another gets, a quick circulation of wealth and power making the sum total to flourish. *Euph.* And do the minute philosophers publish these things to the world? *Lys.* It must be confessed our writers proceed in politics with greater caution than they think necessary with regard to religion. *Cri.* But those things plainly follow from their principles, and are to be admitted for the genuine doctrine of the sect, expressed perhaps with more freedom and perspicuity than might be thought prudent by those who would manage the public, or not offend weak brethren. *Euph.* And pray, is there not need of caution, a rebel or incendiary being characters that many men have a prejudice against? *Lys.* Weak people of all ranks have a world of absurd prejudices. *Euph.* But the better sort, such as statesmen and legislators; do you think they have not the same indisposition towards admitting your principles? *Lys.* Perhaps they may; but the reason is plain. *Cri.* This puts me in mind of that ingenious philosopher, the gamester, Glaucus, who used to say, that statesmen and lawgivers may keep a stir about right and wrong, just and unjust, but that in truth, property of every kind had so often passed from the right owners by fraud and violence, that it was now to be considered as lying on the common, and with equal right belonged to every one that could seize it. *Euph.* What are we to think then of laws and regulations relating to right and wrong, crimes and duties? *Lys.* They serve to bind weak minds, and keep the vulgar in awe: but no sooner doth a true genius arise, but he breaks his way to greatness through all the trammels of duty, conscience, religion, law; to all which he showeth himself infinitely superior.

IX. *Euph.* You are, it seems, for bringing about a thorough reformation. *Lys.* As to what is commonly called the reformation, I could never see how or wherein the world was the better for it. It is much the same as popery, with this difference, that it is the more prude-like and disagreeable thing of the two. A noted writer of ours makes it too great a compliment, when he computes the benefit of hooped petticoats to be nearly equal to that of the reformation. Thorough reformation is thorough liberty. Leave nature at full freedom to work her own way, and all will be well. This is what we aim at, and nothing short of this can come up to our principles. Crito, who is a zealous protestant, hearing these words, could not refrain. The worst effect of the reformation, said he, was the rescuing wicked men from a darkness which kept them in awe. This, as it hath proved, was holding out light to robbers and murderers. Light in itself is good, and the same light which shows a man the folly of superstition, might show him the truth of religion, and the madness of atheism. But to make use of light, only to see the evils on one side, and never to see, but to run blindly upon the worse

extreme, this is to make the best of things produce evil, in the same sense that you prove the worst of things to produce good, to wit, accidentally or indirectly: and by the same method of arguing, you may prove that even diseases are useful: but whatever benefit seems to accrue to the public, either from disease of mind or body, is not their genuine offspring, and may be obtained without them. Lysicles was a little disconcerted by the affirmative air of Crito; but after a short pause replied briskly, that to contemplate the public good was not every one's talent. True, said Euphranor, I question whether every one can frame a notion of the public good, much less judge of the means to promote it.

X. But you, Lysicles, who are master of this subject, will be pleased to inform me, whether the public good of a nation doth not imply the particular good of its individuals? *Lys.* It doth. *Euph.* And doth not the good or happiness of a man consist in having both soul and body sound and in good condition, enjoying those things which their respective natures require, and free from those things which are odious or hurtful to them. *Lys.* I do not deny all this to be true. *Euph.* Now it should seem worth while to consider, whether the regular, decent life of a virtuous man may not as much conduce to this end, as the mad sallies of intemperance and debauchery. *Lys.* I will acknowledge that a nation may merely subsist, or be kept alive, but it is impossible it should flourish without the aid of vice. To produce a quick circulation of traffic and wealth in a state, there must be exorbitant and irregular motions in the appetites and passions. *Euph.* The more people a nation contains, and the happier those people are, the more that nation may be said to flourish. I think we are agreed in this point. *Lys.* We are. *Euph.* You allow then that riches are not an ultimate end, but should only be considered as the means to procure happiness. *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* It seems, that means cannot be of use without our knowing the end, and how to apply them to it. *Lys.* It seems so. *Euph.* Will it not follow, that in order to make a nation flourish, it is not sufficient to make it wealthy, without knowing the true end and happiness of mankind, and how to apply wealth towards attaining that end? In proportion as these points are known and practised, I think the nation should be likely to flourish. But for a people who neither know nor practise them, to gain riches, seems to me the same advantage that it would be for a sick man to come at plenty of meat and drink, which he could not use but to his hurt. *Lys.* This is mere sophistry; it is arguing without persuading. Look into common life; examine the pursuits of man; have a due respect for the consent of the world; and you will soon be convinced, that riches alone are sufficient to make a nation flourishing and happy. Give them riches and they will make themselves happy without

that political invention, that trick of statesmen and philosophers, called virtue.

XI. *Euph.* Virtue then, in your account, is a trick of statesmen. *Lys.* It is. *Euph.* Why then do your sagacious sect betray and divulge that trick or secret of state, which wise men have judged necessary for the good government of the world? Lysicles hesitating, Crito made answer, that he presumed it was because their sect, being wiser than all other wise men, disdained to see the world governed by wrong maxims, and would set all things on a right bottom. *Euph.* Thus much is certain. If we look into all institutions of government, and the political writings of such as have heretofore passed for wise men, we shall find a great regard for virtue. *Lys.* You shall find a strong tincture of prejudice: but, as I said before, consult the multitude if you would find nature and truth. *Euph.* But, among country gentlemen and farmers, and the better sort of tradesmen, is not virtue a reputable thing? *Lys.* You pick up authorities among men of low life and vile education. *Euph.* Perhaps we ought to pay a decent respect to the authority of minute philosophers. *Lys.* And I would fain know whose authority should be more considered, than that of those gentlemen who are alone above prejudice, and think for themselves. *Euph.* How doth it appear that you are the only unprejudiced part of mankind? May not a minute philosopher, as well as another man, be prejudiced in favour of the leaders of his sect? May not an atheistical education prejudice towards atheism? What should hinder a man's being prejudiced against religion, as well as for it? Or can you assign any reason why an attachment to pleasure, interest, vice, or vanity, may not be supposed to prejudice men against virtue? *Lys.* This is pleasant. What? suppose those very men influenced by prejudice, who are always disputing against it, whose constant aim it is to detect and demolish prejudices of all kinds! Except their own, replied Crito, for you must pardon me if I cannot help thinking they have some small prejudice, though not in favour of virtue.

XII. I observe, Lysicles, that you allowed to Euphranor, the greater number of happy people are in a state, the more that state may be said to flourish; it follows therefore, that such methods as multiply inhabitants are good, and such as diminish them are bad for the public. And one would think nobody need be told, that the strength of a state consists more in the number and sort of people, than in any thing else. But in proportion as vice and luxury, those public blessings encouraged by this minute philosophy, prevail among us, fewer are disposed to marry, too many being diverted by pleasure, disabled by disease, or frightened by expense. Nor doth vice only thin a nation, but also debaseth it by a puny degenerate race. I might add, that

it is ruinous to our manufacturers, both as it makes labour dear, and thereby enables our more frugal neighbours to undersell us; and also as it diverts the lower sort of people from honest callings to wicked projects. If these and such considerations were taken into the account, I believe it would be evident to any man in his senses, that the imaginary benefits of vice bear no proportion to the solid, real woes that attend it. Lysicles, upon this, shook his head, and smiled at Crito, without vouchsafing any other answer. After which, addressing himself to Euphranor, there cannot, said he, be a stronger instance of prejudice, than that a man should at this time of day preserve a reverence for that idol virtue, a thing so effectually exposed and exploded by the most knowing men of the age, who have shown, that a man is a mere engine, played upon and driven about by sensible objects; and that moral virtue is only a name, a notion, a chimera, an enthusiasm, or at best a fashion, uncertain and unchangeable, like all other fashions. *Euph.* What do you think, Lysicles, of health; doth it depend on fancy and caprice, or is it something real in the bodily composition of a man? *Lys.* Health is something real, which results from the right constitution and temperature of the organs and the fluids circulating through them. *Euph.* This you say is health of body. *Lys.* It is. *Euph.* And may we not suppose an healthy constitution of soul, when the notions are right, the judgments true, the will regular, the passions and appetites directed to their proper objects, and confined within due bounds? This, in regard to the soul, seems what health is to the body. And the man whose mind is so constituted, is he not properly called virtuous? And to produce this healthy disposition in the minds of his countrymen, should not every good man employ his endeavours? If these things have any appearance of truth, as to me they seem to have, it will not then be so clear a point that virtue is a mere whim or fashion, as you are pleased to represent it: I must own something unexpectedly, after what had been discoursed in last evening's conference, which if you would call to mind, it might perhaps save both of us some trouble. *Lys.* Would you know the truth, Euphranor? I must own I have quite forgot all your discourse about virtue, duty, and all such points, which, being of an airy, notional nature, are apt to vanish, and leave no trace on a mind accustomed only to receive impression from realities.

XIII. Having heard these words, Euphranor looked at Crito and me, and said smiling, I have mistaken my part; it was mine to learn, and his to instruct. Then addressing himself to Lysicles, Deal faithfully, said he, and let me know whether the public benefit of vice be in truth that which makes you plead for it? *Lys.* I love to speak frankly what I think. Know then, that private interest is the first and principal consideration with phi-

losophers of our sect. Now of all interests pleasure is that which hath the strongest charms, and no pleasures like those which are heightened and enlivened by license. Herein consists the peculiar excellency of our principles, that they show people how to serve their country by diverting themselves, causing the two streams of public spirit and self-love to unite and run in the same channel. I have told you already, that I admit a nation might subsist by the rules of virtue. But give me leave to say, it will barely subsist, in a dull, joyless, insipid state, whereas the sprightly excesses of vice inspire men with joy: and where particulars rejoice, the public, which is made up of particulars, must do so too; that is, the public must be happy. This I take to be an irrefragable argument. But to give you its full force, and make it as plain as possible, I will trace things from their original. Happiness is the end to which created beings naturally tend, but we find that all animals, whether men or brutes, do naturally and principally pursue real pleasure of sense, which is therefore to be thought their supreme good, their true end and happiness. It is for this men live, and whoever understands life must allow that man to enjoy the top and flower of it, who hath a quick sense of pleasure, and withal spirit, skill, and fortune sufficient to gratify every appetite and every taste. Niggards and fools will envy or traduce such a one because they cannot equal him. Hence all that sober trifling in disparagement of what every one would be master of if he could, a full freedom and unlimited scope of pleasure. *Euph.* Let me see whether I understand you. Pleasure of sense, you say, is the chief pleasure. *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* And this would be cramped and diminished by virtue. *Lys.* It would. *Euph.* Tell me, Lysicles, is pleasure then at the height when the appetites are satisfied? *Lys.* There is then only an indolence, the lively sense of pleasure being past. *Euph.* It should seem therefore, that the appetites must be always craving to preserve pleasure alive. *Lys.* That is our sense of the matter. *Euph.* The Greek philosopher therefore was in the right, who considered the body of a man of pleasure as a leaky vessel, always filling and never full. *Lys.* You may divert yourself with allegories, if you please. But all the while ours is literally the true taste of nature. Look throughout the universe, and you shall find birds and fishes, beasts and insects, all kinds of animals, with which the creation swarms, constantly engaged by instinct in the pursuit of sensible pleasure. And shall man alone be the grave fool who thwarts, and crosses, and subdues his appetites, whilst his fellow creatures do all most joyfully and freely indulge them? *Euph.* How! Lysicles. I thought that being governed by the senses, appetites, and passions, was the most grievous slavery; and that the proper business of free-thinkers, or philosophers, had been to set men free from

the power of ambition, avarice, and sensuality. *Lys.* You mistake the point. We make men relish the world, attentive to their interests, lively and luxurious in their pleasures, without fear or restraint either from God or man. We despise those preaching writers, who used to disturb or cramp the pleasures and amusements of human life. We hold, that a wise man who meddles with business, doth it altogether for his interest, and refers his interest to his pleasure. With us it is a maxim, that a man should sieze the moments as they fly. Without love, and wine, and play, and late hours, we hold life not to be worth living. I grant, indeed, that there is something gross and ill-bred in the vices of mean men, which the genteel philosopher abhors. *Cri.* But to cheat, whore, betray, get drunk, do all these things decently, this is true wisdom, and elegance of taste.

XIV. *Euph.* To me, who have been used to another way of thinking, this new philosophy seems difficult to digest. I must therefore beg leave to examine its principles, with the same freedom that you do those of other sects. *Lys.* Agreed. *Euph.* You say, if I mistake not, that a wise man pursues only his private interest, and that this consists in sensual pleasure, for proof whereof you appeal to nature. Is not this what you advance? *Lys.* It is. *Euph.* You conclude therefore, that as other animals are guided by natural instinct, man too ought to follow the dictates of sense and appetite. *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* But in this, do you not argue as if man had only sense and appetite for his guides, on which supposition there might be truth in what you say? But what if he hath intellect, reason, a higher instinct, and a nobler life? If this be the case, and you being man, live like a brute, is it not the way to be defrauded of your true happiness—to be mortified and disappointed? Consider most sorts of brutes; you shall perhaps find them have a greater share of sensual happiness than man. *Lys.* To our sorrow we do. This hath made several gentlemen of our sect envy brutes, and lament the lot of human kind. *Cri.* It was a consideration of this sort which inspired Erotylus with the laudable ambition of wishing himself a snail, upon hearing of certain particularities discovered in that animal by a modern virtuoso. *Euph.* Tell me, Lysicles, if you had an inexhaustible fund of gold and silver, should you envy another for having a little more copper than you? *Lys.* I should not. *Euph.* Are not reason, imagination, and sense faculties differing in kind, and in rank higher one than another. *Lys.* I do not deny it. *Euph.* Their acts therefore differ in kind. *Lys.* They do. *Euph.* Consequently the pleasures perfective of those acts are also different. *Lys.* They are. *Euph.* You admit therefore three sorts of pleasure; pleasure of reason, pleasure of imagination, and pleasure of sense. *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* And, as it is reasonable to think, the operation of the highest and noblest fa-

culty to be attended with the highest pleasure, may we not suppose the two former to be as gold or silver, and the latter only as copper? whence it should seem to follow, that man need not envy or imitate a brute. *Lys.* And nevertheless there are very ingenious men who do. And surely every one may be allowed to know what he wants, and wherein his true happiness consists. *Euph.* Is it not plain that different animals have different pleasures? Take a hog from his ditch or dunghill, lay him on a rich bed, treat him with sweetmeats, and music, and perfumes. All these things will be no entertainment to him. Do not a bird, a beast, a fish, amuse themselves in various manners, insomuch that what is pleasing to one may be death to another? Is it ever seen that one of those animals quits its own element or way of living, to adopt that of another? And shall man quit his own nature to imitate a brute? *Lys.* But sense is not only natural to brutes; is it not also natural to man? *Euph.* It is, but with this difference, it maketh the whole of a brute, but is the lowest part or faculty of a human soul. The nature of any thing is peculiarly that which doth distinguish it from other things, not what it hath in common with them. Do you allow this to be true? *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* And is not reason that which makes the principal difference between man and other animals? *Lys.* It is. *Euph.* Reason therefore being the principal part of our nature, whatever is most reasonable should seem most natural to man. Must we not therefore think rational pleasures more agreeable to human kind, than those of sense? Man and beast, having different natures, seem to have different faculties, different enjoyments, and different sorts of happiness. You can easily conceive, that the sort of life which makes the happiness of a mole or a bat, would be a very wretched one for an eagle. And may you not as well conceive that the happiness of a brute can never constitute the true happiness of a man? A beast, without reflection or remorse, without foresight, or appetite of immortality, without notion of vice, or virtue, or order, or reason, or knowledge! What motive, what grounds can there be for bringing down man, in whom are all these things, to a level with such a creature? What merit, what ambition in the minute philosopher to make such an animal a guide or rule for human life!

XV. *Lys.* It is strange, Euphranor, that one who admits freedom of thought, as you do, should yet be such a slave to prejudice. You still talk of order and virtue, as of real things, as if our philosophers had never demonstrated, that they have no foundation in nature, and are only the effects of education. I know, said Crito, how the minute philosophers are accustomed to demonstrate this point. They consider the animal nature of man, or man so far forth as he is animal; and it must be owned

that, considered in that light, he hath no sense of duty, no notion of virtue. He, therefore, who should look for virtue among mere animals, or human kind as such, would look in the wrong place. But that philosopher who is attentive only to the animal part of his being, and raiseth his theories from the very dregs of our species, might probably upon second thoughts find himself mistaken. Look you, Crito, said Lysicles, my argument is with Euphranor; to whom addressing his discourse—I observe, said he, that you stand much on the dignity of human nature. This thing of dignity is an old worn-out notion, which depends on other notions old, and stale, and worn out, such as an immaterial spirit, and a ray derived from the Divinity. But in these days men of sense make a jest of all this grandeur and dignity; and many there are would gladly exchange their share of it for the repose, and freedom, and sensuality of a brute. But comparisons are odious: waving therefore all inquiry concerning the respective excellencies of man and beast, and whether it is beneath a man to follow or imitate brute animals, in judging of the chief good and conduct of life and manners, I shall be content to appeal to the authority of men themselves, for the truth of my notions. Do but look abroad into the world, and ask the common run of men whether pleasure of sense be not the only true, solid, substantial good of their kind? *Euph.* But might not the same vulgar sort of men prefer a piece of sign-post painting to one of Raphael's, or a Grub-street ballad to an ode of Horace? Is there not a real difference between good and bad writing? *Lys.* There is. *Euph.* And yet you will allow there must be a maturity and improvement of understanding to discern this difference, which doth not make it therefore less real. *Lys.* I will. *Euph.* In the same manner what should hinder, but there may be in nature a true difference between vice and virtue, although it require some degree of reflection and judgment to observe it? In order to know whether a thing be agreeable to the rational nature of man, it seems one should rather observe and consult those who have most employed or improved their reason. *Lys.* Well, I shall not insist on consulting the common herd of mankind. From the ignorant and gross vulgar, I might myself appeal in many cases to men of rank and fashion. *Euph.* They are a sort of men I have not the honour to know much of by my own observation. But I remember a remark of Aristotle, who was himself a courtier and knew them well. "Virtue," saith he,* "and good sense are not the property of high birth or a great estate. Nor if they who possess these advantages, wanting a taste for rational pleasures, betake themselves to those of sense; ought we therefore to esteem them eligible, any more than we should the toys and pastimes of children, because they seem

* Ethic. ad Nicom. lib. x. c. 6.

so to them?" And indeed one may be allowed to question, whether the truest estimate of things was to be expected from a mind intoxicated with luxury, and dazzled with the splendour of high living.

> Cùm stupet insanis acies fulgoribus, et cùm
> Acclinis falsis animus meliora recusat. HOR.

Crito upon this observed, that he knew an English nobleman, who in the prime of life professeth a liberal art; and is the first man of his profession in the world; and that he was very sure he had more pleasure from the exercise of that elegant art, than from any sensual enjoyment within the power of one of the largest fortunes and most bountiful spirits in Great Britain.

XVI. *Lys.* But why need we have recourse to the judgment of other men in so plain a case? I appeal to your own breast, consult that, and then say if sensible pleasure be not the chief good of man. *Euph.* I, for my part, have often thought those pleasures which are highest in the esteem of sensualists, so far from being the chiefest good, that it seemed doubtful upon the whole, whether they were any good at all, any more than the mere removal of pain. Are not our wants and appetites uneasy? *Lys.* They are. *Euph.* Doth not sensual pleasure consist in satisfying them? *Lys.* It doth. *Euph.* But the cravings are tedious, the satisfaction momentary. Is it not so? *Lys.* It is, but what then? *Euph.* Why then it should seem that sensual pleasure is but a short deliverance from long pain. A long avenue of uneasiness leads to a point of pleasure, which ends in disgust or remorse. *Cri.* And he who pursues this *ignis fatuus* imagines himself a philosopher and free-thinker. *Lys.* Pedants are governed by words and notions, while the wiser men of pleasure follow fact, nature, and sense. *Cri.* But what if notional pleasures should in fact prove the most real and lasting? Pure pleasures of reason and imagination neither hurt the health, nor waste the fortune, nor gall the conscience. By them the mind is long entertained without loathing or satiety. On the other hand a notion (which with you it seems passeth for nothing) often embitters the most lively sensual pleasures, which at bottom will be found also to depend upon notion more than perhaps you imagine, it being a vulgar remark, that those things are more enjoyed by hope and foretaste of the soul than by possession. Thus much is yielded, that the actual enjoyment is very short, and the alternative of appetite and disgust long as well as uneasy. So that, upon the whole, it should seem those gentlemen, who are called men of pleasure from their eager pursuit of it, do in reality, with great expense of fortune, ease, and health, purchase pain. *Lys.* You may spin out plausible arguments, but will after all find it a difficult matter to convince me

that so many ingenious men should not be able to distinguish between things so directly opposite as pain and pleasure. How is it possible to account for this? *Cri.* I believe a reason may be assigned for it, but to men of pleasure no truth is so palatable as a fable. Jove once upon a time having ordered, that pleasure and pain should be mixed in equal proportions in every dose of human life, upon a complaint that some men endeavoured to separate what he had joined, and taking more than their share of the sweet, would leave all the sour for others, commanded Mercury to put a stop to this evil, by fixing on each delinquent a pair of invisible spectacles, which should change the appearance of things, making pain look like pleasure, and pleasure like pain, labour like recreation, and recreation like labour. From that time the men of pleasure are eternally mistaking and repenting. *Lys.* If your doctrine takes place I would fain know what can be the advantage of a great fortune, which all mankind so eagerly pursue? *Cri.* It is a common saying with Eucrates, that a great fortune is an edged tool, which a hundred may come at, for one who knows how to use it; so much easier is the art of getting than that of spending. What its advantage is I will not say, but I will venture to declare what it is not. I am sure that where abundance excludes want, and enjoyment prevents appetites, there is not the quickest sense of those pleasures we have been speaking of, in which the footman hath often a greater share than his lord, who cannot enlarge his stomach in proportion to his estate.

XVII. Reasonable and well educated men of all ranks have, I believe, pretty much the same amusements, notwithstanding the difference of their fortunes: but those who are particularly distinguished as men of pleasure seem to possess it in a very small degree. *Euph.* I have heard that among persons of that character, a game of cards is esteemed a chief diversion. *Lys.* Without cards there could be no living for people of fashion. It is the most delightful way of passing an evening when gentlemen and ladies are got together, who would otherwise be at a loss what to say or do with themselves. But a pack of cards is so engaging, that it doth not only employ them when they are met, but serves to draw them together. Quadrille gives them pleasure in prospect during the dull hours of the day; they reflect on it with delight, and it furnishes discourse when it is over. *Cri.* One would be apt to suspect these people of condition pass their time but heavily, and are but little the better for their fortunes, whose chief amusement is a thing in the power of every porter or footman, who is as well qualified to receive pleasure from cards as a peer. I can easily conceive that when people of a certain turn are got together, they should prefer doing anything to the ennui of their own conversation; but it is not easy to

conceive there is any great pleasure in this. What a card-table can afford requires neither parts nor fortune to judge of. *Lys.* Play is a serious amusement that comes to the relief of a man of pleasure, after the more lively and affecting enjoyments of sense. It kills time beyond any thing, and is a most admirable anodyne to divert or prevent thought, which might otherwise prey upon the mind. *Cri.* I can easily comprehend, that no man upon earth ought to prize anodynes for the spleen, more than a man of fashion and pleasure. An ancient sage, speaking of one of that character, saith he is made wretched by disappointments and appetites, λυπεῖται ἀπορυγχάνων καὶ ἐπιθυμῶν. And if this was true of the Greeks who lived in the sun, and had so much spirit, I am apt to think it is still more so of our modern English. Something there is in our climate and complexion, that makes idleness nowhere so much its own punishment as in England, where an uneducated fine gentleman pays for his momentary pleasures, with long and cruel intervals of spleen; for relief of which he is driven into sensual excesses, that produce a proportionable depression of spirits, which, as it createth a greater want of pleasures, so it lessens the ability to enjoy them. There is a cast of thought in the complexion of an Englishman, which renders him the most unsuccessful rake in the world. He is (as Aristotle expresseth it) at variance with himself. He is neither brute enough to enjoy his appetites, nor man enough to govern them. He knows and feels that what he pursues is not his true good, his reflection serving only to show him that misery which his habitual sloth and indolence will not suffer him to remedy. At length being grown odious to himself, and abhorring his own company, he runs into every idle assembly, not from the hopes of pleasure, but merely to respite the pain of his own mind. Listless and uneasy at the present, he hath no delight in reflecting on what is past, or in the prospect of any thing to come. This man of pleasure, when, after a wretched scene of vanity and woe, his animal nature is worn to the stumps, wishes and dreads death by turns, and is sick of living, without having ever tried or known the true life of man. *Euph.* It is well this sort of life, which is of so little benefit to the owner, conduceth so much to that of the public. But pray tell me, do these gentlemen set up for minute philosophers? *Cri.* That sect, you must know, contains two sorts of philosophers, the wet and the dry. Those I have been describing are of the former kind. They differ rather in practice than in theory. As an older, graver, or duller man from one that is younger, and more capable or fond of pleasure. The dry philosopher passeth his time but drily. He has the honour of pimping for the vices of more sprightly men, who in return offer some small incense to his vanity. Upon this encouragement, and to make his own mind easy when it is

past being pleased, he employs himself in justifying those excesses he cannot partake in. But to return to your question, those miserable folk are mighty men for the minute philosophy. *Euph.* What hinders them then from putting an end to their lives? *Cri.* Their not being persuaded of the truth of what they profess. Some, indeed, in a fit of despair do now and then lay violent hands on themselves. And as the minute philosophy prevails, we daily see more examples of suicide. But they bear no proportion to those who would put an end to their lives if they durst. My friend Clinias, who had been one of them, and a philosopher of rank, let me into the secret history of their doubts, and fears, and irresolute resolutions of making away with themselves, which last he assures me is a frequent topic with men of pleasure, when they have drunk themselves into a little spirit. It was by virtue of this mechanical valour the renowned philosopher Hermocrates shot himself through the head. The same thing hath since been practised by several others to the great relief of their friends. Splenetic, worried, and frightened out of their wits, they run upon their doom, with the same courage as a bird runs into the mouth of a rattlesnake, not because they are bold to die, but because they are afraid to live. Clinias endeavoured to fortify his irreligion by the discourse and opinion of other minute philosophers, who were mutually strengthened in their own unbelief by his. After this manner, authority working in a circle, they endeavoured to atheize one another. But though he pretended even to a demonstration against the being of a God, yet he could not inwardly conquer his own belief. He fell sick, and acknowledged this truth, is now a sober man and a good Christian; owns he was never so happy as since he became such, nor so wretched as while he was a minute philosopher. And he who has tried both conditions may be allowed a proper judge of both. *Lys.* Truly a fine account of the brightest and bravest men of the age. *Cri.* Bright and brave are fine attributes. But our curate is of opinion that all your free-thinking rakes are either fools or cowards. Thus he argues; if such a man doth not see his true interest he wants sense, if he doth but dare not pursue it, he wants courage. In this manner, from the defect of sense and courage, he deduceth that whole species of men, who are so apt to value themselves upon both those qualities. *Lys.* As for their courage they are at all times ready to give proof of it; and for their understanding, thanks to nature, it is of a size not to be measured by country parsons.

XVIII. *Euph.* But Socrates, who was no country parson, suspected your men of pleasure were such through ignorance. *Lys.* Ignorance of what? *Euph.* Of the art of computing. It was his opinion that rakes cannot reckon.* And that for want

* Plato in Protag.

of this skill they make wrong judgments about pleasure, on the right choice of which their happiness depends. *Lys.* I do not understand you. *Euph.* Do you grant that sense perceiveth only sensible things? *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* Sense perceiveth only things present. *Lys.* This too I grant. *Euph.* Future pleasures, therefore, and pleasures of the understanding, are not to be judged of by actual sense. *Lys.* They are not. *Euph.* Those therefore who judge of pleasure by sense, may find themselves mistaken at the foot of the account.

> Cùm lapidosa chiragra
> Contudit articulos veteris ramalia fagi,
> Tum crassos transisse dies lucemque palustrem,
> Et sibi jam seri vitam ingemuere relictam.*

To make a right computation, should you not consider all the faculties and all the kinds of pleasure, taking into your account the future as well as the present, and rating them all according to their true value? *Cri.* The Epicureans themselves allowed, that pleasure which procures a greater pain, or hinders a greater pleasure, should be regarded as a pain: and, that pain which procures a greater pleasure, or prevents a greater pain, is to be accounted a pleasure. In order therefore to make a true estimate of pleasure, the great spring of action, and that from whence the conduct of life takes its bias, we ought to compute intellectual pleasures and future pleasures, as well as present and sensible: we ought to make allowance, in the valuation of each particular pleasure, for all the pains and evils, for all the disgust, remorse, and shame that attend it: we ought to regard both kind and quantity, the sincerity, the intenseness, and the duration of pleasures. *Euph.* And all these points duly considered, will not Socrates seem to have had reason of his side, when he thought ignorance made rakes, and particularly their being ignorant of what he calls the science of more and less, greater and smaller, equality and comparison, that is to say of the art of computing? *Lys.* All this discourse seems notional. For real abilities of every kind, it is well known, we have the brightest men of the age among us. But all those who know the world do calculate that what you call a good Christian, who hath neither a large conscience, nor unprejudiced mind, must be unfit for the affairs of it. Thus you see, while you compute youselves out of pleasure, others compute you out of business. What then are you good for with all your computation? *Euph.* I have all imaginable respect for the abilities of free-thinkers. My only fear was, their parts might be too lively for such slow talents as forecast and computation, the gifts of ordinary men.

XIX. *Cri.* I cannot make them the same compliment that Euphranor does. For though I shall not pretend to characterize

* Persius, Sat. 5.

the whole sect, yet thus much I may truly affirm, that those who have fallen in my way have been mostly raw men of pleasure, old sharpers in business, or a third sort of lazy sciolists, who are neither men of business, nor men of speculation, but set up for judges or critics in all kinds, without having made a progress in any. These among men of the world pass for profound theorists, and among speculative men would seem to know the world; a conceited race, equally useless to the affairs and studies of mankind. Such as these, for the most part, seem to be sectaries of the minute philosophy. I will not deny that now and then you may meet with a man of easy manners, that, without those faults and affectations, is carried into the party by the mere stream of education, fashion, or company; all which do in this age prejudice men against religion, even those who mechanically rail at prejudice. I must not forget that the minute philosophers have also a strong party among the beaux and fine ladies; and, as affectations out of character are often the strongest, there is nothing so dogmatical and inconvincible as one of these fine things, when it sets up for free-thinking. But, be these professors of the sect never so dogmatical, their authority must needs be small with men of sense: for who would choose for his guide in the search for truth a man whose thoughts and time are taken up with dress, visits, and diversions? or whose education hath been behind a counter, or in an office? or whose speculations have been employed on the forms of business, who are only well read in the ways and commerce of mankind in stock-jobbing, purloining, supplanting, bribing? Or would any man in his senses give a fig for meditations and discoveries made over a bottle? And yet it is certain, that instead of thought, books, and study, most free-thinkers are the proselytes of a drinking club. Their principles are often settled, and decisions on the deepest points made, when they are not fit to make a bargain. *Lys.* You forget our writers, Crito. They make a world of proselytes. *Cri.* So would worse writers in such a cause. Alas! how few read! and of these, how few are able to judge! How many wish your notions true! How many had rather be diverted than instructed! How many are convinced by a title! I may allow your reasons to be effectual, without allowing them to be good. Arguments, in themselves of small weight, have great effect, when they are recommended by a mistaken interest, when they are pleaded for by passion, when they are countenanced by the humour of the age; and above all, with some sort of men, when they are against law, government, and established opinions, things which, as a wise or good man would not depart from without clear evidence, a weak or a bad man will affect to disparage on the slightest grounds. *Lys.* And yet the arguments of our philosophers alarm. *Cri.* The force of their reasoning is not what alarms; their contempt of laws and govern-

ment is alarming, their application to the young and ignorant is dangerous. *Euph.* But without disputing or disparaging their talent at ratiocination, it seems very possible their success might not be owing to that alone. May it not in some measure be ascribed to the defects of others, as well as to their own perfections? My friend Eucrates used to say, that the church would thrive and flourish beyond all opposition, if some certain persons minded piety more than politics, practics than polemics, fundamentals than consectaries, substance than circumstance, things than notions, and notions than words. *Lys.* Whatever may be the cause, the effects are too plain to be denied. And when a considering man observes that our notions do, in this most learned and knowing age, spread and multiply, in opposition to established laws, and every day gain ground against a body so numerous, so learned, so well supported, protected, encouraged for the service and defence of religion: I say, when a man observes and considers all this, he will be apt to ascribe it to the force of truth, and the merits of our cause; which, had it been supported with the revenues and establishments of the church and universities, you may guess what a figure it would make, by the figure that it makes without them. *Euph.* It is much to be pitied, that the learned professors of your sect do not meet with the encouragement they deserve. *Lys.* All in due time. People begin to open their eyes. It is not impossible but those revenues that in ignorant times were applied to a wrong use, may hereafter, in a more enlightened age, be applied to a better. *Cri.* But why professors and encouragement for what needs no teaching? An acquaintance of mine has a most ingenious footman that can neither write nor read, who learned your whole system in half an hour: he knows when and how to nod, shake his head, smile, and give a hint as well as the ablest sceptic, and is in fact a very minute philosopher. *Lys.* Pardon me, it takes time to unlearn religious prejudices, and requires a strong head. *Cri.* I do not know how it might have been once upon a time. But in the present laudable education, I know several who have been imbued with no religious notions at all; and others who have had them so very slight, that they rubbed off without the least pains.

XX. Panope young and beautiful, under the care of her aunt, and admirer of the minute philosophy, was kept from learning the principles of religion, that she might not be accustomed to believe without a reason, nor assent to what she did not comprehend. Panope was not indeed prejudiced with religious notions, but got a notion of intriguing, and a notion of play, which ruined her reputation by fourteen, and her fortune by four and twenty. I have often reflected on the different fate of two brothers in my neighbourhood. Cleon, the elder, being designed an accomplished gentleman, was sent to town, and had the first part of his education

in a great school: what religion he learned there was soon unlearned in a certain celebrated society, which, till we have a better, may pass for a nursery of minute philosophers. Cleon dressed well, could cheat at cards, had a nice palate, understood the mystery of the die, was a mighty man in the minute philosophy: and having shined a few years in these accomplishments, he died before thirty, childless and rotten, expressing the utmost indignation that he could not outlive that old dog his father; who having a great notion of polite manners, and knowledge of the world, had purchased them to his favourite son with much expense, but had been more frugal in the education of Chærephon, the younger son, who was brought up at a country-school, and entered a commoner in the university, where he qualified himself for a parsonage in his father's gift, which he is now possessed of, together with the estate of the family, and a numerous offspring. *Lys.* A pack of unpolished cubs, I warrant. *Cri.* Less polished, perhaps, but more sound, more honest, and more useful than many who pass for fine gentlemen. Crates, a worthy justice of the peace in this county, having had a son miscarry at at London, by the conversation of a minute philosopher, used to say with a great air of complaint, If a man spoils my corn, or hurts my cattle, I have a remedy against him; but if he spoils my children, I have none. *Lys.* I warrant you, he was for penal methods: he would have had a law to persecute tender consciences. *Cri.* The tender conscience of a minute philosopher! He who tutored the son of Crates, soon after did justice on himself. For he taught Lycidas, a modest young man, the principles of his sect. Lycidas, in return, debauched his daughter, an only child: upon which, Charmides (that was the minute philosopher's name) hanged himself. Old Bubalion in the city is carking, and starving, and cheating, that his son may drink and game, keep mistresses, hounds, horses, and die in a jail. Bubalion nevertheless thinks himself wise, and passeth for one that minds the main chance. He is a minute philosopher, which learning he acquired behind the counter from the works of Prodicus and Tryphon. This same Bubalion was one night at supper, talking against the immortality of the soul with two or three grave citizens, one of whom the next day declared himself bankrupt, with five thousand pounds of Bubalion's in his hands; and the night following he received a note from a servant, who had during his lecture waited at table, demanding the sum of fifty guineas to be laid under a stone, and concluding with most terrible threats and imprecations. *Lys.* Not to repeat what had been already demonstrated, that the public is at bottom no sufferer by such accidents, which in truth are inconvenient only to private persons, who in their turn too may reap the benefit of them; I say, not to repeat all that hath been demonstrated on that head, I shall only ask you

whether there would not be rakes and rogues, although we did not make them? Believe me, the world always was, and always will be the same, as long as men are men. *Cri.* I deny that the world is always the same. Human nature, to use Alciphron's comparison, is like land, better or worse, as it is improved, and according to the seeds or principles sown in it. Though nobody held your tenets, I grant there might be bad men by the force of corrupt appetites and irregular passions: but where men, to the force of appetite and passion, add that of opinion, and are wicked from principle, there will be more men wicked, and those more incurably and outrageously so. The error of a lively rake lies in his passions, and may be reformed: but the dry rogue, who sets up for judgment, is incorrigible. It is an observation of Aristotle's, that there are two sort of debauchees, the ἀκρατὴς and the ἀκόλαστος, of which the one is so against his judgment, the other with it, and that there may be hopes of the former, but none of the latter. And in fact I have always observed, that a rake who is a minute philosopher, when grown old, becomes a sharper in business. *Lys.* I could name you several such who have grown most noted patriots. *Cri.* Patriots? such patriots as Catiline and Marc Antony. *Lys.* And what then? Those famous Romans were brave though unsuccessful. They wanted neither sense nor courage, and if their schemes had taken effect, the brisker part of their countrymen had been much the better for them.

XXI. The wheels of government go on, though wound up by different hands; if not in the same form, yet in some other, perhaps a better. There is an endless variety in nature: weak men, indeed, are prejudiced towards rules and systems in life and government; and think if these are gone all is gone: but a man of a great soul and free spirit delights in the noble experiment of blowing up systems and dissolving governments, to mould them anew upon other principles and in another shape. Take my word for it; there is a plastic nature in things that seeks its own end. Pull a state to pieces, jumble, confound, and shake together the particles of human society, and then let them stand awhile, and you shall soon see them settle of themselves in some convenient order, where heavy heads are lowest, and men of genius uppermost. *Euph.* Lysicles speaks his mind freely. *Lys.* Where was the advantage of free-thinking if it were not attended with free speaking, or of free speaking if it did not produce free acting? We are for absolute, independent, original freedom in thought, word, and deed. Inward freedom, without outward, is good for nothing but to set a man's judgment at variance with his practice. *Cri.* This free way of Lysicles may seem new to you; it is not so to me. As the minute philosophers lay it down for a maxim, that there is nothing sacred of any kind, nothing

but what may be made a jest of, exploded, and changed like the fashion of their clothes, so nothing is more frequent than for them to utter their schemes and principles, not only in select companies, but even in public. In a certain part of the world, where ingenious men are wont to retail their speculations, I remember to have seen a valetudinarian in a long wig and cloak sitting at the upper end of a table, with half a dozen of disciples about him. After he had talked about religion in a manner and with an air that would make one think atheism established by law, and religion only tolerated, he entered upon civil government, and observed to his audience, that the natural world was in a perpetual circulation: animals, said he, who draw their sustenance from the earth, mix with that same earth, and in their turn become food for vegetables, which again nourish the animal kind: the vapours that ascend from this globe descend back upon it in showers: the elements alternately prey upon each other: that which one part of nature loseth another gains, the sum total remaining always the same, being neither bigger nor lesser, better nor worse for all these intestine changes. Even so, said this learned professor, the revolutions in the civil world are no detriment to human kind, one part whereof rises as the other falls, and wins by another's loss. A man therefore who thinks deeply, and hath an eye on the whole system, is no more a bigot to government than to religion. He knows how to suit himself to occasions, and make the best of every event: for the rest, he looks on all translations of power and property from one hand to another with a philosophic indifference. Our lecturer concluded his discourse with a most ingenious analysis of all political and moral virtues into their first principles and causes, showing them to be mere fashions, tricks of state, and illusions on the vulgar. *Lys.* We have been often told of the good effects of religion and learning, churches and universities: but I dare affirm, that a dozen or two ingenious men of our sect have done more towards advancing real knowledge, by extemporaneous lectures, in the compass of a few years, than all the ecclesiastics put together for as many centuries. *Euph.* And the nation no doubt thrives accordingly: but it seems, Crito, you have heard them discourse. *Cri.* Upon hearing this and other lectures of the same tendency, methought it was needless to establish professors for the minute philosophy in either university, while there are so many spontaneous lecturers in every corner of the streets, ready to open men's eyes, and rub off their prejudices about religion, loyalty, and public spirit. *Lys.* If wishing was to any purpose, I could wish for a telescope that might draw into my view things future in time, as well as distant in place. Oh! that I could but look into the next age, and behold what it is that we are preparing to be, the glorious harvest of our principles, the spreading of which

hath produced a visible tendency in the nation towards something great and new. *Cri.* One thing I dare say you would expect to see, be the changes and agitations of the public what they will, that is, every free-thinker upon his legs. You are all sons of nature, who cheerfully follow the fortunes of the common mass. *Lys.* And it must be owned we have a maxim, that *each should take care of one.* *Cri.* Alas, Lysicles, you wrong your own character. You would fain pass upon the world and upon yourselves for interested cunning men: but can any thing be more disinterested than to sacrifice all regards to the abstracted speculation of truth? Or can any thing be more void of all cunning than to publish your discoveries to the world, teach others to play the whole game, and arm mankind against yourselves?

XXII. If a man may venture to suggest so mean a thought as the love of their country, to souls fired with the love of truth and the love of liberty, and grasping the whole extent of nature, I would humbly propose it to you, gentlemen, to observe the caution practised by all other discoverers, projectors, and makers of experiments, who never hazard all on the first trial. Would it not be prudent to try the success of your principles on a small model in some remote corner? For instance, set up a colony of atheists in Monomotapa, and see how it prospers before you proceed any further at home: half a dozen ship-load of minute philosophers might easily be spared upon so good a design. In the mean time you, gentlemen, who have found out that there is nothing to be hoped or feared in another life, that conscience is a bugbear, that the bands of government and the cement of human society are rotten things, to be dissolved and crumbled into nothing by the argumentation of every minute philosopher, be so good as to keep these sublime discoveries to yourselves: suffer us, our wives, our children, our servants, and our neighbours, to continue in the belief and way of thinking established by the laws of our country. In good earnest, I wish you would go try your experiments among the Hottentots or Turks. *Lys.* The Hottentots we think well of, believing them to be an unprejudiced people: but it is to be feared their diet and customs would not agree with our philosophers. As for the Turks, they are bigots, who have a notion of God and a respect for Jesus Christ: I question whether it might be safe to venture among them. *Cri.* Make your experiment then in some other part of Christendom. *Lys.* We hold all other Christian nations to be much under the power of prejudice: even our neighbours the Dutch are too much prejudiced in favour of their religion by law established, for a prudent man to attempt innovations under their government. Upon the whole it seems, we can execute our schemes no where with so much security and such prospect of success as at home. Not to say that we have already made a

good progress. Oh! that we could but once see a parliament of true, staunch, libertine free-thinkers! *Cri.* God forbid! I should be sorry to have such men for my servants, not to say, for my masters. *Lys.* In that we differ.

XXIII. But you will agree with me, that the right way to come at this, was to begin with extirpating the prejudices of particular persons. We have carried on this work for many years with much art and industry, and at first with secresy, working like moles under ground, concealing our progress from the public, and our ultimate views from many, even of our own proselytes, blowing the coals between polemical divines, laying hold on and improving every incident, which the passions and folly of churchmen afforded, to the advantage of our sect. As our principles obtained, we still proceeded to further inferences; and as our numbers multiplied, we gradually disclosed ourselves and our opinions: where we are now I need not say. We have stubbed, and weeded, and cleared human nature to that degree, that in a little time, leaving it alone without any labouring or teaching, you shall see natural and just ideas sprout forth of themselves. *Cri.* But I have heard a man, who had lived long and observed much, remark, that the worst and most unwholesome weed was this same minute philosophy. We have had, said he, divers epidemical distempers in the state, but this hath produced of all others the most destructive plague. Enthusiasm had its day, its effects were violent and soon over: this infects more quietly, but spreads widely: the former bred a fever in the state, this breeds a consumption and final decay. A rebellion or an invasion alarms, and puts the public upon its defence; but a corruption of principles works its ruin more slowly perhaps, but more surely. This may be illustrated by a fable I somewhere met with in the writings of a Swiss philosopher, setting forth the original of brandy and gunpowder. The government of the north being once upon a time vacant, the prince of the power of the air convened a council in hell, wherein upon competition between two demons of rank, it was determined they should both make trial of their abilities, and he should succeed who did most mischief. One made his appearance in the shape of gunpowder, the other in that of brandy: the former was a declared enemy, and roared with a terrible noise, which made folks afraid, and put them on their guard: the other passed as a friend and a physician through the world, disguised himself with sweets, and perfumes, and drugs, made his way into the ladies' cabinets, and the apothecaries' shops, and under the notion of helping digestion, comforting the spirits, and cheering the heart, produced direct contrary effects; and having insensibly thrown great numbers of human kind into a lingering but fatal decay, was found to people hell and the grave so fast, as to merit the government which he still possesses.

XXIV. *Lys.* Those who please may amuse themselves with fables and allegories. This is plain English: liberty is a good thing, and we are the support of liberty. *Cri.* To me it seems that liberty and virtue were made for each other. If any man wish to enslave his country, nothing is a fitter preparative than vice; and nothing leads to vice so surely as irreligion. For my part, I cannot comprehend or find out, after having considered it in all lights, how this crying down religion should be the effect of honest views towards a just and legal liberty. Some seem to propose an indulgence in vice. Others may have in prospect the advantages which needy and ambitious men are used to make in the ruin of a state: one may indulge a pert, petulant spirit; another hope to be esteemed among libertines, when he wants wit to please or abilities to be useful. But, be men's views what they will, let us examine what good your principles have done; who has been the better for the instructions of these minute philosophers? Let us compare what we are in respect of learning, loyalty, honesty, wealth, power, and public spirit, with what we have been. Free-thinking (as it is called) hath wonderfully grown of late years. Let us see what hath grown up with it, or what effects it hath produced. To make a catalogue of ills is disagreeable; and the only blessing it can pretend to is luxury: that same blessing which revenged the world upon old Rome: that same luxury that makes a nation, like a diseased, pampered body, look full and fat with one foot in the grave. *Lys.* You mistake the matter. There are no people who think and argue better about the public good of a state than our sect; who have also invented many things tending to that end, which we cannot as yet conveniently put in practice. *Cri.* But one point there is from which it must be owned the public hath already received some advantage, which is the effect of your principles flowing from them, and spreading as they do: I mean that old Roman practice of self-murder, which at once puts an end to all distress, ridding the world and themselves of the miserable. *Lys.* You were pleased before to make some reflections on this custom, and laugh at the irresolution of our free-thinkers: but I can aver for matter of fact, that they have often recommended it by their example as well as arguments, and that it is solely owing to them that a practice, so useful and magnanimous, hath been taken out of the hands of lunatics, and restored to that credit among men of sense, which it anciently had. In whatever light you may consider it, this is in fact a solid benefit: but the best effect of our principles is that light and truth so visibly shed abroad in the world. From how many prejudices, errors, perplexities, and contradictions have we freed the minds of our fellow-subjects! How many hard words and intricate, absurd notions had possessed the minds of men before our philosophers appeared in

the world! But now even women and children have right and sound notions of things. What say you to this, Crito? *Cri.* I say with respect to these great advantages of destroying men and notions, that I question whether the public gains as much by the latter as it loseth by the former. For my own part, I had rather my wife and children all believed what they had no notion of, and daily pronounced words without a meaning, than that any one of them should cut his throat, or leap out of a window. Errors and nonsense, as such, are of small concern in the eyes of the public, which considers not the metaphysical truth of notions, so much as the tendency they have to produce good or evil. Truth itself is valued by the public, as it hath an influence, and is felt in the course of life. You may confute a whole shelf of schoolmen, and discover many speculative truths, without any great merit towards your country. But if I am not mistaken, the minute philosophers are not the men to whom we are most beholden for discoveries of that kind: this I say must be allowed, supposing, what I by no means grant, your notions to be true. For, to say plainly what I think, the tendency of your opinions is so bad, that no good man can endure them, and your arguments for them so weak, that no wise man will admit them. *Lys.* Has it not been proved as clear as the meridian sun, that the politer sort of men lead much happier lives, and swim in pleasure, since the spreading of our principles? But not to repeat or insist further on what has been so amply deduced, I shall only add that the advantages flowing from them extend to the tenderest age and the softer sex: our principles deliver children from terrors by night, and ladies from splenetic hours by day. Instead of these old-fashioned things, prayers and the bible, the grateful amusements of drams, dice, and billets-doux have succeeded. The fair sex have now nothing to do but dress and paint, drink and game, adorn and divert themselves, and enter into all the sweet society of life. *Cri.* I thought, Lysicles, the argument from pleasure had been exhausted: but since you have not done with that point, let us once more by Euphranor's rule cast up the account of pleasure and pain, as credit and debt, under distinct articles. We will set down in the life of your fine lady rich clothes, dice, cordials, scandal, late hours, against vapours, distaste, remorse, losses at play, and the terrible distress of ill spent age increasing every day: suppose no cruel accident of jealousy, no madness or infamy of love, yet at the foot of the account you shall find that empty, giddy, gaudy, fluttering thing, not half so happy as a butterfly or a grasshopper on a summer's day: and for a rake or man of pleasure, the reckoning will be much the same, if you place listlessness, ignorance, rottenness, loathing, craving, quarrelling, and such qualities or accomplishments, over against his little circle of fleeting amusements, long

woe against momentary pleasure; and if it be considered that, when sense and appetite go off, though he seek refuge from his conscience in the minute philosophy, yet in this you will find, if you sift him to the bottom, that he affects much, believes little, knows nothing. Upon which Lysicles turning to me, observed, that Crito might dispute against fact if he pleased, but that every one must see the nation was the merrier for their principles. True, answered Crito, we are a merry nation indeed: young men laugh at the old; children despise their parents; and subjects make a jest of the government: happy effects of the minute philosophy!

XXV. *Lys.* Infer what effects you please: that will not make our principles less true. *Cri.* Their truth is not what I am now considering. The point at present is the usefulness of your principles; and to decide this point we need only take a short view of them fairly proposed and laid together: that there is no God or providence; that man is as the beasts that perish; that his happiness, as theirs, consists in obeying animal instincts, appetites, and passions; that all stings of conscience and sense of guilt are prejudices and errors of education; that religion is a state trick; that vice is beneficial to the public; that the soul of man is corporeal, and dissolveth like a flame or vapour; that man is a machine actuated according to the laws of motion; that consequently he is no agent, or subject of guilt; that a wise man will make his own particular individual interest in this present life the rule and measure of all his actions: these and such opinions are, it seems, the tenets of a minute philosopher, who is himself according to his own principles an organ played on by sensible objects, a ball bandied about by appetites and passions; so subtle is he as to be able to maintain all this by artful reasonings; so sharp-sighted and penetrating to the very bottom of things as to find out, that the most interested occult cunning is the only true wisdom. To complete his character, this curious piece of clock-work, having no principle of action within itself, and denying that it hath or can have any one free thought or motion, sets up for the patron of liberty, and earnestly contends for *free-thinking*. Crito had no sooner made an end, but Lysicles addressed himself to Euphranor and me; Crito, said he, has taken a world of pains, but convinced me only of one single point, to wit, that I must despair of convincing him. Never did I in the whole course of my life meet with a man so deeply immersed in prejudice: let who will pull him out for me. But I entertain better hopes of you. I can answer, said I, for myself, that my eyes and ears are always open to conviction: I am attentive to all that passes, and upon the whole shall form, whether right or wrong, a very impartial judgment. Crito, said Euphranor, is a more enterprising man than I, thus to rate and

lecture a philosopher. For my part, I always find it easier to learn than to teach. I shall therefore beg your assistance to rid me of some scruples about the tendency of your opinions, which I find myself unable to master, though never so willing. This done, though we should not tread exactly in the same steps, nor perhaps go the same road: yet we shall not run in all points diametrically opposite one to another.

XXVI. Tell me now, Lysicles, you who are a minute observer of things, whether a shade be more agreeable at morning, or evening, or noon-day. *Lys.* Doubtless at noon-day. *Euph.* And what disposeth men to rest? *Lys.* Exercise. *Euph.* When do men make the greatest fires? *Lys.* In the coldest weather. *Euph.* And what creates a love for icy liquors? *Lys.* Excessive heat. *Euph.* What if you raise a pendulum to a great height on one side? *Lys.* It will, when left to itself, ascend so much the higher on the other. *Euph.* It should seem therefore, that darkness ensues from light, rest from motion, heat from cold, and in general that one extreme is the consequence of another. *Lys.* It should seem so. *Euph.* And doth not this observation hold in the civil as well as natural world? Doth not power produce license, and license power? Do not whigs make tories, and tories whigs: bigots make atheists, and atheists bigots? *Lys.* Granting this to be true. *Euph.* Will it not hence follow, that as we abhor slavish principles, we should avoid running into licentious ones? I am, and always was a sincere lover of liberty, legal English liberty; which I esteem a chief blessing, ornament, and comfort of life, and the great prerogative of an Englishman. But is it not to be feared, that upon the nation's running into a licentiousness which hath never been endured in any civilized country, men feeling the intolerable evils of one extreme may naturally fall into the other? You must allow, the bulk of mankind are not philosophers, like you and Alciphron. *Lys.* This I readily acknowledge. *Euph.* I have another scruple about the tendency of your opinions. Suppose you should prevail, and destroy this protestant church and clergy: how could you come at the popish? I am credibly informed there is a great number of emissaries of the church of Rome disguised in England: who can tell what harvest a clergy so numerous, so subtle, and so well furnished with arguments to work on vulgar and uneducated minds, may be able to make in a country despoiled of all religion and feeling the want of it? Who can tell whether the spirit of free-thinking ending with the opposition, and the vanity with the distinction, when the whole nation are alike infidels, who can tell, I say, whether in such a juncture the men of genius themselves may not affect a new distinction, and be the first converts to popery? *Lys.* And suppose they should. Between friends it would be no great matter. These are our maxims. In the first

place we hold it would be best to have no religion at all. Secondly, we hold that all religions are indifferent. If therefore upon trial we find the country cannot do without a religion, why not popery as well as another? I know several ingenious men of our sect, who, if we had a popish prince on the throne, would turn papists to-morrow. This is a paradox, but I shall explain it. A prince whom we compliment with our religion, to be sure must be grateful. *Euph.* I understand you. But what becomes of free-thinking all the while? *Lys.* Oh! we should have more than ever of that, for we should keep it all to ourselves. As for the amusement of retailing it, the want of this would be largely compensated by solid advantages of another kind. *Euph.* It seems then, by this account, the tendency you observed in the nation towards something great and new proves a tendency towards popery and slavery. *Lys.* Mistake us not, good Euphranor. The thing first in our intention is consummate liberty; but if this will not do, and there must after all be such things tolerated as religion and government, we are wisely willing to make the best of both. *Cri.* This puts me in mind of a thought I have often had, that the minute philosophers are dupes of the Jesuits. The two most avowed, professed, busy propagators of infidelity in all companies, and upon all occasions, that I ever met with, were both bigoted papists, and being both men of considerable estates, suffered considerably on that score; which it is wonderful their thinking disciples should never reflect upon. Hegemon, a most distinguished writer among the minute philosophers, and hero of the sect, I am well assured, was once a papist, and never heard that he professed any other religion. I know that many of the church of Rome abroad, are pleased with the growth of infidelity among us, as hoping it may make way for them. The emissaries of Rome are known to have personated several other sects, which from time to time have sprung up amongst us, and why not this of the minute philosophers, of all others the best calculated to ruin both church and state? I myself have known a Jesuit abroad talk among English gentlemen like a free-thinker. I am credibly informed, that Jesuits, known to be such by the minute philosophers at home, are admitted into their clubs: and I have observed them to approve, and speak better of the Jesuits, than of any other clergy whatsoever. Those who are not acquainted with the subtle spirit, the refined politics, and wonderful economy of that renowned society, need only read the account given of them by the Jesuit Inchofer, in his book *De Monarchia Solipsorum;* and those who are, will not be surprised they should be able to make dupes of our minute philosophers: dupes, I say, for I can never think they suspect they are only tools to serve the ends of cunninger men than themselves. They seem to me drunk and giddy with a false notion of liberty, and, spurred on

by this principle to make mad experiments on their country, they agree only in pulling down all that stands in their way; without any concerted scheme, and without caring or knowing what to erect in its stead. To hear them, as I have often done, descant on the moral virtues, resolve them into shame, then laugh at shame as a weakness, admire the unconfined lives of savages, despise all order and decency of education, one would think the intention of these philosophers was, when they had pruned and weeded the notions of their fellow-subjects, and divested them of their prejudices, to strip them of their clothes, and fill the country with naked followers of nature, enjoying all the privileges of brutality. Here Crito made a pause, and fixed his eyes on Alciphron, who during this whole conversation had sat thoughtful and attentive, without saying a word, and with an air, one while dissatisfied at what Lysicles advanced, another, serene and pleased, seeming to approve some better thought of his own. But the day being now far spent, Alciphron proposed to adjourn the argument to the following; when, said he, I shall set matters on a new foundation, and in so full and clear a light, as, I doubt not, will give entire satisfaction. So we changed the discourse, and after a repast upon cold provisions, took a walk on the strand, and in the cool of the evening returned to Crito's.

THE THIRD DIALOGUE.

I. Alciphron's account of honour. II. Character and conduct of men of honour. III. Sense of moral beauty. IV. The *honestum* or τὸ καλὸν of the ancients. V. Taste for moral beauty, whether a sure guide or rule. VI. Minute philosophers ravished with the abstract beauty of virtue. VII. Their virtue alone disinterested and heroic. VIII. Beauty of sensible objects, what, and how perceived. IX. The idea of beauty explained by painting and architecture. X. Beauty of the moral system, wherein it consists. XI. It supposeth a providence. XII. Influence of τὸ καλὸν and τὸ πρέπον. XIII. Enthusiasm of Cratylus compared with the sentiments of Aristotle. XIV. Compared with the Stoical principles. XV. Minute philosophers, their talent for raillery and ridicule. XVI. The wisdom of those who make virtue alone its own reward.

I. THE following day, as we sat round the tea-table, in a summer parlour which looks into the garden, Alciphron after the first dish turned down his cup, and reclining back in his chair proceeded as follows:—Above all the sects upon earth it is the peculiar privilege of ours, not to be tied down by any principles. While other philosophers profess a servile adherence to certain tenets, ours assert a noble freedom, differing not only one from another, but very often the same man from himself. Which method of proceeding, beside other advantages, hath this annexed to it, that we are of all men the hardest to confute. You may, perhaps, confute a particular tenet, but then this affects only

him who maintains it, and so long only as he maintains it. Some of our sect dogmatize more than others, and in some more than other points. The doctrine of the usefulness of vice is a point wherein we are not all agreed. Some of us are great admirers of virtue. With others the points of vice and virtue are problematical. For my own part, though I think the doctrine maintained yesterday by Lysicles an ingenious speculation; yet, upon the whole, there are divers reasons which incline me to depart from it, and rather to espouse the virtuous side of the question; with the smallest, perhaps, but the most contemplative and laudable part of our sect. It seemeth, I say, after a nice inquiry and balancing on both sides, that we ought to prefer virtue to vice; and that such preference would contribute both to the public weal, and the reputation of our philosophers. You are to know then, we have among us several that, without one grain of religion, are men of the nicest honour, and therefore men of virtue because men of honour. Honour is a noble, unpolluted source of virtue, without the least mixture of fear, interest, or superstition. It hath all the advantages without the evils which attend religion. It is the mark of a great and fine soul, and is to be found among persons of rank and breeding. It affects the court, the senate, and the camp, and in general every rendezvous of people of fashion. *Euph.* You say then that honour is the source of virtue. *Alc.* I do. *Euph.* Can a thing be the source of itself? *Alc.* It cannot. *Euph.* The source, therefore, is distinguished from that of which it is the source. *Alc.* Doubtless. *Euph.* Honour then is one thing and virtue another. *Alc.* I grant it. Virtuous actions are the effect, and honour is the source or cause of that effect. *Euph.* Tell me, is honour the will producing those actions, or the final cause for which they are produced, or right reason which is their rule and limit, or the object about which they are conversant? or do you by the word *honour* understand a faculty or appetite? All which are supposed, in one sense or other, to be the source of human actions. *Alc.* Nothing of all this. *Euph.* Be pleased then to give me some notion or definition of it. Alciphron having mused a while answered, that he defined honour to be a principle of virtuous actions. To which Euphranor replied: If I understand it rightly the word *principle* is variously taken. Sometimes by principles we mean the parts of which a whole is composed, and into which it may be resolved. Thus the elements are said to be principles of compound bodies. And thus words, syllables, and letters are the principles of speech. Sometimes by principle we mean a small particular seed, the growth or gradual unfolding of which doth produce an organized body, animal or vegetable, in its proper size and shape. Principles at other times are supposed to be certain fundamental theorems in arts and sciences, in religion and

politics. Let me know in which of these senses, or whether it be in some other sense that you understand this word, when you say, honour is a principle of virtue. To this Alciphron replied, that for his part he meant it in none of those senses, but defined honour to be a certain ardour or enthusiasm that glowed in the breast of a gallant man. Upon this, Euphranor observed, it was always admitted to put the definition in place of the thing defined. Is this allowed, said he, or not? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* May we not therefore say, that a man of honour is a warm man, or an enthusiast? Alciphron hearing this, declared that such exactness was to no purpose; that pedants, indeed, may dispute and define, but could never reach that high sense of honour, which distinguished the fine gentleman, and was a thing rather to be felt than explained.

II. Crito perceiving that Alciphron could not bear being pressed any further on that article, and willing to give some satisfaction to Euphranor, said that of himself indeed he should not undertake to explain so nice a point, but he would retail to them part of a conversation he once heard between Nicander a minute philosopher, and Menecles a Christian, upon the same subject, which was for substance as follows:—*M.* From what principle are you gentlemen virtuous? *N.* From honour. We are men of honour. *M.* May not a man of honour debauch another's wife, or get drunk, or sell a vote, or refuse to pay his debts, without lessening or tainting his honour? *N.* He may have the vices and faults of a gentleman: but is obliged to pay debts of honour, that is, all such as are contracted by play. *M.* Is not your man of honour always ready to resent affronts and engage in duels? *N.* He is ready to demand and give gentleman's satisfaction upon all proper occasions. *M.* It should seem by this account, that to ruin tradesmen, break faith to one's own wife, corrupt another man's, take bribes, cheat the public, cut a man's throat for a word, are all points consistent with your principle of honour. *N.* It cannot be denied that we are men of gallantry, men of fire, men who know the world, and all that. *M.* It seems therefore that honour among infidels is like honesty among pirates: something confined to themselves, and which the fraternity perhaps may find their account in, but every one else should be constantly on his guard against. By this dialogue, continued Crito, a man who lives out of the *grand monde*, may be enabled to form some notion of what the world calls honour and men of honour. *Euph.* I must entreat you not to put me off with Nicander's opinion, whom I know nothing of, but rather give me your own judgment, drawn from your own observation upon men of honour. *Cri.* If I must pronounce, I can very sincerely assure you that by all I have heard or seen, I could never find, that honour, considered as a principle distinct from conscience,

religion, reason, and virtue, was more than an empty name. And I do verily believe, that those who build upon that notion have less virtue than other men, and that what they have or seem to have is owing to fashion (being of the reputable kind), if not to a conscience early imbued with religious principles, and afterwards retaining a tincture from them without knowing it. These two principles seem to account for all that looks like virtue in those gentlemen. Your men of fashion in whom animal life abounds, a sort of bullies in morality, who disdain to have it thought they are afraid of conscience; these descant much upon honour, and affect to be called men of honour, rather than conscientious or honest men. But, by all that I could ever observe, this specious character, where there is nothing of conscience or religion underneath, to give it life and substance, is no better than a meteor or painted cloud. *Euph.* I had a confused notion that honour was something nearly connected with truth, and that men of honour were the greatest enemies to all hypocrisy, fallacy, and disguise. *Cri.* So far from that, an infidel who sets up for the nicest honour shall, without the least grain of faith or religion, pretend himself a Christian, take any test, join in any act of worship, kneel, pray, receive the sacrament to serve an interest. The same person, without any impeachment of his honour, shall most solemnly declare and promise in the face of God and the world, that he will love his wife, and forsaking all others keep only to her, when at the same time it is certain, he intends never to perform one tittle of his vow; and convinceth the whole world of this as soon as he gets her in his power, and her fortune, for the sake of which this man of untainted honour makes no scruple to cheat and lie. *Euph.* We have a notion here in the country, that it was of all things most odious, and a matter of much risk and hazard, to give the lie to a man of honour. *Cri.* It is very true. He abhors to take the lie, but not to tell it.

III. Alciphron, having heard all this with great composure of mind and countenance, spake as follows. You are not to think that our greatest strength lies in our greatest number, libertines, and mere men of honour. No: we have among us philosophers of a very different character, men of curious contemplation, not governed by such gross things as sense and custom, but of an abstracted virtue and sublime morals: and the less religious the more virtuous. For virtue of the high and disinterested kind no man is so well qualified as an infidel, it being a mean and selfish thing to be virtuous through fear or hope. The notion of a Providence and future state of rewards and punishments, may indeed tempt or scare men of abject spirit into practices contrary to the natural bent of their souls, but will never produce a true and genuine virtue. To go to the bottom of things, to analyze virtue into its first principles, and fix a scheme of duty on its

true basis, you must understand that there is an idea of beauty natural to the mind of man. This all men desire, this they are pleased and delighted with for its own sake, purely from an instinct of nature. A man needs no arguments to make him discern and approve what is beautiful: it strikes at first sight, and attracts without a reason. And as this beauty is found in the shape and form of corporeal things, so also is there analogous to it a beauty of another kind, an order, a symmetry, and comeliness in the moral world. And as the eye perceiveth the one, so the mind doth by a certain interior sense perceive the other, which sense, talent, or faculty, is ever quickest and purest in the noblest minds. Thus as by sight I discern the beauty of a plant or an animal, even so the mind apprehends the moral excellence, the beauty, and decorum of justice and temperance. And as we readily pronounce a dress becoming, or an attitude graceful, we can, with the same free untutored judgment, at once declare, whether this or that conduct or action be comely and beautiful. To relish this kind of beauty, there must be a delicate and fine taste: but where there is this natural taste nothing further is wanting, either as a principle to convince, or as a motive to induce men to the love of virtue. And more or less there is of this taste or sense in every creature that hath reason. All rational beings are by nature social. They are drawn one towards another by natural affections: they unite and incorporate into families, clubs, parties, and commonwealths by mutual sympathy. As by means of the sensitive soul, our several distinct parts and members do consent towards the animal functions, and are connected in one whole: even so the several parts of these rational systems or bodies politic, by virtue of this moral or interior sense, are held together, have a fellow-feeling, do succour and protect each other, and jointly co-operate towards the same end. Hence that joy in society, that propension towards doing good to our kind, that gratulation and delight in beholding the virtuous deeds of other men, or in reflecting on our own. By contemplation of the fitness and order of the parts of a moral system, regularly operating, and knit together by benevolent affections, the mind of man attaineth to the highest notion of beauty, excellence, and perfection: seized and rapt with this sublime idea, our philosophers do infinitely despise and pity whoever shall propose or accept any other motive to virtue. Interest is a mean, ungenerous thing, destroying the merit of virtue, and falsehood of every kind is inconsistent with the genuine spirit of philosophy. *Cri.* The love therefore that you bear to moral beauty, and your passion for abstracted truth, will not suffer you to think with patience of those fraudulent impositions upon mankind, Providence, the immortality of the soul, and a future retribution of rewards and punishments; which, under the notion of

promoting, do, it seems, destroy all true virtue, and at the same time contradict and disparage your noble theories, manifestly tending to the perturbation and disquiet of men's minds, and filling them with fruitless hopes and vain terrors. *Alc.* Men's first thoughts and natural notions are the best in moral matters. And there is no need that mankind should be preached, or reasoned, or frightened into virtue, a thing so natural and congenial to every human soul. Now if this be the case, as it certainly is, it follows that all the ends of society are secured without religion, and that an infidel bids fair to be the most virtuous man, in a true, sublime, and heroic sense.

IV. *Euph.* O Alciphron, while you talk, I feel an affection in my soul like the trembling of one lute, upon striking the unison strings of another. Doubtless there is a beauty of the mind, a charm in virtue, a symmetry and proportion in the moral world. This moral beauty was known to the ancients by the name of *honestum* or τὸ καλὸν. And in order to know its force and influence, it may not be amiss to inquire what it was understood to be, and what light it was placed in by those who first considered it, and gave it a name: τὸ καλὸν, according to Aristotle, is the ἐπαινετὸν, or laudable; according to Plato it is the ἡδὺ, or ὠφέλιμον, pleasant or profitable, which is meant with respect to a reasonable mind and its true interest. Now I would fain know whether a mind, which considers an action as laudable, be not carried beyond the bare action itself, to regard the opinion of others concerning it? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* And whether this be a sufficient ground or principle of virtue, for a man to act upon, when he thinks himself removed from the eye and observation of every other intelligent being? *Alc.* It seems not. *Euph.* Again, I ask whether a man who doth a thing pleasant or profitable, as such, might not be supposed to forbear doing it, or even to do the contrary, upon the prospect of greater pleasure or profit? *Alc.* He might. *Euph.* Doth it not follow from hence, that the beauty of virtue or τὸ καλὸν, in either Aristotle's or Plato's sense, is not a sufficient principle or ground to engage sensual and worldly-minded men in the practice of it? *Alc.* What then? *Euph.* Why then, it will follow that hope of reward and fear of punishment are highly expedient, to cast the balance of pleasant and profitable on the side of virtue, and thereby very much conduce to the benefit of human society. Alciphron, upon this, appealed; Gentlemen, said he, you are witnesses of this unfair proceeding of Euphranor, who argues against us, from explications given by Plato and Aristotle of the beauty of virtue, which are things we have nothing to say to; the philosophers of our sect abstracting from all praise, pleasure, and interest, when they are enamoured and transported with that sublime idea. I beg pardon, replied Euphranor, for supposing the minute

philosophers of our days think like those ancient sages. But you must tell me, Alciphron, since you do not think fit to adopt the sense of Plato or Aristotle, what sense it is in which you understand the beauty of virtue? Define it, explain it, make me to understand your meaning, that so we may argue about the same thing, without which we can never come to a conclusion.

V. *Alc.* Some things are better understood by definitions and descriptions, but I have always observed that those who would define, explain, and dispute about this point, make the least of it. Moral beauty is of so peculiar and abstracted a nature, something so subtile, fine, and fugacious, that it will not bear being handled and inspected, like every gross and common subject. You will, therefore, pardon me, if I stand upon my philosophic liberty; and choose rather to intrench myself within the general and indefinite sense, rather than by entering into a precise and particular explication of this beauty, perchance lose sight of it, or give you some hold whereon to cavil, and infer, and raise doubts, queries, and difficulties, about a point as clear as the sun, when nobody reasons upon it. *Euph.* How say you, Alciphron, is that notion clearest when it is not considered? *Alc.* I say it is rather to be felt than understood, a certain *je ne sais quoi.* An object, not of the discursive faculty, but of a peculiar sense, which is properly called the moral sense, being adapted to the perception of moral beauty, as the eye to colours, or the ear to sounds. *Euph.* That men have certain instinctive sensations or passions from nature, which make them amiable and useful to each other, I am clearly convinced. Such are a fellow-feeling with the distressed, a tenderness for our offspring, an affection towards our friends, our neighbours, and our country; an indignation against things base, cruel, or unjust. These passions are implanted in the human soul, with several other fears and appetites, aversions and desires, some of which are strongest and uppermost in one mind, others in another. Should it not, therefore, seem a very uncertain guide in morals, for a man to follow his passion or inward feeling? and would not this rule infallibly lead different men different ways, according to the prevalency of this or that appetite or passion? *Alc.* I do not deny it. *Euph.* And will it not follow from hence, that duty and virtue are in a fairer way of being practised, if men are led by reason and judgment, balancing low and sensual pleasures with those of a higher kind, comparing present losses with future gains, and the uneasiness and disgust of every vice with the delightful practice of the opposite virtue, and the pleasing reflections and hopes which attend it? Or can there be a stronger motive to virtue, than the showing that considered in all lights it is every man's true interest?

VI. *Alc.* I tell you, Euphranor, we contemn the virtue of

that man who computes and deliberates, and must have a reason for being virtuous. The refined moralists of our sect are ravished and transported with the abstract beauty of virtue. They disdain all forensical motives to it, and love virtue only for virtue's sake. Oh rapture! oh enthusiasm! oh the quintessence of beauty! methinks I could dwell for ever on this contemplation: but rather than entertain myself, I must endeavour to convince you. Make an experiment on the first man you meet. Propose a villanous or unjust action. Take his first sense of the matter, and you shall find he detests it. He may, indeed, be afterwards misled by arguments, or overpowered by temptation, but his original, unpremeditated, and genuine thoughts, are just and orthodox. How can we account for this but by a moral sense, which, left to itself, hath as quick and true a perception of the beauty and deformity of human actions, as the eye hath of colours? *Euph.* May not this be sufficiently accounted for by conscience, affection, passion, education, reason, custom, religion, which principles and habits, for aught I know, may be what you metaphorically call a moral sense. *Alc.* What I call a moral sense is strictly, properly, and truly such, and in kind different from all those things you enumerate. It is what all men have, though all may not observe it. Upon this Euphranor smiled, and said, Alciphron has made discoveries where I least expected it. For, said he, in regard to every other point, I should hope to learn from him, but for the knowledge of myself, or the faculties and powers of my own mind, I should have looked at home. And there I might have looked long enough, without finding this new talent, which even now, after being tutored, I cannot comprehend. For Alciphron, I must needs say, is too sublime and enigmatical upon a point which, of all others, ought to be most clearly understood. I have often heard that your deepest adepts and oldest professors in science are the obscurest. Lysicles is young and speaks plain. Would he but favour us with his sense of this point, it might perhaps prove more upon a level with my apprehension.

VII. Lysicles shook his head, and in a grave and earnest manner addressed the company. Gentlemen, said he, Alciphron stands upon his own legs. I have no part in these refined notions he is at present engaged to defend. If I must subdue my passions, abstract, contemplate, be enamoured of virtue; in a word, if I must be an enthusiast, I owe so much deference to the laws of my country, as to choose being an enthusiast in their way. Besides, it is better being so for some end than for none. This doctrine hath all the solid inconveniencies, without the amusing hopes and prospects of the Christian. *Alc.* I never counted on Lysicles for my second in this point; which after all doth not need his assistance or explication. All subjects ought not to be treated in the same manner. The way of definition

and division is dry and pedantic. Besides, the subject is sometimes too obscure, sometimes too simple for this method. One while we know too little of a point, another too much, to make it plainer by discourse. *Cri.* To hear Alciphron talk, puts me in mind of that ingenious Greek, who having wrapped a man's brother up in a cloak, asked him whether he knew that person? being ready, either by keeping on, or pulling off the cloak, to confute his answer whatever it should be. For my part I believe, if matters were fairly stated, that rational satisfaction, that peace of mind, that inward comfort, and conscientious joy, which a good Christian finds in good actions, would not be found to fall short of all the ecstasy, rapture, and enthusiasm supposed to be the effect of that high and undescribed principle. In earnest, can any ecstasy be higher, any rapture more affecting, than that which springs from the love of God and man, from a conscience void of offence, and an inward discharge of duty, with the secret delight, trust, and hope that attends it? *Alc.* O Euphranor, we votaries of truth do not envy, but pity, the groundless joys and mistaken hopes of a Christian. And, as for conscience and rational pleasure, how can we allow a conscience without allowing a vindictive Providence? Or how can we suppose the charm of virtue consists in any pleasure or benefit attending virtuous actions, without giving great advantages to the Christian religion, which, it seems, excites its believers to virtue by the highest interests and pleasures in reversion? Alas! should we grant this, there would be a door opened to all those rusty declaimers upon the necessity and usefulness of the great points of faith, the immortality of the soul, a future state, rewards and punishments, and the like exploded conceits; which, according to our system and principles, may perhaps produce a low, popular, interested kind of virtue, but must absolutely destroy and extinguish it in the sublime and heroic sense.

VIII. *Euph.* What you now say is very intelligible: I wish I understood your main principle as well. *Alc.* And are you then in earnest at a loss? Is it possible you should have no notion of beauty, or that having it you should not know it to be amiable, amiable I say in itself, and for itself? *Euph.* Pray tell me, Alciphron, are all mankind agreed in the notion of a beauteous face? *Alc.* Beauty in human kind seems to be of a more mixed and various nature; forasmuch as the passions, sentiments, and qualities of the soul being seen through and blending with the features, work differently on different minds, as the sympathy is more or less. But with regard to other things is there no steady principle of beauty? Is there upon earth a human mind without the idea of order, harmony, and proportion? *Euph.* O Alciphron, it is my weakness that I am apt to be lost and bewildered in abstractions and generalities, but a particular thing is better suited to my faculties. I find it easy to consider and keep

in view the objects of sense, let us therefore try to discover what their beauty is, or wherein it consists: and so, by the help of these sensible things, as a scale or ladder, ascend to moral and intellectual beauty. Be pleased then to inform me, what it is we call beauty in the objects of sense? *Alc.* Every one knows beauty is that which pleases. *Euph.* There is then beauty in the smell of a rose, or the taste of an apple. *Alc.* By no means. Beauty is, to speak properly, perceived only by the eye. *Euph.* It cannot therefore be defined in general that which pleaseth. *Alc.* I grant it cannot. *Euph.* How then shall we limit or define it? Alciphron, after a short pause, said, that beauty consisted in a certain symmetry or proportion pleasing to the eye. *Euph.* Is this proportion one and the same in all things, or is it different in different kinds of things? *Alc.* Different doubtless: the proportions of an ox would not be beautiful in a horse. And we may observe also in things inanimate, that the beauty of a table, a chair, a door, consists in different proportions. *Euph.* Doth not this proportion imply the relation of one thing to another? *Alc.* It doth. *Euph.* And are not these relations founded in size and shape? *Alc.* They are. *Euph.* And to make the proportions just, must not those mutual relations of size and shape in the parts be such, as shall make the whole complete and perfect in its kind? *Alc.* I grant they must. *Euph.* Is not a thing said to be perfect in its kind, when it answers the end for which it was made? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* The parts, therefore, in true proportions must be so related and adjusted to one another, as that they may best conspire to the use and operation of the whole. *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* But the comparing parts one with another, the considering them as belonging to one whole, and the referring this whole to its use or end, should seem the work of reason: should it not? *Alc.* It should. *Euph.* Proportions therefore are not, strictly speaking, perceived by the sense of sight, but only by reason through the means of sight. *Alc.* This I grant. *Euph.* Consequently beauty, in your sense of it, is an object, not of the eye, but of the mind. *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* The eye, therefore, alone cannot see that a chair is handsome, or a door well proportioned. *Alc.* It seems to follow; but I am not clear as to this point. *Euph.* Let us see if there be any difficulty in it. Could the chair you sit on, think you, be reckoned well proportioned or handsome, if it had not such a height, breadth, wideness, and was not so far reclined as to afford a convenient seat? *Alc.* It could not. *Euph.* The beauty, therefore, or symmetry of a chair cannot be apprehended but by knowing its use, and comparing its figure with that use, which cannot be done by the eye alone, but is the effect of judgment. It is therefore one thing to see an object, and another to discern its beauty. *Alc.* I admit this to be true.

IX. *Euph.* The architects judge a door to be of a beautiful proportion, when its height is double of the breadth. But if you should invert a well-proportioned door, making its breadth become the height, and its height the breadth, the figure would still be the same, but without that beauty in one situation, which it had in another. What can be the cause of this, but that in the forementioned supposition, the door would not yield a convenient entrance to creatures of a human figure? But, if in any other part of the universe, there should be supposed rational animals of an inverted stature, they must be supposed to invert the rule for proportion of doors; and to them that would appear beautiful, which to us was disagreeable. *Alc.* Against this I have no objection. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, is there not something truly decent and beautiful in dress? *Alc.* Doubtless there is. *Euph.* Are any likelier to give us an idea of this beauty in dress, than painters and sculptors, whose proper business and study it is, to aim at graceful representations? *Alc.* I believe not. *Euph.* Let us then examine the draperies of the great masters in these arts: how, for instance, they use to clothe a matron or a man of rank. Cast an eye on those figures (said he, pointing to some prints after Raphael and Guido, that hung upon the wall); what appearance, do you think, an English courtier or magistrate, with his Gothic, succinct, plaited garment, and his full-bottomed wig, or one of our ladies in her unnatural dress, pinched, and stiffened, and enlarged with hoops, and whale-bone, and buckram, must make, among those figures so decently clad in draperies that fall into such a variety of natural, easy, and ample folds, that appear with so much dignity and simplicity, that cover the body without encumbering it, and adorn without altering the shape? *Alc.* Truly I think they must make a very ridiculous appearance. *Euph.* And what do you think this proceeds from? Whence is it that the Eastern nations, the Greeks, and the Romans, naturally ran into the most becoming dresses, while our Gothic gentry, after so many centuries racking their inventions, mending, and altering, and improving, and whirling about in a perpetual rotation of fashions, have never yet had the luck to stumble on any that was not absurd and ridiculous? Is it not from hence, that instead of consulting use, reason, and convenience, they abandon themselves to irregular fancy, the unnatural parent of monsters? Whereas the ancients, considering the use and end of dress, made it subservient to the freedom, ease, and convenience of the body, and having no notion of mending or changing the natural shape, they aimed only at showing it with decency and advantage. And if this be so, are we not to conclude that the beauty of dress depends on its subserviency to certain ends and uses? *Alc.* This appears to be true. *Euph.* This subordinate relative nature of beauty perhaps will be yet

plainer, if we examine the respective beauties of a horse and a pillar. Virgil's description of the former is,

> ——— Illi ardua cervix,
> Argutumque caput, brevis alvus, obesaque terga,
> Luxuriatque toris animosum pectus.

Now I would fain know, whether the perfections and uses of a horse may not be reduced to these three points, courage, strength, and speed; and whether each of the beauties enumerated doth not occasion, or betoken, one of these perfections? After the same manner, if we inquire into the parts and proportions of a beautiful pillar, we shall perhaps find them answer to the same idea. Those who have considered the theory of architecture tell us,* the proportions of the three Grecian orders were taken from the human body, as the most beautiful and perfect production of nature. Hence were derived those graceful ideas of columns, which had a character of strength without clumsiness, or of delicacy without weakness. Those beautiful proportions were, I say, taken originally from nature, which, in her creatures, as hath been already observed, referreth them to some end, use, or design. The *gonfiezza* also, or swelling, and the diminution of a pillar, is it not in such proportion as to make it appear strong and light at the same time? In the same manner, must not the whole entablature, with its projections, be so proportioned, as to seem great but not heavy, light but not little, inasmuch as a deviation into either extreme would thwart that reason and use of things, wherein their beauty is founded, and to which it is subordinate? The entablature and all its parts and ornaments, architrave, frieze, cornice, triglyphs, metopes, modiglions, and the rest, have each a use or appearance of use, in giving firmness and union to the building, in protecting it from the weather, and casting off the rain, in representing the ends of beams with their intervals, the production of rafters, and so forth. And if we consider the graceful angles in frontispieces, the spaces between the columns, or the ornaments of their capitals, shall we not find, that their beauty riseth from the appearance of use, or the imitation of natural things, whose beauty is originally founded on the same principle? which is, indeed, the grand distinction between Grecian and Gothic architecture, the latter being fantastical, and for the most part founded neither in nature nor in reason, in necessity nor use, the appearance of which accounts for all the beauty, grace, and ornament of the other. *Cri.* What Euphranor has said confirms the opinion I always entertained, that the rules of architecture were founded, as all other arts which flourished among the Greeks, in truth, and nature, and good sense. But the ancients, who, from a thorough consideration of the

* See the learned Patriarch of Aquileia's Commentary on Vitruvius, lib. iv. c. 1.

grounds and principles of art, formed their idea of beauty, did not always confine themselves strictly to the same rules and proportions: but, whenever the particular distance, position, elevation, or dimension of the fabric or its parts seemed to require it, made no scruple to depart from them, without deserting the original principles of beauty, which governed whatever deviations they made. This latitude or license might not, perhaps, be safely trusted with most modern architects, who in their bold sallies seem to act without aim or design, and to be governed by no idea, no reason or principle of art, but pure caprice, joined with a thorough contempt of that noble simplicity of the ancients, without which there can be no unity, gracefulness, or grandeur in their works; which of consequence must serve only to disfigure and dishonour the nation, being so many monuments to future ages of the opulence and ill taste of the present; which, it is to be feared, would succeed as wretchedly, and make as mad work in other affairs, were men to follow, instead of rules, precepts, and models, their own taste and first thoughts of beauty. *Alc.* I should now, methinks, be glad to see a little more distinctly the use and tendency of this digression upon architecture. *Euph.* Was not beauty the very thing we inquired after? *Alc.* It was. *Euph.* What think you, Alciphron, can the appearance of a thing please at this time, and in this place, which pleased two thousand years ago, and two thousand miles off, without some real principle of beauty? *Alc.* It cannot. *Euph.* And is not this the case with respect to a just piece of architecture? *Alc.* Nobody denies it. *Euph.* Architecture, the noble offspring of judgment and fancy, was gradually formed in the most polite and knowing countries of Asia, Egypt, Greece, and Italy. It was cherished and esteemed by the most flourishing states, and most renowned princes, who, with vast expense, improved and brought it to perfection. It seems, above all other arts, peculiarly conversant about order, proportion, and symmetry. May it not therefore be supposed, on all accounts, most likely to help us to some rational notion of the *je ne sais quoi*, in beauty? And, in effect, have we not learned from this digression, that as there is no beauty without proportion, so proportions are to be esteemed just and true, only as they are relative to some certain use or end, their aptitude and subordination to which end is, at bottom, that which makes them please and charm? *Alc.* I admit all this to be true.

X. *Euph.* According to this doctrine, I would fain know what beauty can be found in a moral system, formed, connected, and governed by chance, fate, or any other blind, unthinking principle; forasmuch as without thought there can be no end or design, and without an end there can be no use, and without use there is no aptitude or fitness of proportion, from whence beauty

springs? *Alc.* May we not suppose a certain vital principle of beauty, order, and harmony, diffused throughout the world, without supposing a providence inspecting, punishing, and rewarding the moral actions of men; without supposing the immortality of the soul, or a life to come; in a word, without admitting any part of what is commonly called faith, worship, and religion? *Cri.* Either you suppose this principle intelligent or not intelligent: if the latter, it is all one with chance or fate, which was just now argued against: if the former, let me entreat Alciphron to explain to me wherein consists the beauty of a moral system, with a supreme intelligence at the head of it, which neither protects the innocent, punishes the wicked, nor rewards the virtuous? To suppose indeed a society of rational agents acting under the eye of Providence, concurring in one design to promote the common benefit of the whole, and conforming their actions to the established laws and order of the divine parental wisdom: wherein each particular agent shall not consider himself apart, but as the member of a great city, whose author and founder is God: in which the civil laws are no other than the rules of virtue and the duties of religion: and where every one's true interest is combined with his duty: to suppose this would be delightful: on this supposition a man need be no Stoic or knight-errant, to account for his virtue. In such a system vice is madness, cunning is folly, wisdom and virtue are the same thing, where, notwithstanding all the crooked paths and bye-roads, the wayward appetites and inclinations of men, sovereign reason is sure to reform whatever seems amiss, to reduce that which is devious, make straight that which is crooked, and in the last act wind up the whole plot according to the exactest rules of wisdom and justice. In such a system or society, governed by the wisest precepts, enforced by the highest rewards and discouragements, it is delightful to consider how the regulation of laws, the distribution of good and evil, the aim of moral agents, do all conspire in due subordination to promote the noblest end, to wit, the complete happiness or well-being of the whole. In contemplating the beauty of such a moral system we may cry out with the Psalmist, "Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of God."

XI. In a system of spirits, subordinate to the will, and under the direction, of the Father of spirits, governing them by laws, and conducting them by methods, suitable to wise and good ends, there will be great beauty. But in an incoherent, fortuitous system governed by chance, or in a blind system governed by fate, or in any system where Providence doth not preside, how can beauty be, which cannot be without order, which cannot be without design? When a man is conscious that his will is inwardly conformed to the divine will, producing order and har-

mony in the universe, and conducting the whole by the justest methods to the best end: this gives a beautiful idea. But on the other hand, a consciousness of virtue overlooked, neglected, distressed by men, and not regarded or rewarded by God, ill-used in this world, without hope or prospect of being better used in another, I would fain know where is the pleasure of this reflection, where is the beauty of this scene? or how could any man, in his senses, think the spreading such notions the way to spread or propagate virtue in the world? Is it not, I beseech you, an ugly system in which you can suppose no law and prove no duty, wherein men thrive by wickedness, and suffer by virtue? Would it not be a disagreeable sight to see an honest man peeled by sharpers, to see virtuous men injured and despised while vice triumphed? An enthusiast may entertain himself with visions and fine talk about such a system; but when it comes to be considered by men of cool heads, and close reason, I believe they will find no beauty nor perfection in it; nor will it appear, that such a moral system can possibly come from the same hand, or be of a piece with the natural, throughout which there shines so much order, harmony, and proportion. *Alc.* Your discourse serves to confirm me in my opinion. You may remember, I declared that, touching this beauty of morality in the high sense, a man's first thoughts are best; and that, if we pretend to examine, and inspect, and reason, we are in danger to lose sight of it. That in fact there is such a thing cannot be doubted, when we consider that in these days some of our philosophers have a high sense of virtue, without the least notion of religion, a clear proof of the usefulness and efficacy of our principles!

XII. *Cri.* Not to dispute the virtue of minute philosophers, we may venture to call its cause in question, and make a doubt whether it be an inexplicable enthusiastic notion of moral beauty, or rather, as to me it seems, what was already assigned by Euphranor, complexion, custom, and religious education? But, allowing what beauty you please to virtue in an irreligious system, it cannot be less in a religious, unless you will suppose that her charms diminish as her dowry increaseth. The truth is, a believer hath all the motives from the beauty of virtue in any sense whatsoever that an unbeliever can possibly have, besides other motives which an unbeliever hath not. Hence it is plain, those of your sect, who have moral virtue, owe it not to their peculiar tenets, which serve only to lessen the motives to virtue. Those, therefore, who are good are less good, and those who are bad are more bad, than they would have been were they believers. *Euph.* To me it seems, those heroic infidel inamoratos of abstracted beauty are much to be pitied, and much to be admired. Lysicles, hearing this, said with some impatience, Gentlemen, you shall have my whole thoughts upon this point plain

and frank. All that is said about a moral sense, or moral beauty, in any signification, either of Alciphron or Euphranor, or any other, I take to be at bottom mere bubble and pretence. The καλὸν and the πρέπον, the beautiful and decent, are things outward, relative, and superficial, which have no effect in the dark, but are specious topics to discourse and expatiate upon, as some formal pretenders of our sect, though in other points very orthodox, are used to do. But should one of them get into power, you would find him no such fool as Euphranor imagines. He would soon show he had found out, that the love of one's country is a prejudice: that mankind are rogues and hypocrites, and that it were folly to sacrifice one's self for the sake of such: that all regards centre in this life, and that, as this life is to every man his own life, it clearly follows that charity begins at home. Benevolence to mankind is perhaps pretended, but benevolence to himself is practised by the wise. The livelier sort of our philosophers do not scruple to own these maxims; and as for the graver, if they are true to their principles, one may guess what they must think at the bottom. *Cri.* Whatever may be the effect of pure theory upon certain select spirits of a peculiar make, or in some other parts of the world, I do verily think that in this country of ours, reason, religion, law, are all together little enough to subdue the outward to the inner man; and that it must argue a wrong head and weak judgment to suppose, that without them men will be enamoured of the golden mean. To which my countrymen, perhaps, are less inclined than others, there being in the make of an English mind a certain gloom and eagerness, which carries to the sad extreme; religion to fanaticism; free-thinking to atheism; liberty to rebellion: nor should we venture to be governed by taste, even in matters of less consequence. The beautiful in dress, furniture, and building, is, as Euphranor hath observed, something real and well-grounded: and yet our English do not find it out of themselves. What wretched work do they and other northern people make, when they follow their own taste of beauty in any of these particulars, instead of acquiring the true, which is to be got from ancient models and the principles of art, as in the case of virtue from great models and meditation, so far as natural means can go. But in no case is it to be hoped, that τὸ καλὸν will be the leading idea of the many, who have quick senses, strong passions, and gross intellects.

XIII. *Alc.* The fewer they are the more ought we to esteem and admire such philosophers, whose souls are touched and transported with this sublime idea. *Cri.* But then one might expect from such philosophers so much good sense and philanthropy as to keep their tenets to themselves, and consider their weak brethren, who are more strongly affected by certain senses and

notions of another kind, than that of the beauty of pure, disinterested virtue. Cratylus, a man prejudiced against the Christian religion, of a crazy constitution, of a rank above most men's ambition, and a fortune equal to his rank, had little capacity for sensual vices, or temptation to dishonest ones. Cratylus having talked himself, or imagined that he had talked himself, into a Stoical enthusiasm about the beauty of virtue, did, under the pretence of making men heroically virtuous, endeavour to destroy the means of making them reasonably and humanly so: a clear instance, that neither birth, nor books, nor conversation, can introduce a knowledge of the world into a conceited mind, which will ever be its own object, and contemplate mankind in its own mirror! *Alc.* Cratylus was a lover of liberty, and of his country, and had a mind to make men incorrupt and virtuous, upon the purest and most disinterested principles. *Cri.* His conduct seems just as wise as if a monarch should give out that there was neither jail nor executioner in his kingdom to enforce the laws, but that it would be beautiful to observe them, and that in so doing men would taste the pure delight which results from order and decorum. *Alc.* After all, is it not true that certain ancient philosophers of great note held the same opinion with Cratylus, declaring that he did not come up to the character, or deserve the title of a good man, who practised virtue for the sake of any thing but its own beauty? *Cri.* I believe, indeed, that some of the ancients said such things as gave occasion for this opinion. Aristotle* distinguisheth between two characters of a good man, the one he calleth ἀγαθὸς, or simply good, the other καλὸς κἀγαθὸς, from whence the compound term καλοκἀγαθία, which cannot, perhaps, be rendered by any one word in our language. But his sense is plainly this: ἀγαθὸς he defineth to be that man to whom the good things of nature are good; for, according to him, those things which are vulgarly esteemed the greatest goods, as riches, honours, power, and bodily perfections, are indeed good by nature, but they happen, nevertheless, to be hurtful and bad to some persons, upon the account of evil habits: inasmuch as neither a fool, nor an unjust man, nor an intemperate, can be at all the better for the use of them, any more than a sick man for using the nourishment proper for those who are in health. But καλὸς κἀγαθὸς is that man in whom are to be found all things worthy and decent and laudable, purely as such, and for their own sake, and who practiseth virtue from no other motive but the sole love of her own innate beauty. That philosopher observes likewise, that there is a certain political habit, such as the Spartans and others had, who thought virtue was to be valued and practised on account of the natural advantages that attend it. For which reason he adds, they are indeed good

* Ethic. ad Eudemum, lib. vii. cap. ult.

men, but they have not the καλοκἀγαθία, or supreme, consummate virtue. From hence it is plain, that, according to Aristotle, a man may be a good man without believing virtue its own reward, or being only moved to virtue by the sense of moral beauty. It is also plain, that he distinguisheth the political virtues of nations, which the public is every where concerned to maintain, from this sublime and speculative kind. It might also be observed, that his exalted idea did consist with supposing a providence which inspects and rewards the virtues of the best men. For, saith he, in another place,* if the gods have any care of human affairs, as it appears they have, it should seem reasonable to suppose, they are most delighted with the most excellent nature, and most approaching their own, which is the mind, and that they will reward those who chiefly love and cultivate what is most dear to them. The same philosopher observes,† that the bulk of mankind are not naturally disposed to be awed by shame, but by fear; nor to abstain from vicious practices, on account of their deformity, but only of the punishment which attends them. And again,‡ he tells us that youth, being of itself averse from abstinence and sobriety, should be under the restraint of laws, regulating their education and employment, and that the same discipline should be continued even after they became men. For which, saith he, we want laws, and, in one word, for the whole ordering of life, inasmuch as the generality of mankind obey rather force than reason, and are influenced rather by penalties than the beauty of virtue; ζημίαις ἢ τῷ καλῷ. From all which it is very plain, what Aristotle would have thought of those, who should go about to lessen or destroy the hopes and fears of mankind, in order to make them virtuous on this sole principle of the beauty of virtue.

XIV. *Alc.* But, whatever the Stagirite and his Peripatetics might think, is it not certain that the Stoics maintained this doctrine in its highest sense, asserting the beauty of virtue to be all-sufficient, that virtue was her own reward, that this alone could make a man happy, in spite of all those things which are vulgarly esteemed the greatest woes and miseries of human life? And all this they held at the same time that they believed the soul of man to be of a corporeal nature, and in death dissipated like a flame or vapour. *Cri.* It must be owned, the Stoics sometimes talk as if they believed the mortality of the soul. Seneca, in a letter of his to Lucilius, speaks much like a minute philosopher in this particular. But in several other places he declares himself of a clear contrary opinion, affirming that the souls of men after death mount aloft into the heavens, look down upon earth, entertain themselves with the theory of celestial bodies,

* Ad Nicom. lib. x. c. 8. † Ibid. c. 9. ‡ Ibid.

the course of nature, and the conversation of wise and excellent men, who, having lived in distant ages and countries upon earth, make one society in the other world. It must also be acknowledged, that Marcus Antoninus sometimes speaks of the soul as perishing, or dissolving into its elementary parts: but it is to be noted, that he distinguisheth three principles in the composition of human nature, the σῶμα, ψυχὴ, νοῦς,* body, soul, mind, or as he otherwise expresseth himself, σαρκία, πνευμάτιον, and ἡγεμονικὸν, flesh, spirit, and governing principle. What he calls the ψυχὴ, or soul, containing the brutal part of our nature, is, indeed, represented as a compound dissoluble, and actually dissolved by death: but the νοῦς or τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν, the mind or ruling principle, he held to be of a pure celestial nature, Θεοῦ ἀπόσπασμα, a particle of God, which he sends back entire to the stars and the divinity. Besides, among all his magnificent lessons and splendid sentiments, upon the force and beauty of virtue, he is positive as to the being of God, and that not merely as a plastic nature, or soul of the world, but in the strict sense of a providence, inspecting and taking care of human affairs.† The Stoics, therefore, though their style was high, and often above truth and nature, yet it cannot be said that they so resolved every motive to a virtuous life into the sole beauty of virtue, as to endeavour to destroy the belief of the immortality of the soul and a distributive providence. After all, allowing the disinterested Stoics (therein not unlike our modern quietists) to have made virtue its own sole reward, in the most rigid and absolute sense, yet what is this to those who are no Stoics? If we adopt the whole principles of that sect, admitting their notions of good and evil, their celebrated apathy, and, in one word, setting up for complete Stoics, we may possibly maintain this doctrine with a better grace; at least it will be of a piece and consistent with the whole. But he who shall borrow this splendid patch from the Stoics, and hope to make a figure by inserting it into a piece of modern composition, seasoned with the wit and notions of these times, will indeed make a figure, but perhaps it may not be in the eyes of a wise man the figure he intended.

XV. Though it must be owned, the present age is very indulgent to every thing that aims at profane raillery; which is alone sufficient to recommend any fantastical composition to the public. You may behold the tinsel of a modern author pass upon this knowing and learned age for good writing; affected strains for wit; pedantry for politeness; obscurity for depths; ramblings for flights; the most awkward imitation for original humour; and all this upon the sole merit of a little artful profaneness. *Alc.* Every one is not alike pleased with writings of

* Lib. iii. c. 16. † Marc. Antonin. lib. ii. § 11.

humour, nor alike capable of them. It is the fine irony of a man of quality, "that certain reverend authors, who can condescend to lay-wit, are nicely qualified to hit the air of breeding and gentility, and that they will, in time, no doubt, refine their manner to the edification of the polite world; who have been so long seduced by the way of raillery and wit." The truth is, the various taste of readers requireth various kinds of writers. Our sect hath provided for this with great judgment. To proselyte the graver sort we have certain profound men at reason and argument. For the coffee-houses and populace, we have declaimers of a copious vein. Of such a writer it is no reproach to say, *fluit lutulentus;* he is the fitter for his readers. Then, for men of rank and politeness we have the finest and wittiest *railleurs* in the world, whose ridicule is the surest test of truth. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, are those ingenious *railleurs* men of knowledge? *Alc.* Very knowing. *Euph.* Do they know for instance the Copernican system, or the circulation of the blood? *Alc.* One would think you judged of our sect by your country neighbours: there is nobody in town but knows all those points. *Euph.* You believe then antipodes, mountains in the moon, and the motion of the earth. *Alc.* We do. *Euph.* Suppose, five or six centuries ago, a man had maintained these notions among the *beaux esprits* of an English court; how do you think they would have been received? *Alc.* With great ridicule. *Euph.* And now it would be ridiculous to ridicule them. *Alc.* It would. *Euph.* But truth was the same then and now. *Alc.* It was. *Euph.* It should seem, therefore, that ridicule is no such sovereign touchstone and test of truth as you gentlemen imagine. *Alc.* One thing we know: our raillery and sarcasms gall the black tribe, and that is our comfort. *Cri.* There is another thing it may be worth your while to know: that men in a laughing fit may applaud a ridicule, which shall appear contemptible when they come to themselves; witness the ridicule of Socrates by the comic poet, the humour and reception it met with no more proving that, than the same will yours, to be just, when calmly considered by men of sense. *Alc.* After all, thus much is certain, our ingenious men make converts by deriding the principles of religion. And, take my word, it is the most successful and pleasing method of conviction. These authors laugh men out of their religion, as Horace did out of their vices; *admissi circum præcordia ludunt.* But a bigot cannot relish or find out their wit.

XVI. *Cri.* Wit without wisdom, if there be such a thing, is hardly worth finding. And as for the wisdom of these men, it is of a kind so peculiar, one may well suspect it. Cicero was a man of sense, and no bigot, nevertheless he makes Scipio own himself much more vigilant and vigorous in the race of virtue, from supposing heaven the prize.* And he introduceth Cato,

* Somn. Scipionis.

declaring, he would never have undergone those virtuous toils for the service of the public, if he had thought his being was to end with this life.* *Alc.* I acknowledge Cato, Scipio, and Cicero were very well for their times, but you must pardon me, if I do not think they arrived at the high, consummate virtue of our modern free-thinkers. *Euph.* It should seem then that virtue flourisheth more than ever among us. *Alc.* It should. *Euph.* And this abundant virtue is owing to the method taken by your profound writers to recommend it. *Alc.* This I grant. *Euph.* But you have acknowledged, that the enthusiastic lovers of virtue are not the many of your sect, but only a few select spirits. To which Alciphron making no answer, Crito addressed himself to Euphranor: To make, said he, a true estimate of the worth and growth of modern virtue, you are not to count the virtuous men, but rather to consider the quality of their virtue. Now you must know, the virtue of these refined theorists is something so pure and genuine, that a very little goes far, and is in truth invaluable. To which that reasonable interested virtue, of the old English or Spartan kind, can bear no proportion. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, are there not diseases of the soul, as well as of the body? *Alc.* Without doubt. *Euph.* And are not those diseases vicious habits? *Alc.* They are. *Euph.* And, as bodily distempers are cured by physic, those of the mind are cured by philosophy; are they not? *Alc.* I acknowledge it. *Euph.* It seems, therefore, that philosophy is a medicine for the soul of man. *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* How shall we be able to judge of medicines, or know which to prefer? Is it not from the effects wrought by them? *Alc.* Doubtless. *Euph.* Where an epidemical distemper rages, suppose a new physician should condemn the known established practice, and recommend another method of cure, would you not, in proportion as the bills of mortality increased, be tempted to suspect this new method, notwithstanding all the plausible discourse of its abettors? *Alc.* This serves only to amuse and lead us from the question. *Cri.* It puts me in mind of my friend Lamprocles, who needed but one argument against infidels. I observed, said he, that, as infidelity grew, there grew corruption of every kind, and new vices. This simple observation on matter of fact was sufficient to make him, notwithstanding the remonstrance of several ingenious men, imbue and season the minds of his children betimes with the principles of religion. The new theories, which our acute moderns have endeavoured to substitute in place of religion, have had their full course in the present age, and produced their effect on the minds and manners of men. That men are men is a sure maxim: but it is as sure that Englishmen are not the same men they were; whether better or worse, more or less virtuous, I need not say. Every one may

* De Senectute.

see and judge. Though, indeed, after Aristides had been banished, and Socrates put to death at Athens, a man, without being a conjurer, might guess what the beauty of virtue could do in England. But there is now neither room nor occasion for guessing. We have our own experience to open our eyes; which yet if we continue to keep shut, till the remains of religious education are quite worn off from the minds of men, it is to be feared we shall then open them wide, not to avoid, but to behold and lament our ruin. *Alc.* Be the consequences what they will, I can never bring myself to be of a mind with those who measure truth by convenience. Truth is the only divinity that I adore. Wherever truth leads I shall follow. *Euph.* You have then a passion for truth? *Alc.* Undoubtedly. *Euph.* For all truths? *Alc.* For all. *Euph.* To know or to publish them? *Alc.* Both. *Euph.* What! would you undeceive a child that was taking physic? Would you officiously set an enemy right, that was making a wrong attack? Would you help an enraged man to his sword? *Alc.* In such cases, common sense directs one how to behave. *Euph.* Common sense, it seems then, must be consulted whether a truth be salutary or hurtful, fit to be declared or concealed. *Alc.* How! you would have me conceal and stifle the truth, and keep it to myself? Is this what you aim at? *Euph.* I only make a plain inference from what you grant. As for myself, I do not believe your opinions true. And although you do, you should not therefore, if you would appear consistent with yourself, think it necessary or wise to publish hurtful truths. What service can it do mankind to lessen the motives to virtue, or what damage to increase them? *Alc.* None in the world. But I must needs say, I cannot reconcile the received notions of a God and Providence to my understanding, and my nature abhors the baseness of conniving at a falsehood. *Euph.* Shall we therefore appeal to truth, and examine the reasons by which you are withheld from believing these points? *Alc.* With all my heart, but enough for the present. We will make this the subject of our next conference.

THE FOURTH DIALOGUE.

I. Prejudices concerning a Deity. II. Rules laid down by Alciphron to be observed in proving a God. III. What sort of proof he expects. IV. Whence we collect the being of other thinking individuals. V. The same method *à fortiori* proves the being of God. VI. Alciphron's second thoughts on this point. VII. God speaks to men. VIII. How distance is perceived by sight. IX. The proper objects of sight at no distance. X. Lights, shades, and colours, variously combined, form a language. XI. The signification of this language learned by experience. XII. God explaineth himself to the eyes of men by the arbitrary use of sensible signs. XIII. The prejudice and twofold aspect of a minute philosopher. XIV. God present to mankind, informs, admonishes, and directs them in a sensible manner. XV. Admirable nature and use of this visual language. XVI. Minute philosophers content to admit a God in certain senses. XVII. Opinion of some who hold that knowledge and wisdom are not properly in God. XVIII. Dangerous tendency of this notion. XIX. Its original. XX. The sense of schoolmen upon it. XXI. Scholastic use of the terms *analogy* and *analogical* explained: analogical perfections of God misunderstood. XXII. God intelligent, wise, and good in the proper sense of the words. XXIII. Objection from moral evil considered. XXIV. Men argue from their own defects against a Deity. XXV. Religious worship reasonable and expedient.

I. EARLY the next morning, as I looked out of my window, I saw Alciphron walking in the garden with all the signs of a man in deep thought. Upon which I went down to him. Alciphron, said I, this early and profound meditation puts me in no small fright. How so? Because I should be sorry to be convinced there was no God. The thought of anarchy in nature is to me more shocking than in civil life; inasmuch as natural concerns are more important than civil, and the basis of all others. I grant, replied Alciphron, that some inconvenience may possibly follow from disproving a God; but as to what you say of fright and shocking, all that is nothing but mere prejudice. Men frame an idea or chimera in their own minds, and then fall down and worship it. Notions govern mankind; but of all notions, that of God's governing the world hath taken the deepest root and spread the furthest: it is therefore in philosophy an heroical achievement to dispossess this imaginary monarch of his government, and banish all those fears and spectres which the light of reason alone can dispel.

> Non radii solis, non lucida tela diei
> Discutiunt, sed naturæ species ratioque.*

My part, said I, shall be to stand by, as I have hitherto done, and take notes of all that passeth during this memorable event, while a minute philosopher not six foot high attempts to dethrone the monarch of the universe. Alas! replied Alciphron, arguments are not to be measured by feet and inches. One man may see more than a million; and a short argument, managed by a free-

* Lucretius.

thinker, may be sufficient to overthrow the most gigantic chimera. As we were engaged in this discourse, Crito and Euphranor joined us. I find you have been beforehand with us to-day, said Crito to Alciphron, and taken the advantage of solitude and early hours, while Euphranor and I were asleep in our beds. We may therefore expect to see atheism placed in the best light, and supported by the strongest arguments.

II. *Alc.* The being of a God is a subject upon which there has been a world of common-place, which it is needless to repeat. Give me leave therefore to lay down certain rules and limitations, in order to shorten our present conference. For as the end of debating is to persuade, all those things which are foreign to this end should be left out of our debate. First then, let me tell you, I am not to be persuaded by metaphysical arguments; such, for instance, as are drawn from the idea of an all-perfect being, or the absurdity of an infinite progression of causes. This sort of arguments I have always found dry and jejune; and, as they are not suited to my way of thinking, they may perhaps puzzle but never will convince me. Secondly, I am not to be persuaded by the authority either of past or present ages, of mankind in general, or of particular wise men, all which passeth for little or nothing with a man of sound argument and free thought. Thirdly, all proofs drawn from utility or convenience are foreign to the purpose. They may prove indeed the usefulness of the notion, but not the existence of the thing. Whatever legislators or statesmen may think, truth and convenience are very different things to the rigorous eyes of a philosopher. And now, that I may not seem partial, I will limit myself also not to object, in the first place, from any thing that may seem irregular or unaccountable in the works of nature, against a cause of infinite power and wisdom; because I already know the answer you would make, to wit, that no one can judge of the symmetry and use of the parts of an infinite machine, which are all relative to each other, and to the whole, without being able to comprehend the entire machine or the whole universe. And in the second place, I shall engage myself not to object against the justice and providence of a supreme being, from the evil that befalls good men, and the prosperity which is often the portion of wicked men in this life; because I know that, instead of admitting this to be an objection against a Deity, you would make it an argument for a future state, in which there shall be such a retribution of rewards and punishments, as may vindicate the divine attributes, and set all things right in the end. Now these answers, though they should be admitted for good ones, are in truth no proofs of the being of God, but only solutions of certain difficulties which might be objected, supposing it already proved by proper arguments. Thus much I thought fit to premise, in order to save

time and trouble both to you and myself. *Cri.* I think that, as the proper end of our conference ought to be supposed the discovery and defence of truth, so truth may be justified, not only by persuading its adversaries, but, where that cannot be done, by showing them to be unreasonable. Arguments therefore, which carry light, have their effect, even against an opponent who shuts his eyes, because they show him to be obstinate and prejudiced. Besides, this distinction between arguments that puzzle and that convince, is least of all observed by minute philosophers, and need not therefore be observed by others in their favour. But perhaps Euphranor may be willing to encounter you on your own terms, in which case I have nothing further to say.

III. *Euph.* Alciphron acts like a skilful general, who is bent upon gaining the advantage of the ground, and alluring the enemy out of their trenches. We, who believe a God, are intrenched within tradition, custom, authority, and law. And nevertheless, instead of attempting to force us, he proposes that we should voluntarily abandon these intrenchments, and make the attack, when we may act on the defensive with much security and ease, leaving him the trouble to dispossess us of what we need not resign. Those reasons (continued he, addressing himself to Alciphron) which you have mustered up in this morning's meditation, if they do not weaken, must establish our belief of a God; for the utmost is to be expected from so great a master in his profession, when he sets his strength to a point. *Alc.* I hold the confused notion of a Deity, or some invisible power, to be of all prejudices the most unconquerable. When half a dozen ingenious men are got together over a glass of wine, by a cheerful fire, in a room well lighted, we banish with ease all the spectres of fancy or education, and are very clear in our decisions. But, as I was taking a solitary walk before it was broad day-light in yonder grove, methought the point was not quite so clear; nor could I readily recollect the force of those arguments, which used to appear so conclusive at other times. I had I know not what awe upon my mind, and seemed haunted by a sort of panic, which I cannot otherwise account for, than by supposing it the effect of prejudice: for you must know, that I, like the rest of the world, was once upon a time catechised and tutored into the belief of a God or Spirit. There is no surer mark of prejudice, than the believing a thing without reason. What necessity then can there be that I should set myself the difficult task of proving a negative, when it is sufficient to observe that there is no proof of the affirmative, and that the admitting it without proof is unreasonable? Prove therefore your opinion; or, if you cannot, you may indeed remain in possession of it, but you will only be possessed of a prejudice. *Euph.* O Alciphron, to content you we must prove, it seems, and we must prove upon your own

terms. But, in the first place, let us see what sort of proof you expect. *Alc.* Perhaps I may not expect it, but I will tell you what sort of proof I would have: and that is in short, such proof as every man of sense requires of a matter of fact, or the existence of any other particular thing. For instance, should a man ask why I believe there is a king of Great Britain? I might answer, because I had seen him; or a king of Spain? because I had seen those who saw him. But as for this King of kings, I neither saw him myself, nor any one else that did ever see him. Surely if there be such a thing as God, it is very strange that he should leave himself without a witness; that men should still dispute his being; and that there should be no one evident, sensible, plain proof of it, without recourse to philosophy or metaphysics. A matter of fact is not to be proved by notions, but by facts. This is clear and full to the point. You see what I would be at. Upon these principles I defy superstition. *Euph.* You believe then as far as you can see. *Alc.* That is my rule of faith. *Euph.* How! will you not believe the existence of things which you hear, unless you also see them? *Alc.* I will not say so neither. When I insisted on seeing, I would be understood to mean perceiving in general: outward objects make very different impressions upon the animal spirits, all which are comprised under the common name of sense. And whatever we can perceive by any sense, we may be sure of.

IV. *Euph.* What! do you believe then there are such things as animal spirits? *Alc.* Doubtless. *Euph.* By what sense do you perceive them? *Alc.* I do not perceive them immediately by any of my senses. I am nevertheless persuaded of their existence, because I can collect it from their effects and operations. They are the messengers, which, running to and fro in the nerves, preserve a communication between the soul and outward objects. *Euph.* You admit then the being of a soul. *Alc.* Provided I do not admit an immaterial substance, I see no inconvenience in admitting there may be such a thing as a soul. And this may be no more than a thin, fine texture of subtle parts or spirits residing in the brain. *Euph.* I do not ask about its nature. I only ask whether you admit that there is a principle of thought and action, and whether it be perceivable by sense. *Alc.* I grant that there is such a principle, and that it is not the object of sense itself, but inferred from appearances which are perceived by sense. *Euph.* If I understand you rightly, from animal functions and motions you infer the existence of animal spirits, and from reasonable acts you infer the existence of a reasonable soul. Is it not so? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* It should seem therefore, that the being of things imperceptible to sense may be collected from effects and signs, or sensible tokens. *Alc.* It may. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, is not the

soul that which makes the principal distinction between a real person and a shadow, a living man and a carcass? *Alc.* I grant it is. *Euph.* I cannot, therefore, know that you for instance are a distinct thinking individual, or a living real man, by surer or other signs than those from which it can be inferred that you have a soul. *Alc.* You cannot. *Euph.* Pray tell me, are not all acts immediately and properly perceived by sense reducible to motion? *Alc.* They are. *Euph.* From motions therefore you infer a mover or cause; and from reasonable motions (or such as appear calculated for a reasonable end) a rational cause, soul, or spirit. *Alc.* Even so.

V. *Euph.* The soul of man actuates but a small body, an insignificant particle, in respect of the great masses of nature, the elements, and heavenly bodies, and system of the world. And the wisdom that appears in those motions, which are the effect of human reason, is incomparably less than that which discovers itself in the structure and use of organized natural bodies, animal or vegetable. A man with his hand can make no machine so admirable as the hand itself: nor can any of those motions, by which we trace out human reason, approach the skill and contrivance of those wonderful motions of the heart, and brain, and other vital parts, which do not depend on the will of man. *Alc.* All this is true. *Euph.* Doth it not follow then that from natural motions, independent of man's will, may be inferred both power and wisdom incomparably greater than that of the human soul? *Alc.* It should seem so. *Euph.* Further, is there not in natural productions and effects a visible unity of counsel and design? Are not the rules fixed and immoveable? Do not the same laws of motion obtain throughout? The same in China and here, the same two thousand years ago and at this day? *Alc.* All this I do not deny. *Euph.* Is there not also a connexion or relation between animals and vegetables, beween both and the elements, between the elements and heavenly bodies; so that from their mutual respects, influences, subordinations, and uses, they may be collected to be parts of one whole, conspiring to one and the same end, and fulfilling the same design? *Alc.* Supposing all this to be true. *Euph.* Will it not then follow, that this vastly great or infinite power and wisdom must be supposed in one and the same agent, spirit, or mind; and that we have, at least, as clear, full, and immediate certainty of the being of this infinitely wise and powerful spirit, as of any one human soul whatsoever besides our own? *Alc.* Let me consider; I suspect we proceed too hastily. What! do you pretend you can have the same assurance of the being of a God, that you can have of mine, whom you actually see stand before you and talk to you? *Euph.* The very same, if not greater. *Alc.* How do you make this appear? *Euph.* By the person Alciphron is

meant an individual thinking thing, and not the hair, skin, or visible surface, or any part of the outward form, colour, or shape of Alciphron. *Alc.* This I grant. *Euph.* And in granting this, you grant that, in a strict sense, I do not see Alciphron, i. e. that individual thinking thing, but only such visible signs and tokens, as suggest and infer the being of that invisible thinking principle or soul. Even so, in the selfsame manner, it seems to me, that though I cannot with eyes of flesh behold the invisible God, yet I do in the strictest sense behold and perceive by all my senses such signs and tokens, such effects and operations, as suggest, indicate, and demonstrate an invisible God, as certainly and with the same evidence, at least, as any other signs, perceived by sense, do suggest to me the existence of your soul, spirit, or thinking principle; which I am convinced of only by a few signs or effects, and the motions of one small organized body: whereas I do, at all times and in all places, perceive sensible signs, which evince the being of God. The point, therefore, doubted, or denied by you at the beginning, now seems manifestly to follow from the premises. Throughout this whole inquiry, have we not considered every step with care, and made not the least advance without clear evidence? You and I examined and assented singly to each foregoing proposition: what shall we do then with the conclusion? For my part, if you do not help me out, I find myself under an absolute necessity of admitting it for true. You must therefore be content henceforward to bear the blame, if I live and die in the belief of a God.

VI. *Alc.* It must be confessed, I do not readily find an answer. There seems to be some foundation for what you say. But on the other hand, if the point was so clear as you pretend, I cannot conceive how so many sagacious men of our sect should be so much in the dark, as not to know or believe one syllable of it. *Euph.* O Alciphron! it is not our present business to account for the oversights, or vindicate the honour of those great men the free-thinkers, when their very existence is in danger of being called in question. *Alc.* How so? *Euph.* Be pleased to recollect the concessions you have made, and then show me, if the arguments for a Deity be not conclusive, by what better argument you can prove the existence of that thinking thing, which in strictness constitutes the free-thinker. As soon as Euphranor had uttered these words, Alciphron stopped short, and stood in a posture of meditation, while the rest of us continued our walk, and took two or three turns; after which he joined us again with a smiling countenance, like one who had made some discovery. I have found, said he, what may clear up the point in dispute, and give Euphranor entire satisfaction; I would say an argument which will prove the existence of a free-thinker, the like whereof

cannot be applied to prove the existence of a God. You must know then, that your notion of our perceiving the existence of God, as certainly and immediately as we do that of a human person, I could by no means digest, though I must own it puzzled me, till I had considered the matter. At first methought, a particular structure, shape, or motion was the most certain proof of a thinking, reasonable soul. But a little attention satisfied me, that these things have no necessary connexion with reason, knowledge, and wisdom; and that allowing them to be certain proofs of a living soul, they cannot be so of a thinking and reasonable one. Upon second thoughts, therefore, and a minute examination of this point, I have found that nothing so much convinces me of the existence of another person as his speaking to me. It is my hearing you talk that, in strict and philosophical truth, is to me the best argument for your being. And this is a peculiar argument inapplicable to your purpose: for you will not, I suppose, pretend that God speaks to man in the same clear and sensible manner, as one man doth to another.

VII. *Euph.* How! is then the impression of sound so much more evident than that of other senses? Or, if it be, is the voice of man louder than that of thunder? *Alc.* Alas! you mistake the point. What I mean is not the sound of speech merely as such, but the arbitrary use of sensible signs, which have no similitude or necessary connexion with the things signified, so as by the apposite management of them, to suggest and exhibit to my mind an endless variety of things, differing in nature, time, and place, thereby informing me, entertaining me, and directing me how to act, not only with regard to things near and present, but also with regard to things distant and future. No matter whether these signs are pronounced or written; whether they enter by the eye or ear: they have the same use, and are equally proofs of an intelligent, thinking, designing cause. *Euph.* But what if it should appear that God really speaks to man; would this content you? *Alc.* I am for admitting no inward speech, no holy instincts, or suggestions of light or spirit. All that, you must know, passeth with men of sense for nothing. If you do not make it plain to me, that God speaks to men by outward sensible signs, of such sort and in such manner as I have defined, you do nothing. *Euph.* But if it shall appear plainly, that God speaks to men by the intervention and use of arbitrary, outward, sensible signs, having no resemblance or necessary connexion with the things they stand for and suggest: if it shall appear, that by innumerable combinations of these signs, an endless variety of things is discovered and made known to us; and that we are thereby instructed or informed in their different natures; that we are taught and admonished what to shun, and what to pursue; and are directed how to regulate our motions, and how

to act with respect to things distant from us, as well in time as place; will this content you? *Alc.* It is the very thing I would have you make out; for therein consists the force, and use, and nature of language.

VIII. *Euph.* Look, Alciphron, do you not see the castle upon yonder hill? *Alc.* I do. *Euph.* Is it not at a great distance from you? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, is not distance a line turned end-wise to the eye? *Alc.* Doubtless. *Euph.* And can a line, in that situation, project more than one single point on the bottom of the eye? *Alc.* It cannot. *Euph.* Therefore the appearance of a long and of a short distance is of the same magnitude, or rather of no magnitude at all, being in all cases one single point. *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* Should it not follow from hence, that distance is not immediately perceived by the eye? *Alc.* It should. *Euph.* Must it not then be perceived by the mediation of some other thing? *Alc.* It must. *Euph.* To discover what this is, let us examine what alteration there may be in the appearance of the same object, placed at different distances from the eye. Now I find by experience, that when an object is removed still further and further off, in a direct line from the eye, its visible appearance still grows lesser and fainter, and this change of appearance, being proportional and universal, seems to me to be that by which we apprehend the various degrees of distance. *Alc.* I have nothing to object to this. *Euph.* But littleness or faintness, in their own nature, seem to have no necessary connexion with greater length of distance. *Alc.* I admit this to be true. *Euph.* Will it not follow then, that they could never sugggest it but from experience? *Alc.* It will. *Euph.* That is to say, we perceive distance, not immediately, but by mediation of a sign, which hath no likeness to it, or necessary connexion with it, but only suggests it from repeated experience as words do things. *Alc.* Hold, Euphranor; now I think of it, the writers in optics tell us of an angle made by the two optic axes, where they meet in the visible point or object; which angle the obtuser it is the nearer it shows the object to be, and by how much the acuter by so much the further off; and this by a necessary demonstrable connexion. *Euph.* The mind then finds out the distance of things by geometry. *Alc.* It doth. *Euph.* Should it not follow therefore that nobody could see but those who had learned geometry, and knew something of lines and angles? *Alc.* There is a sort of natural geometry which is got without learning. *Euph.* Pray inform me, Alciphron, in order to frame a proof of any kind, or deduce one point from another, is it not necessary, that I perceive the connexion of the terms in the premises, and the connexion of the premises with the conclusion; and, in general, to know one thing by means of another, must I not first know that other thing?

when I perceive your meaning by your words, must I not first perceive the words themselves? and must I not know the premises before I infer the conclusion? *Alc.* All this is true. *Euph.* Whoever therefore collects a nearer distance from a wider angle, or a further distance from an acuter angle, must first perceive the angles themselves. And he who doth not perceive those angles, can infer nothing from them. Is it so or not? *Alc.* It is as you say. *Euph.* Ask now the first man you meet, whether he perceives or knows any thing of those optic angles? or whether he ever thinks about them, or makes any inferences from them, either by natural or artificial geometry? What answer do you think he would make? *Alc.* To speak the truth, I believe his answer would be, that he knew nothing of those matters. *Euph.* It cannot therefore be, that men judge of distance by angles: nor consequently can there be any force in the argument you drew from thence, to prove that distance is perceived by means of something which hath a necessary connexion with it. *Alc.* I agree with you.

IX. *Euph.* To me it seems, that a man may know whether he perceives a thing or no; and if he perceives it, whether it be immediately or mediately: and if mediately, whether by means of something like or unlike, necessarily or arbitrarily connected with it. *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* And is it not certain, that distance is perceived only by experience, if it be neither perceived immediately by itself, nor by means of any image, nor of any lines and angles, which are like it, or have a necessary connexion with it? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Doth it not seem to follow from what hath been said and allowed by you that before all experience a man would not imagine the things he saw were at any distance from him? *Alc.* How! let me see. *Euph.* The littleness or faintness of appearance, or any other idea or sensation not necessarily connected with, or resembling distance, can no more suggest different degrees of distance, or any distance at all, to the mind, which hath not experienced a connexion of the things signifying and signified, than words can suggest notions before a man hath learned the language. *Alc.* I allow this to be true. *Euph.* Will it not thence follow, that a man born blind, and made to see, would upon first receiving his sight, take the things he saw, not to be at any distance from him, but in his eye, or rather in his mind? *Alc.* I must own it seems so; and yet, on the other hand, I can hardly persuade myself, that, if I were in such a state, I should think those objects, which I now see at so great distance, to be at no distance at all. *Euph.* It seems then, that you now think the objects of sight are at a distance from you. *Alc.* Doubtless I do. Can any one question but yonder castle is at a great distance? *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, can you discern the doors, windows, and battlements of that same castle? *Alc.*

I cannot. At this distance it seems only a small round tower. *Euph.* But I, who have been at it, know that it is no small round tower, but a large square building with battlements and turrets, which it seems you do not see. *Alc.* What will you infer from thence? *Euph.* I would infer, that the very object, which you strictly and properly perceive by sight, is not that thing which is several miles distant. *Alc.* Why so? *Euph.* Because a little round object is one thing, and a great square object is another. Is it not? *Alc.* I cannot deny it. *Euph.* Tell me, is not the visible appearance alone the proper object of sight? *Alc.* It is. What think you now (said Euphranor, pointing towards the heavens) of the visible appearance of yonder planet? Is it not a round luminous flat, no bigger than a sixpence? *Alc.* What then? *Euph.* Tell me then, what you think of the planet itself. Do you not conceive it to be a vast opaque globe, with several unequal risings and vallies? *Alc.* I do. *Euph.* How can you therefore conclude, that the proper object of your sight exists at a distance? *Alc.* I confess I know not. *Euph.* For your further conviction, do but consider that crimson cloud. Think you that if you were in the very place where it is, you would perceive any thing like what you now see? *Alc.* By no means. I should perceive only a dark mist. *Euph.* Is it not plain, therefore, that neither the castle, the planet, nor the cloud, which you see here, are those real ones which you suppose exist at a distance.

X. *Alc.* What am I to think then? Do we see any thing at all, or is it altogether fancy and illusion? *Euph.* Upon the whole, it seems the proper objects of sight are light and colours, with their several shades and degrees, all which, being infinitely diversified and combined, do form a language wonderfully adapted to suggest and exhibit to us the distances, figures, situations, dimensions, and various qualities of tangible objects; not by similitude, nor yet by inference of necessary connexion, but by the arbitrary imposition of Providence, just as words suggest the things signified by them. *Alc.* How! do we not, strictly speaking, perceive by sight such things as trees, houses, men, rivers, and the like? *Euph.* We do, indeed, perceive or apprehend those things by the faculty of sight; but will it follow from thence, that they are the proper and immediate objects of sight, any more than that all those things are the proper and immediate objects of hearing, which are signified by the help of words or sounds? *Alc.* You would have us think then, that light, shades, and colours, variously combined, answer to the several articulations of sound in language, and that, by means thereof, all sorts of objects are suggested to the mind through the eye, in the same manner as they are suggested by words or sounds through the ear; that is, neither from necessary deduction to the judgment, nor from similitude to

the fancy, but purely and solely from experience, custom, and habit. *Euph.* I would not have you think any thing more than the nature of things obligeth you to think, nor submit in the least to my judgment, but only to the force of truth, which is an imposition that I suppose the freest thinkers will not pretend to be exempt from. *Alc.* You have led me, it seems, step by step, till I am got I know not where. But I shall try to get out again, if not by the way I came, yet by some other of my own finding. Here Alciphron, having made a short pause, proceeded as follows.

XI. Answer me, Euphranor, should it not follow from these principles, that a man born blind, and made to see, would at first sight, not only not perceive their distance, but also not so much as know the very things themselves which he saw, for instance, men or trees? which surely to suppose must be absurd. *Euph.* I grant, in consequence of those principles, which both you and I have admitted, that such a one would never think of men, trees, or any other objects that he had been accustomed to perceive by touch, upon having his mind filled with new sensations of light and colours, whose various combinations he doth not yet understand, or know the meaning of, no more than a Chinese, upon first hearing the words man and tree, would think of the things signified by them. In both cases, there must be time and experience, by repeated acts, to acquire a habit of knowing the connexion between the signs and things signified, that is to say, of understanding the language, whether of the eyes or of the ears. And I conceive no absurdity in all this. *Alc.* I see therefore, in strict philosophical truth, that rock only in the same sense that I may be said to hear it, when the word rock is pronounced. *Euph.* In the very same. *Alc.* How comes it to pass then, that every one shall say he sees, for instance, a rock or a house, when those things are before his eyes: but nobody will say he hears a rock or a house, but only the words or sounds themselves, by which those things are said to be signified or suggested, but not heard? besides, if vision be only a language speaking to the eyes, it may be asked, when did men learn this language? To acquire the knowledge of so many signs, as go to the making up a language, is a work of some difficulty. But will any man say he hath spent time, or been at pains, to learn this language of vision? *Euph.* No wonder, we cannot assign a time beyond our remotest memory. If we have been all practising this language, ever since our first entrance into the world: if the Author of nature constantly speaks to the eyes of all mankind, even in their earliest infancy, whenever the eyes are open in the light, whether alone or in company: it doth not seem to me at all strange, that men should not be aware they had ever learned a language, begun so early, and practised so constantly as this of vision. And, if we

also consider that it is the same throughout the whole world, and not, like other languages, differing in different places, it will not seem unaccountable, that men should mistake the connexion between the proper objects of sight and the things signified by them, to be founded in necessary relation, or likeness, or that they should even take them for the same things. Hence it seems easy to conceive, why men, who do not think, should confound in this language of vision the signs with the things signified, otherwise than they are wont to do, in the various particular languages formed by the several nations of men.

XII. It may be also worth while to observe, that signs being little considered in themselves, or for their own sake, but only in their relative capacity, and for the sake of those things whereof they are signs, it comes to pass, that the mind often overlooks them, so as to carry its attention immediately on to the things signified. Thus, for example, in reading we run over the characters with the slightest regard, and pass on to the meaning. Hence it is frequent for men to say, they see words, and notions, and things, in reading of a book; whereas in strictness they see only the characters, which suggest words, notions, and things. And by parity of reason, may we not suppose, that men, not resting in, but overlooking, the immediate and proper objects of sight, as in their own nature of small moment, carry their attention onward to the very things signified, and talk as if they saw the secondary objects, which, in truth and strictness, are not seen but only suggested and apprehended by means of the proper objects of sight, which alone are seen? *Alc.* To speak my mind freely, this dissertation grows tedious, and runs into points too dry and minute for a gentleman's attention. I thought, said Crito, we had been told, that minute philosophers loved to consider things closely and minutely. *Alc.* That is true, but in so polite an age who would be a mere philosopher? There is a certain scholastic accuracy, which ill suits the freedom and ease of a well-bred man. But, to cut short this chicane, I propound it fairly to your own conscience, whether you really think, that God himself speaks every day and in every place to the eyes of all men. *Euph.* That is really and in truth my opinion; and it should be yours too, if you are consistent with yourself, and abide by your own definition of language. Since you cannot deny, that the great mover and author of nature constantly explaineth himself to the eyes of men by the sensible intervention of arbitrary signs, which have no similitude or connexion with the things signified; so as by compounding and disposing them, to suggest and exhibit an endless variety of objects differing in nature, time, and place, thereby informing and directing men how to act with respect to things distant and future, as well as near and present. In consequence, I say, of your own sentiments and concessions, you

have as much reason to think, the universal agent or God speaks to your eyes, as you can have for thinking any particular person speaks to your ears. *Alc.* I cannot help thinking, that some fallacy runs throughout this whole ratiocination, though perhaps I may not readily point it out. Hold! let me see. In language the signs are arbitrary, are they not? *Euph.* They are. *Alc.* And consequently, they do not always suggest real matters of fact. Whereas this natural language, as you call it, or these visible signs, do always suggest things in the same uniform way, and have the same constant, regular connexion with matters of fact: whence it should seem, the connexion was necessary; and therefore, according to the definition premised, it can be no language. How do you solve this objection? *Euph.* You may solve it yourself, by the help of a picture or looking-glass. *Alc.* You are in the right. I see there is nothing in it. I know not what else to say to this opinion, more than it is so odd and contrary to my way of thinking, that I shall never assent to it.

XIII. *Euph.* Be pleased to recollect your own lectures upon prejudice, and apply them in the present case. Perhaps they may help you to follow where reason leads, and to suspect notions which are strongly riveted, without having been ever examined. *Alc.* I disdain the suspicion of prejudice. And I do not speak only for myself. I know a club of most ingenious men, the freest from prejudice of any men alive, who abhor the notion of a God, and I doubt not would be very able to untie this knot. Upon which words of Alciphron, I, who had acted the part of an indifferent stander-by, observed to him, that it misbecame his character and repeated professions, to own an attachment to the judgment, or build upon the presumed abilities of other men, how ingenious soever; and that this proceeding might encourage his adversaries to have recourse to authority, in which perhaps they would find their account more than he. Oh! said Crito, I have often observed the conduct of minute philosophers. When one of them has got a ring of disciples round him, his method is to exclaim against prejudice, and recommend thinking and reasoning, giving to understand that himself is a man of deep researches and close argument, one who examines impartially and concludes warily. The same man in other company, if he chance to be pressed with reason, shall laugh at logic, and assume the lazy, supine airs of a fine gentleman, a wit, a *railleur*, to avoid the dryness of a regular and exact inquiry. This double face of the minute philosopher is of no small use to propagate and maintain his notions. Though to me it seems a plain case, that if a fine gentleman will shake off authority, and appeal from religion to reason, unto reason he must go: and if he cannot go without leading strings, surely he had better be led by the authority of the public, than by that of any knot of

minute philosophers. *Alc.* Gentlemen, this discourse is very irksome and needless. For my part, I am a friend to inquiry. I am willing reason should have its full and free scope. I build on no man's authority. For my part, I have no interest in denying a God. Any man may believe or not believe a God, as he pleases, for me. But after all, Euphranor must allow me to stare a little at his conclusions. *Euph.* The conclusions are yours as much as mine, for you were led to them by your own concessions.

XIV. You, it seems, stare to find, that God is not far from every one of us, and that in him we live, and move, and have our being. You, who in the beginning of this morning's conference thought it strange, that God should leave himself without a witness, do now think it strange the witness should be so full and clear. *Alc.* I must own I do. I was aware, indeed, of a certain metaphysical hypothesis, of our seeing all things in God by the union of the human soul with the intelligible substance of the Deity, which neither I nor any one else could make sense of. But I never imagined it could be pretended, that we saw God with our fleshly eyes as plain as we see any human person whatsoever, and that he daily speaks to our senses in a manifest and clear dialect. *Cri.* This language hath a necessary connexion with knowledge, wisdom, and goodness. It is equivalent to a constant creation, betokening an immediate act of power and providence. It cannot be accounted for by mechanical principles, by atoms, attractions, or effluvia. The instantaneous production and reproduction of so many signs combined, dissolved, transposed, diversified, and adapted to such an endless variety of purposes, ever shifting with the occasions and suited to them, being utterly inexplicable and unaccountable by the laws of motion, by chance, by fate, or the like blind principles, doth set forth and testify the immediate operation of a spirit or thinking being; and not merely of a spirit, which every motion or gravitation may possibly infer, but of one wise, good, and provident Spirit, who directs, and rules, and governs the world. Some philosophers, being convinced of the wisdom and power of the Creator, from the make and contrivance of organized bodies and orderly system of the world, did nevertheless imagine that he left this system, with all its parts and contents well adjusted and put in motion, as an artist leaves a clock, to go thenceforward of itself for a certain period. But this visual language proves, not a Creator merely, but a provident governor, actually and intimately present and attentive to all our interests and motions, who watches over our conduct, and takes care of our minutest actions and designs, throughout the whole course of our lives, informing, admonishing, and directing incessantly, in a most evident and sensible manner. This is truly wonderful.

Euph. And is it not so, that men should be encompassed by such a wonder, without reflecting on it?

XV. Something there is of divine and admirable in this language, addressed to our eyes, that may well awaken the mind, and deserve its utmost attention: it is learned with so little pains; it expresseth the differences of things so clearly and aptly; it instructs with such facility and despatch, by one glance of the eye conveying a greater variety of advices, and a more distinct knowledge of things than could be got by a discourse of several hours: and, while it informs, it amuses and entertains the mind with such singular pleasure and delight: it is of such excellent use in giving a stability and permanency to human discourse, in recording sounds and bestowing life on dead languages, enabling us to converse with men of remote ages and countries: and it answers so apposite to the uses and necessities of mankind, informing us more distinctly of those objects, whose nearness and magnitude qualify them to be of greatest detriment or benefit to our bodies, and less exactly, in proportion as their littleness or distance make them of less concern to us. *Alc.* And yet these strange things affect men but little. *Euph.* But they are not strange, they are familiar, and that makes them be overlooked. Things which rarely happen strike; whereas frequency lessens the admiration of things, though in themselves ever so admirable. Hence a common man, who is not used to think and make reflections, would probably be more convinced of the being of a God, by one single sentence heard once in his life from the sky, than by all the experience he has had of this visual language, contrived with such exquisite skill, so constantly addressed to his eyes, and so plainly declaring the nearness, wisdom, and providence, of him with whom we have to do. *Alc.* After all, I cannot satisfy myself, how men should be so little surprised or amazed about this visive faculty, if it was really of a nature so surprising and amazing. *Euph.* But let us suppose a nation of men blind from their infancy, among whom a stranger arrives, the only man who can see in all the country: let us suppose this stranger travelling with some of the natives, and that while he foretells to them, that in case they walk straight forward, in half an hour they shall meet men or cattle, or come to a house; that if they turn to the right and proceed, they shall, in a few minutes, be in danger of falling down a precipice; that shaping their course to the left they will, in such a time, arrive at a river, a wood, or a mountain. What think you? must they not be infinitely surprised that one, who had never been in their country before, should know it so much better than themselves? And would not those predictions seem to them as unaccountable and incredible, as prophecy to a minute philosopher? *Alc.* I cannot deny it. *Euph.* But it seems to

require intense thought, to be able to unravel a prejudice that has been so long forming, to get over the vulgar error of ideas common to both senses, and so to distinguish between the objects of sight and touch,* which have grown (if I may so say) blended together in our fancy, as to be able to suppose ourselves exactly in the state that one of those men would be in, if he were made to see. And yet this I believe is possible, and might seem worth the pains of a little thinking, especially to those men whose proper employment and profession it is to think, and unravel prejudices, and confute mistakes. *Alc.* I frankly own I cannot find my way out of this maze, and should gladly be set right by those who see better than myself. *Cri.* The pursuing this subject in their own thoughts would possibly open a new scene to those speculative gentlemen of the minute philosophy. It puts me in mind of a passage in the psalmist, where he represents God to be covered with light as with a garment, and would, methinks, be no ill comment on that ancient notion of some eastern sages, that God had light for his body, and truth for his soul. This conversation lasted till a servant came to tell us the tea was ready: upon which we walked in, and found Lysicles at the tea-table.

XVI. As soon as we sat down, I am glad, said Alciphron, that I have here found my second, a fresh man to maintain our common cause, which, I doubt, Lysicles will think hath suffered by his absence. *Lys.* Why so? *Alc.* I have been drawn into some concessions you will not like. *Lys.* Let me know what they are. *Alc.* Why, that there is such a thing as a God, and that his existence is very certain. *Lys.* Bless me! how came you to entertain so wild a notion? *Alc.* You know we profess to follow reason wherever it leads. And, in short, I have been reasoned into it. *Lys.* Reasoned! you should say amused with words, bewildered with sophistry. *Euph.* Have you a mind to hear the same reasoning that led Alciphron and me step by step, that we may examine whether it be sophistry or no? *Lys.* As to that I am very easy. I guess all that can be said on that head. It shall be my business to help my friend out, whatever arguments drew him in. *Euph.* Will you admit the premises and deny the conclusions? *Lys.* What if I admit the conclusion? *Euph.* How! will you grant there is a God. *Lys.* Perhaps I may. *Euph.* Then we are agreed. *Lys.* Perhaps not. *Euph.* O Lysicles, you are a subtle adversary. I know not what you would be at. *Lys.* You must know then, that at bottom the being of a God is a point in itself of small consequence, and a man may make this concession without yielding much. The great point is, what sense the word God is to be

* See the foregoing Treatise, wherein this point and the whole theory of vision are more fully explained.

taken in. The very Epicureans allowed the being of gods: but then they were indolent gods, unconcerned with human affairs. Hobbes allowed a corporeal God, and Spinosa held the universe to be God. And yet nobody doubts they were staunch free-thinkers. I could wish indeed the word God were quite omitted, because, in most minds, it is coupled with a sort of superstitious awe, the very root of all religion. I shall not, nevertheless, be much disturbed, though the name be retained, and the being of God allowed in any sense but in that of a mind, which knows all things, and beholds human actions, like some judge or magistrate, with infinite observation and intelligence. The belief of a God in this sense fills a man's mind with scruples, lays him under constraints, and embitters his very being: but in another sense, it may be attended with no great ill consequence. This I know was the opinion of our great Diagoras, who told me he would never have been at the pains to find out a demonstration that there was no God, if the received notion of God had been the same with that of some fathers and schoolmen. *Euph.* Pray what was that?

XVII. *Lys.* You must know, Diagoras, a man of much reading and inquiry, had discovered that once upon a time, the most profound and speculative divines, finding it impossible to reconcile the attributes of God, taken in the common sense, or in any known sense, with human reason, and the appearance of things, taught that the words knowledge, wisdom, goodness, and such like, when spoken of the Deity, must be understood in a quite different sense, from what they signify in the vulgar acceptation, or from any thing that we can form a notion of, or conceive. Hence, whatever objections might be made against the attributes of God they easily solved, by denying those attributes belonged to God, in this or that or any known particular sense or notion; which was the same thing as to deny they belonged to him at all. And thus denying the attributes of God they in effect denied his being, though perhaps they were not aware of it. Suppose, for instance, a man should object, that future contingencies were inconsistent with the foreknowledge of God, because it is repugnant that certain knowledge should be of an uncertain thing: it was a ready and an easy answer to say, that this may be true, with respect to knowledge taken in the common sense, or in any sense that we can possibly form any notion of; but that there would not appear the same inconsistency, between the contingent nature of things and divine foreknowledge, taken to signify somewhat that we know nothing of, which in God supplies the place of what we understand by knowledge; from which it differs not in quantity or degree of perfection, but altogether, and in kind, as light doth from sound; and even more, since these agree in that they are both sensations: whereas

knowledge in God hath no sort of resemblance or agreement with any notion that man can frame of knowledge. The like may be said of all the other attributes, which indeed may by this means be equally reconciled with every thing or with nothing. But all men who think must needs see, this is cutting knots and not untying them. For how are things reconciled with the divine attributes, when these attributes themselves are in every intelligible sense denied; and consequently the very notion of God taken away, and nothing left but the name, without any meaning annexed to it? In short, the belief that there is an unknown subject of attributes absolutely unknown is a very innocent doctrine; which the acute Diagoras well saw, and was therefore wonderfully delighted with this system.

XVIII. For, said he, if this could once make its way and obtain in the world, there would be an end of all natural or rational religion, which is the basis both of the Jewish and the Christian: for he who comes to God, or enters himself in the church of God, must first believe that there is a God in some intelligible sense; and not only that there is something in general without any proper notion, though never so inadequate, of any of its qualities or attributes; for this may be fate, or chaos, or plastic nature, or any thing else as well as God. Nor will it avail to say, there is something in this unknown being analogous to knowledge and goodness; that is to say, which produceth those effects which we could not conceive to be produced by men in any degree, without knowledge and goodness. For this is in fact to give up the point in dispute between theists and atheists, the question having always been, not whether there was a principle (which point was allowed by philosophers as well before as since Anaxagoras), but whether this principle was a νοῦς, a thinking, intelligent being: that is to say, whether that order, and beauty, and use, visible in natural effects, could be produced by any thing but a mind or intelligence, in the proper sense of the word; and whether there must not be true, real, and proper knowledge in the first cause. We will therefore acknowledge, that all those natural effects, which are vulgarly ascribed to knowledge and wisdom, proceed from a being in which there is, properly speaking, no knowledge or wisdom at all, but only something else, which, in reality, is the cause of those things which men, for want of knowing better, ascribe to what they call knowledge and wisdom and understanding. You wonder perhaps to hear a man of pleasure, who diverts himself as I do, philosophize at this rate. But you should consider that much is to be got by conversing with ingenious men, which is a short way to knowledge, that saves a man the drudgery of reading and thinking. And now we have granted to you that there is a God in this indefinite sense, I would fain see what use you can make of this concession. You cannot argue from unknown attributes, or which is the same thing, from attri-

butes in an unknown sense. You cannot prove, that God is to be loved for his goodness, or feared for his justice, or respected for his knowledge: all which consequences, we own, would follow from those attributes admitted in an intelligible sense; but we deny that those or any other consequences can be drawn from attributes admitted in no particular sense, or in a sense which none of us understand. Since therefore nothing can be inferred from such an account of God, about conscience, or worship, or religion, you may even make the best of it; and, not to be singular, we will use the name too, and so at once there is an end of atheism. *Euph.* This account of a Deity is new to me. I do not like it, and therefore shall leave it to be maintained by those who do.

XIX. *Cri.* It is not new to me. I remember not long since to have heard a minute philosopher triumph upon this very point; which put me on inquiring what foundation there was for it in the fathers or schoolmen. And, for aught that I can find, it owes its original to those writings, which have been published under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. The author of which, it must be owned, hath written upon the divine attributes in a very singular style. In his treatise of the celestial hierarchy* he saith, that God is something above all essence and life, *ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν οὐσίαν καὶ ζωὴν*; and again in his treatise of the divine names,† that he is above all wisdom and understanding, *ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν σοφίαν καὶ σύνεσιν*, ineffable and innominable, *ἄῤῥητος καὶ ἀνώνυμος*; the wisdom of God he terms an unreasonable, unintelligent, and foolish wisdom; *τὴν ἄλογον καὶ ἄνουν καὶ μωρὰν σοφίαν*. But then the reason he gives, for expressing himself in this strange manner, is, that the divine wisdom is the cause of all reason, wisdom, and understanding, and therein are contained the treasures of all wisdom and knowledge. He calls God *ὑπέρσοφος* and *ὑπέρζως*; as if wisdom and life were words not worthy to express the divine perfections: and he adds, that the attributes *unintelligent* and *unperceiving* must be ascribed to the divinity, not *κατ' ἔλλειψιν*, by way of defect, but *καθ' ὑπεροχὴν*, by way of eminency; which he explains by our giving the name of darkness to light inaccessible. And, notwithstanding the harshness of his expressions in some places, he affirms over and over in others, that God knows all things; not that he is beholden to the creatures for his knowledge, but by knowing himself, from whom they all derive their being, and in whom they are contained as in their cause. It was late before these writings appear to have been known in the world; and although they obtained credit during the age of the schoolmen, yet since critical learning hath been cultivated, they have lost that credit, and are at this day given up for spurious, as containing several evident marks of a much later date than the age of Dionysius.

* De Hierarch. Cœlest. c. 2. † De Nom. Div. c. 7.

Upon the whole, although this method of growing in expression, and dwindling in notion, of clearing up doubts by nonsense, and avoiding difficulties by running into affected contradictions, may perhaps proceed from a well-meant zeal; yet it appears not to be according to knowledge, and instead of reconciling atheists to the truth, hath, I doubt, a tendency to confirm them in their own persuasion. It should seem, therefore, very weak and rash in a Christian to adopt this harsh language of an apocryphal writer, preferably to that of the holy scriptures. I remember, indeed, to have read of a certain philosopher, who lived some centuries ago, that used to say, if these supposed works of Dionysius had been known to the primitive fathers, they would have furnished them admirable weapons against the heretics, and would have saved a world of pains. But the event since their discovery hath by no means confirmed his opinion. It must be owned, the celebrated Picus of Mirandula, among his nine hundred conclusions (which that prince, being very young, proposed to maintain by public disputation at Rome), hath this for one; to wit, that it is more improper to say of God, he is an intellect or intelligent being, than to say of a reasonable soul that it is an angel: which doctrine it seems was not relished. And Picus, when he comes to defend it, supports himself altogether by the example and authority of Dionysius, and in effect explains it away into a mere verbal difference, affirming, that neither Dionysius nor himself ever meant to deprive God of knowledge, or to deny that he knows all things: but that, as reason is of kind peculiar to man, so by intellection he understands a kind or manner of knowing peculiar to angels: and that the knowledge which is in God is more above the intellection of angels, than angel is above man. He adds that, as his tenet consists with admitting the most perfect knowledge in God, so he would by no means be understood to exclude from the Deity intellection itself, taken in the common or general sense, but only that peculiar sort of intellection proper to angels, which he thinks ought not to be attributed to God any more than human reason.* Picus, therefore, though he speaks as the apocryphal Dionysius, yet when he explains himself, it is evident he speaks like other men. And although the forementioned books of the celestial hierarchy and of the divine names, being attributed to a saint and martyr of the apostolical age, were respected by the schoolmen, yet it is certain they rejected or softened his harsh expressions, and explained away or reduced his doctrine to the received notions taken from holy scripture and the light of nature.

XX. Thomas Aquinas expresseth his sense of this point in the following manner. All perfections, saith he, derived from God to the creatures are in a certain higher sense, or (as the

* Pic. Mirand. in Apolog. p. 155, ed. Bas.

schoolmen term it) eminently in God. Whenever, therefore, a name borrowed from any perfection in the creature is attributed to God, we must exclude from its signification every thing that belongs to the imperfect manner, wherein that attribute is found in the creature. Whence he concludes, that knowledge in God is not a habit, but a pure act.* And again the same doctor observes, that our intellect gets its notions of all sorts of perfections from the creatures, and that, as it apprehends those perfections, so it signifies them by names. Therefore, saith he, in attributing these names to God, we are to consider two things; first, the perfections themselves, as goodness, life, and the like, which are properly in God; and secondly, the manner which is peculiar to the creature, and cannot, strictly and properly speaking, be said to agree to the Creator.† And although Suarez, with other schoolmen, teacheth, that the mind of man conceiveth knowledge and will to be in God as faculties or operations, by analogy only to created beings; yet he gives it plainly as his opinion, that when knowledge is said not to be properly in God, it must be understood in a sense including imperfection, such as discursive knowledge, or the like imperfect kind found in the creatures: and that, none of those imperfections in the knowledge of men or angels belonging to the formal notion of knowledge, or to knowledge as such, it will not thence follow that knowledge, in its proper formal sense, may not be attributed to God; and of knowledge taken in general for the clear evident understanding of all truth, he expressly affirms that it is in God, and that this was never denied by any philosopher who believed a God.‡ It was, indeed, a current opinion in the schools, that even being itself should be attributed analogically to God and the creatures. That is, they held that God, the supreme, independent, self-originate cause and source of all beings, must not be supposed to exist in the same sense with created beings, not that he exists less truly, properly, or formally than they, but only because he exists in a more eminent and perfect manner.

XXI. But to prevent any man's being led, by mistaking the scholastic use of the terms analogy and analogical, into an opinion that we cannot frame in any degree a true and proper notion of attributes applied by analogy, or, in the school phrase, predicated analogically, it may not be amiss to inquire into the true sense and meaning of those words. Every one knows, that analogy is a Greek word used by mathematicians, to signify a similitude of proportions. For instance, when we observe that two is to six as three is to nine, this similitude or equality of proportion is termed analogy. And although proportion strictly signifies the habitude or relation of one quantity to another, yet, in a looser and

* Sum. Theolog. p. i. quest. 14, art. 1. † Ibid., quest. 13, art. 3.
‡ Suarez Disp. Metaph. tom. ii. disp. 30, sect. 15.

translated sense, it hath been applied to signify every other habitude; and consequently the term analogy comes to signify all similitude of relations or habitudes whatsoever. Hence, the schoolmen tell us there is analogy between intellect and sight; forasmuch as intellect is to the mind what sight is to the body: and that he who governs the state is analogous to him who steers a ship. Hence a prince is analogically styled a pilot, being to the state as a pilot is to his vessel.* For the further clearing of this point it is to be observed, that a twofold analogy is distinguished by the schoolmen, metaphorical and proper. Of the first kind there are frequent instances in holy scripture, attributing human parts and passions to God. When he is represented as having a finger, an eye, or an ear, when he is said to repent, to be angry or grieved, every one sees the analogy is merely metaphorical. Because those parts and passions, taken in the proper signification, must in every degree necessarily, and from the formal nature of the thing, include imperfection. When therefore it is said, the finger of God appears in this or that event, men of common sense mean no more, but that it is as truly ascribed to God, as the works wrought by human fingers are to man: and so of the rest. But the case is different when wisdom and knowledge are attributed to God. Passions and senses, as such, imply defect; but in knowledge simply, or as such, there is no defect. Knowledge, therefore, in the proper formal meaning of the word, may be attributed to God proportionably, that is, preserving a proportion to the infinite nature of God. We may say, therefore, that as God is infinitely above man, so is the knowledge of God infinitely above the knowledge of man, and this is what Cajetan calls *analogia proprie facta.* And after this same analogy, we must understand all those attributes to belong to the Deity, which in themselves simply, and as such, denote perfection. We may therefore, consistently with what hath been premised, affirm that all sorts of perfection, which we can conceive in a finite spirit, are in God, but without any of that alloy which is found in the creatures. This doctrine, therefore, of analogical perfections in God, or our knowing God by analogy, seems very much misunderstood and misapplied by those who would infer from thence, that we cannot frame any direct or proper notion, though never so inadequate, of knowledge or wisdom, as they are in the Deity, or understand any more of them than one born blind can of light and colours.

XXII. And now, gentlemen, it may be expected I should ask your pardon for having dwelt so long on a point of metaphysics, and introduced such unpolished and unfashionable writers as the schoolmen into good company: but as Lysicles gave the occasion, I leave him to answer for it. *Lys.* I never dreamt of this dry

* Vide Cajetan. de Nom. Analog. c. iii.

dissertation. But if I have been the occasion of discussing these scholastic points, by my unluckily mentioning the schoolmen, it was my first fault of the kind, and I promise it shall be the last. The meddling with crabbed authors of any sort is none of my taste. I grant one meets now and then with a good notion in what we call dry writers, such a one for example as this I was speaking of, which I must own struck my fancy. But then for these we have such as Prodicus or Diagoras, who look into obsolete books, and save the rest of us that trouble. *Cri.* So you pin your faith upon them. *Lys.* It is only for some odd opinions, and matters of fact, and critical points. Besides, we know the men to whom we give credit: they are judicious and honest, and have no end to serve but truth. And I am confident some author or other has maintained the forementioned notion in the same sense as Diagoras related it. *Cri.* That may be. But it never was a received notion, and never will, so long as men believe a God; the same arguments that prove a first cause proving an intelligent cause: intelligent, I say, in the proper sense: wise and good in the true and formal acceptation of the words. Otherwise it is evident, that every syllogism brought to prove those attributes, or (which is the same thing) to prove the being of a God, will be found to consist of four terms, and consequently can conclude nothing. But for your part, Alciphron, you have been fully convinced, that God is a thinking, intelligent being in the same sense with other spirits, though not in the same imperfect manner or degree.

XXIII. *Alc.* And yet I am not without my scruples: for with knowledge you infer wisdom, and with wisdom goodness. But how is it possible to conceive God so good, and man so wicked? It may perhaps with some colour be alleged, that a little soft shadowing of evil sets off the bright and luminous parts of the creation, and so contributes to the beauty of the whole piece: but for blots so large and so black it is impossible to account by that principle. That there should be so much vice and so little virtue upon earth, and that the laws of God's kingdom should be so ill observed by his subjects, is what can never be reconciled with that surpassing wisdom and goodness of the supreme monarch. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, would you argue that a state was ill-administered, or judge of the manners of its citizens, by the disorders committed in the gaol or dungeon? *Alc.* I would not. *Euph.* And for aught we know, this spot, with the few sinners on it, bears no greater proportion to the universe of intelligences, than a dungeon doth to a kingdom. It seems we are led not only by revelation but by common sense, observing and inferring from the analogy of visible things, to conclude there are innumerable orders of intelligent beings more happy and more perfect than man, whose life is but a span, and whose

place this earthly globe is but a point in respect of the whole system of God's creation. We are dazzled indeed with the glory and grandeur of things here below, because we know no better. But I am apt to think, if we knew what it was to be an angel for one hour, we should return to this world, though it were to sit on the brightest throne in it, with vastly more loathing and reluctance than we would now descend into a loathsome dungeon or sepulchre.

XXIV. *Cri.* To me it seems natural that such a weak, passionate, and short-sighted creature as man, should be ever liable to scruples of one kind or other. But, as this same creature is apt to be over positive in judging, and over hasty in concluding, it falls out that these difficulties and scruples about God's conduct are made objections to his being. And so men come to argue from their own defects against the divine perfections. And as the views and humours of men are different and often opposite, you may sometimes see them deduce the same atheistical conclusion from contrary premises. I knew an instance of this, in two minute philosophers of my acquaintance, who used to argue each from his own temper against a Providence. One of them, a man of a choleric and a vindictive spirit, said he could not believe a Providence, because London was not swallowed up or consumed by fire from heaven, the streets being, as he said, full of people who show no other belief or worship of God, but perpetually praying that he would damn, rot, sink, and confound them. The other, being of an indolent and easy temper, concluded there could be no such thing as a Providence, for that a being of consummate wisdom must needs employ himself better, than in minding the prayers, and actions, and little interests of mankind. *Alc.* After all, if God have no passions, how can it be true that vengeance is his? Or how can he be said to be jealous of his glory? *Cri.* We believe that God executes vengeance without revenge, and is jealous without weakness, just as the mind of man sees without eyes, and apprehends without hands.

XXV. *Alc.* To put a period to this discourse we will grant, there is a God in this dispassionate sense; but what then? What hath this to do with religion or divine worship? To what purpose are all these prayers, and praises, and thanksgivings, and singing of psalms, which the foolish vulgar call serving God? What sense, or use, or end is there in all these things? *Cri.* We worship God, we praise and pray to him: not because we think that he is proud of our worship, or fond of our praise or prayers, and affected with them as mankind are, or that all our service can contribute in the least degree to his happiness or good: but because it is good for us to be so disposed towards God: because it is just and right, and suitable to the nature of things, and becoming the relation we stand in to our supreme

Lord and governor. *Alc.* If it be good for us to worship God, it should seem that the Christian religion, which pretends to teach men the knowledge and worship of God, was of some use and benefit to mankind. *Cri.* Doubtless. *Alc.* If this can be made to appear, I shall own myself very much mistaken. *Cri.* It is now near dinner-time; wherefore if you please we will put an end to this conversation for the present, and to-morrow morning resume our subject.

THE FIFTH DIALOGUE.

I. Minute philosophers join in the cry, and follow the scent of others. II. Worship prescribed by the Christian religion suitable to God and man. III. Power and influence of the Druids. IV. Excellency and usefulness of the Christian religion. V. It ennobles mankind, and makes them happy. VI. Religion neither bigotry nor superstition. VII. Physicians and physic for the soul. VIII. Character of the clergy. IX. Natural religion and human reason not to be disparaged. X. Tendency and use of the Gentile religion. XI. Good effects of Christianity. XII. Englishmen compared with ancient Greeks and Romans. XIII. The modern practice of duelling. XIV. Character of the old Romans, how to be formed. XV. Genuine fruits of the gospel. XVI. Wars and factions not an effect of the Christian religion. XVII. Civil rage and massacres in Greece and Rome. XVIII. Virtue of ancient Greeks. XIX. Quarrels of polemical divines. XX. Tyranny, usurpation, sophistry of ecclesiastics. XXI. The universities censured. XXII. Divine writings of a certain modern critic. XXIII. Learning the effect of religion. XXIV. Barbarism of the schools. XXV. Restoration of learning and polite arts, to whom owing. XXVI. Prejudice and ingratitude of minute philosophers. XXVII. Their pretensions and conduct inconsistent. XXVIII. Men and brutes compared with respect to religion. XXIX. Christianity the only means to establish natural religion. XXX. Free-thinkers mistake their talents; have a strong imagination. XXXI. Tithes and church lands. XXXII. Men distinguished from human creatures. XXXIII. Distribution of mankind into birds, beasts, and fishes. XXXIV. Plea for reason allowed, but unfairness taxed. XXXV. Freedom a blessing, or a curse, as it is used. XXXVI. Priestcraft not the reigning evil.

I. We amused ourselves next day every one to his fancy, till nine of the clock, when word was brought that the tea-table was set in the library, which is a gallery on a groundfloor, with an arched door at one end opening into a walk of limes; where, as soon as we had drank tea, we were tempted by fine weather to take a walk which led us to a small mount of easy ascent, on the top whereof we found a seat under a spreading tree. Here we had a prospect on one hand of a narrow bay or creek of the sea, enclosed on either side by a coast beautified with rocks and woods, and green banks and farm-houses. At the end of the bay was a small town placed upon the slope of a hill, which, from the advantage of its situation, made a considerable figure. Several fishing-boats and lighters gliding up and down on a surface as smooth and bright as glass enlivened the prospect. On the other side we looked down on green pastures, flocks, and herds, basking beneath in sunshine, while we in our superior situation enjoyed the freshness of air and shade. Here we felt that sort

of joyful instinct which a rural scene and fine weather inspire; and proposed no small pleasure, in resuming and continuing our conference without interruption till dinner: but we had hardly seated ourselves, and looked about us, when we saw a fox run by the foot of our mount into an adjacent thicket. A few minutes after, we heard a confused noise of the opening of hounds, the winding of horns, and the roaring of country squires. While our attention was suspended by this event, a servant came running out of breath, and told Crito, that his neighbour Ctesippus, a squire of note, was fallen from his horse, attempting to leap over a hedge, and brought into the hall, where he lay for dead. Upon which we all rose and walked hastily to the house, where we found Ctesippus just come to himself, in the midst of half-a-dozen sun-burnt squires in frocks, and short wigs and jockey-boots. Being asked how he did, he answered it was only a broken rib. With some difficulty Crito persuaded him to lie on a bed till the chirurgeon came. These fox-hunters, having been up early at their sport, were eager for dinner, which was accordingly hastened. They passed the afternoon in a loud rustic mirth, gave proof of their religion and loyalty by the healths they drank, talked of hounds and horses, and elections and country affairs, till the chirurgeon, who had been employed about Ctesippus, desired he might be put into Crito's coach, and sent home, having refused to stay all night. Our guests being gone, we reposed ourselves after the fatigue of this tumultuous visit, and next morning assembled again at the seat on the mount. Now Lysicles, being a nice man, and a *bel esprit*, had an infinite contempt for the rough manners and conversation of fox-hunters, and could not reflect with patience that he had lost, as he called it, so many hours in their company. I flattered myself, said he, that there had been none of this species remaining among us: strange that men should be diverted with such uncouth noise and hurry, or find pleasure in the society of dogs and horses! how much more elegant are the diversions of the town! There seems, replied Euphranor, to be some resemblance between fox-hunters and free-thinkers; the former exerting their animal faculties in pursuit of game, as you gentlemen employ your intellectuals in the pursuit of truth. The kind of amusement is the same, although the object be different. *Lys.* I had rather be compared to any brute upon earth than a rational brute. *Cri.* You would then have been less displeased with my friend Pythocles, whom I have heard compare the common sort of minute philosophers, not to the hunters, but the hounds. For, said he, you shall often see among the dogs a loud babbler, with a bad nose, lead the unskilful part of the pack, who join all in his cry without following any scent of their own, any more than the herd of free-thinkers follow their own reason.

II. But Pythocles was a blunt man, and must never have known such reasoners among them as you gentlemen, who can sit so long at an argument, dispute every inch of ground, and yet know when to make a reasonable concession. *Lys.* I do not know how it comes to pass, but methinks Alciphron makes concessions for himself and me too. For my own part, I am not altogether of such a yielding temper: but yet I do not care to be singular neither. *Cri.* Truly, Alciphron, when I consider where we are got, and how far we are agreed, I conceive it probable we may agree altogether in the end. You have granted that a life of virtue is upon all accounts eligible, as most conducive both to the general and particular good of mankind: and you allow, that the beauty of virtue alone is not a sufficient motive with mankind to the practice of it. This led you to acknowledge, that the belief of a God would be very useful in the world; and that consequently you should be disposed to admit any reasonable proof of his being: which point hath been proved, and you have admitted the proof. If then we admit a divinity, why not divine worship? and if worship, why not religion to teach this worship? and if a religion, why not the Christian, if a better cannot be assigned, and it be already established by the laws of our country, and handed down to us from our forefathers? Shall we believe a God, and not pray to him for future benefits nor thank him for the past? Neither trust in his protection, nor love his goodness, nor praise his wisdom, nor adore his power? And if these things are to be done, can we do them in a way more suitable to the dignity of God or man, than is prescribed by the Christian religion? *Alc.* I am not perhaps altogether sure that religion must be absolutely bad for the public: but I cannot bear to see policy and religion walk hand in hand: I do not like to see human rights attached to the divine: I am for no *pontifex maximus*, such as in ancient or in modern Rome: no high priest, as in Judea: no royal priests, as in Egypt and Sparta: no such things as Dairos of Japan, or Lamas of Tartary.

III. I knew a late witty gentleman of our sect, who was a great admirer of the ancient Druids. He had a mortal antipathy to the present established religion, but used to say he should like well to see the Druids and their religion restored, as it anciently flourished in Gaul and Britain; for it would be right enough that there should be a number of contemplative men set apart to preserve a knowledge of arts and sciences, to educate youth, and teach men the immortality of the soul and the moral virtues. Such, said he, were the Druids of old, and I should be glad to see them once more established among us. *Cri.* How would you like, Alciphron, that priests should have power to decide all controversies, adjudge property, distribute rewards and punishments;

that all who did not acquiesce in their decrees should be excommunicated, held in abhorrence, excluded from all honours and privileges, and deprived of the common benefit of the laws; and that now and then, a number of laymen should be crammed together in a wicker idol, and burnt for an offering to their pagan gods? How should you like living under such priests and such a religion? *Alc.* Not at all. Such a situation would by no means agree with free-thinkers. *Cri.* And yet such were the Druids and such their religion, if we may trust Cæsar's account of them.* *Lys.* I am now convinced more than ever, there ought to be no such thing as an established religion of any kind. Certainly all the nations of the world have been hitherto out of their wits. Even the Athenians themselves, the wisest and freest people upon earth, had, I know not what, foolish attachment to their established church. They offered, it seems, a talent as a reward to whoever should kill Diagoras the Melian, a free-thinker of those times who derided their mysteries: and Protagoras, another of the same turn, narrowly escaped being put to death, for having wrote something that seemed to contradict their received notions of the gods. Such was the treatment our generous sect met with at Athens. And I make no doubt, but these Druids would have sacrificed many a holocaust of free-thinkers. I would not give a single farthing to exchange one religion for another. Away with all together, root and branch, or you had as good do nothing. No Druids or priests of any sort for me: I see no occasion for any of them.

IV. *Euph.* What Lysicles saith, puts me in mind of the close of our last conference, wherein it was agreed, in the following, to resume the point we were then entered upon, to wit, the use or benefit of the Christian religion, which Alciphron expected Crito should make appear. *Cri.* I am the readier to undertake this point, because I conceive it to be no difficult one, and that one great mark of the truth of Christianity is, in my mind, its tendency to do good, which seems the north star to conduct our judgment in moral matters, and in all things of a practic nature; moral or practical truths being ever connected with universal benefit. But to judge rightly of this matter, we should endeavour to act like Lysicles upon another occasion, taking into our view the sum of things, and considering principles as branched forth into consequences to the utmost extent we are able. We are not so much to regard the humour, or caprice, or imaginary distresses of a few idle men, whose conceit may be offended, though their conscience cannot be wounded; but fairly to consider the true interest of individuals as well as of human society. Now the Christian religion, considered as a fountain of light, and

* De Bello Gallico, lib. 6.

joy, and peace, as a source of faith, and hope, and charity (and that it is so will be evident to whoever takes his notion of it from the gospel), must needs be a principle of happiness and virtue. And he who sees not, that the destroying the principles of good actions must destroy good actions, sees nothing: and he who, seeing this, shall yet persist to do it, if he be not wicked, who is?

V. To me it seems the man can see neither deep nor far, who is not sensible of his own misery, sinfulness, and dependence; who doth not perceive, that this present world is not designed or adapted to make rational souls happy; who would not be glad of getting into a better state, and who would not be overjoyed to find, that the road leading thither was the love of God and man, the practising every virtue, the living reasonably while we are here upon earth, proportioning our esteem to the value of things, and so using this world as not to abuse it, for this is what Christianity requires. It neither enjoins the nastiness of the Cynic, nor the insensibility of the Stoic. Can there be a higher ambition than to overcome the world, or a wiser than to subdue ourselves, or a more comfortable doctrine than the remission of sins, or a more joyful prospect than that of having our base nature renewed and assimilated to the Deity, our being made fellow-citizens with angels and sons of God? Did ever Pythagoreans, or Platonists, or Stoics, even in idea or in wish, propose to the mind of man purer means or a nobler end? How great a share of our happiness depends upon hope! how totally is this extinguished by the minute philosophy! On the other hand, how is it cherished and raised by the gospel! Let any man who thinks in earnest but consider these things, and then say which he thinks deserveth best of mankind, he who recommends, or he who runs down Christianity? Which he thinks likelier to lead a happy life, to be a hopeful son, an honest dealer, a worthy patriot, he who sincerely believes the gospel, or he who believes not one tittle of it? He who aims at being a child of God, or he who is contented to be thought, and to be, one of Epicurus's hogs? And in fact do but scan the characters, and observe the behaviour of the common sort of men on both sides: observe and say which live most agreeably to the dictates of reason? How things should be, the reason is plain; how they are, I appeal to fact.

VI. *Alc.* It is wonderful to observe how things change appearance, as they are viewed in different lights, or by different eyes. The picture, Crito, that I form of religion is very unlike yours, when I consider how it unmans the soul, filling it with absurd reveries and slavish fears; how it extinguishes the gentle passions, inspiring a spirit of malice, and rage, and persecution: when I behold bitter resentment and unholy wrath in those very men who preach up meekness and charity to others. *Cri.* It is

very possible, that gentlemen of your sect may think religion a subject beneath their attention; but yet it seems that whoever sets up for opposing any doctrine, should know what it is he disputes against. Know then, that religion is the virtuous mean between incredulity and superstition. We do not therefore contend for superstitious follies, or for the rage of bigots. What we plead for, is religion against profaneness, law against confusion, virtue against vice, the hope of a Christian against the despondency of an atheist. I will not justify bitter resentments and unholy wrath in any man, much less in a Christian, and least of all in a clergyman. But if sallies of human passion should sometimes appear even in the best, it will not surprise any one who reflects on the sarcasms and ill manners with which they are treated by the minute philosophers. For as Cicero somewhere observes, *Habet quendam aculeum contumelia, quem pati prudentes ac viri boni difficillimè possunt.* But although you might sometimes observe particular persons, professing themselves Christians, run into faulty extremes of any kind through passion and infirmity, while infidels of a more calm and dispassionate temper shall perhaps behave better. Yet these natural tendencies on either side prove nothing, either in favour of infidel principles, or against Christian. If a believer doeth evil, it is owing to the man, not to his belief. And if an infidel doeth good, it is owing to the man and not to his infidelity.

VII. *Lys.* To cut this matter short, I shall borrow an allusion to physic, which one of you made use of against our sect. It will not be denied, that the clergy pass for physicians of the soul, and that religion is a sort of medicine which they deal in and administer. If then souls in great numbers are diseased and lost, how can we think the physician skilful or his physic good? It is a common complaint, that vice increases, and men grow daily more and more wicked. If a shepherd's flock be diseased or unsound, who is to blame but the shepherd, for neglecting or not knowing how to cure them? a fig therefore for such shepherds, such physic, and such physicians, who, like other mountebanks, with great gravity and elaborate harangues put off their pills to the people, who are never the better for them. *Euph.* Nothing seems more reasonable than this remark, that men should judge of a physician, and his physic by its effect on the sick. But pray, Lysicles, would you judge of a physician by those sick who take his physic and follow his prescriptions, or by those who do not? *Lys.* Doubtless by those who do. *Euph.* What shall we say then, if great numbers refuse to take the physic, or instead of it take poison of a direct contrary nature prescribed by others, who make it their business to discredit the physician and his medicines, to hinder men from using them, and to destroy their effects by drugs of their own? Shall the physician be blamed for the miscarriage of those people? *Lys.* By no means. *Euph.* By a parity

of reason should it not follow, that the tendency of religious doctrines ought to be judged of by the effects which they produce, not upon all who hear them, but upon those only who receive or believe them? *Lys.* It seems so. *Euph.* Therefore to proceed fairly, shall we not judge of the effects of religion by the religious, of faith by believers, of Christianity by Christians?

VIII. *Lys.* But I doubt these sincere believers are very few. *Euph.* But will it not suffice to justify our principles, if in proportion to the numbers which receive them, and the degree of faith with which they are received, they produce good effects? Perhaps the number of believers are not so few as you imagine; and if they were, whose fault is that so much as of those who make it their professed endeavour to lessen that number? And who are those but the minute philosophers? *Lys.* I tell you it is owing to the clergy themselves, to the wickedness and corruption of clergymen. *Euph.* And who denies but there may be minute philosophers even among the clergy? *Cri.* In so numerous a body it is to be presumed there are men of all sorts. But notwithstanding the cruel reproaches cast upon that order by their enemies, an equal observer of men and things will, if I mistake not, be inclined to think those reproaches owing as much to other faults as those of the clergy, especially if he considers the declamatory manner of those who censure them. *Euph.* My knowledge of the world is too narrow for me to pretend to judge of the virtue and merit and liberal attainments of men in the several professions. Besides, I should not care for the odious work of comparison: but I may venture to say, the clergy of this country where I live are by no means a disgrace to it; on the contrary, the people seem much the better for their example and doctrine. But supposing the clergy to be (what all men certainly are) sinners and faulty; supposing you might spy out here and there among them even great crimes and vices, what can you conclude against the profession itself from its unworthy professors, any more than from the pride, pedantry, and bad lives of some philosophers against philosophy, or of lawyers against law?

IX. It is certainly right to judge of principles from their effects, but then we must know them to be effects of those principles. It is the very method I have observed, with respect to religion and the minute philosophy. And I can honestly aver, that I never knew any man or family grow worse in proportion as they grew religious: but I have often observed that minute philosophy is the worst thing that can get into a family, the readiest way to impoverish, divide, and disgrace it. *Alc.* By the same method of tracing causes from their effects, I have made it my observation, that the love of truth, virtue, and the happiness of mankind are specious pretexts, but not the inward principles that set divines at work; else why should they affect to abuse

human reason, to disparage natural religion, to traduce the philosophers as they universally do? *Cri.* Not so universally perhaps as you imagine. A Christian, indeed, is for confining reason within its due bounds; and so is every reasonable man. If we are forbid meddling with unprofitable questions, vain philosophy, and science falsely so called, it cannot be thence inferred, that all inquiries into profitable questions, useful philosophy, and true science, are unlawful. A minute philosopher may indeed impute, and perhaps a weak brother may imagine those inferences, but men of sense will never make them. God is the common father of lights; and all knowledge really such, whether natural or revealed, is derived from the same source of light and truth. To amass together authorities upon so plain a point would be needless. It must be owned some men's attributing too much to human reason, hath, as is natural, made others attribute too little to it. But thus much is generally acknowledged, that there is a natural religion, which may be discovered and proved by the light of reason, to those who are capable of such proofs. But it must be withal acknowledged, that precepts and oracles from heaven are incomparably better suited to popular improvement and the good of society, than the reasonings of philosophers; and accordingly we do not find, that natural or rational religion ever became the popular national religion of any country.

X. *Alc.* It cannot be denied, that in all heathen countries there have been received, under the colour of religion, a world of fables and superstitious rites. But I question whether they were so absurd and of so bad influence as is vulgarly represented, since their respective legislators and magistrates must, without doubt, have thought them useful. *Cri.* It were needless to inquire into all the rites and notions of the gentile world. This hath been largely done when it was thought necessary. And whoever thinks it worth while may be easily satisfied about them. But as to the tendency and usefulness of the heathen religion in general, I beg leave to mention a remark of St. Augustine's,* who observes that the heathens in their religion had no assemblies for preaching, wherein the people were to be instructed what duties or virtues the gods required, no place or means to be taught what Persius† exhorts them to learn.

> Disciteque ô miseri, et causas cognoscite rerum,
> Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur.

Alc. This is the true spirit of the party, never to allow a grain of use or goodness to any thing out of their own pale: but we have had learned men who have done justice to the religion of the gentiles. *Cri.* We do not deny but there was something useful

* De Civitate Dei, lib. 2. † Sat. iii.

in the old religions of Rome and Greece, and some other pagan countries. On the contrary, we freely own they produced some good effects on the people: but then these good effects were owing to the truths contained in those false religions, the truer therefore the more useful. I believe you will find it a hard matter to produce any useful truth, any moral precept, any salutary principle or notion in any gentile system, either of religion or philosophy, which is not comprehended in the Christian, and either enforced by stronger motives, or supported by better authority, or carried to a higher point of perfection.

XI. *Alc.* Consequently you would have us think ourselves a finer people than the ancient Greeks or Romans. *Cri.* If by finer you mean better, perhaps we are; and if we are not, it is not owing to the Christian religion, but to the want of it. *Alc.* You say, perhaps we are. I do not pique myself on my reading: but should be very ignorant to be capable of being imposed on in so plain a point. What! compare Cicero or Brutus to an English patriot, or Seneca to one of our parsons! Then that invincible constancy and vigour of mind, that disinterested and noble virtue, that adorable public spirit you so much admire, are things in them so well known, and so different from our manners, that I know not how to excuse your *perhaps*. Euphranor, indeed, who passeth his life in this obscure corner, may possibly mistake the characters of our times, but you who know the world, how could you be guilty of such a mistake? *Cri.* O Alciphron, I would by no means detract from the noble virtue of ancient heroes: but I observe those great men were not the minute philosophers of their times; that the best principles upon which they acted are common to them with Christians, of whom it would be no difficult matter to assign many instances, in every kind of worth and virtue, public or private, equal to the most celebrated of the ancients. Though perhaps their story might not have been so well told, set off with such fine lights and colouring of style, or so vulgarly known and considered by every school-boy. But though it should be granted, that here and there a Greek or Roman genius, bred up under strict laws and severe discipline, animated to public virtue by statues, crowns, triumphal arches, and such rewards and monuments of great actions, might attain to a character and fame beyond other men, yet this will prove only, that they had more spirit and lived under a civil polity more wisely ordered in certain points than ours; which advantages of nature and civil institution will be no argument for their religion or against ours. On the contrary, it seems an invincible proof of the power and excellency of the Christian religion, that, without the help of those civil institutions and incentives to glory, it should be able to inspire a phlegmatic people with the noblest sentiments, and soften the rugged

manners of northern boors into gentleness and humanity: and that these good qualities should become national, and rise and fall in proportion to the purity of our religion, as it approaches to, or recedes from the plan laid down in the gospel.

XII. To make a right judgment of the effects of the Christian religion, let us take a survey of the prevailing notions and manners of this very country where we live, and compare them with those of our heathen predecessors. *Alc.* I have heard much of the glorious light of the gospel, and should be glad to see some effects of it in my own dear country, which, by the bye, is one of the most corrupt and profligate upon earth, notwithstanding the boasted purity of our religion. But it would look mean and diffident, to affect a comparison with the barbarous heathen, from whence we drew our original: if you would do honour to your religion, dare to make it with the most renowned heathens of antiquity. *Cri.* It is a common prejudice, to despise the present, and over-rate remote times and things. Something of this seems to enter into the judgments men make of the Greeks and Romans. For though it must be allowed, those nations produced some noble spirits and great patterns of virtue: yet upon the whole, it seems to me they were much inferior in point of real virtue and good morals, even to this corrupt and profligate nation, as you are now pleased to call it in dishonour to our religion; however you may think fit to characterize it, when you would do honour to the minute philosophy. This, I think, will be plain to any one, who shall turn off his eyes from a few shining characters, to view the general manners and customs of those people. Their insolent treatment of captives, even of the highest rank and softer sex,[1] their unnatural exposing of their own children, their bloody gladiatorian spectacles, compared with the common notions of Englishmen, are to me a plain proof, that our minds are much softened by Christianity. Could any thing be more unjust, than the condemning a young lady to the most infamous punishment and death for the guilt of her father, or a whole family of slaves, perhaps some hundreds, for a crime committed by one? or more abominable than their bacchanals and unbridled lusts of every kind? which, notwithstanding all that has been done by minute philosophers to debauch the nation, and their successful attempts on some part of it, have not yet been matched among us, at least not in every circumstance of impudence and effrontery. While the Romans were poor, they were temperate; but, as they grew rich, they became luxurious to a degree that is hardly believed or conceived by us. It cannot be denied, the old Roman spirit was a great one. But it is as certain, there have been numberless examples of the most resolute and clear courage in Britons, and in general from a religious cause. Upon the whole, it seems an instance of the greatest

blindness and ingratitude, that we do not see and own the exceeding great benefits of Christianity, which to omit higher considerations, hath so visibly softened, polished, and embellished our manners.

XIII. *Alc.* O Crito, we are alarmed at cruelty in a foreign shape, but overlook it in a familiar one. Else how is it possible that you should not see the inhumanity of that barbarous custom of duelling, a thing avowed and tolerated, and even reputable, among us? Or that, seeing this, you should suppose our Englishmen of a more gentle disposition than the old Romans, who were altogether strangers to it? *Cri.* I will by no means make an apology for every Goth that walks the streets, with a determined purpose to murder any man who shall but spit in his face, or give him the lie. Nor do I think the Christian religion is in the least answerable for a practice so directly opposite to its precepts, and which obtains only among the idle part of the nation, your men of fashion; who, instead of law, reason, or religion, are governed by fashion. Be pleased to consider that what may be, and truly is, a most scandalous reproach to a Christian country, may be none at all to the christian religion: for the pagan encouraged men in several vices, but the Christian in none. *Alc.* Give me leave to observe, that what you now say is foreign to the purpose. For the question, at present, is not concerning the respective tendencies of the pagan and the Christian religions, but concerning our manners, as actually compared with those of ancient heathens, who I aver had no such barbarous custom as duelling. *Cri.* And I aver that, bad as this is, they had a worse; and that was poisoning. By which we have reason to think there were many more lives destroyed, than by this Gothic crime of duelling: inasmuch as it extended to all ages, sexes, and characters, and as its effects were more secret and unavoidable; and as it had more temptations, interest as well as passion, to recommend it to wicked men. And for the fact, not to waste time, I refer you to the Roman authors themselves. *Lys.* It is very true: duelling is not so general a nuisance as poisoning, nor of so base a nature. This crime, if it be a crime, is in a fair way to keep its ground in spite of the law and the gospel. The clergy never preach against it, because themselves never suffer by it: and the man of honour must not appear against the means of vindicating honour. *Cri.* Though it be remarked by some of your sect, that the clergy are not used to preach against duelling, yet I neither think the remark itself just, nor the reason assigned for it. In effect, one-half of their sermons, all that is said of charity, brotherly love, forbearance, meekness, and forgiving injuries, is directly against this wicked custom; by which the clergy themselves are so far from never suffering, that perhaps they will be found, all things considered, to suffer oftener than

other men. *Lys.* How do you make this appear? *Cri.* An observer of mankind may remark two kinds of bully, the fighting and the tame, both public nuisances, the former (who is the more dangerous animal, but by much the less common of the two) employs himself wholly and solely against the laity, while the tame species exert their talents upon the clergy. The qualities constituent of this tame bully are natural rudeness joined with a delicate sense of danger. For, you must know, the force of inbred insolence and ill manners is not diminished, though it acquire a new determination, from the fashionable custom of calling men to account for their behaviour. Hence you may often see one of these tame bullies ready to burst with pride and ill-humour, which he dares not vent till a parson has come in the way to his relief. And the man of raillery, who would as soon bite off his tongue, as break a jest on the profession of arms in the presence of a military man, shall instantly brighten up, and assume a familiar air with religion and the church before ecclesiastics. Dorcon, who passeth for a poltroon and stupid in all other company, and really is so, when he is got among clergymen, affects a quite opposite character. And many Dorcons there are which owe their wit and courage to this passive order.

XIV. *Alc.* But to return to the point in hand, can you deny the old Romans were as famous for justice and integrity as men in these days for the contrary qualities? *Cri.* The character of the Romans is not to be taken from the sentiments of Tully, or Cato's actions, or a shining passage here and there in their history, but from the prevailing tenor of their lives and notions. Now if they and our modern Britons are weighed in this same equal balance, you will, if I mistake not, appear to have been prejudiced in favour of the old Romans against your own country, probably because it professeth Christianity. Whatever instances of fraud or injustice may be seen in Christians carry their own censure with them, in the care that is taken to conceal them, and the shame that attends their discovery. There is, even at this day, a sort of modesty in all our public councils and deliberations. And I believe the boldest of our minute philosophers would hardly undertake, in a popular assembly, to propose any thing parallel to the rape of the Sabines, the most unjust usage of Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, or the ungrateful treatment of Camillus, which, as a learned father observes, were instances of iniquity agreed to by the public body of the Romans. And if Rome in her early days were capable of such flagrant injustice, it is most certain she did not mend her manners as she grew great in wealth and empire, having produced monsters in every kind of wickedness, as far exceeding other men as they surpassed them in power. I freely acknowledge, the Christian religion hath not had the same influence upon the nation, that it would

in case it had been always professed in its purity, and cordially believed by all men. But I will venture to say, that if you take the Roman history from one end to the other, and impartially compare it with our own, you will neither find them so good, nor your countrymen so bad as you imagine. On the contrary, an indifferent eye may, I verily think, perceive a vein of charity and justice, the effect of Christian principles, run through the latter; which, though not equally discernible in all parts, yet discloseth itself sufficiently to make a wide difference upon the whole in spite of the general appetites and passions of human nature, as well as of the particular hardness and roughness of the block out of which we were hewn. And it is observable (what the Roman authors themselves do often suggest) that even their virtues and magnanimous actions rose and fell with a sense of providence and a future state, and a philosophy the nearest to the Christian religion.

XV. Crito having spoke thus, paused. But Alciphron, addressing himself to Euphranor and me, said, It is natural for men, according to their several educations and prejudices, to form contrary judgments upon the same things, which they view in very different lights. Crito, for instance, imagines that none but salutary effects proceed from religion: on the other hand, if you appeal to the general experience and observation of other men, you shall find it grown into a proverb that religion is the root of evil.

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

And this not only among Epicureans or other ancient heathens, but among moderns speaking of the Christian religion. Now methinks it is unreasonable to oppose against the general concurring opinion of the world, the observation of a particular person, or particular set of zealots, whose prejudice sticks close to them, and ever mixeth with their judgment; and who read, collect, and observe with an eye not to discover the truth, but to defend their prejudice. *Cri.* Though I cannot think with Alciphron, yet I must own I admire his address and dexterity in argument. Popular and general opinion is by him represented, on certain occasions, to be a sure mark of error. But when it serves his ends that it should seem otherwise, he can as easily make it a character of truth. But it will by no means follow, that a profane proverb used by the friends and admired authors of a minute philosopher, must therefore be a received opinion, much less a truth grounded on the experience and observation of mankind. Sadness may spring from guilt or superstition, and rage from bigotry; but darkness might as well be supposed the natural effect of sunshine, as sullen and furious passions to proceed from the glad tidings and divine precepts of the gospel.

What is the sum and substance, scope and end, of Christ's religion, but the love of God and man? to which all other points and duties are relative and subordinate, as parts or means, as signs, principles, motives, or effects. Now I would fain know, how it is possible for evil or wickedness of any kind to spring from such a source? I will not pretend, there are no evil qualities in Christians, nor good in minute philosophers. But this I affirm, that whatever evil is in us, our principles certainly lead to good; and whatever good there may be in you, it is most certain your principles lead to evil.

XVI. *Alc.* It must be owned there is a fair outside, and many plausible things may be said, for the Christian religion taken simply as it lies in the gospel. But it is the observation of one of our great writers, that the first Christian preachers very cunningly began with the fairest face and the best moral doctrines in the world. It was all love, charity, meekness, patience, and so forth. But when by this means they had drawn over the world and got power, they soon changed their appearance, and showed cruelty, ambition, avarice, and every bad quality. *Cri.* That is to say, some men very cunningly preached and underwent a world of hardships, and laid down their lives to propagate the best principles and the best morals, to the end that others some centuries after might reap the benefit of bad ones. Whoever may be cunning, there is not much cunning in the maker of this observation. *Alc.* And yet ever since this religion hath appeared in the world, we have had eternal feuds, factions, massacres, and wars, the very reverse of that hymn with which it is introduced in the gospel: Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good-will towards men. *Cri.* This I will not deny. I will even own that the gospel and the Christian religion have been often the pretexts for these evils; but it will not thence follow they were the cause. On the contrary it is plain they could not be the real, proper cause of these evils, because a rebellious, proud, revengeful, quarrelsome spirit is directly opposite to the whole tenor and most express precepts of Christianity: a point so clear that I shall not prove it. And secondly, because all those evils you mention were as frequent, nay much more frequent, before the Christian religion was known in the world. They are the common product of the passions and vices of mankind, which are sometimes covered with the mask of religion by wicked men, having the form of godliness without the power of it. This truth seems so plain, that I am surprised how any man of sense, knowledge, and candour can make a doubt of it.

XVII. Take but a view of heathen Rome; what a scene is there of faction and fury and civil rage! Let any man consider the perpetual feuds between the patricians and plebeians, the bloody and inhuman factions of Marius and Sylla, Cinna and

Octavius, and the vast havoc of mankind, during the two famous triumvirates. To be short, let any man of common candour and common sense but cast an eye from one end to the other of the Roman story, and behold that long scene of seditions, murders, massacres, proscriptions, and desolations of every kind, enhanced by every cruel circumstance of rage, rapine, and revenge, and then say, whether those evils were introduced into the world with the Christian religion, or whether they are not less frequent now than before? *Alc.* The ancient Romans, it must be owned, had a high and fierce spirit, which produced eager contentions and very bloody catastrophes. The Greeks, on the other hand, were a polite and gentle sort of men, softened by arts and philosophy. It is impossible to think of the little states and cities of Greece, without wishing to have lived in those times, without admiring their policy and envying their happiness. *Cri.* Men are apt to consider the dark sides of what they possess, and the bright ones of things out of their reach. A fine climate, elegant taste, polite amusements, love of liberty, and most ingenious inventive spirit for arts and sciences were indisputable prerogatives of ancient Greece. But as for peace and quietness, gentleness and humanity, I think we have plainly the advantage: for those envied cities composed of gentle Greeks were not without their factions, which persecuted each other with such treachery, rage, and malice, that in respect of them our factious folk are mere lambs. To be convinced of this truth, you need only look into Thucydides,* where you will find those cities in general involved in such bitter factions, as for fellow-citizens without the formalities of war to murder one another, even in their senate-houses and their temples, no regard being had to merit, rank, obligation, or nearness of blood. And if human nature boiled up to so vehement a pitch in the politest people, what wonder that savage nations should scalp, roast, torture, and destroy each other, as they are known to do? It is therefore plain, that without religion there would not be wanting pretexts for quarrels and debates; all which can very easily be accounted for by the natural infirmities and corruption of men. It would not perhaps be so easy to account for the blindness of those, who impute the most hellish effects to the most divine principle, if they could be supposed in earnest, and to have considered the point. One may daily see ignorant and prejudiced men make the most absurd blunders: but that free-thinkers, divers to the bottom of things, fair inquirers, and openers of eyes, should be capable of such a gross mistake, is what one would not expect.

XVIII. *Alc.* The rest of mankind we could more easily give up: but as for the Greeks, men of the most refined genius express an high esteem of them, not only on account of those

* Thucyd. lib. 3.

qualities which you think fit to allow them, but also for their virtues. *Cri.* I shall not take upon me to say how far some men may be prejudiced against their country, or whether others may not be prejudiced in favour of it. But upon the fullest and most equal observation that I am able to make, it is my opinion, that, if by virtue is meant truth, justice, gratitude, there is incomparably more virtue now at this day in England, than at any time could be found in ancient Greece. Thus much will be allowed, that we know few countries, if any, where men of eminent worth, and famous for deserving well of the public, met with harder fate, and were more ungratefully treated, than in the most polite and learned of the Grecian states. Though Socrates, it must be owned, would not allow that those statesmen, by adorning the city, augmenting the fleet, or extending the commerce of Athens, deserved well of their country; or could with justice complain of the ungrateful returns made by their fellow-citizens, whom, while they were in power, they had taken no care to make better men, by improving and cultivating their minds with the principles of virtue, which if they had done, they needed not to have feared their ingratitude. If I were to declare my opinion, what gave the chief advantage to Greeks and Romans and other nations, which have made the greatest figure in the world, I should be apt to think it was a peculiar reverence for their respective laws and institutions, which inspired them with steadiness and courage, and that hearty, generous love of their country, by which they did not merely understand a certain language or tribe of men, much less a particular spot of earth, but included a certain system of manners, customs, notions, rites, and laws, civil and religious. *Alc.* Oh! I perceive your drift; you would have us reverence the laws and religious institutions of our country. But herein we beg to be excused, if we do not think fit to imitate the Greeks, or to be governed by any authority whatsoever. But to return: as for wars and factions, I grant they ever were and ever will be in the world upon some pretext or other, as long as men are men.

XIX. But there is a sort of war and warriors peculiar to Christendom, which the heathens had no notion of: I mean disputes in theology and polemical divines, which the world hath been wonderfully pestered with: these teachers of peace, meekness, concord, and what not! if you take their word for it: but if you cast an eye upon their practice, you find them to have been in all ages the most contentious, quarrelsome, disagreeing crew that ever appeared upon earth. To observe the skill and sophistry, the zeal and eagerness, with which those barbarians, the school divines, split hairs and contest about chimeras, gives me more indignation, as being more absurd and a greater scandal to human reason, than all the ambitious intrigues, cabals, and

politics, of the court of Rome. *Cri.* If divines are quarrelsome, that is not so far forth as divine, but as undivine and unchristian. Justice is a good thing, and the art of healing is excellent; nevertheless, in the administering of justice or physic, men may be wronged or poisoned. But as wrong cannot be justice, or the effect of justice, so poison cannot be medicine or the effect of medicine, so neither can pride or strife be religion or the effect of religion. Having premised this, I acknowledge, you may often see hot-headed bigots engage themselves in religious as well as civil parties, without being of credit or service to either. And as for the schoolmen in particular, I do not in the least think the Christian religion concerned in the defence of them, their tenets, or their method of handling them: but whatever futility there may be in their notions, or inelegancy in their language, in pure justice to truth one must own, they neither banter, nor rail, nor declaim in their writings, and are so far from showing fury, or passion, that perhaps an impartial judge will think, the minute philosophers are by no means to be compared with them for keeping close to the point, or for temper and good manners. But after all, if men are puzzled, wrangle, talk nonsense, and quarrel about religion, so they do about law, physic, politics, and every thing else of moment. I ask, whether in these professions or in any other, where men have refined and abstracted, they do not run into disputes, chicane, nonsense, and contradictions, as well as in divinity? And yet this doth not hinder, but there may be many excellent rules, and just notions, and useful truths in all those professions. In all disputes human passions too often mix themselves, in proportion as the subject is conceived to be more or less important. But we ought not to confound the cause of men with the cause of God, or make human follies an objection to divine truths. It is easy to distinguish what looks like wisdom from above, and what proceeds from the passion and weakness of men. This is so clear a point, that one would be tempted to think, the not doing it was an effect, not of ignorance, but of something worse.

XX. The conduct we object to minute philosophers is a natural consequence of their principles. Whatsoever they can reproach us with is an effect, not of our principles, but of human passion and frailty. *Alc.* This is admirable. So we must no longer object to Christians, the absurd contentions of councils, the cruelty of inquisitions, the ambition and usurpations of churchmen. *Cri.* You may object them to Christians but not to Christianity. If the divine author of our religion and his disciples have sown a good seed; and together with this good seed, the enemies of his gospel (among whom are to be reckoned the minute philosophers of all ages) have sown bad seeds, whence spring tares and thistles; is it not evident, these bad weeds can-

not be imputed to the good seed, or to those who sowed it? Whatever you do or can object against ecclesiastical tyranny, usurpation, or sophistry, may, without any blemish or disadvantage to religion, be acknowledged by all true Christians; provided still that you impute those wicked effects to their true cause, not blaming any principles or persons for them, but those that really produce or justify them. Certainly, as the interests of Christianity are not to be supported by unchristian methods, whenever these are made use of, it must be supposed there is some other latent principle which sets them at work. If the very court of Rome hath been known, from motives of policy, to oppose settling the inquisition in a kingdom, where the secular power hath endeavoured to introduce it in spite of that court:* we may well suppose, that elsewhere factions of state, and political views of princes, have given birth to transactions seemingly religious, wherein at bottom neither religion, nor church, nor churchmen, were at all considered. As no man of common sense and honesty will engage in a general defence of ecclesiastics, so I think no man of common candour can condemn them in general. Would you think it reasonable, to blame all statesmen, lawyers, or soldiers, for the faults committed by those of their profession, though in other times, or in other countries, and influenced by other maxims and other discipline? And if not, why do you measure with one rule to the clergy, and another to the laity? Surely the best reason that can be given for this is prejudice. Should any man rake together all the mischiefs that have been committed, in all ages and nations, by soldiers and lawyers, you would, I suppose, conclude from thence, not that the state should be deprived of those useful professions, but only that their exorbitances should be guarded against and punished. If you took the same equitable course with the clergy, there would indeed be less to be said against you; but then you would have much less to say. This plain, obvious consideration, if every one who read considered, would lessen the credit of your declaimers. *Alc.* But when all is said that can be said, it must move a man's indignation to see reasonable creatures, under the notion of study and learning, employed in reading and writing so many voluminous tracts *de lanâ caprinâ*. *Cri.* I shall not undertake the vindication of theological writings, a general defence being as needless as a general charge is groundless. Only let them speak for themselves, and let no man condemn them upon the word of a minute philosopher. But we will imagine the very worst, and suppose a wrangling pedant in divinity disputes, and ruminates, and writes upon a refined point, as useless and unintelligible as you please. Suppose this same person bred

* P. Paolo Istoria dell' Inquisizione, p. 42.

a layman, might he not have employed himself in tricking bargains, vexatious law-suits, factions, seditions, and such like amusements, with much more prejudice to the public? Suffer then curious wits to spin cobwebs; where is the hurt? *Alc.* The mischief is, what men want in light they commonly make up in heat: zeal and ill nature being weapons constantly exerted by the partisans, as well as champions, on either side: and those perhaps not mean pedants or book-worms. You shall often see even the learned and eminent divine lay himself out in explaining things inexplicable, or contend for a barren point of theory, as if his life, liberty, or fortune were at stake. *Cri.* No doubt all points in divinity are not of equal moment. Some may be too fine spun, and others have more stress laid on them than they deserve. Be the subject what it will, you shall often observe that a point, by being controverted, singled out, examined, and nearly inspected, groweth considerable to the same eye, that, perhaps, would have overlooked it in a large and comprehensive view. Nor is it an uncommon thing, to behold ignorance and zeal united in men, who are born with a spirit of party, though the church or religion have in truth but small share in it. Nothing is easier than to make a *caricatura* (as the painters call it) of any profession upon earth: but at bottom, there will be found nothing so strange in all this charge upon the clergy, as the partiality of those who censure them, in supposing the common defects of mankind peculiar to their order, or the effect of religious principles. *Alc.* Other folks may dispute or squabble as they please, and nobody mind them; but it seems, these venerable squabbles of the clergy pass for learning, and interest mankind. To use the words of the most ingenious characterizer of our times, "A ring is made, and readers gather in abundance. Every one takes party and encourages his own side. This shall be my champion! This man for my money! Well hit on our side! Again a good stroke! There he was even with him! Have at him the next bout! excellent sport!"* *Cri.* Methinks I trace the man of quality and breeding in this delicate satire, which so politely ridicules those arguments, answers, defences, and replications which the press groans under. *Alc.* To the infinite waste of time and paper, and all the while nobody is one whit the wiser. And who indeed can be the wiser for reading books upon subjects quite out of the way, incomprehensible, and most wretchedly written? What man of sense or breeding would not abhor the infection of prolix pulpit eloquence, or of that dry, formal, pedantic, stiff, and clumsy style which smells of the lamp and the college.

XXI. They who have the weakness to reverence the univer-

* Characteristics, vol. iii. c. 2.

sities as seats of learning, must needs think this a strange reproach; but it is a very just one. For the most ingenious men are now agreed, that they are only nurseries of prejudice, corruption, barbarism, and pedantry. *Lys.* For my part, I find no fault with universities. All I know is, that I had the spending three hundred pounds a year in one of them, and think it the cheerfullest time of my life. As for their books and style I had not leisure to mind them. *Cri.* Whoever has a mind to weed will never want work; and he that shall pick out bad books on every subject will soon fill his library. I do not know what theological writings Alciphron and his friends may be conversant in; but I will venture to say, one may find among our English divines many writers, who for compass of learning, weight of matter, strength of argument, and purity of style, are not inferior to any in our language. It is not my design to apologize for the universities: whatever is amiss in them (and what is there perfect among men?) I heartily wish amended. But I dare affirm, because I know it to be true, that any impartial observer, although they should not come up to what in theory he might wish or imagine, will nevertheless find them much superior to those that in fact are to be found in other countries, and far beyond the mean picture that is drawn of them by minute philosophers. It is natural for those to rail most at places of education, who have profited least by them. Weak and fond parents will also readily impute to a wrong cause, those corruptions themselves have occasioned, by allowing their children more money than they knew how to spend innocently. And too often a gentleman who has been idle at the college, and kept idle company, will judge of a whole university from his own cabal. *Alc.* Crito mistakes the point. I vouch the authority, not of a dunce, or a rake, or absurd parent, but of the most consummate critic this age has produced. This great man characterizeth men of the church and universities with the finest touches and most masterly pencil. What do you think he calls them? *Euph.* What? *Alc.* Why, the black tribe, magicians, formalists, pedants, bearded boys, and, having sufficiently derided and exploded them and their mean, ungenteel learning, he sets most admirable models of his own for good writing: and it must be acknowledged they are the finest things in our language; as I could easily convince you, for I am never without something of that noble writer about me. *Euph.* He is then a noble writer? *Alc.* I tell you he is a nobleman. *Euph.* But a nobleman who writes is one thing, and a noble writer another. *Alc.* Both characters are coincident, as you may see.

XXII. Upon which Alciphron pulled a treatise out of his pocket, entitled A Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author. Would you behold, said he, looking round upon the company, a noble speci-

men of fine writing; do but dip into this book: which Crito opening, read verbatim as follows.*

" Where then are the pleasures which ambition promises
And love affords? How is the gay world enjoyed?
Or are those to be esteemed no pleasures
Which are lost by dulness and inaction?
But indolence is the highest pleasure.
To live and not to feel! To feel no trouble.
What good then? Life itself. And is
This properly to live? is sleeping life?
Is this what I should study to prolong?
Here the
Fantastic tribe itself seem scandalized.
A civil war begins: the major part
Of the capricious dames do range themselves
On reason's side,
And declare against the languid siren.
Ambition blushes at the offered sweet.
Conceit and vanity take superior airs.
Even luxury herself in her polite
And elegant humour reproves the apostate
Sister,
And marks her as an alien to true pleasure.
Away thou
Drowsy phantom! haunt me no more; for I
Have learned from better than thy sisterhood
That life and happiness consist in action
And employment.
But here a busy form solicits us,
Active, industrious, watchful, and despising
Pains, and labour. She wears the serious
Countenance of virtue, but with features
Of anxiety and disquiet.
What is it she mutters? What looks she on with
Such admiration and astonishment?
Bags! coffers! heaps of shining metal! What?
For the service of luxury? For her
These preparations? Art thou then her friend,
Grave fancy! Is it for her thou toilest?
No, but for provision against want.
But luxury apart, tell me now,
Hast thou not already a competence?
It is good to be secure against the fear
Of starving. Is there then no death but this?
No other passage out of life? Are other doors
Secured if this be barred? Say avarice!
Thou emptiest of phantoms, is it not vile
Cowardice thou servest? what further have I then
To do with thee, thou doubly vile dependant,
When once I have dismissed thy patroness,
And despised her threats?
Thus I contend with fancy and opinion."

Euphranor, having heard thus far, cried out: What! will you never have done with your poetry? another time may serve: but why should we break off our conference to read a play? You are mistaken, it is no play nor poetry, replied Alciphron, but a

* Part iii. sect. ii.

famous modern critic moralizing in prose. You must know this great man hath (to use his own words) revealed a grand *arcanum* to the world, having instructed mankind in what he calls *mirror-writing, self-discoursing practice, and author practice*, and showed "that by virtue of an intimate recess, we may discover a certain duplicity of soul, and divide our self into two parties, or (as he varies the phrase) practically form the dual number." In consequence whereof, he hath found out that a man may argue with himself, and not only with himself, but also with notions, sentiments, and vices, which by a marvellous prosopopœia he converts into so many ladies, and so converted, he confutes and confounds them in a divine strain. Can any thing be finer, bolder, or more sublime? *Euph.* It is very wonderful. I thought indeed you had been reading a piece of a tragedy. Is this he who despiseth our universities, and sets up for reforming the style and taste of the age? *Alc.* The very same. This is the admired critic of our times. Nothing can stand the test of his correct judgment, which is equally severe to poets and parsons. "The British muses," saith this great man, "lisp as in their cradles: and their stammering tongues, which nothing but youth and rawness can excuse, have hitherto spoken in wretched pun and quibble. Our dramatic Shakespeare, our Fletcher, Johnson, and our epic Milton preserve this style. And, according to him, even our later authors, aiming at a false sublime, entertain our raw fancy and unpractised ear, which has not yet had leisure to form itself, and become truly musical." *Euph.* Pray what effect may the lessons of this great man, in whose eyes our learned professors are but bearded boys, and our most celebrated wits but wretched punsters, have had upon the public? Hath he rubbed off the college rust, cured the rudeness and rawness of our authors, and reduced them to his own Attic standard? Do they aspire to his true sublime, or imitate his chaste, unaffected style? *Alc.* Doubtless the taste of the age is much mended: in proof whereof his writings are universally admired. When our author published this treatise, he foresaw the public taste would improve apace; that arts and letters would grow to great perfection; that there would be a happy birth of genius: of all which things he spoke, as he saith himself, in a prophetic style. *Cri.* And yet notwithstanding the prophetical predictions of this critic, I do not find any science that throve among us of late, so much as the minute philosophy. In this kind, it must be confessed, we have had many notable productions. But whether they are such masterpieces for good writing, I leave to be determined by their readers.

XXIII. In the mean time, I must beg to be excused, if I cannot believe your great man on his bare word, when he would have us think, that ignorance and ill taste are owing to the Christian religion or the clergy; it being my sincere opinion, that what-

ever learning or knowledge we have among us, is derived from that order. If those, who are so sagacious at discovering a mote in other eyes, would but purge their own, I believe they might easily see this truth. For what but religion could kindle and preserve a spirit towards learning, in such a northern, rough people? Greece produced men of active and subtile genius. The public conventions and emulations of their cities forwarded that genius; and their natural curiosity was amused and excited by learned conversations, in their public walks and gardens and porticos. Our genius leads to amusements of a grosser kind: we breathe a grosser and a colder air: and that curiosity which was general in the Athenians, and the gratifying of which was their chief recreation, is among our people of fashion treated like affectation, and as such banished from polite assemblies and places of resort; and without doubt would in a little time be banished the country, if it were not for the great reservoirs of learning, where those formalists, pedants, and bearded boys, as your profound critic calls them, are maintained by the liberality and piety of our predecessors. For it is as evident that religion was the cause of those seminaries, as it is that they are the cause or source of all the learning and taste which is to be found, even in those very men who are the declared enemies of our religion and public foundations. Every one, who knows any thing, knows we are indebted for our learning to the Greek and Latin tongues. This those severe censors will readily grant. Perhaps they may not be so ready to grant, what all men must see, that we are indebted for those tongues to our religion. What else could have made foreign and dead languages in such request among us? What could have kept in being and handed them down to our times, through so many dark ages in which the world was wasted and disfigured by wars and violence? What, but a regard to the holy scriptures, and theological writings of the fathers and doctors of the church? And in fact, do we not find that the learning of those times was solely in the hands of ecclesiastics, that they alone lighted the lamp in succession one from another, and transmitted it down to after-ages; and that ancient books were collected and preserved in their colleges and seminaries, when all love and remembrance of polite arts and studies was extinguished among the laity, whose ambition entirely turned to arms?

XXIV. *Alc.* There is, I must needs say, one sort of learning undoubtedly of Christian original, and peculiar to the universities where our youth spend several years in acquiring that mysterious jargon of scholasticism; than which there could never have been contrived a more effectual method to perplex and confound human understanding. It is true, gentlemen are untaught by the world what they have been taught at the college: but then their time is doubly lost. *Cri.* But what if this scholastic learning was not

of Christian but of Mahometan original, being derived from the Arabs? And what if this grievance of gentlemen's spending several years in learning and unlearning this jargon, be all grimace and a specimen only of the truth and candour of certain minute philosophers, who raise great invectives from slight occasions, and judge too often without inquiring? Surely it would be no such deplorable loss of time, if a young gentlemen spent a few months upon that so much despised and decried art of logic, a surfeit of which is by no means the prevailing nuisance of this age. It is one thing to waste one's time in learning and unlearning the barbarous terms, wiredrawn distinctions, and prolix sophistry of the schoolmen, and another to attain some exactness in defining and arguing: things perhaps not altogether beneath the dignity even of a minute philosopher. There was indeed a time, when logic was considered as its own object: and that art of reasoning, instead of being transferred to things, turned altogether upon words and abstractions: which produced a sort of leprosy in all parts of knowledge, corrupting and converting them into hollow, verbal disputations in a most impure dialect. But those times are past; and that, which had been cultivated as the principal learning for some ages, is now considered in another light, and by no means makes that figure in the universities, or bears that part in the studies of young gentlemen educated there, which is pretended by those admirable reformers of religion and learning, the minute philosophers.

XXV. But who were they that encouraged and produced the restoration of arts and polite learning? What share had the minute philosophers in this affair? Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary, Alphonsus, king of Naples, Cosmus de Medicis, Picus of Mirandula, and other princes and great men, famous for learning themselves, and for encouraging it in others with a munificent liberality, were neither Turks, nor gentiles, nor minute philosophers. Who was it that transplanted and revived the Greek language and authors, and with them all polite arts and literature in the west? Was it not chiefly Bessarion, a cardinal, Marcus Musurus, an archbishop, Theodore Beza, a private clergyman? Has there been a greater and more renowned patron and restorer of elegant studies in every kind, since the days of Augustus Cæsar, than Leo the tenth, pope of Rome? Did any writers approach the purity of the classics nearer than the cardinals Bembus and Sadoletus, or than the bishops Jovius and Vida? not to mention an endless number of ingenious ecclesiastics, who flourished on the other side of the Alps in the golden age (as the Italians call it) of Leo the tenth, and wrote, both in their own language and the Latin, after the best models of antiquity. It is true, this first recovery of learning preceded the reformation, and lighted the way to it: but the religious controversies, which

ensued, did wonderfully propagate and improve it in all parts of Christendom. And surely, the church of England is, at least, as well calculated for the encouragement of learning as that of Rome. Experience confirms this observation; and I believe the minute philosophers will not be so partial to Rome as to deny it. *Alc.* It is impossible your account of learning beyond the Alps should be true. The noble critic in my hands, having complimented the French, to whom he allows some good authors, asserts of other foreigners, particularly the Italians, "that they may be reckoned no better than the corrupters of true learning and erudition." *Cri.* With some sorts of critics, dogmatical censures and conclusions are not always the result of perfect knowledge or exact inquiry: and if they harangue upon taste, truth of art, a just piece, grace of style, Attic elegance, and such topics, they are to be understood only as those that would fain talk themselves into reputation for courage. To hear Thrasymachus speak of resentment, duels, and point of honour, one would think him ready to burst with valour. *Lys.* Whatever merit this writer may have as a demolisher, I always thought he had very little as a builder. It is natural for careless writers to run into faults they never think of; but for an exact and severe critic to shoot his bolt at random, is unpardonable. If he, who professes at every turn a high esteem for polite writing, should yet despise those who most excel in it, one would be tempted to suspect his taste. But if the very man, who of all men talks most about art, and taste, and critical skill, and would be thought to have most considered those points, should often deviate from his own rules, into the false sublime or the *mauvaise plaisanterie:* what reasonable man would follow the taste and judgment of such a guide, or be seduced to climb the steep ascent, or tread in the rugged paths of virtue on his recommendation?

XXVI. *Alc.* But to return, methinks Crito makes no compliment to the genius of his country, in supposing that Englishmen might not have wrought out of themselves all art and science and good taste, without being beholden to church, or universities, or ancient languages. *Cri.* What might have been is only conjecture. What has been, it is not difficult to know. That there is a vein in Britain of as rich an ore as ever was in any country, I will not deny; but it lies deep, and will cost pains to come at: and extrordinary pains require an extraordinary motive. As for what lies next the surface, it seems but indifferent, being neither so good nor in such plenty as in some other countries. It was the comparison of an ingenious Florentine, that the celebrated poems of Tasso and Ariosto are like two gardens, the one of cucumbers, the other of melons. In the one you shall find few bad, but the best are not a very good fruit, in the other much the greater part are good for nothing, but those

that are good are excellent. Perhaps the same comparison may hold, between the English and some of their neighbours. *Alc.* But suppose we should grant that the Christian religion and its seminaries might have been of use, in preserving or retrieving polite arts and letters; what then? Will you make this an argument of its truth? *Cri.* I will make it an argument of prejudice and ingratitude in those minute philosophers, who object darkness, ignorance, and rudeness, as an effect of that very thing, which above all others hath enlightened and civilized and embellished their country: which is as truly indebted to it for arts and sciences (which nothing but religion was ever known to have planted in such a latitude) as for that general sense of virtue and humanity, and the belief of a providence and future state, which all the argumentation of minute philosophers hath not yet been able to abolish.

XXVII. *Alc.* It is strange you should still persist to argue, as if all the gentlemen of our sect were enemies to virtue, and downright atheists: though I have assured you of the contrary, and that we have among us several, who profess themselves in the interests of virtue and natural religion, and have also declared, that I myself do now argue upon that foot. *Cri.* How can you pretend to be in the interest of natural religion, and yet be professed enemies of the Christian, the only established religion which includes whatever is excellent in the natural, and which is the only means of making those precepts, duties, and notions, so called, become reverenced throughout the world? Would not he be thought weak or insincere, who should go about to persuade people, that he was much in the interests of an earthly monarch; that he loved and admired his government; when at the same time he showed himself on all occasions a most bitter enemy of those very persons and methods, which above all others contributed most to his service, and to make his dignity known and revered, his laws observed, or his dominion extended? And is not this what minute philosophers do, while they set up for advocates of God and religion, and yet do all they can to discredit Christians and their worship? It must be owned, indeed, that you argue against Christianity, as the cause of evil and wickedness in the world; but with such arguments, and in such a manner, as might equally prove the same thing of civil government, of meat and drink, of every faculty and profession, of learning, of eloquence, and even of human reason itself. After all, even those of your sect who allow themselves to be called deists, if their notions are thoroughly examined, will, I fear, be found to include little of religion in them. As for the providence of God watching over the conduct of human agents, and dispensing blessings or chastisements, the immortality of the soul, a final judgment, and future state of rewards and punishments; how

few, if any, of your free-thinkers have made it their endeavour to possess men's minds with a serious sense of those great points of natural religion! How many, on the contrary, endeavour to render the belief of them doubtful or ridiculous! *Lys.* To speak the truth, I, for my part, had never any liking to religion of any kind, either revealed or unrevealed: and I dare venture to say the same for those gentlemen of our sect that I am acquainted with, having never observed them guilty of so much meanness, as even to mention the name of God with reverence, or speak with the least regard of piety or any sort of worship. There may perhaps be found one or two formal pretenders to enthusiasm and devotion, in the way of natural religion, who laughed at Christians for publishing hymns and meditations, while they plagued the world with as bad of their own: but the sprightly men make a jest of all this. It seems to us mere pedantry. Sometimes, indeed, in good company one may hear a word dropped in commendation of honour and good nature: but the former of these, by connoisseurs, is always understood to mean nothing but fashion, as the latter is nothing but temper and constitution, which guides a man just as appetite doth a brute.

XXVIII. And after all these arguments and notions, which beget one another without end; to take the matter short, neither I nor my friends for our souls could ever comprehend, why man might not do very well, and govern himself without any religion at all, as well as a brute, which is thought the sillier creature of the two. Have brutes instincts, senses, appetites, and passions, to steer and conduct them? So have men, and reason over and above to consult upon occasion. From these premises we conclude, the road of human life is sufficiently lighted without religion. *Cri.* Brutes having but small power, limited to things present or particular, are sufficiently opposed and kept in order, by the force or faculties of other animals and the skill of man, without conscience or religion: but conscience is a necessary balance to human reason, a faculty of such mighty extent and power, especially toward mischief. Besides, other animals are, by the law of their nature, determined to one certain end or kind of being, without inclination or means either to deviate or go beyond it. But man hath in him a will and higher principle; by virtue whereof he may pursue different or even contrary ends, and either fall short of or exceed the perfection natural to his species in this world, as he is capable either, by giving up the reins to his sensual appetites, of degrading himself into the condition of brutes, or else, by well ordering and improving his mind, of being transformed into the similitude of angels. Man alone of all animals hath understanding to know his God. What availeth this knowledge unless it be to ennoble man, and raise him to an imitation and participation of the divinity? Or what

could such ennoblement avail if to end with this life? Or how can these things take effect without religion? But the points of vice and virtue, man and beast, sense and intellect, have been already at large canvassed. What! Lysicles, would you have us go back where we were three or four days ago? *Lys.* By no means: I had much rather go forward, and make an end as soon as possible. But to save trouble, give me leave to tell you once for all, that, say what you can, you shall never persuade me so many ingenious, agreeable men are in the wrong, and a pack of snarling, sour bigots in the right.

XXIX. *Cri.* O Lysicles, I neither look for religion among bigots, nor reason among libertines; each kind disgrace their several pretensions; the one owning no regard even to the plainest and most important truths, while the others exert an angry zeal for points of least concern. And surely whatever there is of silly, narrow, and uncharitable in the bigot, the same is in great measure to be imputed to the conceited ignorance, and petulant profaneness, of the libertine. And it is not at all unlikely that as libertines make bigots, so bigots should make libertines, the extreme of one party being ever observed to produce a contrary extreme of another. And although, while these adversaries draw the rope of contention, reason and religion are often called upon, yet are they perhaps very little considered or concerned in the contest. Lysicles, instead of answering Crito, turned short upon Alciphron. It was always my opinion, said he, that nothing could be sillier than to think of destroying Christianity, by crying up natural religion. Whoever thinks highly of the one can never, with a consistency, think meanly of the other; it being very evident that natural religion, without revealed, never was and never can be established or received any where but in the brains of a few idle speculative men. I was aware what your concessions would come to. The belief of God, virtue, a future state, and such fine notions, are, as every one may see with half an eye, the very basis and corner-stone of the Christian religion. Lay but this foundation for them to build on, and you shall soon see what superstructures our men of divinity will raise from it. The truth and importance of those points once admitted, a man need be no conjurer to prove, upon that principle, the excellency and usefulness of the Christian religion: and then to be sure there must be priests to teach and propagate this useful religion. And if priests, a regular subordination without doubt in this worthy society, and a provision for their maintenance, such as may enable them to perform all their rites and ceremonies with decency, and keep their sacred character above contempt. And the plain consequence of all this is a confederacy between the prince and the priesthood to subdue the people: so we have let in at once upon us a long train of eccle-

siastical evils, priestcraft, hierarchy, inquisition. We have lost our liberty and property, and put the nation to vast expense, only to purchase bridles and saddles for their own backs.

XXX. This being spoke with some sharpness of tone, and an upbraiding air, touched Alciphron to the quick, who replied nothing, but showed confusion in his looks. Crito, smiling, looked at Euphranor and me, then, casting an eye on the two philosophers, spoke as follows: if I may be admitted to interpose good offices, for preventing a rupture between old friends and brethren in opinion, I would observe, that in this charge of Lysicles there is something right and something wrong. It seems right to assert as he doth, that the real belief of natural religion will lead a man to approve of revealed: but it is as wrong to assert, that inquisitions, tyranny, and ruin must follow from thence. Your free-thinkers, without offence be it said, seem to mistake their talent. They imagine strongly, but reason weakly; mighty at exaggeration, and jejune in argument! Can no method be found to relieve them from the terror of that fierce and bloody animal, an English parson? Will it not suffice to pare his talons without chopping off his fingers? Then they are such wonderful patriots for liberty and property! When I hear these two words in the mouth of a minute philosopher, I am put in mind of the Teste di Ferro at Rome. His holiness, it seems, not having power to assign pensions on Spanish benefices to any but natives of Spain, always keeps at Rome two Spaniards, called Teste di Ferro, who have the name of all such pensions but not the profit, which goes to Italians. As we may see every day, both things and notions placed to the account of liberty and property, which in reality neither have nor are meant to have any share in them. What! is it impossible for a man to be a Christian but he must be a slave; or a clergyman, but he must have the principles of an inquisitor? I am far from screening and justifying appetite of domination or tyrannical power in ecclesiastics. Some, who have been guilty in that respect, have sorely paid for it, and it is to be hoped they always will. But having laid the fury and folly of the ambitious prelate, is it not time to look about and spy whether, on the other hand, some evil may not possibly accrue to the state, from the overflowing zeal of an independent whig? This I may affirm, without being at any pains to prove it, that the worst tyranny this nation ever felt was from the hands of patriots of that stamp.

XXXI. *Lys.* I don't know. Tyranny is a harsh word, and sometimes misapplied. When spirited men of independent maxims create a ferment, or make a change in the state: he that loseth is apt to consider things in one light, and he that wins in another. In the meantime this is certainly good policy, that we should be frugal of our money, and reserve it for better uses

than to expend on the church and religion. *Cri.* Surely the old apologue of the belly and members need not be repeated to such knowing men. It should seem as needless to observe, that all other states, which ever made any figure in the world for wisdom and politeness, have thought learning deserved encouragement as well as the sword; that grants for religious uses were as fitting as for knights' service; and foundations for propagating piety, as necessary to the public welfare and defence, as either civil or military establishments. But I ask who are at this expense, and what is this expense so much complained of? *Lys.* As if you had never heard of church lands and tithes. *Cri.* But I would fain know, how they can be charged as an expense, either upon the nation or private men. Where nothing is exported the nation loseth nothing: and it is all one to the public, whether money circulates at home through the hands of a vicar or a squire. Then as for private men, who, for want of thought, are full of complaint about the payment of tithes; can any man justly complain of it as a tax, that he pays what never belonged to him? The tenant rents his farm with this condition, and pays his landlord proportionably less than if his farm had been exempt from it: so he loseth nothing; it being all one to him whether he pays his pastor or his landlord. The landlord cannot complain that he has not what he hath no right to, either by grant, purchase, or inheritance. This is the case of tithes; and as for the church lands, he surely can be no free-thinker, nor any thinker at all, who doth not see that no man, whether noble, gentle, or plebeian, hath any sort of right or claim to them, which he may not with equal justice pretend to all the lands in the kingdom. *Lys.* At present indeed we have no right, and that is our complaint. *Cri.* You would have then what you have no right to. *Lys.* Not so neither: what we would have is first a right conveyed by law, and in the next place, the lands by virtue of such right. *Cri.* In order to this, it might be expedient, in the first place, to get an act passed for excommunicating from all civil rights every man that is a Christian, a scholar, and wears a black coat, as guilty of three capital offences against the public weal of this realm. *Lys.* To deal frankly, I think it would be an excellent good act. It would provide at once for several deserving men, rare artificers in wit and argument and ridicule, who have, too many of them, but small fortunes with a great arrear of merit towards their country, which they have so long enlightened and adorned gratis. *Euph.* Pray tell me, Lysicles, are not the clergy legally possessed of their lands and emoluments? *Lys.* Nobody denies it. *Euph.* Have they not been possessed of them from time immemorial? *Lys.* This too I grant. *Euph.* They claim them by law and ancient prescription. *Lys.* They do. *Euph.* Have the oldest families of the nobility a

better title? *Lys.* I believe not. It grieves me to see so many overgrown estates in the hands of ancient families, on account of no other merit, but what they brought with them into the world. *Euph.* May you not then as well take their lands too, and bestow them on the minute philosophers, as persons of more merit? *Lys.* So much the better. This enlarges our view, and opens a new scene: it is very delightful, in the contemplation of truth, to behold how one theory grows out of another. *Alc.* Old Pætus used to say, that if the clergy were deprived of their hire, we should lose the most popular argument against them. *Lys.* But so long as men live by religion, there will never be wanting teachers and writers in defence of it. *Cri.* And how can you be sure they would be wanting, though they did not live by it; since it is well known Christianity had its defenders even when men died by it? *Lys.* One thing I know, there is a rare nursery of young plants growing up, who have been carefully guarded against every air of prejudice, and sprinkled with the dew of our choicest principles; meanwhile wishes are wearisome, and to our infinite regret nothing can be done, so long as there remains any prejudice in favour of old customs and laws and national constitutions, which, at bottom, we very well know and can demonstrate to be only words and notions.

XXXII. But, I can never hope, Crito, to make you think my schemes reasonable. We reason each right upon his own principles, and shall never agree till we quit our principles, which cannot be done by reasoning. We all talk of just, and right, and wrong, and public good, and all those things. The names may be the same, but the notions and conclusions very different, perhaps diametrically opposite; and yet each may admit of clear proofs, and be inferred by the same way of reasoning. For instance, the gentlemen of the club which I frequent, define man to be a sociable animal: consequently, we exclude from this definition all those human creatures, of whom it may be said, we had rather have their room than their company. And such, though wearing the shape of man, are to be esteemed in all account of reason, not as men, but only as human creatures. Hence it plainly follows, that men of pleasure, men of humour, and men of wit, are alone properly and truly to be considered as men. Whatever therefore conduceth to the emolument of such is for the good of mankind, and consequently very just and lawful, although seeming to be attended with loss or damage to other creatures: inasmuch as no real injury can be done in life or property to those, who know not how to enjoy them. This we hold for clear and well connected reasoning. But others may view things in another light, assign different definitions, draw other inferences, and perhaps consider, what we suppose the very top and flower of the creation, only as a wart or excrescence of

human nature. From all which there must ensue a very different system of morals, politics, rights, and notions. *Cri.* If you have a mind to argue, we will argue; if you have more mind to jest, we will laugh with you. *Lys.*

——— Ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat?

This partition of our kind into men and human creatures, puts me in mind of another notion, broached by one of our club, whom we used to call the Pythagorean.

XXXIII. He made a threefold partition of the human species, into birds, beasts, and fishes, being of opinion that the road of life lies upwards, in a perpetual ascent through the scale of being: in such sort, that the souls of insects after death make their second appearance, in the shape of perfect animals, birds, beasts, or fishes; which upon their death are preferred into human bodies, and in the next stage into beings of a higher and more perfect kind. This man we considered at first as a sort of heretic, because his scheme seemed not to consist with our fundamental tenet, the mortality of the soul: but he justified the notion to be innocent, inasmuch as it included nothing of reward or punishment, and was not proved by any argument, which supposed or implied either incorporeal spirit or providence, being only inferred, by way of analogy, from what he had observed in human affairs, the court, the church, and the army; wherein the tendency is always upwards from lower posts to higher. According to this system, the fishes are those men who swim in pleasure, such as *petits maîtres*, *bons vivans*, and honest fellows. The beasts are dry, drudging, covetous, rapacious folk, and all those addicted to care and business like oxen, and other dry land animals, which spend their lives in labour and fatigue. The birds are airy, notional men, enthusiasts, projectors, philosophers, and such like: in each species every individual retaining a tincture of his former state, which constitutes what is called genius. If you ask me which species of human creatures I like best, I answer, the flying fish; that is, a man of animal enjoyment with a mixture of whim. Thus you see we have our creeds and our systems, as well as graver folks; with this difference, that they are not strait-laced, but sit easy, to be slipped off or on, as humour or occasion serves. And now I can, with the greatest equanimity imaginable, hear my opinions argued against, or confuted.

XXXIV. *Alc.* It were to be wished, all men were of that mind. But you shall find a sort of men, whom I need not name, that cannot bear, with the least temper, to have their opinions examined or their faults censured. They are against reason, because reason is against them. For our parts we are all for liberty of conscience. If our tenets are absurd, we allow

them to be freely argued and inspected; and by parity of reason we might hope to be allowed the same privilege, with respect to the opinions of other men. *Cri.* O Alciphron, wares that will not bear the light are justly to be suspected. Whatever therefore moves you to make this complaint, take my word I never will: but as hitherto I have allowed your reason its full scope, so for the future I always shall. And though I cannot approve of railing or declaiming, not even in myself, whenever you have shown me the way to it: yet this I will answer for, that you shall ever be allowed to reason as closely and as strenuously as you can. But for the love of truth, be candid, and do not spend your strength and our time in points of no significancy, or foreign to the purpose, or agreed between us. We allow that tyranny and slavery are bad things: but why should we apprehend them from the clergy at this time? Rites and ceremonies we own are not points of chief moment in religion: but why should we ridicule things in their own nature, at least, innocent, and which bears the stamp of supreme authority? That men in divinity, as well as other subjects, are perplexed with useless disputes, and are like to be so as long as the world lasts, I freely acknowledge; but why must all the human weakness and mistakes of clergymen be imputed to wicked designs? Why indiscriminately abuse their character and tenets? Is this like candour, love of truth, and free-thinking? It is granted there may be found, now and then, spleen and ill-breeding in the clergy; but are not the same faults incident to English laymen, of a retired education and country life? I grant there is infinite futility in the schoolmen: but I deny that a volume of that doth so much mischief, as a page of minute philosophy. That weak or wicked men should, by favour of the world, creep into power and high stations in the church, is nothing wonderful: and that in such stations they should behave like themselves, is natural to suppose. But all the while it is evident, that not the gospel but the world, not the spirit but the flesh, not God but the devil, puts them upon their unworthy achievements. We make no difficulty to grant, that nothing is more infamous than vice and ignorance in a clergyman; nothing more base than a hypocrite, more frivolous than a pedant, more cruel than an inquisitor. But it must be also granted by you, gentlemen, that nothing is more ridiculous and absurd, than for pedantic, ignorant, and corrupt men to cast the first stone, at every shadow of their own defects and vices in other men.

XXXV. *Alc.* When I consider the detestable state of slavery and superstition, I feel my heart dilate and expand itself to grasp that inestimable blessing of liberty, absolute liberty in its utmost unlimited extent. This is the sacred and high prerogative, the very life and health of our English constitution. You must not

therefore think it strange, if with a vigilant and curious eye, we guard it against the minutest appearance of evil. You must even suffer us to cut round about, and very deep, and make use of the magnifying glass, the better to view and extirpate every the least speck, which shall discover itself in what we are careful and jealous to preserve, as the apple of our eye. *Cri.* As for unbounded liberty I leave it to savages, among whom alone I believe it is to be found: but, for the reasonable legal liberty of our constitution, I most heartily and sincerely wish it may for ever subsist and flourish among us. You and all other Englishmen cannot be too vigilant, or too earnest, to preserve this goodly frame, or to curb and disappoint the wicked ambition of whoever, layman or ecclesiastic, shall attempt to change our free and gentle government into a slavish or severe one. But what pretext can this afford for your attempts against religion, or indeed how can it be consistent with them? Is not the protestant religion a main part of our legal constitution? I remember to have heard a foreigner remark, that we of this island were very good protestants, but no Christians. But whatever minute philosophers may wish, or foreigners say, it is certain our laws speak a different language. *Alc.* This puts me in mind of the wise reasoning of a certain sage magistrate, who, being pressed by the raillery and arguments of an ingenious man, had nothing to say for his religion but that ten millions of people inhabiting the same island might, whether right or wrong, if they thought good, establish laws for the worshipping of God in their temples, and appealing to him in their courts of justice. And that in case ten thousand ingenious men should publicly deride and trample on those laws, it might be just and lawful for the said ten millions to expel the said ten thousand ingenious men out of their said island. *Euph.* And pray, what answer would you make to this remark of the sage magistrate? *Alc.* The answer is plain. By the law of nature, which is superior to all positive institutions, wit and knowledge have a right to command folly and ignorance. I say, ingenious men have by natural right a dominion over fools. *Euph.* What dominion over the laws and people of Great Britain, minute philosophers may be entitled to by nature, I shall not dispute, but leave to be considered by the public. *Alc.* This doctrine, it must be owned, was never thoroughly understood before our own times. In the last age Hobbes and his followers, though otherwise very great men, declared for the religion of the magistrate, probably because they were afraid of the magistrate: but times are changed and the magistrates may now be afraid of us. *Cri.* I allow the magistrate may well be afraid of you in one sense, I mean, afraid to trust you. This brings to my thoughts a passage on the trial of Leander for a capital offence: that gentleman having picked out and excluded from his jury, by peremptory exception, all but

some men of fashion and pleasure, humbly moved when Dorcon was going to kiss the book, that he might be required to declare upon honour, whether he believed either God or gospel. Dorcon, rather than hazard his reputation as a man of honour and free-thinker, openly avowed, that he believed in neither. Upon which the court declared him unfit to serve on a jury. By the same reason, so many were set aside, as made it necessary to put off the trial. We are very easy, replied Alciphron, about being trusted to serve on juries, if we can be admitted to serve in lucrative employments. *Cri.* But what if the government should enjoin, that every one, before he was sworn into office, should make the same declaration which Dorcon was required to make? *Alc.* God forbid! I hope there is no such design on foot. *Cri.* Whatever designs may be on foot, thus much is certain: the Christian reformed religion is a principal part and corner stone of our free constitution; and I verily think, the only thing that makes us deserving of freedom, or capable of enjoying it. Freedom is either a blessing or a curse as men use it. And to me it seems, that if our religion were once destroyed from among us, and those notions, which pass for prejudices of a Christian education, erased from the minds of Britons, the best thing that could befall us would be the loss of our freedom. Surely a people wherein there is such restless ambition, such high spirits, such animosity of faction, so great interests in contest, such unbounded license of speech and press, amidst so much wealth and luxury, nothing but those *veteres aviæ*, which you pretend to extirpate, could have hitherto kept from ruin.

XXXVI. Under the Christian religion this nation hath been greatly improved. From a sort of savages, we have grown civil, polite, and learned: we have made a decent and noble figure both at home and abroad. And, as our religion decreaseth, I am afraid we shall be found to have declined. Why then should we persist in the dangerous experiment? *Alc.* One would think, Crito, you had forgot the many calamities occasioned by churchmen and religion. *Cri.* And one would think, you had forgot what was answered this very day to that objection. But, not to repeat eternally the same things, I shall observe in the first place, that if we reflect on the past state of Christendom, and of our country in particular, with our feuds and factions subsisting while we were all of the same religion, for instance, that of the white and red roses, so violent and bloody and of such long continuance; we can have no assurance that those ill humours, which have since shown themselves under the mask of religion, would not have broke out with some other pretext, if this had been wanting. I observe in the second place, that it will not follow from any observations you can make on our history, that the evils, accidentally occasioned by religion, bear any proportion

either to the good effects it hath really produced, or the evils it hath prevented. Lastly, I observe, that the best things may by accident be the occasion of evil; which accidental effect is not, to speak properly and truly, produced by the good thing itself, but by some evil thing, which being neither part, property, nor effect of it, happens to be joined with it. But I should be ashamed to insist and enlarge on so plain a point, and shall only add that, whatever evils this nation might have formerly sustained from superstition, no man of common sense will say, the evils felt or apprehended at present are from that quarter. Priestcraft is not the reigning distemper at this day. And surely it will be owned that a wise man who takes upon him to be vigilant for the public weal, should touch proper things at proper times, and not prescribe for a surfeit when the distemper is a consumption. *Alc.* I think we have sufficiently discussed the subject of this day's conference. And now, let Lysicles take it as he will, I must in regard to my own character, as a fair impartial adversary, acknowledge there is something in what Crito hath said upon the usefulness of the Christian religion. I will even own to you that some of our sect are for allowing it a toleration. I remember, at a meeting of several ingenious men, after much debate we came successively to divers resolutions. The first was, that no religion ought to be tolerated in the state: but this on more mature thought was judged impracticable. The second was that all religions should be tolerated, but none countenanced except atheism: but it was apprehended, that this might breed contentions among the lower sort of people. We came therefore to conclude in the third place, that some religion or other should be established for the use of the vulgar. And after a long dispute what this religion should be, Lysis, a brisk young man, perceiving no signs of agreement, proposed that the present religion might be tolerated till a better was found. But allowing it to be expedient, I can never think it true, so long as there lie unanswerable objections against it, which, if you please, I shall take the liberty to propose at our next meeting. To which we all agreed.