the same Bigness, but at some times seemeth far greater than at others.

LXVIII. Now in order to explain the Reason of the Moon's appearing greater than ordinary in the Horizon, it must be observed, that the Particles which compose our Atmosphere intercept the Rays of Light proceeding from any Object to the Eye; and by how much the greater is the Portion of Atmosphere, interjacent between the Object and the Eye, by so much the more are the Rays intercepted; and by consequence, the Appearance of the Object rendered more faint, every Object appearing more vigorous or more faint, in Proportion as it sendeth more or fewer Rays into the Eye. Now, between
the

the Eye and the Moon, when situated in the Horizon, there lies a far greater Quantity of Atmosphere, than there does when the Moon is in the Meridian. Whence it comes to pass, that the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon is fainter, and therefore by Sect. LVI. it should be thought bigger in that Situation, than in the Meridian, or in any other Elevation above the Horizon.

LXIX. Farther, the Air being variously impregnated, sometimes more and sometimes less, with Vapours and Exhalations fitted to retund and intercept the Rays of Light, it follows, that the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon hath not always an equal Faintness, and by Consequence, that Luminary, though in the very same Situation, is at one time judged greater than at another.

LXX. That we have here given the true Account of the Phænomena of the Horizontal Moon, will, I suppose, be farther evident to any one from the following Considerations. *First*, It is plain, that which in this Case suggests the Idea of greater Magnitude, must be something which is it self perceived ; for, that which
is

is unperceived cannot suggest to our Perception any other thing. *Secondly*, It must be something that does not constantly remain the same, but is subject to some Change or Variation, since the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon varies, being at one time greater than at another. And yet, *Thirdly*, It cannot be the visible Figure or Magnitude, since that remains the same, or is rather lesser, by how much the Moon is nearer to the Horizon. It remains therefore, that the true Cause is that Affection or Alteration of the Visible Appearance, which proceeds from the greater Paucity of Rays arriving at the Eye, and which I term Faintness: Since this answers all the forementioned Conditions, and I am not conscious of any other Perception that doth.

LXXI. Add to this, that in misty Weather it is a common Observation, that the Appearance of the Horizontal Moon is far larger than usual, which greatly conspires with, and strengthens our Opinion. Neither would it prove in the least, irreconcilable with what we have said, if the Horizontal Moon should change sometimes to seem enlarged beyond its usual Extent, even in more serene Weather. For we
must

must not only have regard to the Mist, which happens to be in the place where we stand; we ought also to take into our Thoughts, the whole Sum of Vapours and Exhalations, which lie betwixt the Eye and the Moon: All which cooperating to render the Appearance of the Moon more faint, and thereby increase its Magnitude, it may chance to appear greater than it usually does, even in the Horizontal Position, at a time when, though there be no extraordinary Fog or Haziness, just in the place where we stand; yet, the Air between the Eye and the Moon, taken all together, may be loaded with a greater quantity of interspersed Vapours and Exhalations, than at other times.

LXXII. It may be objected, that in Consequence of our Principles, the Interposition of a Body in some degree Opaque, which may intercept a great Part of the Rays of Light, should render the Appearance of the Moon in the Meridian as large, as when it is viewed in the Horizon. To which I answer, it is not Faintness any how applied, that suggests greater Magnitude, there being no necessary, but only an experimental Connexion between those two things: It follows, that the

Faintness, which enlarges the Appearance, must be applied in such Sort, and with such Circumstances, as have been observed to attend the Vision of great Magnitudes. When from a Distance we behold great Objects, the Particles of the intermediate Air and Vapours, which are themselves unperceivable, do interrupt the Rays of Light, and thereby render the Appearance less strong and vivid: now, Faintness of Appearance caused in this Sort, hath been experienced to coexist with great Magnitude. But when it is caused by the Interposition of an opaque sensible Body, this Circumstance alters the Case, so that a faint Appearance this way caused, doth not suggest greater Magnitude, because it hath not been experienced to coexist with it.

LXXIII. Faintness, as well as all other Ideas or Perceptions which suggest Magnitude or Distance, doth it in the same way that Words suggest the Notions to which they are annexed. Now, it is known, a Word pronounced with certain Circumstances, or in a certain Context with other Words, hath not always the same Import and Signification, that it hath when pronounced in some other Circumstances, or different Context of Words. The very same
Visible

Visible Appearance as to Faintness and all other Respects, if placed on high, shall not suggest the same Magnitude that it would if it were seen at an equal Distance, on a level with the Eye. The Reason whereof is, that we are rarely accustomed to view Objects at a great Height; our Concerns lie among things situated rather before than above us; and accordingly our Eyes are not placed on the top of our Heads, but in such a Position, as is most convenient for us to see distant Objects standing in our way. And this Situation of them being a Circumstance, which usually attends the Vision of distant Objects, we may from hence account for (what is commonly observed) an Object's appearing of different Magnitude, even with respect to its Horizontal Extension, on the top of a Steeple, for example, an hundred Feet high to one standing below, from what it would if placed at an hundred Feet distance on a level with his Eye. For it hath been shewn, that the Judgment we make on the Magnitude of a thing, depends not on the visible Appearance alone, but also on diverse other Circumstances, any one of which being omitted or varied may suffice to make some Alteration in our Judgment. Hence,

the Circumstance of viewing a distant Object in such a Situation as is usual, and suits with the ordinary Posture of the Head and Eyes being omitted, and instead thereof a different Situation of the Object, which requires a different Posture of the Head taking place, it is not to be wondered at, if the Magnitude be judged different: but it will be demanded, why an high Object should constantly appear less than an equidistant low Object of the same Dimensions, for so it is observed to be: it may indeed be granted that the Variation of some Circumstances may vary the Judgment, made on the Magnitude of high Objects, which we are less used to look at: But it does not hence appear, why they should be judged less rather than greater? I answer, that in case the Magnitude of distant Objects was suggested by the Extent of their visible Appearance alone, and thought proportional thereto, it is certain they would then be judged much less than now they seem to be, *Vide* SECT. LXXIX. But, several Circumstances concurring to form the Judgment we make on the Magnitude of distant Objects, by means of which they appear far larger than others, whose visible Appearance hath an equal or even

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greater

greater Extension ; it follows, that upon the Change or Omission of any of those Circumstances, which are wont to attend the Vision of distant Objects, and so come to influence the Judgments made on their Magnitude, they shall proportionably appear less than otherwise they would. For any of those things that caused an Object to be thought greater, than in proportion to its visible Extension, being either omitted or applied without the usual Circumstances, the Judgment depends more intirely on the visible Extension, and consequently the Object must be judged less. Thus in the present Case, the Situation of the thing seen being different from what it usually is in those Objects we have occasion to view, and whose Magnitude we observe, it follows, that the very same Object, being an hundred Feet high, should seem less than if it was an hundred Feet off on (or nearly on) a level with the Eye. What has been here set forth, seems to me to have no small share in contributing to magnify the Appearance of the horizontal Moon, and deserves not to be passed over in the Explication of it.

LXXIV. If we attentively consider the Phænomenon before us, we shall find the not discerning between the mediate and

immediate Objects of Sight, to be the chief Cause of the Difficulty that occurs in the Explication of it. The Magnitude of the visible Moon, or that which is the proper and immediate Object of Vision, is no greater when the Moon is in the Horizon, than when it is in the Meridian. How comes it therefore, to seem greater in one Situation than the other? What is it can put this Cheat on the Understanding? It has no other Perception of the Moon, than what it gets by Sight: And that which is seen, is of the same Extent, I say, the visible Appearance hath the same, or rather a less Magnitude when the Moon is viewed in the Horizontal, than when in the Meridional Position: And yet it is esteemed greater in the former than in the latter. Herein consists the difficulty, which doth vanish and admit of a most easy Solution, if we consider that as the visible Moon is not greater in the Horizon than in the Meridian, so neither is it thought to be so. It hath been already shewn, that in any act of Vision, the visible Object absolutely, or in it self, is little taken notice of, the Mind still carrying its View from that to some tangible Ideas, which have been observed to be connected with it, and by that means come to be suggested by it. So that when a thing is said to
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appear great or small, or whatever Estimate be made of the Magnitude of any thing, this is meant not of the visible, but of the tangible Object. This duly considered, it will be no hard matter to reconcile the seeming Contradiction there is, that the Moon should appear of a different Bigness, the visible Magnitude thereof remaining still the same. For by SECT. LVI. the very same visible Extension, with a different Faintness, shall suggest a different tangible Extension. When therefore the horizontal Moon is said to appear greater than the meridional Moon, this must be understood not of a greater visible Extension, but of a greater tangible or real Extension, which by reason of the more than ordinary Faintness of the visible Appearance, is suggested to the Mind along with it.

LXXV. Many Attempts have been made by Learned Men, to account for this Appearance. *Gassendus, Descartes, Hobbes*, and several others, have employed their Thoughts on that Subject; but how fruitless and unsatisfactory their Endeavours have been, is sufficiently shewn in *The Philosophical Transactions**, where you may see their several Opinions at large

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* Phil. Transf. Num. 187. p. 314.

A NEW THEORY

set forth and confuted, not without some Surprize at the gross Blunders that ingenious Men have been forced into, by endeavouring to reconcile this Appearance with the ordinary Principles of Optics. Since the Writing of which, there hath been published in the Transactions † another Paper relating to the same Affair by the celebrated Dr. *Wallis*, wherein he attempts to account for that Phænomenon, which, though it seems not to contain any thing new, or different from what had been said before by others, I shall nevertheless consider in this place.

LXXVI. His Opinion, in short, is this; We judge not of the Magnitude of an Object by the visual Angle alone, but by the visual Angle in conjunction with the Distance. Hence, though the Angle remain the same, or even become less, yet if withal the Distance seem to have been increased, the Object shall appear greater. Now, one way whereby we estimate the Distance of any thing, is by the Number and Extent of the intermediate Objects: When therefore the Moon is seen in the Horizon, the Variety of Fields, Houses, &c. together with the large Prospect of the wide extended Land or Sea, that lies between the Eye and the utmost Limb

† Numb. 187. p. 323.

of the Horizon, suggest unto the Mind the Idea of greater Distance, and consequently magnify the Appearance. And this, according to Dr. *Wallis*, is the true Account of the extraordinary Largeness attributed by the Mind to the horizontal Moon, at a time when the Angle subtended by its Diameter, is not one Jot greater than it used to be.

LXXVII. With reference to this Opinion, not to repeat what hath been already said concerning Distance, I shall only observe, *First*, That if the Prospect of interjacent Objects be that which suggests the Idea of farther Distance, and this Idea of farther Distance be the Cause that brings into the Mind the Idea of greater Magnitude, it should hence follow, that if one looked at the horizontal Moon from behind a Wall, it would appear no bigger than ordinary. For in that Case, the Wall interposing cuts off all that Prospect of Sea and Land, &c. which might otherwise increase the apparent Distance, and thereby the apparent Magnitude of the Moon. Nor will it suffice to say, the Memory doth even then suggest all that Extent of Land, &c. which lies within the Horizon; which Suggestion occasions a

sudden Judgment of Sense, that the Moon is farther off and larger than usual. For ask any Man, who from such a Station beholding the horizontal Moon, shall think her greater than usual, whether he hath at that time in his Mind any Idea of the intermediate Objects, or long Tract of Land that lies between his Eye and the extreme Edge of the Horizon? And whether it be that Idea which is the Cause of his making the aforementioned Judgment? He will, I suppose, reply in the Negative, and declare the horizontal Moon shall appear greater than the meridional, though he never thinks of all or any of those things that lie between him and it. *Secondly*, It seems impossible by this Hypothesis, to account for the Moon's appearing in the very same Situation, at one time greater than at another; which nevertheless has been shewn to be very agreeable to the Principles we have laid down, and receives a most easy and natural Explication from them. For the further clearing up of this Point, it is to be observed that what we immediately and properly see are only Lights and Colours in sundry Situations and Shades, and Degrees of Faintness and Clearness, Confusion and Distinctness. All which visible Objects are only in the Mind,
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nor do they suggest ought external, whether Distance or Magnitude, otherwise than by habitual Connexion as Words do Things. We are also to remark, that, beside the Straining of the Eyes, and beside the vivid and faint, the distinct and confused Appearances (which bearing some Proportion to Lines and Angles, have been substituted instead of them, in the foregoing Part of this Treatise) there are other means which suggest both Distance and Magnitude; particularly, the Situation of visible Points, or Objects, as upper or lower; the one suggesting a farther Distance and greater Magnitude, the other a nearer Distance and lesser Magnitude: All which is an Effect only of Custom and Experience; there being really nothing intermediate in the Line of Distance, between the uppermost and lowermost, which are both *Æquidistant*, or rather at no Distance from the Eye, as there is also nothing in Upper or Lower, which by necessary Connexion should suggest greater or lesser Magnitude. Now, as these customary, experimental means of suggesting Distance, do likewise suggest Magnitude, so they suggest the one as immediately as the other. I say, they do not (*Vide* SECT. LIII.) first sug-

suggest Distance, and then leave the Mind from thence to infer or compute Magnitude, but suggest Magnitude as immediately and directly as they suggest Distance.

LXXVIII. This Phænomenon of the horizontal Moon is a clear Instance of the insufficiency of Lines and Angles, for explaining the way wherein the Mind perceives, and estimates the Magnitude of outward Objects. There is nevertheless a Use of Computation by them, in order to determine the apparent Magnitude of things, so far as they have a Connexion with, and are proportional to those other Ideas, or Perceptions which are the true and immediate Occasions that suggest to the Mind the apparent Magnitude of Things. But this in general may, I think, be observed concerning mathematical Computation in Optics: That it can never be very precise and exact, since the Judgments we make of the Magnitude of external Things do often depend on several Circumstances, which are not proportionable to, or capable of being defined by Lines and Angles.

LXXIX.

LXXIX. From what has been said, we may safely deduce this Consequence; to wit, that a Man born blind and made to see, would, at first opening of his Eyes, make a very different Judgment of the Magnitude of Objects intromitted by them, from what others do. He would not consider the Ideas of Sight, with reference to, or as having any Connexion with the Ideas of Touch: His View of them being entirely terminated within themselves, he can no otherwise judge them great or small, than as they contain a greater or lesser Number of visible Points. Now, it being certain that any visible Point can cover or exclude from View, only one other visible Point, it follows, that whatever Object intercepts the View of another, hath an equal Number of visible Points with it; and consequently they shall both be thought by him to have the same Magnitude. Hence it is evident, one in those Circumstances would judge his Thumb, with which he might hide a Tower, or hinder its being seen, equal to that Tower, or his Hand, the Interposition whereof might conceal the Firmament from his View, equal to the Firmament: How great an Inequality soever there may, in our Apprehensions, seem to be betwixt those

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two things, because of the customary and close Connexion that has grown up in our Minds between the Objects of Sight and Touch; whereby the very different and distinct Ideas of those two Senses, are so blended and confounded together, as to be mistaken for one and the same thing; out of which Prejudice we cannot easily extricate our selves.

LXXX. For the better explaining the Nature of Vision, and setting the Manner wherein we perceive Magnitudes in a due Light, I shall proceed to make some Observations concerning Matters relating thereto, whereof the want of Reflexion, and duly separating between tangible and visible Ideas, is apt to create in us mistaken and confused Notions. And *First*, I shall observe that the *Minimum Visibile* is exactly equal in all Beings whatsoever, that are endowed with the visive Faculty. No exquisite Formation of the Eye, no peculiar Sharpness of Sight can make it less in one Creature than in another; for it not being distinguishable into Parts, nor in any wise consisting of them, it must necessarily be the same to all. For suppose it otherwise, and that the *Minimum Visibile* of a Mite, for Instance, be less

less than the *Minimum Visibile* of a Man: the latter therefore may by Detraction of some part be made equal to the former: It doth therefore consist of Parts, which is inconsistent with the Notion of a *Minimum Visibile*, or Point.

LXXXI. It will perhaps be objected that the *Minimum Visibile* of a Man doth really, and in it self contain Parts whereby it surpasses that of a Mite, though they are not perceivable by the Man. To which I answer, the *Minimum Visibile* having (in like manner as all other the proper and immediate Objects of Sight) been shewn not to have any Existence without the Mind of him who sees it, it follows there cannot be any Part of it that is not actually perceived, and therefore visible. Now for any Object to contain several distinct visible Parts, and at the same time to be a *Minimum Visibile*, is a manifest Contradiction.

LXXXII. Of these visible Points we see at all times an equal Number. It is every whit as great when our View is contracted and bounded by near Objects, as when it is extended to larger and remoter. For it being impossible that one *Minimum Visibile*

Visible should obscure, or keep out of Sight more than one other, it is a plain Consequence; that when my View is on all sides bounded by the Walls of my Study, I see just as many visible Points as I could, in case that by the Removal of the Study-walls, and all other Obstructions, I had a full Prospect of the circumjacent Fields, Mountains, Sea, and open Firmament: for so long as I am shut up within the Walls, by their Interposition, every Point of the external Objects is covered from my View: But each Point that is seen being able to cover or exclude from Sight, one only other corresponding Point, it follows, that whilst my Sight is confined to those narrow Walls, I see as many Points, or *Minima Visibilia*, as I should were those Walls away, by looking on all the external Objects, whose Prospect is intercepted by them. Whenever therefore we are said to have a greater Prospect at one time than another, this must be understood with relation, not to the proper and immediate, but the secondary and mediate Objects of Vision, which, as hath been shewn, properly belong to the Touch.

LXXXIII. The visive Faculty considered, with reference to its immediate Objects,

jects, may be found to labour of two Defects, *First*, In respect of the Extent or Number of visible Points that are at once perceivable by it, which is narrow and limited to a certain Degree. It can take in at one View but a certain determinate Number of *Minima Visibilia*, beyond which it cannot extend its Prospect. *Secondly*, Our Sight is defective in that its View is not only narrow, but also for the most part confused: of those things that we take in at one Prospect, we can see but a few at once clearly and unconfusedly: and the more we fix our Sight on any one Object, by so much the darker and more indistinct shall the rest appear.

LXXXIV. Corresponding to these two Defects of Sight, we may imagine as many Perfections, to wit, *1st*. That of comprehending in one View a greater Number of visible Points. *2dly*. Of being able to view them all equally and at once, with the utmost Clearness and Distinction. That those Perfections are not actually in some Intelligences of a different Order and Capacity from ours, it is impossible for us to know.

LXXXV.

LXXXV. In neither of those two ways, do Microscopes contribute to the Improvement of Sight; for when we look through a Microscope, we neither see more visible Points, nor are the collateral Points more distinct than when we look with the naked Eye, at Objects placed in a due Distance. A Microscope brings us as it were into a new World: It presents us with a new Scene of visible Objects, quite different from what we behold with the naked Eye. But herein consists the most remarkable Difference, to wit, that whereas the Objects perceived by the Eye alone, have a certain Connexion with Tangible Objects, whereby we are taught to foresee what will ensue upon the Approach or Application of distant Objects to the Parts of our own Body, which much conduceth to its Preservation; there is not the like Connexion between things Tangible and those visible Objects, that are perceived by help of a fine Microscope.

LXXXVI. Hence it is evident, that were our Eyes turned into the Nature of Microscopes, we should not be much benefited by the Change; we should be deprived of the forementioned Advantage we at present receive by the visive Faculty;

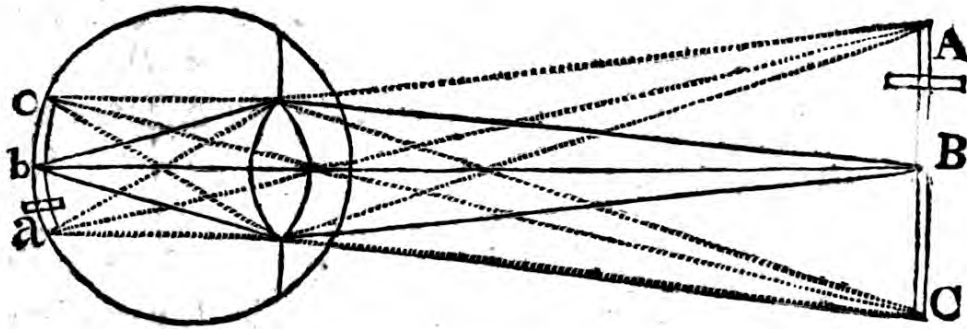
and have left us only the empty Amusement of Seeing, without any other Benefit arising from it. But in that Case, it will perhaps be said, our Sight would be endued with a far greater Sharpness and Penetration than it now hath. But it is certain from what we have already shewn, that the *Minimum Visibile* is never greater or lesser, but in all Cases constantly the same: and in the Case of microscopical Eyes, I see only this Difference, to wit, that upon the ceasing of a certain observable Connexion betwixt the divers Perceptions of Sight and Touch, which before enabled us to regulate our Actions by the Eye, it would now be rendered utterly unserviceable to that Purpose.

LXXXVII. Upon the whole, it seems that if we consider the Use and End of Sight, together with the present State and Circumstances of our Being, we shall not find any great Cause to complain of any Defect or Imperfection in it, or easily conceive how it could be mended. With such admirable Wisdom is that Faculty contrived, both for the Pleasure and Convenience of Life.

LXXXVIII. Having finished what I intended to say, concerning the Distance and Magnitude of Objects, I come now to treat of the Manner, wherein the Mind perceives by Sight their Situation. Among the Discoveries of the last Age, it is reputed none of the least, that the Manner of Vision hath been more clearly explained, than ever it had been before. There is, at this Day, no one Ignorant, that the Pictures of external Objects are painted on the *Retina*, or Fund of the Eye. That we can see nothing which is not so painted: And that, according as the Picture is more distinct or confused, so also is the Perception we have of the Object: But then in this Explication of Vision, there occurs one mighty Difficulty. The Objects are painted in an inverted Order on the Bottom of the Eye: The upper part of any Object being painted on the lower part of the Eye, and the lower part of the Object on the upper part of the Eye: And so also as to Right and Left. Since therefore the Pictures are thus inverted, it is demanded how it comes to pass, that we see the Objects erect and in their natural Posture?

LXXXIX. In answer to this Difficulty, we are told, that the Mind perceiving an
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Impulse of a Ray of Light, on the upper part of the Eye, considers this Ray as coming in a direct Line, from the lower part of the Object; and in like manner tracing the Ray that strikes on the lower part of the Eye, it is directed to the upper part of the Object. Thus in the adjacent Figure C the lower Point of the Object ABC is projected on *c* the upper part of the Eye. So likewise, the highest



Point A is projected on *a* the lowest part of the Eye, which makes the Representation *c b a* inverted: But the Mind considering the Stroke that is made on *c* as coming in the straight Line C *c* from the lower end of the Object; and the Stroke or Impulse on *a*, as coming in the Line A *a* from the upper end of the Object, is directed to make a right Judgment of the Situation of the Object ABC, notwithstanding the Picture of it is inverted. This is illustrated by conceiving a blind

Man, who holding in his Hands two Sticks that cross each other, doth with them touch the Extremities of an Object, placed in a perpendicular Situation. It is certain, this Man will judge that to be the upper Part of the Object, which he touches with the Stick held in the undermost Hand, and that to be the lower Part of the Object, which he touches with the Stick in his uppermost Hand. This is the common Explication of the erect Appearance of Objects, which is generally received and acquiesced in, being (as Mr. *Molyneux* tells us *) *allowed by all Men as Satisfactory.*

XC. But this Account to me does not seem in any Degree true. Did I perceive those Impulses, Decussations, and Directions of the Rays of Light, in like manner as hath been set forth, then, indeed, it would not be altogether void of Probability. And there might be some Pretence for the Comparison of the Blind-Man and his cross Sticks. But the Case is far otherwise. I know very well that I perceive no such thing. And of Consequence, I cannot thereby make an Estimate of the Situation of Objects, I appeal to any one's Experience, whe-

* Diopt. par. 2. c. 7. p. 289.

ther he be conscious to himself, that he thinks on the Interfection made by the rarious Pencils, or pursues the Impulses they give in right Lines, whenever he perceives by Sight the Position of any Object? To me it seems evident, that crossing and tracing of the Rays, is never thought on by Children, Idiots, or in truth by any other, save only those who have applied themselves to the Study of Optics. And for the Mind to judge of the Situation of Objects by those things, without perceiving them, or to perceive them without knowing it, is equally beyond my Comprehension. Add to this, that the explaining the manner of Vision by the Example of cross Sticks, and hunting for the Object along the Axes of the rarious Pencils, doth suppose the proper Objects of Sight to be perceived at a Distance from us, contrary to what hath been demonstrated.

XCI. It remains, therefore, that we look for some other Explication of this Difficulty: And I believe it not impossible to find one, provided we examine it to the Bottom, and carefully distinguish between the Ideas of Sight and Touch; which cannot be too oft inculcated in

treating of Vision: But more especially throughout the Consideration of this Affair, we ought to carry that Distinction in our Thoughts: For that from want of a right Understanding thereof, the Difficulty of explaining erect Vision seems chiefly to arise.

XCII. In order to disentangle our Minds, from whatever Prejudices we may entertain with relation to the Subject in hand, nothing seems more apposite, than the taking into our Thoughts the Case of one born blind, and afterwards, when grown up, made to see. And though perhaps, it may not be an easy Task to divest our selves intirely of the Experience received from Sight, so as to be able to put our Thoughts exactly in the Posture of such a one's; we must, nevertheless, as far as possible, endeavour to frame true Conceptions, of what might reasonably be supposed to pass in his Mind.

XCIII. It is certain, that a Man actually blind, and who had continued so from his Birth, would by the Sense of Feeling attain to have Ideas of Upper and Lower. By the Motion of his Hand he might discern the Situation of any tangible

ble Object placed within his Reach. That Part on which he felt himself supported, or towards which he perceived his Body to gravitate, he would term lower, and the contrary to this upper; and accordingly denominate whatsoever Objects he touched.

XCIV. But then, whatever Judgments he makes concerning the Situation of Objects, are confined to those only that are perceivable by Touch. All those things that are intangible, and of a spiritual Nature, his Thoughts and Desires, his Passions, and in general all the Modifications of the Soul, to these he would never apply the Terms Upper and Lower, except only in a metaphorical Sense. He may, perhaps, by way of Allusion, speak of high or low Thoughts: But those Terms in their proper Signification, would never be applied to any thing, that was not conceived to exist without the Mind. For a Man born blind, and remaining in the same State, could mean nothing else by the Words Higher and Lower, than a greater or lesser Distance from the Earth: Which Distance he would measure by the Motion or Application of his Hand, or some other part of his Body. It is, therefore,

X 4 evident,

evident, that all those things which, in respect of each other, would by him be thought higher or lower, must be such as were conceived to exist without his Mind, in the ambient Space.

XCV. Whence it plainly follows, that such a one, if we suppose him made to see, would not at first Sight think, that any thing he saw was high or low, erect or inverted; for it hath been already demonstrated in Sect XLI. that he would not think the Things he perceived by Sight to be at any Distance from him, or without his Mind. The Objects to which he had hitherto been used to apply the Terms Up and Down, High and Low, were such only as affected, or were some way perceived by his Touch: But the proper Objects of Vision make a new Set of Ideas, perfectly distinct and different from the former, and which can in no sort make themselves perceived by Touch. There is, therefore, nothing at all that could induce him to think those Terms applicable to them: Nor would he ever think it, till such time as he had observed their Connexion with tangible Objects, and the same Prejudice began to insinuate it self into his Understanding, which

which from their Infancy had grown up in the Understandings of other Men.

XCVI. To set this Matter in a clearer Light, I shall make use of an Example. Suppose the above-mentioned blind Person, by his Touch, perceives a Man to stand Erect. Let us inquire into the manner of this. By the Application of his Hand to the several Parts of a humane Body, he had perceived different tangible Ideas, which being collected into sundry complex ones have distinct Names annexed to them. Thus one Combination of a certain tangible Figure, Bulk, and Consistency of Parts is called the Head, another the Hand, a third the Foot, and so of the rest: All which complex Ideas could, in his Understanding, be made up only of Ideas perceivable by Touch. He had also by his Touch obtained an Idea of Earth or Ground, towards which he perceives the Parts of his Body to have a natural Tendency. Now, by Erect nothing more being meant, than that perpendicular Position of a Man, wherein his Feet are nearest to the Earth: If the blind Person by moving his Hand, over the Parts of the Man who stands before him, perceives the tangible Ideas that
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compose the Head, to be farthest from, and those that compose the Feet to be nearest to, that other Combination of tangible Ideas which he calls Earth: He will denominate that Man Erect. But if we suppose him on a sudden to receive his Sight, and that he behold a Man standing before him, it is evident in that Case, he would neither judge the Man he sees to be Erect nor Inverted; for he never having known those Terms applied to any other, save tangible Things, or which existed in the Space without him, and what he sees neither being Tangible, nor perceived as existing without, he could not know that in Propriety of Language they were applicable to it.

XCVII. Afterwards, when upon turning his Head or Eyes up and down to the right and left, he shall observe the visible Objects to change, and shall also attain to know, that they are called by the same Names, and connected with the Objects perceived by Touch; then, indeed, he will come to speak of them and their Situation, in the same Terms that he has been used to apply to tangible Things: And those that he perceives by turning up his Eyes, he will call Upper, and those that
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by turning down his Eyes, he will call Lower.

XCVIII. And this seems to me the true Reason, why he should think those Objects uppermost that are painted on the lower part of his Eye: For, by turning the Eye up they shall be distinctly seen; as likewise those that are painted on the highest part of the Eye shall be distinctly seen, by turning the Eye down, and are for that Reason esteemed lowest: For we have shewn that to the immediate Objects of Sight, considered in themselves, he would not attribute the Terms High and Low. It must therefore be on account of some Circumstances, which are observed to attend them: And these, it is plain, are the Actions of turning the Eye up and down, which suggest a very obvious Reason, why the Mind should denominate the Objects of Sight accordingly High or Low. And without this Motion of the Eye, this turning it up and down in order to discern different Objects, doubtless Erect, Inverse, and other the like Terms relating to the Position of tangible Objects, would never have been transferred, or in any degree apprehended to belong to the Ideas of Sight: The meer
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Act of Seeing including nothing in it to that Purpose; whereas the different Situations of the Eye naturally direct the Mind to make a suitable Judgment of the Situation of Objects intromitted by it.

XCIX. Farther, when he has by Experience learned the Connexion there is between the several Ideas of Sight and Touch, he will be able, by the Perception he has of the Situation of visible Things in respect of one another, to make a sudden and true Estimate of the Situation of outward, tangible Things corresponding to them. And thus it is, he shall perceive by Sight the Situation of External Objects, which do not properly fall under that Sense.

C. I know we are very prone to think, that if just made to see, we should judge of the Situation of visible Things as we do now: But, we are also as prone to think, that at first Sight, we should in the same way apprehend the Distance and Magnitude of Objects, as we do now: Which hath been shewn to be a false and groundless Persuasion. And for the like Reasons, the same Censure may be past
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on the positive Assurance, that most Men, before they have thought sufficiently of the Matter, might have of their being able to determine by the Eye at first view, whether Objects were erect or inverted.

CI. It will, perhaps, be objected to our Opinion, that a Man, for instance, being thought erect when his Feet are next the Earth, and inverted when his Head is next the Earth, it doth hence follow, that by the meer Act of Vision, without any Experience or altering the Situation of the Eye, we should have determined whether he were erect or inverted: For both the Earth it self, and the Limbs of the Man who stands thereon, being equally perceived by Sight, one cannot choose seeing, what part of the Man is nearest the Earth, and what part farthest from it, *i. e.* whether he be erect or inverted.

CII. To which I answer, the Ideas which constitute the tangible Earth and Man, are intirely different from those which constitute the visible Earth and Man. Nor was it possible, by virtue of the visive Faculty alone, without superadding any

any Experience of Touch, or altering the Position of the Eye, ever to have known, or so much as suspected, there had been any Relation or Connexion between them: Hence, a Man at first view would not denominate any thing he saw Earth, or Head, or Foot; and consequently, he could not tell by the meer Act of Vision, whether the Head or Feet were nearest the Earth: Nor, indeed, would we have thereby any thought of Earth or Man, erect or inverse, at all: Which will be made yet more evident, if we nicely observe, and make a particular Comparison between the Ideas of both Senses.

CIII. That which I see is only variety of Light and Colours. That which I feel is hard, or soft, hot or cold, rough or smooth. What Similitude, what Connexion have those Ideas with these? Or how is it possible, that any one should see Reason, to give one and the same Name to Combinations of Ideas so very different, before he had experienced their Coexistence? We do not find there is any necessary Connexion betwixt this or that tangible Quality, and any Colour whatsoever. And we may sometimes

times perceive Colours, where there is nothing to be felt. All which doth make it manifest, that no Man at first receiving of his Sight, would know there was any Agreement between this or that particular Object of his Sight, and any Object of Touch he had been already acquainted with: The Colours therefore of the Head, would to him no more suggest the Idea of Head, than they would the Idea of Foot.

CIV. Farther, we have at large shewn (vid. Sect. LXIII and LXIV.) there is no discoverable, necessary Connexion, between any given visible Magnitude, and any one particular tangible Magnitude; but that it is intirely the result of Custom and Experience, and depends on foreign and accidental Circumstances, that we can by the Perception of visible Extension inform our selves, what may be the Extension of any tangible Object connected with it. Hence it is certain that neither the visible Magnitude of Head or Foot, would bring along with them into the Mind, at first opening of the Eyes, the respective tangible Magnitudes of those Parts.



CV. By

CV. By the foregoing Section, it is plain the visible Figure of any Part of the Body hath no necessary Connexion with the tangible Figure thereof, so as at first Sight to suggest it to the Mind: For Figure is the Termination of Magnitude; whence it follows, that no visible Magnitude having in its own Nature an aptness to suggest any one particular tangible Magnitude, so neither can any visible Figure be inseparably connected with its corresponding tangible Figure: So as of it self and in a way prior to Experience, it might suggest it to the Understanding. This will be farther evident, if we consider that what seems smooth and round to the Touch, may to Sight, if viewed through a Microscope, seem quite otherwise.

CVI. From all which laid together and duly considered, we may clearly deduce this Inference. In the first Act of Vision, no Idea entering by the Eye, would have a perceivable Connexion with the Ideas to which the Names Earth, Man, Head, Foot, &c. were annexed in the Understanding of a Person blind from his Birth; so as in any sort to introduce them into his Mind, or make themselves be called by the same Names, and reputed the same Things

Things with them, as afterwards they come to be.

CVII. There doth, nevertheless, remain one Difficulty, which perhaps may seem to press hard on our Opinion, and deserve not to be passed over: For though it be granted that neither the Colour, Size, nor Figure of the visible Feet have any necessary Connexion with the Ideas that compose the tangible Feet, so as to bring them at first sight into my Mind, or make me in danger of confounding them before I had been used to, and for some time experienced their Connexion: Yet thus much seems undeniable, namely, that the Number of the visible Feet, being the same with that of the tangible Feet, I may from hence without any Experience of Sight, reasonably conclude, that they represent or are connected with the Feet rather than the Head. I say, it seems the Idea of two visible Feet will sooner suggest to the Mind, the Idea of two tangible Feet than of one Head; so that the blind Man upon first Reception of the visive Faculty might know, which were the Feet or Two, and which the Head or One.

CVIII. In order to get clear of this seeming Difficulty, we need only observe, that Diversity of visible Objects doth not necessarily infer diversity of tangible Objects corresponding to them. A Picture painted with great variety of Colours affects the Touch in one uniform manner; it is therefore evident, that I do not by any necessary Consecution, independent of Experience, judge of the number of things tangible, from the number of things visible. I should not therefore at first opening my Eyes conclude, that because I see two I shall feel two. How, therefore can I, before Experience teaches me, know that the visible Legs, because two, are connected with the tangible Legs, or the visible Head, because one is connected with the tangible Head? The truth is, the things I see are so very different and heterogeneous from the things I feel, that the Perception of the one would never have suggested the other to my thoughts, or enabled me to pass the least Judgment thereon, until I had experienced their Connexion.

CIX. But for a fuller Illustration of this Matter, it ought to be considered that Number (however some may reckon it
amongst

amongst the primary Qualities) is nothing fixed and settled, really existing in things themselves. It is intirely the Creature of the Mind, considering, either an Idea by it self, or any Combination of Ideas to which it gives one Name, and so makes it pass for an Unite. According as the Mind variously combines its Ideas, the Unite varies: and as the Unite, so the Number, which is only a Collection of Unites, doth also vary. We call a Window one, a Chimney one, and yet a House in which there are many Windows, and many Chimneys, hath an equal right to be called one, and many Houses go to the making of one City. In these and the like Instances, it is evident the *Unite* constantly relates to the particular Draughts the Mind makes of its Ideas, to which it affixes Names, and wherein it includes more or less, as best suits its own Ends and Purposes. Whatever therefore the Mind considers as one, that is an Unite. Every Combination of Ideas is considered as one thing by the mind, and in token thereof is marked by one Name. Now, this naming and combining together of Ideas is perfectly arbitrary, and done by the Mind in such sort, as Experience shews it to be most convenient: Without which, our Ideas had

never been collected into such sundry distinct Combinations as they now are.

'CX. Hence it follows, that a Man born blind, and afterwards, when grown up, made to see, would not in the first Act of Vision, parcel out the Ideas of Sight, into the same distinct Collections that others do, who have experienced which do regularly coexist and are proper to be bundled up together under one Name. He would not, for Example, make into one complex Idea, and thereby esteem an Unite all those particular Ideas, which constitute the visible Head or Foot. For there can be no Reason assigned why he should do so, barely upon his seeing a Man stand upright before him: There croud into his Mind the Ideas which compose the visible Man, in company with all the other Ideas of Sight perceiv'd at the same time: But all these Ideas offered at once to his View, he would not distribute into sundry distinct Combinations, till such time as by observing the Motion of the Parts of the Man and other Experiences, he comes to know, which are to be separated, and which to be collected together.

CXI.

CXI. From what hath been premised, it is plain the Objects of Sight and Touch make, if I may so say, two Sets of Ideas, which are widely different from each other. To Objects of either kind, we indifferently attribute the Terms high and low, right and left, and such like, denoting the Position or Situation of things: But then we must well observe that the Position of any Object is determined with respect only to Objects of the same Sense. We say any Object of Touch is high or low, according as it is more or less distant from the tangible Earth: And in like manner we denominate any Object of Sight high or low, in Proportion as it is more or less distant from the visible Earth: But to define the Situation of visible Things, with relation to the Distance they bear from any tangible Thing, or *vice versa*, this were absurd and perfectly unintelligible. For all visible things are equally in the Mind, and take up no part of the external Space: And consequently are equidistant from any tangible thing, which exists without the Mind.

CXII. Or rather to speak truly, the proper Objects of Sight are at no Distance, neither near nor far, from any tangible
Y 3
Thing,

Thing. For if we inquire narrowly into the Matter we shall find that those things only are compared together in respect of Distance, which exist after the same manner, or appertain unto the same Sense. For by the Distance between any two Points, nothing more is meant than the Number of intermediate Points: If the given Points are visible, the Distance between them is marked out by the Number of the interjacent visible Points: If they are tangible, the Distance between them is a Line consisting of tangible Points; but if they are one tangible, and the other visible, the Distance between them doth neither consist of Points perceivable by Sight nor by Touch, *i. e.* it is utterly inconceivable. This, perhaps, will not find an easy Admission into all Mens Understanding: However, I should gladly be informed whether it be not true, by any one who will be at the pains to reflect a little, and apply it home to his Thoughts.

CXIII. The not observing what has been delivered in the two last Sections, seems to have occasioned no small part of the Difficulty that occurs in the Business of erect Appearances. The Head, which
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is painted nearest the Earth, seems to be farthest from it: and on the other hand, the Feet, which are painted farthest from the Earth, are thought nearest to it. Herein lies the Difficulty, which vanishes if we express the thing more clearly and free from Ambiguity, thus: How comes it that, to the Eye, the visible Head which is nearest the tangible Earth, seems farthest from the Earth, and the visible Feet, which are farthest from the tangible Earth, seem nearest the Earth? The Question being thus proposed, who sees not, the Difficulty is founded on a Supposition, that the Eye, or visive Faculty, or rather the Soul by means thereof, should judge of the Situation of visible Objects, with reference to their Distance from the tangible Earth? Whereas it is evident the tangible Earth is not perceived by Sight: And it hath been shewn in the two last preceding Sections, that the Location of visible Objects is determined only by the Distance they bear from one another; and that it is Nonsense to talk of Distance, far or near, between a visible and tangible Thing.

CXIV. If we confine our Thoughts to the proper Objects of Sight, the whole is

plain and easy. The Head is painted farthest from, and the Feet nearest to the visible Earth; and so they appear to be. What is there strange or unaccountable in this? Let us suppose the Pictures in the Fund of the Eye, to be the immediate Objects of the Sight. The Consequence is, that things should appear in the same Posture they are painted in; and is it not so? The Head which is seen, seems farthest from the Earth which is seen; and the Feet, which are seen, seem nearest to the Earth which is seen; and just so they are painted.

CXV. But, say you, the Picture of the Man is inverted, and yet the Appearance is erect: I ask, what mean you by the Picture of the Man, or, which is the same thing, the visible Man's being inverted? You tell me it is inverted, because the Heels are uppermost, and the Head undermost? Explain me this. You say, that by the Head's being undermost, you mean that it is nearest to the Earth; and by the Heels being uppermost, that they are farthest from the Earth. I ask again, what Earth you mean? You cannot mean the Earth that is painted on the Eye, or the visible Earth: For the Picture of the Head is
farthest

farthest from the Picture of the Earth, and the Picture of the Feet nearest to the Picture of the Earth; and accordingly the visible Head is farthest from the visible Earth, and the visible Feet nearest to it. It remains, therefore, that you mean the tangible Earth, and so determine the Situation of visible things with respect to tangible things; contrary to what hath been demonstrated in SECT. CXI. and CXII. The two distinct Provinces of Sight and Touch should be considered apart, and as if their Objects had no Inter-course, no manner of Relation one to another, in point of Distance or Position.

CXVI. Farther, what greatly contributes to make us mistake in this Matter is, that when we think of the Pictures in the Fund of the Eye, we imagine our selves looking on the Fund of another's Eye, or another looking on the Fund of our own Eye, and beholding the Pictures painted thereon. Suppose two Eyes A and B: A from some distance looking on the Pictures in B sees them inverted, and for that Reason concludes they are inverted in B: But this is wrong. There are projected in little on the Bottom of A, the Images of the Pictures of, suppose Man, Earth, &c. which are painted on B. And besides these, the
Eye

Eye B it self, and the Objects which environ it, together with another Earth, are projected in a larger Size on A. Now, by the Eye A, these larger Images are deemed the true Objects, and the lesser only Pictures in miniature. And it is with respect to those greater Images, that it determines the Situation of the smaller Images: So that comparing the little Man with the great Earth, A judges him inverted, or that the Feet are farthest from, and the Head nearest to the great Earth. Whereas, if A compare the little Man with the little Earth, then he will appear erect, *i.e.* his Head shall seem farthest from, and his Feet nearest to the little Earth. But we must consider that B does not see two Earths as A does: It sees only what is represented by the little Pictures in A, and consequently shall judge the Man erect: For, in truth, the Man in B is not inverted, for there the Feet are next the Earth; but it is the Representation of it in A which is inverted, for there the Head of the Representation of the Picture of the Man in B is next the Earth, and the Feet farthest from the Earth, meaning the Earth which is without the Representation of the Pictures in B. For if you take the little Images of the Pictures in B, and consider them by themselves, and with respect only

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to one another, they are all Erect and in their natural Posture.

CXVII. Farther, there lies a Mistake in our imagining that the Pictures of external Objects are painted on the Bottom of the Eye. It hath been shewn, there is no Resemblance between the Ideas of Sight and things Tangible. It hath likewise been demonstrated, that the proper Objects of Sight do not exist without the Mind. Whence it clearly follows, that the Pictures painted on the Bottom of the Eye, are not the Pictures of external Objects. Let any one consult his own Thoughts, and then say what Affinity, what Likeness there is between that certain Variety and Disposition of Colours, which constitute the visible Man, or Picture of a Man, and that other Combination of far different Ideas, sensible by Touch, which compose the tangible Man. But if this be the Case, how come they to be accounted Pictures or Images, since that supposes them to copy or represent some Originals or other?

CXVIII. To which I answer: In the forementioned Instance, the Eye A takes the little Images, included within the Representation

presentation of the other Eye B, to be Pictures or Copies, whereof the Archetypes are not things existing without, but the larger Pictures projected on its own Fund; and which by A are not thought Pictures, but the Originals, or true Things themselves. Though if we suppose a third Eye C, from a due Distance to behold the Fund of A, then indeed the Things projected thereon, shall, to C, seem Pictures or Images, in the same Sense that those projected on B do to A.

CXIX. Rightly to conceive this Point, we must carefully distinguish between the Ideas of Sight and Touch, between the visible and tangible Eye; for certainly on the tangible Eye, nothing either is or seems to be painted. Again, the visible Eye, as well as all other visible Objects, hath been shewn to exist only in the Mind, which perceiving its own Ideas, and comparing them together, calls some *Pictures* in respect of others. What hath been said, being rightly comprehended and laid together, doth, I think, afford a full and genuine Explication of the erect Appearance of Objects; which Phænomenon, I must confess, I do not see how it can be explained by any Theories of Vision hitherto made publick.

CXX.

CXX. In treating of these things, the use of Language is apt to occasion some Obscurity and Confusion, and create in us wrong Ideas: For Language being accommodated to the common Notions and Prejudices of Men, it is scarce possible to deliver the naked and precise Truth, without great Circumlocution, Impropropriety, and (to an unwary Reader) seeming Contradictions; I do, therefore, once for all desire whoever shall think it worth his while to understand what I have written concerning Vision, that he would not stick in this or that Phrase, or Manner of Expression, but candidly collect my Meaning from the whole Sum and Tenor of my Discourse, and laying aside the Words as much as possible, consider the bare Notions themselves, and then judge whether they are agreeable to Truth and his own Experience, or no.

CXXI. We have shewn the way wherein the Mind by mediation of visible Ideas doth perceive or apprehend the Distance, Magnitude, and Situation of tangible Objects. We come now to inquire more particularly concerning the Difference between the Ideas of Sight and Touch, which are called by the same Names, and see whether

ther there be any Idea common to both Senses. From what we have at large set forth and demonstrated in the foregoing Parts of this Treatise, it is plain there is no one self same numerical Extension, perceived both by Sight and Touch; but that the particular Figures and Extensions perceived by Sight, however they may be called by the same Names, and reputed the same Things, with those perceived by Touch, are nevertheless different, and have an Existence distinct and separate from them: So that the Question is not now concerning the same numerical Ideas, but whether there be any one and the same sort or Species of Ideas equally perceivable to both Senses; Or, in other Words, whether Extension, Figure, and Motion perceived by Sight, are not specifically distinct from Extension, Figure, and Motion perceived by Touch.

CXXII. But before I come more particularly to discuss this Matter, I find it proper to consider Extension in Abstract: For of this there is much Talk, and I am apt to think, that when Men speak of Extension, as being an Idea common to two Senses, it is with a secret Supposition, that we can single out Extension
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tion from all other tangible and visible Qualities, and form thereof an abstract Idea, which Idea they will have common both to Sight and Touch. We are therefore to understand by Extension in abstract, an Idea of Extension, for Instance, a Line or Surface, intirely stript of all other sensible Qualities and Circumstances that might determine it to any particular Existence; it is neither black nor white, nor red, nor hath it any Colour at all, or any tangible Quality whatsoever, and consequently it is of no finite determinate Magnitude: For that which bounds or distinguishes one Extension from another, is some Quality or Circumstance wherein they disagree.

CXXIII. Now I do not find that I can perceive, imagine, or any wise frame in my Mind such an abstract Idea, as is here spoken of. A Line or Surface, which is neither black, nor white, nor blue, nor yellow, &c. nor long, nor short, nor rough, nor smooth, nor square, nor round, &c. is perfectly incomprehensible. This I am sure of as to my self: how far the Faculties of other Men may reach, they best can tell.

CXXIV.

CXXIV. It is commonly said, that the Object of Geometry is abstract Extension: but Geometry contemplates Figures: Now, Figure is the Termination of Magnitude: but we have shewn that Extension in Abstract hath no finite determinate Magnitude. Whence it clearly follows that it can have no Figure, and consequently is not the Object of Geometry. It is indeed a Tenet as well of the modern as of the ancient Philosophers, that all general Truths are concerning universal abstract Ideas; without which, we are told, there could be no Science, no Demonstration of any general Proposition in Geometry. But it were no hard matter, did I think it necessary to my present Purpose, to shew that Propositions and Demonstrations in Geometry might be universal, though they who make them, never think of abstract general Ideas of Triangles or Circles.

CXXV. After reiterated Endeavours to apprehend the general Idea of a Triangle, I have found it altogether incomprehensible. And surely if any one were able to introduce that Idea into my Mind, it must be the Author of the *Essay concerning Humane Understanding*; He, who has so far
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distinguished himself from the generality of Writers, by the Clearness and Significancy of what he says. Let us therefore see how this celebrated Author describes the general, or abstract Idea of a Triangle. 'It must be (says he) neither Oblique, nor Rectangular, neither Equilateral, Equicrural, nor Scalenum; but all and none of these at once. In effect it is somewhat imperfect that cannot exist; an Idea, wherein some Parts of several different and inconsistent Ideas are put together.' *Essay on Hum. Understand. B. iv. C. 7. S. 9.* This is the Idea, which he thinks needful, for the Enlargement of Knowledge, which is the Subject of Mathematical Demonstration, and without which we could never come to know any general Proposition concerning Triangles. That Author acknowledges it doth 'require some Pains and Skill to form this general Idea of a Triangle.' *Ibid.* But had he called to mind what he says in another Place, to wit, 'That Ideas of mixed Modes wherein any inconsistent Ideas are put together, cannot so much as exist in the Mind, *i. e.* be conceived.' *Vid. B. iii. C. 10. S. 33. Ibid.* I say, had this occurred to his Thoughts, it is not improbable he would have owned it above

A NEW THEORY.

all the Pains and Skill he was master of, to form the above-mentioned Idea of a Triangle, which is made up of manifest, staring Contradictions. That a Man who laid so great a Stress on clear and determinate Ideas, should nevertheless talk at this rate, seems very surprizing. But the Wonder will lessen if it be considered, that the Source whence this Opinion flows, is the prolific Womb which has brought forth innumerable Errors and Difficulties, in all parts of Philosophy, and in all the Sciences: But this Matter, taken in its full Extent, were a Subject too comprehensive to be insisted on in this place. And so much for Extension in Abstract.

CXXVI. Some, perhaps, may think pure Space, *Vacuum*, or Trine Dimension to be equally the Object of Sight and Touch: But though we have a very great Propension, to think the Ideas of Outness and Space to be the immediate Object of Sight; yet, if I mistake not, in the foregoing Parts of this Essay, that hath been clearly demonstrated to be a mere Delusion, arising from the quick and sudden suggestion of Fancy, which so closely connects the Idea of Distance with those
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of Sight, that we are apt to think it is it self a proper and immediate Object of that Sense, till Reason corrects the Mistake.

CXXVII. It having been shewn, that there are no abstract Ideas of Figure, and that it is impossible for us, by any Precision of Thought, to frame an Idea of Extension separate from all other visible and tangible Qualities, which shall be common both to Sight and Touch: The Question now remaining is, whether the particular Extensions, Figures, and Motions perceived by Sight be of the same kind, with the particular Extensions, Figures, and Motions perceived by Touch? In answer to which, I shall venture to lay down the following Proposition: *The Extension, Figures, and Motions, perceived by Sight are specifically distinct from the Ideas of Touch, called by the same Names, nor is there any such thing as one Idea, or kind of Idea common to both Senses.* This Proposition may, without much Difficulty, be collected from what hath been said in several Places of this Essay. But, because it seems so remote from, and contrary to, the received Notions and settled Opinion of Mankind,

kind, I shall attempt to demonstrate it more particularly, and at large, by the following Arguments.

CXXVIII. When upon Perception of an Idea, I range it under this or that sort; it is because it is perceived after the same manner; or because it has a Likeness or Conformity with, or affects me in the same way as the Ideas of the sort I rank it under. In short, it must not be intirely new, but have something in it old, and already perceived by me: It must, I say, have so much, at least, in common with the Ideas I have before known and named, as to make me give it the same Name with them. But it has been, if I mistake not, clearly made out, that a Man born blind would not at first Reception of his Sight, think the Things he saw were of the same Nature with the Objects of Touch, or had any thing in common with them; but that they were a new Set of Ideas, perceived in a new Manner, and intirely different from all he had ever perceived before: So that he would not call them by the same Name, nor repute them to be of the same Sort, with any thing he had hitherto known.

CXXIX.

CXXIX. *Secondly*, Light and Colours are allowed by all to constitute a sort or Species intirely different from the Ideas of Touch: Nor will any Man, I presume, say they can make themselves perceived by that Sense: But there is no other immediate Object of Sight, besides Light and Colours. It is therefore a direct Consequence, that there is no Idea common to both Senses.

CXXX. It is a prevailing Opinion, even amongst those who have thought and writ most accurately concerning our Ideas, and the ways whereby they enter into the Understanding, that something more is perceived by Sight, than barely Light and Colours with their Variations. Mr. *Locke* termeth Sight, ‘ The most comprehen-
 ‘ five of all our Senses, conveying to our
 ‘ Minds the Ideas of Light and Colours,
 ‘ which are peculiar only to that Sense;
 ‘ and also the fair different Ideas of Space,
 ‘ Figure, and Motion.’ *Essay on Humane Understand.* B. ii. C. 9. S. 9. Space or Distance, we have shewn is not otherwise the Object of Sight than of Hearing. *vid.* Sect. XLVI. And as for Figure and Extension, I leave it to any one, that shall calmly attend to his own clear and distinct

Ideas, to decide whether he has any Idea intromitted immediately and properly by Sight, save only Light and Colours: Or whether it be possible for him, to frame in his Mind a distinct Abstract Idea of Visible Extension, or Figure, exclusive of all Colour: and on the other hand, whether he can conceive Colour without visible Extension? For my own part, I must confess, I am not able to attain so great a nicety of Abstraction: in a strict Sense, I see nothing but Light and Colours, with their several Shades and Variations. He who beside these doth also perceive by Sight Ideas far different and distinct from them, hath that Faculty in a Degree more perfect and comprehensive than I can pretend to. It must be owned, that by the Mediation of Light and Colours, other far different Ideas are suggested to my Mind: but so they are by Hearing, which beside Sounds which are peculiar to that Sense, doth by their Mediation suggest not only Space, Figure, and Motion, but also all other Ideas whatsoever that can be signified by Words.

CXXXI. *Thirdly*, It is, I think, an Axiom universally received, that Quantities of the same kind may be added together,

gether, and make one intire Sum. Mathematicians add Lines together: but they do not add a Line to a Solid, or conceive it as making one Sum with a Surface: These three kinds of Quantity being thought incapable of any such mutual Addition, and consequently of being compared together, in the several ways of Proportion, are by them esteemed intirely Disparate and Heterogeneous. Now let any one try in his Thoughts to add a visible Line or Surface to a tangible Line or Surface, so as to conceive them making one continued Sum or Whole. He that can do this, may think them Homogeneous: but he that cannot must, by the foregoing Axiom, think them Heterogeneous: A Blue, and a Red Line I can conceive added together into one Sum, and making one continued Line: but to make, in my Thoughts, one continued Line of a visible and tangible Line added together is, I find, a Task far more difficult, and even insurmountable: and I leave it to the Reflexion and Experience of every particular Person to determine for himself.

CXXXII. A farther Confirmation of our Tenet may be drawn from the Solution

tion of Mr. *Molyneux's* Problem, published by Mr. *Locke* in his *Essay*: Which I shall set down as it there lies, together with Mr. *Locke's* Opinion of it, ‘ *Suppose a Man*
‘ *born Blind, and now Adult, and taught*
‘ *by his Touch to distinguish between a Cube,*
‘ *and a Sphere of the same Metal, and*
‘ *nighly of the same Bigness, so as to tell,*
‘ *when he felt one and t’other, which is*
‘ *the Cube, and which the Sphere. Sup-*
‘ *pose then the Cube and Sphere placed on a*
‘ *Table, and the blind Man to be made to*
‘ *See: Quære, Whether by his Sight, be-*
‘ *fore he touched them, he could now distin-*
‘ *guish, and tell, which is the Globe, which*
‘ *the Cube? To which the acute and judi-*
‘ *cious Proposer answers: Not. For though*
‘ *he has obtained the Experience of, how a*
‘ *Globe, how a Cube affects his Touch; yet*
‘ *he has not yet attained the Experience, that*
‘ *what affects his Touch so or so, must affect*
‘ *his Sight so or so: Or that a protuberant*
‘ *Angle in the Cube, that pressed his Hand*
‘ *unequally, shall appear to his Eye, as it*
‘ *doth in the Cube. I agree with this*
‘ *thinking Gentleman, whom I am proud*
‘ *to call my Friend, in his Answer to this*
‘ *his Problem; and am of opinion, that*
‘ *the blind Man, at first Sight would not*
‘ *be able with certainty to say, which was*
‘ *the*

‘ the Globe, which the Cube, whilst he
 ‘ only saw them.’ *Essay on Humane Under-*
standing, B. ii. C. 9. S. 8.

CXXXIII. Now, if a square Surface perceived by Touch be of the same sort with a square Surface perceived by Sight; it is certain the blind Man here mentioned might know a square Surface, as soon as he saw it: It is no more but introducing into his Mind, by a new Inlet, an Idea he has been already well acquainted with. Since therefore he is supposed to have known by his Touch, that a Cube is a Body terminated by square Surfaces; and that a Sphere is not terminated by square Surfaces: upon the supposition that a visible and tangible Square differ only *in numero*, it follows, that he might know, by the unerring Mark of the square Surfaces, which was the Cube, and which not, while he only saw them. We must therefore allow, either that visible Extension and Figures are specifically distinct from tangible Extension and Figures, or else, that the Solution of this Problem, given by those two thoughtful and ingenious Men, is wrong.

CXXXIV.

CXXXIV. Much more might be laid together in Proof of the Propofition I have advanced: but what has been faid is, if I miftake not, fufficient to convince any one that fhall yield a reasonable Attention; And, as for thofe that will not be at the pains of a little Thought, no Multiplication of Words will ever fuffice to make them underftand the Truth, or rightly conceive my Meaning.

CXXXV. I cannot let go the above-mentioned Problem, without fome Reflexion on it. It hath been made evident, that a Man blind from his Birth would not, at firft Sight, denominate any thing he faw, by the Names he had been ufed to appropriate to Ideas of Touch, *vid.* Sect. CVI. Cube, Sphere, Table, are Words he has known applied to Things perceivable by Touch, but to Things perfectly intangible he never knew them applied. Thofe Words in their wonted Application, always marked out to his Mind Bodies, or folid Things which were perceived by the Refiftance they gave: But there is no Solidity, no Refiftance or Protrufion perceived by Sight. In fhort, the Ideas of Sight are all new Perceptions, to which there be no Names annexed in his Mind:

Mind: he cannot, therefore understand what is said to him concerning them: And to ask of the two Bodies he saw placed on the Table, which was the Sphere, which the Cube? were, to him, a Question downright bantering and unintelligible; nothing he sees being able to suggest to his Thoughts, the Idea of Body, Distance, or in general, of any thing he had already known.

CXXXVI. It is a Mistake, to think the same thing affects both Sight and Touch. If the same Angle or Square, which is the Object of Touch, be also the Object of Vision, what should hinder the blind Man, at first Sight, from knowing it? For though the Manner wherein it affects the Sight, be different from that wherein it affected his Touch; yet, there being, beside this Manner or Circumstance, which is new and unknown, the Angle or Figure, which is old and known, he cannot choose but discern it.

CXXXVII. Visible Figure and Extension having been demonstrated to be of a nature, intirely different and heterogeneous from tangible Figure and Extension, it remains that we inquire concerning
Motion.

Motion. Now that visible Motion is not of the same sort with tangible Motion, seems to need no farther Proof, it being an evident Corollary from what we have shewn concerning the Difference there is between visible and tangible Extension: But for a more full and express Proof hereof, we need only observe, that one who had not yet experienced Vision, would not at first sight know Motion. Whence it clearly follows, that Motion perceivable by Sight is of a sort distinct from Motion perceivable by Touch. The Antecedent I prove thus: By Touch he could not perceive any Motion, but what was up or down, to the right or left, nearer or farther from him; besides these, and their several Varieties or Complications, it is impossible he should have any Idea of Motion. He would not therefore think any thing to be Motion, or give the name Motion to any Idea, which he could not range under some or other of those particular kinds thereof. But from Sect. XCV. it is plain that by the meer act of Vision, he could not know Motion upwards or downwards, to the right or left, or in any other possible Direction. From which I conclude, he would not know Motion at all at first sight. As for the
Idea

Idea of Motion in Abstract, I shall not waste Paper about it, but leave it to my Reader, to make the best he can of it. To me it is perfectly unintelligible.

CXXXVIII. The Consideration of Motion may furnish a new Field for Inquiry: But since the Manner wherein the Mind apprehends by Sight, the Motion of tangible Objects, with the various Degrees thereof, may be easily collected, from what hath been said concerning the Manner, wherein that Sense doth suggest their various Distances, Magnitudes and Situations; I shall not enlarge any farther on this Subject, but proceed to consider what may be alledged with greatest appearance of Reason, against the Proposition we have shewn to be true: For where there is so much Prejudice to be encountered, a bare and naked Demonstration of the Truth will scarce suffice. We must also satisfy the Scruples that Men may raise in favour of their preconceived Notions, shew whence the Mistake arises, how it came to spread, and carefully disclose and root out those false Persuasions, that an early Prejudice might have implanted in the Mind.

CXXXIX.

CXXXIX. *First*, Therefore, it will be demanded, how visible Extension and Figures come to be called by the same Name, with tangible Extension and Figures, if they are not of the same kind with them? It must be something more than Humour or Accident, that could occasion a Custom so constant and universal as this, which has obtained in all Ages and Nations of the World, and amongst all Ranks of Men, the Learned as well as the Illiterate.

CXL. To which I answer, we can no more argue a visible and tangible Square to be of the same Species, from their being called by the same Name, than we can, that a tangible Square and the Monosyllable consisting of six Letters, whereby it is marked, are of the same Species because they are both called by the same Name. It is customary to call written Words, and the Things they signify, by the same Name: For Words not being regarded in their own Nature, or otherwise than as they are Marks of Things, it had been superfluous, and beside the design of Language, to have given them Names distinct from those of the Things marked by them. The same Reason holds
here

here also. Visible Figures are the Marks of tangible Figures, and from SECT. LIX. it is plain, that in themselves they are little regarded, or upon any other Score than for their Connexion with tangible Figures, which by Nature they are ordained to signify. And because this Language of Nature doth not vary in different Ages or Nations, hence it is, that in all Times and Places, visible Figures are called by the same Names, as the respective tangible Figures suggested by them, and not because they are alike, or of the same sort with them.

CXLI. But, say you, surely a tangible Square is liker to a visible Square, than to a visible Circle: It has four Angles, and as many Sides: so also has the visible Square: but the visible Circle has no such thing, being bounded by one uniform Curve, without right Lines or Angles, which makes it unfit to represent the tangible Square, but very fit to represent the tangible Circle. Whence it clearly follows, that visible Figures are Patterns of, or of the same Species with the respective tangible Figures represented by them: that they are like unto them, and of their own Nature fitted to represent them, as
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being of the same sort: and that they are in no respect arbitrary Signs, as Words.

CXLII. I answer, it must be acknowledged, the visible Square is fitter than the visible Circle, to represent the tangible Square, but then it is not because it is liker, or more of a Species with it; but because the visible Square contains in it several distinct Parts, whereby to mark the several distinct, corresponding Parts of a tangible Square, whereas the visible Circle doth not. The Square perceived by Touch, hath four distinct, equal Sides, so also hath it four distinct, equal Angles. It is therefore necessary, that the visible Figure which shall be most proper to mark it, contain four distinct equal Parts corresponding to the four Sides of the tangible Square; as likewise four other distinct and equal Parts, whereby to denote the four equal Angles of the tangible Square. And accordingly we see the visible Figures contain in them distinct visible Parts, answering to the distinct tangible Parts of the Figures signified, or suggested by them.

CXLIII. But it will not hence follow, that any visible Figure is like unto, or of
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the same Species with its corresponding tangible Figure, unless it be also shewn, that not only the Number, but also the Kind of the Parts be the same in both. To illustrate this, I observe that visible Figures represent tangible Figures, much after the same manner that written Words do Sounds. Now, in this respect, Words are not arbitrary, it not being indifferent, what written Word stands for any Sound: But it is requisite, that each Word contain in it so many distinct Characters, as there are Variations in the Sound it stands for. Thus the single Letter *a* is proper to mark one simple uniform Sound; and the word *Adultery* is accommodated to represent the Sound annexed to it, in the Formation whereof, there being eight different Collisions, or Modifications of the Air by the Organs of Speech, each of which produces a difference of Sound, it was fit the Word representing it should consist of as many distinct Characters, thereby to mark each particular Difference or Part of the whole Sound: And yet no Body, I presume, will say, the single Letter *a*, or the Word *Adultery* are like unto, or of the same Species with the respective Sounds by them represented. It is indeed arbitrary that, in

general, Letters of any Language represent Sounds at all: but when that is once agreed, it is not arbitrary what Combination of Letters shall represent this or that particular Sound. I leave this with the Reader to pursue, and apply it in his own Thoughts.

CXLIV. It must be confessed that we are not so apt to confound other Signs, with the Things signified, or to think them of the same Species, as we are visible and tangible Ideas. But a little Consideration will shew us how this may be, without our supposing them of a like Nature. These Signs are constant and universal, their Connexion with tangible Ideas has been learnt at our first Entrance into the World; and ever since, almost every Moment of our Lives, it has been occurring to our Thoughts, and fastening and striking deeper on our Minds. When we observe that Signs are variable, and of Humane Institution; when we remember, there was a time they were not connected in our Minds, with those things they now so readily suggest; but that their Signification was learned by the slow Steps of Experience: This preserves us from confounding

founding them. But when we find the same Signs suggest the same Things all over the World ; when we know they are not of Humane Institution, and cannot remember that we ever learned their Signification, but think that at first Sight they would have suggested to us the same Things they do now : All this persuades us they are of the same Species as the Things respectively represented by them, and that it is by a natural Resemblance they suggest them to our Minds.

CXLV. Add to this, that whenever we make a nice Survey of any Object, successively directing the Optic Axis to each Point thereof ; there are certain Lines and Figures described by the Motion of the Head or Eye, which being in truth perceived by feeling, do nevertheless so mix themselves as it were, with the Ideas of Sight, that we can scarce think but they appertain to that Sense. Again, the Ideas of Sight enter into the Mind, several at once more distinct and unmingled, than is usual in the other Senses beside the Touch. Sounds, for example, perceived at the same Instant, are apt to coalesce, if I may so say, into one Sound: But we can perceive at the same time great variety

riety of visible Objects, very separate and distinct from each other. Now tangible Extension being made up of several distinct coexistent parts, we may hence gather another Reason, that may dispose us to imagine a Likeness or Analogy between the immediate Objects of Sight and Touch. But nothing, certainly, doth more contribute to blend and confound them together, than the strict and close Connexion they have with each other. We cannot open our Eyes, but the Ideas of Distance, Bodies, and tangible Figures are suggested by them. So swift and sudden, and unperceived is the Transition from visible to tangible Ideas, that we can scarce forbear thinking them equally the immediate Object of Vision.

CXLVI. The Prejudice, which is grounded on these, and whatever other Causes may be assigned thereof, sticks so fast, that it is impossible without obstinate Striving, and Labour of the Mind, to get intirely clear of it. But then the Reluctancy we find, in rejecting any Opinion, can be no Argument of its Truth, to whoever considers what has been already shewn, with regard to the

Prejudices we entertain concerning the Distance, Magnitude, and Situation of Objects; Prejudices so familiar to our Minds, so confirmed and inveterate, as they will hardly give way to the clearest Demonstration.

CXLVII. Upon the whole, I think we may fairly conclude, that the proper Objects of Vision constitute an universal Language of the Author of Nature, whereby we are instructed how to regulate our Actions, in order to attain those things, that are necessary to the Preservation and Well-being of our Bodies, as also to avoid whatever may be hurtful and destructive of them. It is by their Information that we are principally guided in all the Transactions and Concerns of Life. And the manner wherein they signify, and mark unto us the Objects which are at a Distance, is the same with that of Languages and Signs of Humane Appointment; which do not suggest the things signified, by any Likeness or Identity of Nature, but only by an habitual Connexion, that Experience has made us to observe between them.

CXLVIII. Suppose one who had always continued Blind, be told by his Guide, that after he has advanced so many Steps, he shall come to the Brink of a Precipice, or be stopt by a Wall; must not this to him seem very admirable and surprizing? He cannot conceive how it is possible for Mortals to frame such Predictions as these, which to him would seem as strange and unaccountable, as Prophecy doth to others. Even they who are blessed with the visive Faculty, may (though Familiarity make it less observed) find therein sufficient Cause of Admiration. The wonderful Art and Contrivance wherewith it is adjusted to those Ends and Purposes for which it was apparently designed, the vast Extent, Number, and Variety of Objects that are at once with so much Ease, and Quickness, and Pleasure suggested by it: All these afford Subject for much and pleasing Speculation, and may, if any thing, give us some Glimmering, analogous Prænotion of Things, which are placed beyond the certain Discovery and Comprehension of our present State.

CXLIX. I do not design to trouble myself with drawing Corollaries, from the
Doctrines

Doctrine I have hitherto laid down. If it bears the Test, others may, so far as they shall think convenient, employ their Thoughts in extending it farther, and applying it to whatever Purposes it may be subservient to: Only, I cannot forbear making some Inquiry concerning the Object of Geometry, which the Subject we have been upon doth naturally lead one to. We have shewn there is no such Idea as that of Extension in Abstract, and that there are two kinds of sensible Extension and Figures, which are intirely distinct and heterogeneous from each other. Now, it is natural to inquire which of these is the Object of Geometry.

CL. Some things there are, which at first sight incline one to think Geometry conversant about visible Extension. The constant Use of the Eyes, both in the practical and speculative Parts of that Science doth very much induce us thereto. It would, without doubt, seem odd to a Mathematician to go about to convince him, the Diagrams he saw upon Paper were not the Figures, or even the Likeness of the Figures, which make the Subject of the Demonstration. The con-

rary being held an unquestionable Truth, not only by Mathematicians, but also by those who apply themselves more particularly to the Study of Logick; I mean, who consider the Nature of Science, Certainty, and Demonstration: It being by them assigned as one Reason, of the extraordinary Clearness and Evidence of Geometry, that in this Science the Reasonings are free from those Inconveniencies, which attend the Use of arbitrary Signs, the very Ideas themselves being copied out, and exposed to View upon Paper. But, by the bye, how well this agrees with what they likewise assert of abstract Ideas, being the Object of Geometrical Demonstration, I leave to be considered.

CLI. To come to a Resolution in this Point, we need only observe what hath been said in SECT. LIX. LX. LXI. where it is shewn that visible Extensions in themselves are little regarded, and have no settled determinate Greatness, and that Men measure altogether, by the Application of tangible Extension to tangible Extension. All which makes it evident, that visible Extension and Figures are not the Object of Geometry.

CLI.

CLII. It is therefore plain that visible Figures are of the same Use in Geometry, that Words are: and the one may as well be accounted the Object of that Science, as the other; neither of them being otherwise concerned therein, than as they represent or suggest to the Mind the particular tangible Figures connected with them. There is indeed this Difference between the Signification of tangible Figures by visible Figures, and of Ideas by Words: That whereas the latter is variable and uncertain, depending altogether on the arbitrary Appointment of Men, the former is fixed, and immutably the same in all Times and Places. A visible Square, for Instance, suggests to the Mind the same tangible Figure in *Europe*, that it doth in *America*. Hence it is that the Voice of the Author of Nature, which speaks to our Eyes, is not liable to that Misinterpretation and Ambiguity, that Languages of Humane Contrivance are unavoidably subject to.

CLIII. Though what has been said may suffice to shew what ought to be determined, with relation to the Object of Geometry; I shall nevertheless, for the fuller Illustration

tion thereof, consider the Case of an Intelligence, or unbodied Spirit, which is supposed to see perfectly well, *i. e.* to have a clear Perception of the proper and immediate Objects of Sight, but to have no Sense of Touch. Whether there be any such Being in Nature or no, is beside my purpose to inquire. It sufficeth, that the Supposition contains no Contradiction in it. Let us now examine, what Proficiency such a one may be able to make in Geometry. Which Speculation will lead us more clearly to see, whether the Ideas of Sight can possibly be the Object of that Science.

CLIV. *First*, then it is certain, the aforesaid Intelligence could have no Idea of a Solid, or Quantity of three Dimensions, which followeth from its not having any Idea of Distance. We indeed are prone to think, that we have by Sight the Ideas of Space and Solids, which ariseth from our imagining that we do, strictly speaking, see Distance, and some Parts of an Object at a greater Distance than others; which hath been demonstrated to be the Effect of the Experience we have had, what Ideas of Touch are connected with such and such Ideas

Ideas attending Vision: But the Intelligence here spoken of is supposed to have no Experience of Touch. He would not, therefore, judge as we do, nor have any Idea of Distance, Outness, or Profundity, nor consequently of Space or Body, either immediately or by Suggestion. Whence it is plain he can have no Notion of those Parts of Geometry, which relate to the Mensuration of Solids, and their convex or concave Surfaces, and contemplate the Properties of Lines generated by the Section of a Solid. The conceiving of any Part whereof, is beyond the Reach of his Faculties.

CLV. Farther, he cannot comprehend the Manner wherein Geometers describe a right Line or Circle; the Rule and Compass with their Use, being things of which it is impossible he should have any Notion: Nor is it an easier matter for him to conceive the placing of one Plain or Angle on another, in order to prove their Equality: Since that supposeth some Idea of Distance, or external Space. All which makes it evident, our pure Intelligence could never attain to know so much as the first Elements of plain Geometry.

And

And perhaps, upon a nice Inquiry, it will be found, he cannot even have an Idea of plain Figures any more than he can of Solids; since some Idea of Distance is necessary, to form the Idea of a Geometrical Plain, as will appear to whoever shall reflect a little on it.

CLVI. All that is properly perceived by the visive Faculty, amounts to no more than Colours with their Variations, and different Proportions of Light and Shade: But, the perpetual Mutability, and Fleetingness of those immediate Objects of Sight, render them incapable of being managed after the manner of Geometrical Figures; nor is it in any Degree useful that they should. It is true, there are divers of them perceived at once; and more of some, and less of others: But accurately to compute their Magnitude, and assign precise determinate Proportions, between things so variable and inconstant, if we suppose it possible to be done, must yet be a very trifling and insignificant Labour.

CLVII. I must confess, Men are tempted to think that flat or plain Figures are
immediate

immediate Objects of Sight, though they acknowledge Solids are not. And this Opinion is grounded on what is observed in painting, wherein (it seems) the Ideas immediately imprinted on the Mind, are only of Plains variously coloured, which by a sudden Act of the Judgment are changed into Solids: But, with a little Attention we shall find the Plains here mentioned, as the immediate Objects of Sight, are not visible but tangible Plains. For when we say that Pictures are Plains: we mean thereby, that they appear to the Touch smooth and uniform. But then this Smoothness and Uniformity, or, in other Words, this Plainness of the Picture, is not perceived immediately by Vision: For it appeareth to the Eye various and multiform.

CLVIII. From all which we may conclude, that Plains are no more the immediate Object of Sight than Solids. What we strictly see are not Solids, nor yet Plains variously coloured: they are only diversity of Colours. And some of these suggest to the Mind Solids, and others plain Figures; just as they have been experienced to be connected with the one, or
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the other: So that we see Plains, in the same way that we see Solids; both being equally suggested by the immediate Objects of Sight, which accordingly are themselves denominated Plains and Solids: But though they are called by the same Names, with the things marked by them, they are nevertheless of a Nature intirely different, as hath been demonstrated:

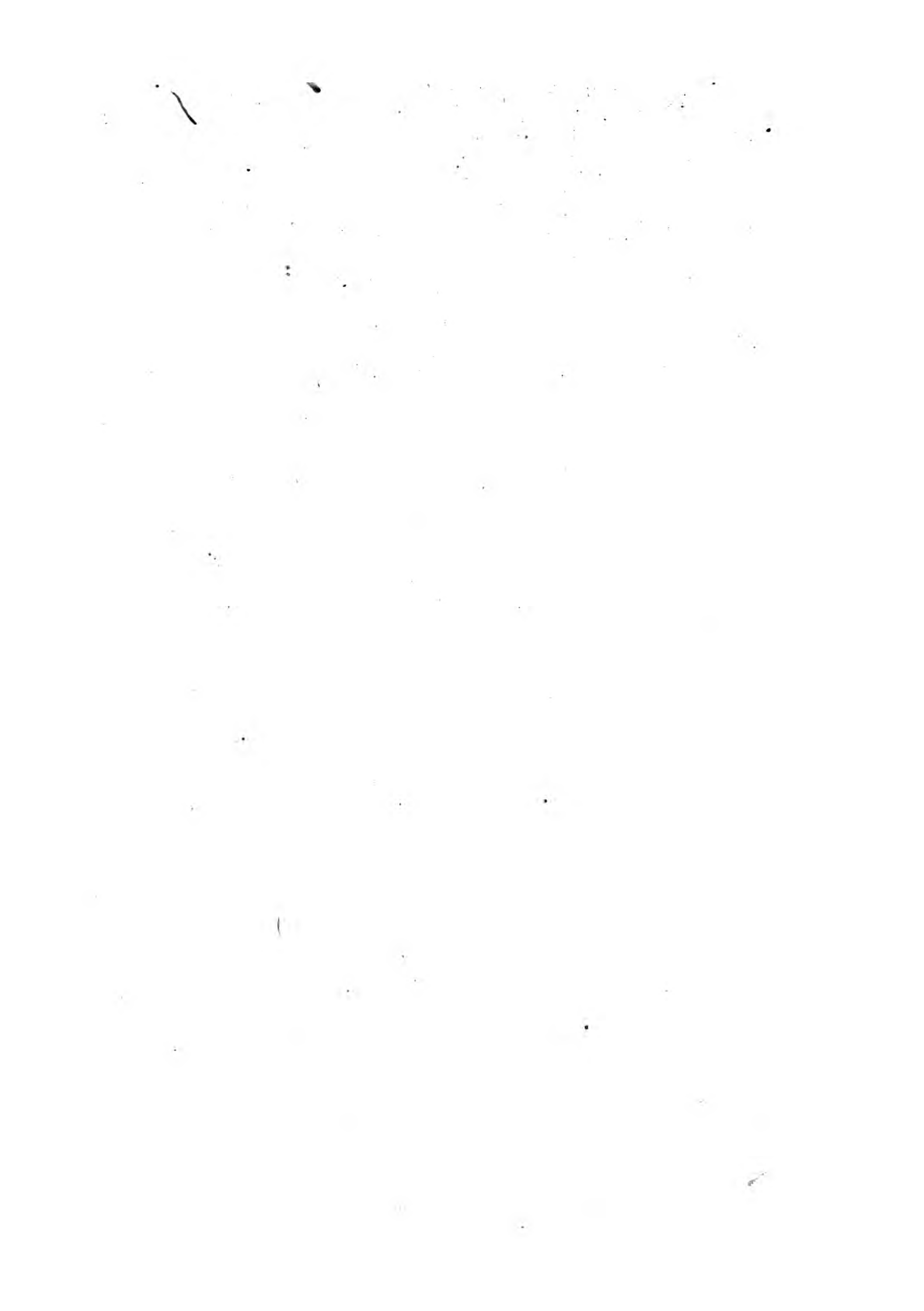
CLIX. What hath been said is, if I mistake not, sufficient to decide the Question we proposed to examine, concerning the Ability of a pure Spirit, such as we have described, to know *Geometry*: It is, indeed, no easy Matter for us to enter precisely into the Thoughts of such an Intelligence; because we cannot, without great Pains, cleverly separate and disentangle in our Thoughts the proper Objects of Sight from those of Touch which are connected with them. This, indeed, in a compleat Degree, seems scarce possible to be performed: Which will not seem strange to us, if we consider how hard it is, for any one to hear the Words of his Native Language pronounced in his Ears without understanding them. Though he endeavour to disunite the Meaning from
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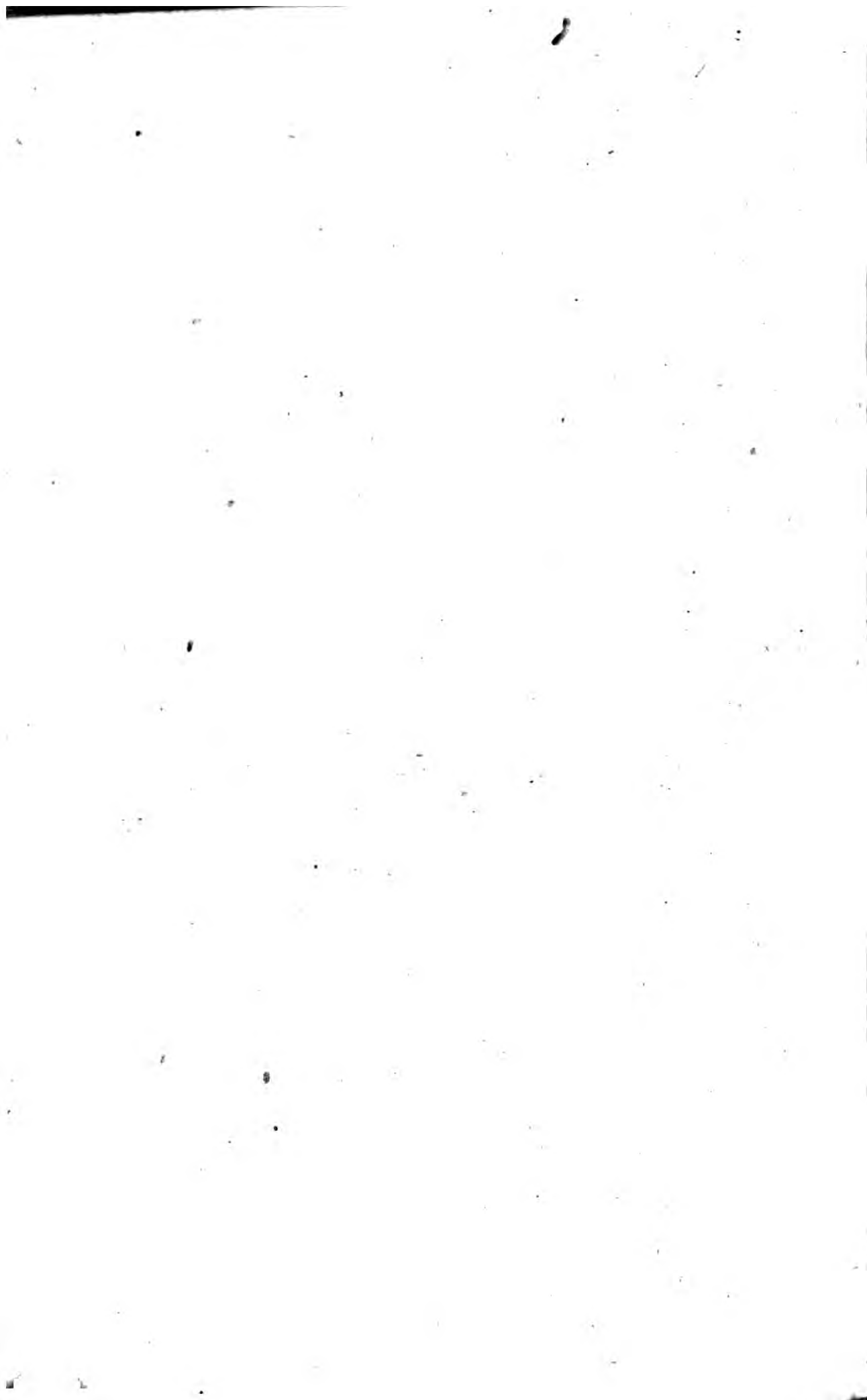
the Sound, it will nevertheless intrude into his Thoughts, and he shall find it extreme difficult, if not impossible, to put himself exactly in the Posture of a Foreigner, that never learned the Language, so as to be affected barely with the Sounds themselves, and not perceive the Signification annexed to them. By this time, I suppose, it is clear that neither Abstract, nor visible Extension makes the Object of Geometry; the not discerning of which may perhaps, have created some Difficulty and useless Labour in Mathematics.

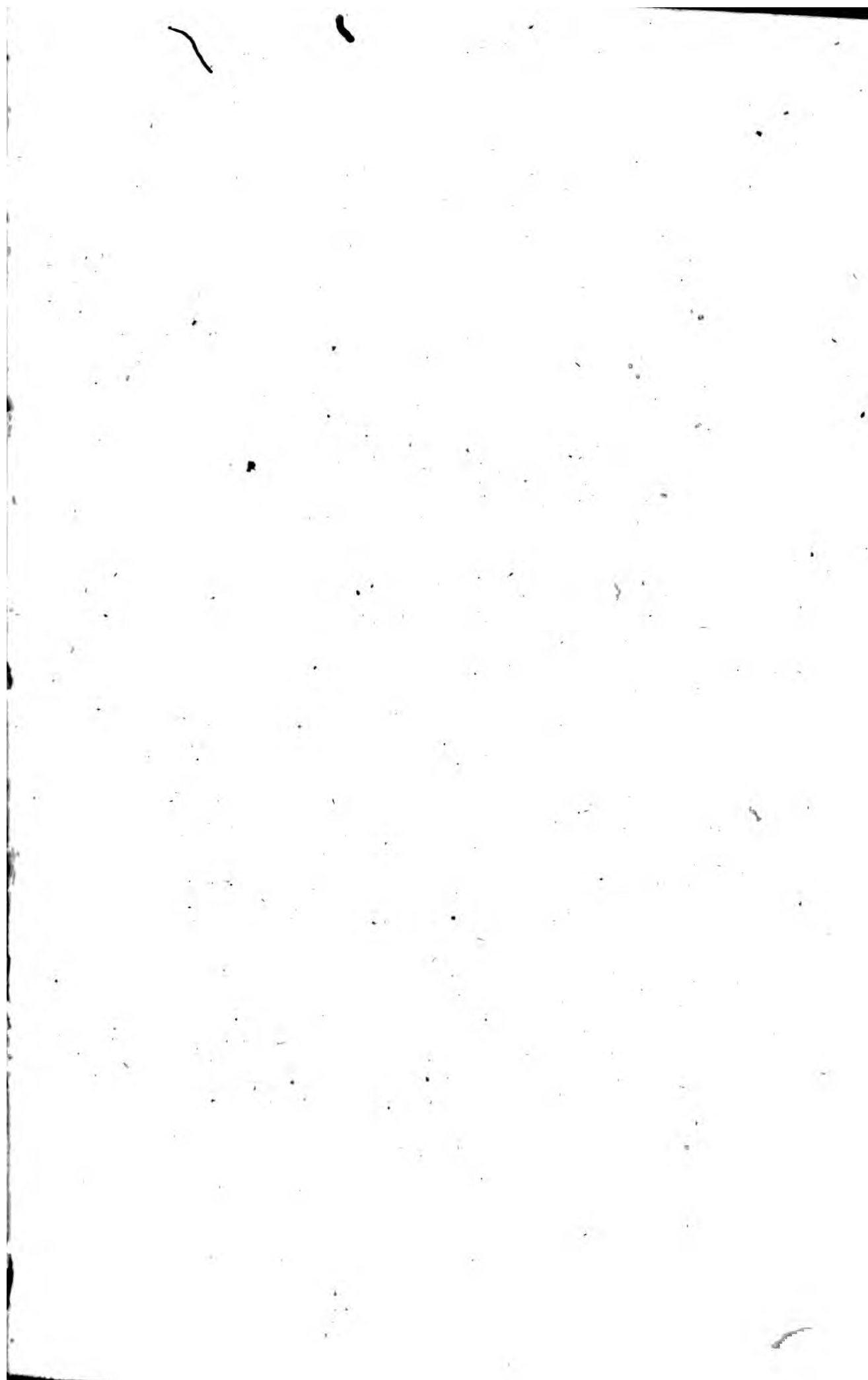
F I N I S.











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