

acknowledged it, or caused it to be printed; without any regard to the unhappiness of his situation; or pity for his bodily infirmities, they began their process by ordering him to be clapped up in prison. Thus they would have had him taken out of his bed, and dragged from his house, to be thrown among infamous criminals to rot in a jail. Nay, who knows but they might have burnt him at the stake, without suffering him to speak in his defence! for what reason is there to think they would have proceeded more regularly afterwards than at first, in a prosecution so violently commenced, as to be almost without example, even in the countries of the inquisition! Thus it is, in my case alone, that this sagacious tribunal forgets its prudential maxims: it is against me only, that a people, who boast so much of their humanity, and by whom I thought myself beloved, act with the strangest barbarity: it is thus, the country I preferred as an asylum above all others, justifies my giving it that preference! I know not how far such proceedings may be consistent with the laws of nations; but I know very well, that where they are carried on, a man's liberty, and perhaps his life, lies at the mercy of the first printer who chuses to set his name to a book.

A citizen of Geneva owes no respect to such unjust magistrates, who order persons to be apprehended and committed to prison, on the first scandalous information given them, without citing the accused to appear and answer for himself. Now, not having been cited to appear, he is not obliged to do it. But, being thus attacked by force and violence, he is justified in flying from persecution. He shakes the dust off his feet,

feet, therefore, and leaves an inhospitable country, where the strong are so ready to oppress the weak, and to load the stranger with chains, without hearing his defence; without knowing whether the act he is accused of be criminal; or being so, whether he hath indeed committed it. He abandons with regret the pleasing solitude he had chosen, leaving all his possessions, his few, but valuable friends, behind. Weak and infirm as he is, he is obliged to undergo the fatigues of a long journey; hoping at the end of it to breathe freely in a land of liberty. He repairs to his own country, flattering himself his reception there will console him for his past disgrace—But what am I going to say? My heart sinks, my hand trembles, and my pen falls to the ground: I will be silent, nor be guilty of exposing my country.

And wherefore am I thus treated? I do not ask for what reason, but on what pretence? The magistrates have been rash enough to judge me guilty of impiety, without reflecting that the book containing the pretended instances of it is in every body's hands. What would they not give effectually to suppress that authentic testimony in my favour; that they might then be able more boldly to say it contains what they pretend to have found there! But this proof of my innocence will remain in spite of all their efforts to suppress it; and posterity will be amazed, in looking therein for the enormous crimes imputed to the author, to find only the errors and mistakes of a sincere friend to virtue.

I shall avoid speaking of my contemporaries, because I would be hurtful to none. But the Atheist Spinoza was peaceably suffered to teach
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his doctrines to the world ; he met with no opposition in printing or selling his works. He came to France, and was well received there ; all the states of Europe were ready to afford him countenance, or at least protection. He was offered professorships by some princes, and particularly honoured by others ; living and dying peacefully, and even respected. And yet, in an age so much celebrated as the present for philosophy, reason, and humanity, a defender of the cause of truth is proscribed and pursued from state to state, from asylum to asylum, without the least regard for his indigence, or pity for his infirmities ; and all for having proposed, with great circumspection, and even with great respect and tenderness for mankind, some doubts founded on the honour of the supreme Being. For this he is hunted through the world, with a bitterness of persecution the vilest malefactor never experienced, and which would be even cruel to exert against a man possessed of health and strength to support him under it. Prohibited the use of the common elements of fire and water in almost every part of Europe, he is driven from his very retreat in the woods ; and is only safe in the fortitude of an illustrious protector, and the goodness of an enlightened prince ; all which became necessary to ensure him an asylum in the midst of the mountains. Instead of safety thus procured, he had, in all probability, spent the remainder of his miserable life in chains, or perished beneath the torture, had he been found during the first phrenzy which seized on governments, at the mercy of his inhuman persecutors.

Escaped from the hangman, he fell next into

the hands of the priests: not that I shall mention any ill treatment, as surprising, he might meet with from them: but surely it is something wonderful, that a man of virtue, whose mind is as noble as his birth, an illustrious archbishop, who ought to suppress their baseness, should authorise it! Yet so it is; this Catholic prelate issues out a mandate against a Protestant author; he mounts his tribunal to examine into the particular doctrines of an heretic; and although he condemns indiscriminately every one that is not of his church, yet he refuses to permit the accused to err his own way, but prescribes in a manner the path in which he must descend to hell. No sooner have the inferior clergy received his sanction, but they fly with virulence on the enemy whom they imagine to be levelled with the ground, and to lie at their mercy. There is not the meanest vicar or ignorant curate of a country parish, who doth not take a pride in insulting the devoted author, whom the senate and their bishop have united to crush.

Thus, my Lord, have I displayed the unhappy circumstances peculiar to my situation, of which there is no precedent. Nor is this all. The present is perhaps one of the most difficult passages of my life; one of those in which revenge and self-love are the most easily satisfied, and least permit a man of integrity to be moderate. Ten lines more, and I cover my persecutors with eternal ridicule. Oh that the public did but know two anecdotes, without my being at the trouble of telling them! oh that they did but know who were the persons that meditated my ruin, and what steps they have taken to effect it! They would see by what

contemptible insects, by what dark means, the powers of government are sometimes moved: they would see by what four leaven the parliament was put into a ferment. They would see from what a ridiculous cause the several states of Europe united in league together against the son of a watchmaker! How greatly should I enjoy their surprize, were I not myself so nearly concerned in it!

Hitherto my pen, though bold in relating the truth, hath always kept itself free from satire; it hath always respected the character of others in defending my own. Shall I now, therefore, when I am going to lay it aside, dip it into calumny, or copy the style of my enemies? No; be theirs all the advantage of stabbing men in the dark. For my part, I would only defend myself openly, and would do nothing more than act in my own defence. To this end, what the public already know, is sufficient; or at least what they may know without my giving any one offence.

A surprising thing of this kind, and what I may safely say, is to see the intrepid Christopher de Beaumont, whom no power could reduce to make peace with the Jansenists, become, without knowing it, the dupe of their animosity: to see their most irreconcilable enemy raging against me, because I would not be of their party; because I would not write against the Jesuits, whom I do not love, though I have no cause of complaint against them, and think them ill treated. If your Lordship pleases to cast your eye over the sixth volume of the *New Eloisa*, you will there discover, in a note, page 138, the true source of my misfortunes. I have pro-

phesied in that note, (for I intermeddle also sometimes with prophesying,) that as soon as the Jansenists should gain the superiority, they would be more persecuting and severe than their enemies. I did not then know, however, that my prediction would be verified on myself. The thread of this clue would not be difficult for those to unravel who know how my book hath been treated. I cannot say more on this head without saying too much; but I may at least inform you, what sort of people you have been influenced by without suspecting it.

Will it be believed that you would have attacked my book had it not been first censured by the parliament? Some people may believe it, or at least say it; but you, whose conscience will not permit of deceit, will not say so. My Discourse on the Inequality of Mankind was generally read throughout your diocese, and yet you published no mandate against it. My Letter to M. de Alembert was as general, and yet you published no mandate against it. The New Eloisa was universal, and yet your Lordship issued no mandate. All these books, however, which you must have read, since you judge of them, contain the same maxims, and display, without disguise, the same modes of thinking.

If the subject of them did not admit of their being so fully explained, they gained in force what they lost in extent, and express the author's profession of faith with less reserve than that of the Savoyard curate. Wherefore, my Lord, did you not exert yourself on these occasions? Was your flock then less dear to you? did they read my books less? did they dislike my writings more? were they less exposed to error?

error? No—But the Jesuits were not then laid under proscription. I had not then fallen into the snares my enemies have since laid for me. That fatal note was not then known; and when it was known, the public had already passed their judgment of approbation on the book. It was too late to think of raising their resentment on that score for the present; it was thought proper to defer it to a more convenient opportunity. The occasion was attentively watched for, and eagerly seized, with all that fury which is common to partial zealots; nothing now was talked of but imprisonment and tortures. My book was said to be the signal for anarchy, and the trumpet of atheism; the author was stigmatised as a monster of iniquity, and it was thought amazing that he had been so long permitted to live.

Amidst this universal clamour, your Lordship would have been ashamed to be silent; you chose therefore rather to commit an act of cruelty, than to be accused of wanting zeal. You chose rather to serve your enemies, than to bear the insult of their reproaches. Such, my Lord, you must own, was the true motive of your mandate; and such are the facts whose concurrence may, in my opinion, be very justly denominated singular.

Justice, I know, hath long given place to the maxims and formalities of state. I am not insensible, that, in some circumstances, a man invested with a public character is unhappily compelled against his will to act against honest men. To be moderate among zealots, is to expose one's self to their fury; and I can easily conceive, that, in such a combination as that

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to which I have fallen a victim, it is necessary to join the cry and hunt with the wolves, or run the risk of being devoured by them. I do not complain therefore that your Lordship has issued a mandate against my book; but I complain that you have done it against myself, and that with as little candour as truth. I complain, that, authorising by your own language that which you reproach me for having put into the mouth of a dogmatist, you load me with calumnies which, without hurting my cause, attack my honour, or rather your's. I complain that you have wantonly, without reason, without necessity, and without regard to my misfortunes, abused me in a manner the most unworthy your own character. And after all, my Lord, what is it I have done? I, who have always spoken of you with so much esteem; I, who have so often admired your unshaken fortitude, tho' lamenting, it is true, the use which your prejudices induced you to make of it; I, who have always respected, and still respect, your virtues, even though you have so grossly injured me.

But thus it is that people extricate themselves from difficulties, when they are determined to find fault, and are themselves in the wrong. As you could not answer my objections, you have imputed them to me as crimes; you imagined you should make me despicable, by ill-treating me; but you have been mistaken. On the contrary, without invalidating my arguments, you have made every humane and generous mind take part in my sufferings; you have given occasion for every person of sense to reflect, that a man who judged so ill of the author, was still less qualified to judge well of his book.

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You have shewn yourself, my Lord, neither humane nor generous; and yet you might have been so, without omitting any of the arguments you have made use of against my book: nay, I will take upon me to say, they would in that case have had much more weight. I must acknowledge, also, that I have no right to require those virtues of you, nor to expect any thing like them from an ecclesiastic. We shall inquire however, if you have at least been equitable and just; for this is a duty imposed on all mankind, nor are the saints themselves excused in the breach of it.

Your Lordship's mandate hath two points in view; the one is to censure my book, and the other to abuse my person. I shall think I have made a sufficient reply to it, therefore, if I prove, that, wherever you have endeavoured to refute me, you have reasoned falsely; and that where you have insulted me, you have been guilty of calumny. But when we prove our assertions as we go on, and are compelled by the importance of the subject and the quality of our adversary to proceed sedately, and to follow him step by step through all his censures, every word almost requires a page; thus while a short satire is amusing to the reader, a long defence becomes irksome and tedious. Notwithstanding this inconvenience, however, I must make a defence, or sit down contented under your falsest imputations. I am resolved, therefore, to defend myself; but shall rather defend my honour than my book. It is not the creed of the Savoyard curate that I examine, but the mandate of the archbishop of Paris; the scandal thrown on the editor only obliging him to
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Speak of the work itself. I will endeavour to do myself justice, because it is my duty; I owe it to my own character. At the same time, however, I am very sensible how disagreeable a circumstance it is to contend with such a powerful adversary, and that the mere justification of the innocent can afford but very dull entertainment to the reader.

The fundamental principle of all morality, that on which I have reasoned in all my writings, and which I explained in the last with all the perspicuity I was master of, is this: That man is naturally good; that he loves justice and order; that there is no original perversity in the human heart, and that the first emotions of nature are always right. I have shown, that the only passion which is born with man, to wit, self-love, is in itself indifferent either to good or evil; that it becomes good or evil only by accident, and according to the circumstances in which it is displayed. I have shewn that none of the vices imputed to the human heart are natural to it: I have described the manner in which they arise; have traced, as it were, their genealogy; and shewn the manner in which, by a successive deviation from their original goodness, mankind are become what they are.

I have explained farther what I understand by this original goodness, which does not seem to flow from that indifference to good and evil which is natural to self-love. Man is not a simple, but a compound being, formed of two substances. It is true, that all the world do not agree in this; but you and I, my Lord, are agreed in it, and I have endeavoured to demonstrate it to others. This being admitted then, self-love
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is not a simple passion ; but hath two principles, *viz.* the intelligent being and the sensitive being, whose happiness is not one and the same. The sensual appetites tend to the gratification of the body, and the love of order to that of the mind. This last passion, expanded and become active, is denominated conscience ; but conscience displays itself, and acts only from knowledge. It is by acquiring knowledge only that man acquires a sense of order ; and it is from his acquiring this sense, that his conscience induces him to love it. Conscience is, therefore, nothing in those men who have never compared different objects and seen their relations. In such a state as this, a man knows nothing but himself ; he doth not see his own happiness to be consistent with, or opposed to, that of others : he neither loves nor hates ; but, confined solely to physical instinct, is a mere sensitive being, an idiot. This I have shewn at large in my Discourse on the Inequality of Mankind.

When, by a developement of the passions, the progress of which I have traced out, men begin to look round on their fellow-creatures, they begin also to see the relation they stand in to one another, and to the objects about them ; hence arise their ideas of agreement or disagreement, of justice, of order, and the like. It is now that moral beauty becomes perceptible, and the conscience begins to act. They now possess virtues ; and if they have vices also, it is because their separate interests increase, and their ambition is excited in proportion as their knowledge grows extensive. So long also as the opposition of their interests is less than the concurrence of their knowledge, men are essentially good.

good. Such is the second state of mankind

But when all the particular interests of individuals interfere, and clash against each other; when self-love is converted, by its fermentation, into self-interest; and opinion, by rendering the whole universe necessary to each individual, makes them all enemies from their birth, and causes the happiness of one to depend on the misery of another; then conscience, too feeble to withstand the violence of the passions, is silenced by their impetuosity, and remains a mere empty word, which mankind reciprocally make use of to deceive each other. Then every one pretends to sacrifice his own interest to that of his country, and all are liars. Not one is desirous of the public good, unless it coincides with his own; and hence this coincidence between the public and private good becomes the object of that true policy, which alone is calculated to make men virtuous and happy. But I am now beginning to talk a strange language, as little understood by the majority of readers as by your Lordship. This is the third and last state, beyond which nothing remains to be done; and thus we see how man, being naturally and originally good, individuals become wicked. The great object of my book is the means of preventing this defection. Not that I affirmed it, in the present order of things, to be absolutely possible; but this I affirmed, and do still, that there are no other means of effecting it but those I have pointed out.

Your Lordship is, nevertheless, pleased to say, my plan of education is so far from being consistent with Christianity, that it is not adapted to either form citizens or men. Your only
proof

proof of this assertion, however, is the doctrine of original sin. Now baptism, my Lord, is the only means of deliverance from original sin and its effects. Whence it follows, according to your arguments, that there never were any citizens or men in the world but Christians. You must either deny this consequence, therefore, or own that you have proved too much.

As you go so far back for your proofs, I must do the same for my objections to them. And first it appears to me, that this doctrine of original sin, subject as it is to the most striking difficulties, is not to be found in the scriptures, so clearly or so strictly expressed as the rhetorical Augustine and other theologues have been pleased to maintain. It is farther hardly possible to conceive, that God should create so many innocent souls, with a view to join them to corrupt bodies, there to contract a moral impurity, for which he should damn them to all eternity in hell, though guilty of no other crime than what was the immediate effect of that union which was his own work. I shall not say, whether (as you have boasted) by this system you have cleared up the mystery of the human heart; but I affirm that you have greatly obscured by it the justice and goodness of the supreme Being. If you have removed one objection, it hath been only to substitute others much greater in its place.

But after all, what hath this doctrine to do with the author of *Emilius*? It is certain, that notwithstanding he conceived his book might be of use to mankind in general, he wrote it more particular for Christians; for the use of men, cleansed from the guilt of original sin and
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its effects, at least with regard to their souls, by the sacrament instituted for that purpose. According to that doctrine, we all recovered our primitive innocence in our infancy, being rendered by baptism as pure of heart as Adam came out of the hands of God. Will you say, that we have contracted new impurities? How? As we began the world with being thus cleansed, in what manner can we have contracted them since? Is not the blood of Christ sufficiently efficacious to wash away the stain? or is our guilt the effect of the natural corruption of the flesh; and hath God made us originally corrupt, independent of original sin, on purpose to have the pleasure of punishing us? You attribute to original sin the vices of those whom you affirm to be cleansed from it; and yet blame me for having attributed their vices to another cause. Is it just to make it criminal in me not to reason so bad as your Lordship?

It may be said, indeed, that the effects which I attribute to baptism * do not appear by any external signs; that Christians are not less prone to vice than infidels; whereas, according to my supposition, the native virulence of sin should

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* Burnet supposes, that the corruption and mortality of the human race, in consequence of the fall of Adam, were the natural effect of the forbidden fruit; that aliment containing some poisonous juices, which proved destructive to the animal œconomy, by irritating the passions, weakening the understanding, and diffusing principles of vice and mortality throughout the whole man. In this case, however, the nature of the remedy being adapted to that of the disease, it is plain that baptism ought to have a physical operation on the body of man, by restoring to him that constitution he enjoyed in a state of innocence, and, if not the immortality dependent on it, at least all the moral effects of such a re-establishment of the animal œconomy.

appear in the latter, and make an evident distinction between them. With the assistance, it might be said, of gospel morality, added to baptism, all Christians ought to resemble angels; while infidels, being not only uncleaned from original sin, but also given up to false worship, would be little better than devils. I can imagine, that, if this difficulty were artfully insisted on, it would prove very embarrassing: for what answer can we make those who are ready to demonstrate, that the effects of a redemption, purchased at so high a price, are, with regard to the moral virtues of mankind, next kin to nothing? But, setting aside my suspicion, that no expedient, agreeable to sound theology, can be found to get over this difficulty, were I to admit that baptism does not effectually remedy the corruption of our nature, your Lordship will not be found to have reasoned a jot better. We are sinners, you say, because of the sins of our first parents: but how came our first parents to be sinners themselves? Why is not the same reason, by which you would explain Adam's sin, applicable to his posterity, without imputing to them his guilt? and why must we impute injustice to God, in that we are made sinners, and subjected to punishment from the vice of our birth, when our first parents were sinners, and were punished in like manner, without it? Original sin may serve to explain every thing but its own principle, and this is the very thing to be explained.

You advance that, according to my principle, we lose sight of that ray of light which discovers to us the mystery of our own hearts; and at the same time do not see that my principle, more

universal than yours, explains even the sin of the first man Adam *, which your's leaves in obscurity. You behold man only as being in the hands of the devil, and I explain the manner of his fall. The cause of evil is, according to you, the corruption of our nature ; and this very corruption

* To demur against an useless and arbitrary prohibition, is nothing but what is natural; but it is so far from being vicious in itself, that it is conformable to the order of things, and the constitution of human nature: for man would not be in a state to provide for his own preservation, if he had not a very lively sense of self-love, and of all those rights and privileges he hath received from nature. An omnipotent Being would require nothing but what is useful; but a feeble being, whose power is farther limited and restrained by law, loses part of himself by such restraint, and is urged doubtless to reclaim what he is thus deprived of. To impute this to him as a crime, is to make it criminal in him to be himself and not another person; it is to require him to be, and not to be, at the same time. For this reason, the command which was broken by Adam appears to me to have been rather a paternal advice, than an absolute prohibition; a kind of friendly warning to him, to abstain from a pernicious and deadly fruit. This idea is surely more conformable to our notions of the goodness of the Deity, and even to the text, than that which divines have been pleased to teach us; for, with regard to the twofold death, it hath been shewn, that the phrase *morte morieris* is not so emphatical as they pretend; being only an hebraism, made use of in other parts of scripture where such emphasis could not take place. There is, besides, so natural a motive for indulgence and commiseration in the subtilty of the serpent, and the seduction of the woman, that, all circumstances considered, the crime of Adam appears really but a venial sin. And yet, according to our divines, what a shocking punishment attends it! it is impossible to conceive any thing more terrible! For what greater punishment could Adam have been subjected to, even for the greatest of crimes, than that of being condemned, together with his posterity, to death in this world, and to suffer to all eternity amidst the flames of hell in the next? Can such a punishment be inflicted by the God of mercy on a poor unhappy being, merely for suffering himself to be deceived? How do I abominate this discouraging doctrine of our cruel theologues? I should think myself a blasphemer indeed, if I were tempted but for a moment to believe it.

ruption is the evil of which I would discover the cause. We both are agreed, I imagine, that man was created originally good; but you say he is wicked because he is wicked, and I endeavour to shew how he became so. Which of us, do you think, approaches nearest to first principles?

And yet you proceed in a triumphant manner, as if you had levelled my argument with the ground. You oppose against me, as an immoveable obstacle, “that striking mixture of greatness and meanness, of zeal for truth and love for error, of inclination to virtue and tendency to vice,” which is to be found in man. “Astonishing contrast! (say you,) which disconcerts the pagan philosophy, and leaves it to wander in vain speculation!”

The theory of man, however, is not a vain speculation, as it is founded in nature, and proceeds only on the support of well-connected facts, which, leading us to the sources of the passions, teach us how to regulate their course. If you are pleased to call the Savoyard’s creed heathen philosophy, I can make no reply to such an imputation, because I cannot comprehend your meaning*; but I think it ludicrous enough that you should borrow his own terms to tell us he hath not explained what he hath explained so clearly.

Your Lordship will permit me to remind you of the conclusion you have drawn from an objection so well discussed, with all the chain of consequences attending it. “Man finds him-
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* Unless, indeed, it relates to what his lordship charges me with in the sequel, of admitting a plurality of Gods.

self impelled by an unhappy tendency to vice : and how shall he make head against it, if he be not, in his infancy, put under the direction of preceptors, abounding in virtue, diligence and wisdom ; or if, during his whole life, he does not, under the protection and with the grace of God, make continual and powerful efforts to withstand it ?” This is as much as to say, We see mankind are wicked, notwithstanding they are kept under the most tyrannical subjection, from their infancy ; if, therefore, they are not kept under such early subjection, how shall they ever become virtuous and prudent, since by constantly tyrannizing over them, it is impossible to make them so !

The force of our arguments concerning education will become more sensible if we apply them to a different subject. Let us, therefore, suppose, my Lord, a man should address himself to us in the following manner. “ You give yourselves a great deal of trouble to make choice of the most equitable governments, and to procure good laws. But I will demonstrate to you, in the first place, that your forms of government themselves occasion those evils for which you think them a remedy. I will prove to you farther, that it is impossible you should ever have either good laws or equitable governments ; and lastly, I will point out to you the true way to prevent all the evils you complain of, without government, and without laws.”

Let us suppose, that, after this, he should lay down his system, and point out his pretended means, I do not inquire whether his system be reasonable, or his means practicable. If they were not, it is possible he would only be looked upon

as a lunatic, and be very justly confined to a dark chamber. But if unhappily his system should be well founded and practicable, it would go much worse with him; and you will readily conceive, my Lord, or others will do it for you, that it would be difficult to find racks and tortures enough to punish the detestable wretch for being in the right. But this is not strictly the present case; and whatever might befall the person of such a victim, it is certain an inundation of writings would burst out against his book. There would not be a single scribbler in the town, or under-graduate of the college, but, in order to pay his court to those in power, and proud of a *cum privilegio* to his writings, would load him with a pamphlet of abuse, and boast of having silenced the man, who might either be prevented speaking, or might hold such antagonists in too much contempt to answer them. But this case also is not exactly to the present point. We will suppose then, lastly, that some grave personage, interested in the affair, should think himself obliged to follow the example of others, and, amidst other declamatory abuses, should address the culprit as follows. “What dost thou mean, abandoned wretch? wouldest thou overturn all government and law, when these are our only check on vice, and even these can hardly restrain it within moderate bounds? Good God! what would become of us, if we had neither laws nor government? Take away our prisons and our gibbets, and thefts and robberies would become universal: O, thou art an abominable wretch!”

If, after so harsh a reproof, the poor man might venture to speak, he would doubtless express

himself thus : “ Excuse me, my noble Lord, your honour is guilty of a *petitio principii*. I did not say that vice ought not to be suppressed : But I say it would be better to prevent its existence. I would provide against the insufficiency of the laws; and you object to me that very insufficiency. You accuse me of introducing abuses, because, instead of remedying, I chuse rather to prevent them.— What! if there were a method by which we might live always in health, must it be suppressed because the physicians would have nothing to do? Your honour is desirous of seeing racks and gibbets, and I of seeing no malefactors to require them; with all due submission, therefore, I do not think myself that abominable wretch your honour pronounces me.”

But to return to your Lordship’s mandate. “ Alas! my dear brethren, in spite of the principles of the most salutary and virtuous education, and notwithstanding the most encouraging promises and the most terrible menaces of religion, the errors of youth are still too frequent.” But I have proved that the education which you call the most salutary, is the most absurd and senseless; that the education you call the most virtuous, is in fact the cause of all the vices of children : I have proved, that all the celestial glories of paradise have less influence over them than a lump of sugar-candy, and that they are much more afraid of being tired at vespers than of burning in hell : I have proved, that all the errors and extravagancies of youth, which you complain cannot be prevented by your means, are really effected by them. “ Into what errors and excesses doth not youth, when let alone, precipitate itself!” Youth, my Lord, when let alone,
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never goes astray; all its errors arise from being missed. The companions and mistresses of young men, only complete what their priests and preceptors begun. This, my Lord, I have proved. But your Lordship proceeds: "It is a torrent that rushes forth, in spite of the most powerful dykes that can be raised to oppose it: what then would be the consequence, if no obstacles were made use of to withstand its efforts?" In answer to this, I might say, "It is a torrent which breaks down your feeble dykes, and carries all before it. Enlarge its bed, and let it flow without obstacle, and it will do no harm." But I am ashamed of employing on so serious a subject such a florid declamation as each party makes use of at pleasure, and which proves nothing on either side.

It appears, however, that, notwithstanding the extravagancies of youth are too numerous and frequent on account of original sin, your Lordship is not at so great variance with them on the whole; as you seem to be so well satisfied with that salutary and virtuous method of education, which is practised by your preceptors so full of virtue, diligence, and wisdom; so that you think youth would be still greater losers were they educated in any other manner; and it seems that you do not in fact think quite so ill of the present age, *the sink of all ages*, as you affect to speak in your mandate.

I confess, indeed, it is quite superfluous for those people to project new schemes of education, who are well satisfied with the present; but if this be the case with your Lordship, you must agree with me that you are not very nice or difficult in this matter. Had you been so easy
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with regard to doctrines, your dioceſe had not experienced the troubles with which it hath been long agitated; the ſtorm you raiſed would not have fallen on the Jeſuits; I ſhould not have been oppreſſed for the ſake of company; and you would have enjoyed a greater ſhare of tranquillity as well as myſelf.

You confeſs, that to reform the world as far as the weakneſs, and, according to you, the corruption of our nature, will permit, it is ſufficient to obſerve, under the direction and influence of grace, the dawnings of human reaſon, and to direct them carefully to the paths of truth. “By ſuch means (ſay you) thoſe minds, which are as yet exempt from prejudices, may be put always upon their guard againſt error; thoſe hearts which are as yet free from violent paſſions, may take the impreſſion of every virtue.” So far then we are agreed, for this I have ſaid myſelf. It is true, I did not add that children ſhould only be educated by prieſts; nor did I even think it neceſſary in order to make them citizens or men; but this error, if it be one, is ſo common among Catholics, that it ſurely ſhould not be thought ſo very great a crime in a Proteſtant. I do not inquire whether, in your country, the prieſts themſelves are accounted very good citizens; but as it has been your buſineſs to educate the preſent generation, it lies between you on one part, and your former mandates on the other, to decide whether the pupils have profited ſo much by the ſpiritual milk of the world, as to become ſuch good ſaints, ſuch ſincere worſhippers of God, ſuch great men, “as to be worthy of being the ſupport and ornament of their country.” I might add to this, another obſervation which ought to
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strike all good Frenchmen, and of course your Lordship as such; and this is, That of all the several kings that have reigned over your nation, the very best of them is the only one who was not educated by priests.

But of what consequence is this, since I do not exclude them from that task! Let them educate youth, if they are capable of it; I pretend not to oppose it; so that what you have said on that head, doth not in the least affect my book. Will you assert that my plan is a bad one, merely because it is better adapted to other people than it is to those of the church?

If a man is naturally good, as I think I have sufficiently demonstrated; it follows, that he will remain such, unless some foreign cause corrupts him: and if men be originally wicked, (which great pains have been taken to make me believe;) it still follows, that the wickedness comes from some foreign cause. Close up, therefore, all the avenues of vice, and the human heart will be always good.

On this principle I lay down the negative plan of education as the best, or rather as the only one that is good for any thing. I prove that all positive education acts contrary to the end designed, and shew in what manner the point aimed at may be attained.

I call that positive education which tends to form the understanding before the proper time, and to give a child prematurely the knowledge of the duties of a man. I call that negative education, which tends to perfect the corporeal organs, the instruments of our knowledge, and which prepares us for reasoning by exercising our senses. Do what we will, however, negative

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tive education is not inactive. It is true, it does not inculcate virtue, but it prevents the introduction of vice: it doth not teach us the truth, but preserves us from error. It disposes a child towards every thing that may lead to truth, when he is in a capacity to comprehend it; and to good, when he is in a capacity to love and admire it.

This fact displeases and offends you; it is easy to see the reason of it. You begin by calumniating the design of the proposer. According to you, this inactivity of the mind appeared to me necessary in order to dispose it to receive the errors I wanted to inculcate. It is not, however, very easy to conceive what error a tutor can want to inculcate, who teaches his pupil nothing so carefully as to be sensible of his own ignorance, and to know that he knows nothing. You agree that the understanding is progressive, and is formed by degrees. “But doth it thence follow, (say you,) that a child at the age of ten years should not know the difference between good and evil, that he should confound wisdom with folly, gentleness with cruelty, and virtue with vice?” Doubtless all this will follow, if the judgment doth not sooner unfold itself. “What!” you proceed, “will he not perceive that it is good to obey his parents, and that it is evil to disobey them?” So far from it, my Lord, that I maintain he will, on the contrary, perceive, that to leave his play to go to his book, notwithstanding it may be done in obedience to his parents, is an evil; and that to disobey them, in possessing himself of some delicious forbidden fruit, is a good. I must confess, indeed, he will perceive that it is an evil to be punished, and that it is
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good to be rewarded ; and it is by the balance of this contradictory good and evil that infantine prudence is always regulated. This I think I have fully demonstrated in my two first volumes, and particularly in the dialogue between the preceptor and the child. But you, my Lord, refute my two volumes in as many lines : thus, “ To assert this, my dear brethren, is to calumniate human nature, in imputing to it a degree of stupidity which is foreign to it.” It is certainly impossible to make use of a keener or more concise argument. But this ignorance, which you are pleased to call stupidity, is constantly found in every mind lying under the restraint of imperfect organs or under the want of due cultivation : this is an observation easily made, and may be confirmed by the whole world. To impute this ignorance, therefore, to human nature, is not to calumniate or revile it : it is you, my Lord, who have done this, in imputing to it a malignity to which it is a stranger.

But you go on : “ To think of instructing mankind only at a season when their growing passions are most prevalent, is to inculcate it in a manner which the author himself explodes.”

Here is another sinister intention, which your Lordship is so good as to impute to me, though I dare say no other person would ever have found it in the book. I have shewn, in the first place, that a child educated after my method would not be under the tyranny of the passions at the time you speak of : secondly, I have shewn in what manner the lessons of prudence may retard the developement of those very passions. It is the bad effects of your own mode of education that you impute to mine ; while
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you object to me those faults which I teach you how to prevent. I have secured the heart of my pupil till he arrive at the age of manhood ; and when I see the passions ready to break forth, I even then take measures to retard their progress. Prudential instructions are of no use to a child when very young, as he can neither interest himself in them nor understand them. They are also useless when he is grown up and his heart is already agitated by the passions. It is at the period only which I have pointed out that they can be really useful ; for then, whether it be to instruct or to divert the attention of youth, it is equally necessary that such attention should be engaged.

You say, “ In order that youth should possess the requisite docility to receive our instructions, I would have them be destitute of every principle of religion. The reason, my Lord, is plain ; I would have them be of some religion, and am therefore against teaching them any thing the truth of which they are not capacitated to understand. But had I said, my Lord, that, “ in order to find youth possessed of the requisite docility to receive our instructions, we must be careful to begin with them before they come to years of understanding ;” should I have reasoned worse than your Lordship ? and can this be any prepossession in favour of the instructions you give to children ? According to you, I made choice of the age of reason to inculcate error ; and you anticipate that age to inculcate truth. You are solicitous, and in haste, to instruct a child, before he is capable of discerning right from wrong ; while I am indifferent, and wait to deceive him, till he is capable of judging for him-

himself. Is this a natural conclusion? Which, my lord, is most to be suspected of imposture, he who would address himself only to men, or he who would have to do solely with children?

You censure me for having affirmed and demonstrated, that every child who believes in God is necessarily an idolater or anthropomorphite; and controvert that assertion, by affirming that we can suppose neither one nor the other of a child that receives the education of a Christian. This, my Lord, is the matter in question: it remains to examine the proofs. Mine is, that no education, however truly Christian, can confer a degree of understanding on a child, which is above his years, or detach his ideas from material objects, from which even grown persons cannot detach theirs. I will appeal farther to experience; advising my readers to consult their own memory, and to recollect whether in believing a God, during their infancy, they did not always attach some corporeal image to their idea of the Deity. When you tell a child “that the Deity is like nothing which comes under the cognifance of our senses,” his mind is either so perplexed as to understand nothing, or he understands that the Deity is nothing. When you talk to him of *infinite intelligence*, he is ignorant what *intelligence* is; and still more so of what you mean by the term *infinite*. You may, indeed, make him repeat after you the words you dictate to him; you may also, if it be required, make him say he understands them; for that concession costs him little, and he had much rather say he comprehends you, than be chid or beaten for want of apprehension. The ancients, not even excepting the

Jews, universally represented the Deity as a corporeal Being; and are there not many Christians, particularly Roman Catholics, who do the same at this day? If your children talk like men, it is because your men are still children: and this is the very reason why your inexplicable mysteries no longer puzzle any one, the terms of them being as easily got by rote as any other. It is, indeed, one of the great conveniences of modern Christianity, to be satisfied with a certain jargon of words without ideas.

From an examination into that intelligence which leads to the knowledge of God, I find it unreasonable to believe this knowledge “always necessary to salvation.” As proof of this, I cite the case of idiots and children; with whom also I rank those persons who have not acquired sufficient knowledge to comprehend the existence of God. On this occasion you say, “We need not be surpris’d, however, my dear brethren, that this author defers so long the knowledge of the existence of a Deity, when he doth not believe it necessary to salvation.” Thus you begin, by rendering my proposition more obnoxious, in charitably suppressing the word *always*; which not only softens, but in fact gives it a different sense; for, according to the manner in which I have expressed myself, it is admitted that this knowledge is usually necessary; and according to that you impute to me, it never is necessary. After this little piece of deceit, your Lordship proceeds thus: “It is clear (says he, in the character of an imaginary personage,) that a man may, under some circumstances, live to grow old, without believing in God; and yet he would not, for that reason, be deprived of his

his presence in the other world, if his unbelief were voluntary: and this I affirm to be sometimes the case."

Before I proceed to transcribe your remark on this passage, you will permit me to make mine; and this is, that the pretended personage you speak of here, is really myself, and not the curate; this passage, which you imagined to be in his creed, being in a different part of my work. You must read, my Lord, very carelessly, and quote very inaccurately, those writings you nevertheless so severely condemn. A person in office, who takes upon him thus to censure others, ought surely to be a little more exact. I come now to your remark: "Observe, my dear brethren, the author doth not mean here a person who is incapable of the use of reason, but merely one whose reason might have received no assistance from information." After this you affirm the proposition to be absurd. "St Paul, you say, assures us indeed, that, among the pagan philosophers, many had, by the force of reason alone, arrived at the knowledge of the true God; and thereupon you quote the words of that apostle."

It is often, my Lord, but a small fault, not to understand the author we read; but it is a great one not to understand him before we attempt to refute him, and still a much greater not to do it before we take upon ourselves to abuse him. Now, you have not understood that passage of my book, which you have here attacked, any more than you have done many others. The reader will judge, however, whether this be my fault or yours, when I have quoted the passage itself throughout.

“ We Protestants hold, that no child, who dies before he arrives at the age of reason, is deprived of salvation : the Roman Catholics believe the same of every child that is baptized, though it should never once have heard the name of God. There are some cases, therefore, in which men may be saved without believing in God, as in infancy and imbecillity of mind, as in idiots and madmen, where the understanding is incapable of the operations requisite to infer an acknowledgment of the Deity. All the difference that I see here between me and you, is, that you think children of seven years of age capacitated to believe in God, and I do not think them capable of it even at fifteen. Whether I am right or wrong in this particular, it is not in itself an article of faith, but only a simple observation in natural history.

“ On the same principles it is evident, that if a man should arrive at old age without believing in God, he would not be deprived of his presence in the other world, provided his infidelity be not wilful ; and this, I say, may sometimes happen. You will admit that, with respect to madmen, a malady deprives them of their intellectual faculties, but not of their condition as men, nor of course their claim to the beneficence of their Creator. Why then will you not admit the same claim, in those who, sequestered in their infancy from all society, have lived the real life of a savage, deprived of that information which is to be acquired only by conversation with mankind ? For it is a demonstrable impossibility, that such a savage should ever raise his ideas to the knowledge of the true God. Reason tells us, that man is
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punishable only for his wilful errors, and that invincible ignorance can never be imputed to him as a crime. Hence it should follow, that, in the eye of eternal justice, every man who would have believed, had he had the opportunities of information, will appear as a believer; and that none will be punished for infidelity but those whose hearts refuse to admit the truth."

Such is the passage as it stands in my book; on the perusal of which, your error must be evident to every reader. Your mistake lies, in that you understood, or would have others to understand, that, according to my notions, a person must be instructed in the existence of God, to believe in such existence: whereas my sentiments are very different. I say, that a man's understanding must be ripened, and his mind cultivated to a certain degree, before he is in a capacity to comprehend the proofs of the existence of God, and more particularly so to enable him to discover them himself, without having been informed of them. I speak of barbarians and savages, and you object to me the case of philosophers. I say, that some degree of philosophy is necessary to elevate our minds to the ideas of the true God; and you quote St. Paul against me, who acknowledges, that the pagan philosophers did acquire ideas of the true God. I say, that some men of ignorant and uncultivated minds, may not be in a capacity to form just notions of the Deity; and you say, that people properly instructed may form such notions; and on these allegations it is that you pronounce my opinion a manifest absurdity. How! my Lord, will you say, that, because a professed Civilian ought to understand the laws

of his country, it is absurd to suppose a child who cannot read can be ignorant of them ?

When a writer is careful to avoid perpetual repetition, and hath once clearly expressed himself on any one point, he is not bound to recur always to the same proofs in reasoning on the same subject. The several parts of his writings serve to explain each other ; and the latter, if he preserves any method, always suppose the former. This is what I have endeavoured always to do, and have particularly effected as to the matter in question.

You suppose, with almost all those who treat these subjects, that man comes into the world with a perfect capacity of reasoning, and hath nothing to do but employ it. Now, this is not true ; for reason is an acquisition, and that one of the slowest of the human mind. Man learns to see with his intellectual as well as with his corporeal eyes : but he is much longer about the former than the latter ; because the relations between intellectual objects, being not commensurable like those of material bodies, they are discoverable only by estimation ; and because our first desires and necessities being merely physical, they do not make the examination of such objects sufficiently interesting. We must learn to view two objects at a time, and to form a comparison between them ; we must even learn to compare a variety of objects together, to recur by degrees to their causes, and thence to trace them down to their effects ; it is necessary for us to have combined an infinite number and diversity of relations, in order to acquire the ideas of agreement, proportion, harmony, and order. The man who, deprived of the assistance
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of his fellow-creatures, and incessantly occupied in providing for his necessities, is reduced to the simple progress of his own ideas, will make but little advances in this kind of knowledge; he will grow old and die, without ever emerging from the infancy of reason. Now, can you sincerely believe, my Lord, that out of a million of men, living and dying in that manner, there would be one who should attain a thought of God?

The order of the universe, admirable as it is, doth not appear equally so to every eye. The vulgar pay but little attention to it, being in want of that knowledge which is necessary to render it apparent, and having never learned to reflect on what they see. It is neither perverseness nor obstinacy that prevent their being sensible of his wonderful harmony of things; it is only ignorance and dulness. The least study fatigues such people, as the least manual labour fatigues the student. They have heard of the works of God and the wonders of nature. They repeat the same words indeed, but without annexing to them the same ideas; and are but little affected by those circumstances that elevate the mind of the philosopher to the contemplation of his Creator. Now if, even among us, the common people, who have the opportunity of so much instruction, are still so very dull and stupid; what must be the case with those poor people, who, being left to themselves from their infancy, have learnt nothing from others? Can you believe that an Hottentot, or Laplander, philosophises much on the revolutions of the planets and the generation of things? And yet the Hottentots and Laplanders, living together
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in societies, have a multitude of acquired and communicated ideas, by the help of which they may form some gross notions of a Deity. They have some sort of a catechism; but a savage, wandering solitarily in the woods, can have none at all. You will say, perhaps, no such creature actually exists: be it so. He may be supposed, nevertheless, to exist; and certainly there are men in the world who never entered into any kind of philosophical conversation in their lives, and whose whole time is spent in seeking out their subsistence, eating, and sleeping. What shall we do with these people, the *Ekimaux*, for example? Shall we make theologians of them?

My opinion, therefore, is, that the human mind, such as it comes out of the hands of nature, destitute of instruction and improvement, is not in a capacity of itself to raise its ideas to the sublime conceptions of the Deity; but that these conceptions present themselves in proportion as the mind is cultivated and enlightened. I am of opinion, that God manifests himself, in his works, to all those who have thought and reflected thereon; that he reveals himself to every one that is enlightened by knowledge, in the prospect of the universe; that when our eyes are once opened to his works, we must wilfully shut them, to be blind to their great Author; that every atheistical philosopher must be insincere, or be blinded by pride; but that a man, grossly incapacitated, though simple and sincere, whose mind is without error and without vice, may not be able, through involuntary ignorance, to raise his ideas to the Author of his being, or form conceptions of God, without being subject

to have this ignorance imputed to him as a crime, or being punishable for a fault in which his heart had no share. The one is not enlightened, and the other refuses to be so; between which there appears to me a very wide difference.

Apply the passage you quoted from St Paul to this opinion, and you will see, that, instead of contradicting, it is perfectly consistent with it: you will see that this passage relates solely to those pretended sages, to whom the things that are to be known of God have been made manifest; and of whom he says, "The invisible things of him, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, are seen by the creation of the world, being considered in his works, to the intent that they should be without excuse. But that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was full of darkness; who, while they professed themselves to be wise, became fools."

The reason, for the apostle's reproaching the philosophers with not having glorified the true God, not being applicable to my supposition, is altogether in my favour; and confirm, what I have myself said, "that every philosopher who is an unbeliever, is to blame; because he makes a bad use of the understanding he hath cultivated, and is in a capacity of understanding the truths he rejects." It appears, in fine, from the very passage itself, that you did not understand me; and that you charge me with having said what I neither said nor thought, viz. that men believe in God only upon the authority of others*:
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* His Lordship indeed doth not expressly say this; but it is

in which you are so wide of the mark, that, on the contrary, I have only distinguished between the case wherein men may acquire the knowledge of God of themselves, and that in which they must be obliged to the assistance of others.

But supposing, my Lord, that you had been right in your criticism, and that you had solidly refuted my opinion, it would not thence follow that such opinion must be palpably absurd, as you are pleased to term it: a man may be mistaken without being extravagant or ridiculous; as every error is not an absurdity. My respect for your Lordship makes me more sparing of my epithets: it is not my fault, also, if the reader should supply their omission.

It is thus, my Lord, proceeding always to censure without understanding me, you pass on from one imputation, equally false and important, to another which is more so. After having unjustly accused me of denying the evidence of the Deity, you charge me, still more unjustly, with calling in question his unity. Nay, on this head you go still farther, and take the pains, contrary to your usual custom, of entering into an argument on the subject; the only part of your Mandate, where you have Reason on your side, being that wherein you refute an extravagant position which I never laid down.

The passage you object to is this; or rather the passage in which you relate mine; for the Reader must remember, it is your Lordship that always sets me forth. “I believe, *he makes the same imaginary personage say*, that the world is
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is the only meaning I can reasonably annex to his words, supported by those of St Paul; and I can reply only to what I understand.

governed by a wise and powerful will. I see it, or rather I feel it: and this is of importance for me to know: But is the world eternal, or is it created? Are things derived from one self-sufficient principle, or are there two or more? And what is their essence? Of all this I know nothing, nor do I see it is of any consequence I should *.—I give up all such idle disquisitions, which serve only to make me discontented with myself, are useless in practice, and above my comprehension.”

I must here observe, by the way, that this is the second time you call the Savoyard Curate a chimerical or supposed personage. Pray, my Lord, how do you know this to be the case? I have asserted what I knew; you have ventured to deny what you know nothing of: Which of us is, in this case, the most daring? It is well known, I confess, that there are few priests who believe in God; it is not therefore proved, however, that there are none at all. But, to proceed with your Mandate.

“What is it this daring Author means to say?—The unity of God appears to him a futile and indeterminate question; as if the notion of a multiplicity of Gods was not the greatest of absurdities. *The plurality of Gods, says Tertullian very expressively, tends to the nullity of God.* To admit a God, is to admit a supreme independent Being, to whom all the other Beings are subordinate †. This Writer insinuates, there-

* This break indicates an omission of two lines, by which the passage is moderated, and which the Archbishop would not transcribe. See Mandate, page 235. and Emilius, vol. ii. page 144.

† Tertullian is here guilty of a sophism very common with
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therefore, that there are many Gods."

But who is it says there are many Gods? Ah! my Lord, you would have been glad, very probably, that I had been guilty of such an absurdity; in which case, you certainly would not have taken the pains to write a Mandate against me.

I neither know how, nor why, things are as they are; and many others, who pique themselves on explaining their causes, know just as little as myself. But I can evidently see, there is but one first moving Cause, as every thing clearly tends to the same end. I acknowledge, therefore, the existence of one sole supreme Will, which directs and governs all things; and one sole supreme Power, which animates and influences all things. I attribute this power and will to one and the same Being; because of their perfect agreement and union, which is more easily conceived in one than in two; and because it is unreasonable to admit of more Beings than are necessary. And indeed, even the evil itself, of which we are sensible, is not absolute, and is so far from operating fundamentally against the good, that it concurs with it to the production of universal harmony.

But the reason why things are, is precisely to be distinguished under two ideas, viz. the thing which makes, and the thing which is made: nay, it requires some considerable effort of the mind
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the fathers. He defines the word *God* after the manner of the Christians; and then accuses the Pagans of contradiction, because, contrary to his definition, they admit of many gods. It was not worth while to impute an error to me which I have not committed, merely to introduce so unseasonably a sophism of Tertullian.

to unite these two ideas in the same object; as we cannot conceive how any thing acts, without supposing at the same time the existence of some other being on which it acts. It is farther certain, that we have ideas of two distinct substances; viz. Matter and Spirit; of a thinking substance, and an extended substance; and these two ideas are very easily conceived, the one without the other.

There are, therefore, two methods, in which we may conceive the origin of things: either as they proceed from two different causes; the one alive, the other dead; the one moving, the other moved; the one active, the other passive; the one efficient, the other instrumental: or otherwise, as they are derived from one sole cause, possessed in itself of every thing which is, and every thing which is made. Neither of these opinions, however, though so long agitated by the metaphysicians, can be easily reconciled to human reason: for, if the eternal and necessary existence of matter hath its difficulties, the creation of it must be attended with no less; the philosophers who have in all ages meditated on this subject, having unanimously rejected the possibility of its creation; except a very small number, perhaps, who appear to have sincerely submitted their reason to authority: though, whether these were truly sincere or not, the motives of interest, ease or security, render justly doubtful; and, indeed, it will be impossible to come to any assurance on this head, so long as we run a risk in speaking the truth.

On the supposition that things are derived from one sole eternal principle; this principle being simple in its essence, cannot be a com-

pound of matter and spirit, but is either matter or spirit alone. Now, from the deductions of the Savoyard Curate, he cannot conceive that this principle should be matter; and if it be spirit, he cannot conceive how matter could receive its being from such a cause; for, to this end, it is necessary to conceive its creation: Now, the idea of creation, viz. the idea by which we conceive that, from a simple act of volition, nothing becomes something, is, of all ideas that are not evidently contradictory, the least comprehensible by the human mind.

Beset by such difficulties on both sides, the good priest remained undetermined, resolving not to perplex himself with doubts of mere speculation, which could have no manner of influence on his moral duties. For, after all, to what purpose should I explain the origin of things, provided I know in what manner they actually subsist; if I know my own place among them, and, in consequence of that, the obligations imposed on me?

But should we even suppose two original principles*, (a supposition, however, which the Curate doth not make,) we should not thereby suppose the existence of two Gods; unless indeed we supposed, with the Manicheans, that these principles are both active; a doctrine diametrically opposite to that of our Curate, who very positively, and in the most express terms, admits only of one first intelligence, one active prin-

* He who knows only two substances, can imagine the existence only of two principles; so that the words, *or more*, annexed, are in some measure expletive, serving to intimate, that it is of as little consequence to know the number of these principles as their name.

principle, and, of course, but one God.

I must own indeed, that, the creation of the world being clearly related in our translations of the book of Genesis, to reject that account would be to reject the authority, if not of the holy Scriptures, at least of the translations given us of them; and this is the very reason of the Curate's retaining those doubts, which might not have arisen without such authority. For, setting this consideration aside, the co-existence of two principles * serves better to explain the constitution of the universe, and to remove those difficulties which cannot be solved without it; and particularly, among others, that of the origin of evil. Add to this, that we ought to be perfectly acquainted with the Hebrew tongue, and even to have been contemporary with Moses, to know precisely what sense he attached to the word which is rendered to us *created*. This term is too philosophical to have had originally that known and popular acceptation which we give it at present on the credit of our divines. The acceptation of this term may have been changed, and have misled even the Septuagint themselves, possessed as they already were with

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* It may not be amiss to remark, that this question about the eternity of matter, which so startles our modern divines, gave but little concern to the fathers, whose sentiments were more similar to those of Plato. Not to speak of Justin Martyr, Origen, and others, Clement Alexandrine takes the side of the affirmative so strongly in his *Hypotyposes*, that Photius would have it, on this account, that his book had been interpolated. The same opinion, however, appears again in the *Stromates*, where Clement relates that of Heraclitus without amendment. This father indeed endeavours, in the fifth book, to establish one sole principle; but this is, because he refuses to give that name to matter, even admitting its eternity.

the terms and questions of the Greek Philosophy. Nothing is more common than for words to change their meaning in process of time; and thereby cause us to attribute to ancient authors, who have used them, ideas they never entertained. It is very doubtful whether the Greek word was used in the sense we please to give it; and it is very certain that the Latin term had not the same sense, as Lucretius, who expressly denies the possibility of all *creation*, makes frequent use of the same term to express the formation of the universe and its parts. In fine, M. de Beaufobre hath proved, that the notion of Creation is not to be met with in the ancient Jewish Theology; and you have too much learning, my Lord, to be ignorant, that many writers, who have had the greatest respect for the sacred writings, have not been able, nevertheless, to discover the absolute creation of the universe, in the account given by Moses. Thus our Curate, who was not imposed on by the arbitrary authority of the divines, might very well doubt, without being the less orthodox, whether there existed two eternal first principles, or only one.

This is, indeed, a matter purely philological and philosophical, in which revelation hath nothing to do. Be this, however, as it will, this is not a subject of dispute between you and me. I do not undertake to defend the sentiments of the Curate; but to point out the fallacies and mistakes of your Lordship.

Now, you are totally in the wrong, to advance that the unity of God appeared to me an idle question, and above the human understanding; as, in the very work you condemn, this
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unity is established and maintained by argument. Again, you are quite wrong in bringing the testimony of Tertullian, to prove against me, that the passage in question implies there are many Gods; for, without having recourse to Tertullian, I agree with you that it doth imply there are many Gods. You are wrong, nevertheless, to call me, on this account, rash and daring: for where there is no positive assertion, there can be no temerity. Is it to be conceived that an author must be stigmatized with presumption, only for being less presumptuous than yourself?

You are farther wrong in conceiving that you have justified those particular tenets, which attribute human passions to the Deity, and which, so far from clearing up our notions of that great Being, serve only to obscure and debase them. You are wrong in falsely accusing me of perplexing and debasing those notions; of controverting the divine essence which I have not controverted, and of calling in doubt his unity which I never questioned. But supposing I had done it, what is the consequence? To recriminate on others, is not to justify one's self! but he whose sole defence is to accuse the supposed criminal, may very justly be suspected of being the only one who is guilty.

The contradiction you reproach me with, in the same passage, is also as ill founded as the preceding accusation. "He knows, say you; nothing of the nature of God; and yet presently after he acknowledges this Supreme Being to be possessed of intelligence, power, will, and goodness: is not this to have an idea of the divine nature?"

The answer I shall make your Lorship on this head is as follows. " God is intelligent; but in what manner? Man is intelligent by the act of reasoning, but the supreme Intelligence lies under no necessity to reason. He requires neither premises nor consequences; not even the simple form of a proposition: His knowledge is purely intuitive; he beholds equally what is and will be; all truths are to him as one idea, as all places are but one point, and all times one moment. Human power acts by the use of means, the divine power in and of itself. God is powerful because he is willing, his will constituting his power. God is good: nothing is more manifest than this truth. Goodness in man, however, consists in a love to his fellow-creatures; and the goodness of God in a love of order: for it is on such order that the connection and preservation of all things depend. Again, God is just: this I am fully convinced of, as it is the natural consequence of his goodness. The injustice of men is their own work, not his; and that moral disorder, which, in the judgment of some philosophers, makes against the system of providence, is in mine the strongest argument for it. Justice in man, indeed, is to render every one his due; but the justice of God requires, at the hands of every one, an account of the talents with which he has intrusted him.

In the discovery, however, by the force of reason, of those divine attributes of which I have no absolute idea, I only affirm what I do not clearly comprehend, which is in effect to affirm nothing. I may say, it is true, that God is this or that; I may be sensible of it, and fully convinced within myself that he is so. I am yet
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never the better able to conceive how or in what manner he is so.

In short, the greater efforts I make to contemplate his infinite essence, the less I am able to conceive it : but I am certain that he is, and that is sufficient ; the more he surpasses my conceptions, the more I adore him. I humble myself before him, and say, “ Being of beings, I
 “ am because thou art ; to meditate continually on thee is to elevate my thoughts to the
 “ Fountain of existence. The most meritorious
 “ use of my reason is to be annihilated before
 “ thee : it is the delight of my soul to feel my
 “ weak faculties overcome by the splendor of
 “ thy greatness.”

Such is my answer, and I flatter myself it is satisfactory. Will it be necessary for me to tell your Lordship from whence it is taken ? I have taken it, word for word, from the very passage wherein you accuse me of contradiction * ; and you have made just such a use of it as all my adversaries do, who transcribe the objections I myself raise, and suppress my solutions. Their answer is therefore already written, and is contained in the work they refute. But we proceed, my Lord, to the discussion of matters of the utmost importance.

After having attacked my system and my book, you make an attack also on my religion ; and because the Roman-Catholic Curate had objections against his church, you endeavour to make me pass for an enemy to mine ; as if, to propose the difficulties attending any particular opinion, were to renounce it ; as if all human knowledge had not its particular difficulties ; as
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* Emilius, Vol. ii. p. 156.

if even geometry itself were entirely free from them, or that the geometricians made it a rule to be silent lest they should depreciate the certainty of their art.

The answer I have ready to make, is to declare, with my usual frankness and sincerity, my sentiments with respect to religion; such as I have constantly professed them to be in all my writings, and such as they have always been both on my lips and in my heart. Nay, I will go still farther, and declare why I published the Curate's creed; and why, in spite of all the clamours that have been raised against it, I shall ever esteem it to be the best and most useful performance this age hath produced. Neither persecution, nor arrets, shall ever make me change my tone: the divines, in bidding me be humble, shall not make me an hypocrite; nor shall the philosophers, by taxing me with hypocrisy, make me profess myself an infidel. I will speak of my religion, because I have one: and I will speak of it boldly, because I have the courage to declare what it is; and it were to be wished, for the happiness of mankind, it were that of the whole human race.

My Lord, I am a Christian, a sincere Christian, according to the doctrine of the Gospel. I am a Christian, not as a disciple of priests, but as a disciple of Jesus Christ. My great Master refined but little on doctrinal tenets, but insisted strongly on moral obligations. He prescribed fewer articles of faith than good works; he commanded us to believe only so much as is necessary to make us good. When he superseded the law and the prophets, it was more by acts of virtue than articles of belief. And he hath told
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me, as well in his own words, as by those of his apostles, "That whoso loveth his brother hath fulfilled the law."

With regard to myself, being firmly convinced of the essential truths of Christianity, which are the foundation of all good morality, I endeavour to nourish my heart with the spirit of the Gospel, without perplexing my head about what appears in it dark and obscure; and being as fully persuaded, that whosoever loveth God above all things, and his neighbour as himself, is a true Christian, I strive to prove myself such, laying aside all those doctrinal subtilties, those important trifles with which the Pharisees so perplex our duty and confound our belief; placing, with St Paul, even faith itself below charity.

Happy in having been educated in a religion the most rational and pure upon earth, I remain inviolably attached to the worship of my fathers: Like them, I take scripture and reason for the only rules of faith: Like them, I pay no implicit regard to human authority, nor subscribe to their formulas till I perceive the truth of them: Like them, I heartily join with the true servants of Jesus Christ, and the real worshippers of God, to pay him homage, with the communion of the faithful in his church. It is pleasing and consolatory, to be numbered among its members, to assist in this public worship of the Deity, and to reflect, while I am in the midst of them, Here am I with my brethren.

Penetrated with due respect for a worthy pastor, who, resisting the torrent of example, and judging in the truth, hath not excluded from his church a defender of God's cause, I shall pre-
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serve to the latest hour of my life a grateful remembrance of charity to truly Christian. I shall ever think it an honour to be numbered among his flock, and hope never to bring a scandal on its members either by my sentiments or conduct. But when injurious priests arrogate to themselves a power to which they have no just pretensions; when they take upon them to dictate what I shall believe, and insolently bid me explain this, disown that, retract my words, or disguise my meaning; their arrogance hath no effect on my sincerity: they cannot make me be guilty of falsehood in order to be orthodox, or say what I do not think merely to please them. And though my veracity may give them so much offence as to make them eager to cut me off from the church, I am little terrified by a menace which it is not in their power to put in execution. They cannot prevent my heart from being united to the faithful; they cannot blot out my name from among the elect, if it be written in that number. They may deprive me, indeed, of many of the comforts of this life, but they cannot deprive me of my hope in that which is to come; where it is my most sincere and ardent wish to have Jesus Christ himself the umpire and judge between them and me.

Such, my Lord, are my real sentiments; which, however, I do not lay down as a rule for others, but only declare them to be mine, and that such they will remain, as long as it pleases, not men, but God, who alone is capable of changing my heart and mind. For so long as I may be what I am, and think as I now do, I shall speak as I now speak. Very opposite, I must own, is this conduct to that of your nominal Christians; who.

who are always ready to believe, or to say, what their ease, or interest, require them to say or believe; being satisfied they are good Christians enough, provided their writings are not burnt, and no arret be issued out against them. They live like people firmly persuaded, that it is not merely necessary they should confess this or that article, but that such confession is sufficient to entitle them to heaven: whereas I am persuaded, on the contrary, that the essential part of religion consists in the discharge of practical duty; and that it is not merely necessary that a man should be just, compassionate, humane, and charitable, but that whoever is truly so, believes enough for his salvation. As for the rest, indeed, I must own their doctrine is much more commodious than mine, and that it would cost a man much less trouble to get himself ranked among the number of the faithful for his opinions than for his virtues.

Whether I ought to have kept my sentiments on these matters to myself, as it is incessantly told me; or whether, when I had the courage to publish and own them, I attacked the laws and disturbed the peace of society; we shall enquire presently. But before I enter on this inquiry, permit me to intreat your Lordship, and every reader of this letter, to place some confidence in the solemn declarations of a friend to truth, and not to follow the example of those who, without proof or probability, and solely on the suggestions of their own hearts, accuse me of atheism and irreligion, and that in contradiction to the most serious and positive protestations, and which nothing on my part ever rendered suspected. I should not think I have
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the appearance of a man who disguises his sentiments; nor is it easy to see what interest I can have in so doing. It ought to be presumed, at least, that a man, who expresses himself so freely concerning what he doth not believe, must be sincere in what he actually professes; and that when his conversation, his actions, and his writings, all perfectly agree on this head, whoever shall dare to affirm he is guilty of falsehood, without having the omniscience of the Deity, must be guilty of a notorious falsehood himself.

I had not always the happiness of a retired life; I have mixed with people of all characters, have known men of all parties, believers of all sects, and freethinkers of all systems. I have seen the high and the low, the libertine and the philosopher. I have had friends who have been sincere, and others who were not so: I have been beset with spies and with enemies; and the world is full of people who hate me for the injuries they have done me. I conjure them all, notwithstanding, of what kind soever, publicly to declare what they know of my belief as to matters of religion; to declare, whether during the most constant familiarity, the most intimate connection, whether in the midst of convivial gaiety, or in the most secret confidence of private conversation, they ever found me different from myself in this respect. Let them declare, if, when they were pleased to rally or argue with me, they found me at any time affected with their arguments or raileries; if they ever caught me varying in my sentiments, or if they could discover any thing in the bottom of my heart which I concealed from the public. Let them
say,