

in the sixth and ninth Book of his *Odysses*, to *savage and unjust Men*, opposes those who have *Sentiments of Religion*. So Justin<sup>b</sup> from *Trogus Pompeius* commends the Justice of the antient *Jews*, as being mixt with Religion; as does also *Strabo*<sup>c</sup>, saying, *They were People who were really just and religious. If it is Piety, says Lactantius*,<sup>d</sup> to know GOD, the Sum of which Knowledge is, that you worship him, he must be altogether ignorant of Justice, who does not hold to the Religion of GOD: For how can he know Justice, who is ignorant of the Source from whence it is derived? And the same Author elsewhere,<sup>e</sup> *Justice properly belongs to Religion*.

6. Now the Usefulness of Religion is even greater in that great Society of Mankind in general, than in any particular Civil Society; for in a Civil State it is partly supplied by the Laws, and the easy Execution of the Laws; whereas, on the contrary, in the universal Society of Mankind, the Execution of Right is very difficult, as being to be performed no other Way than by Force of Arms, and the Laws are very few, which themselves, moreover, derive their Force chiefly from the Fear of a Deity; from whence those who offend against the Law of Nations, are every where said to violate the Law of GOD. It was not amiss therefore, that the Emperors asserted, that<sup>18</sup> *The Corruption of Religion was an Injury to all the World*.

XLV. 1. To take a closer View of the whole Matter, we must observe, that the true Religion, which has been common to all Ages, is built upon four fundamental Principles; of which the first is, that *There is a GOD, and but one GOD only*. The second, that *GOD is not any of those Things we see, but something more sublime than them*. The third, that *GOD takes Care of human Affairs, and judges them with the strictest Equity*. The fourth, that *The same GOD is the Creator of all Things but himself*. These four are expressed in so many Commandments of the Decalogue.

2. For in the first is plainly delivered the Unity of GOD; in the second, his invisible Nature, by Reason of which any Image of him is forbid to be made, *Deut. iv. 12.* as<sup>1</sup> *Antisthenes* also said, *He is not seen with the Eyes, there is nothing to which he bears any Resemblance, so that no Man can know him by an Image*. And<sup>2</sup> *Philo*, *It is a profane Thing to represent the Image of him that is invisible, by any Picture or Statue*. *Diodorus Siculus*,<sup>3</sup> speaking of *Moses*, says,<sup>b</sup> *He made no Image of the Divinity, because he did not believe GOD to be of human Shape*. The *Jews*, says *Tacitus*,<sup>c</sup> *conceive GOD in their Minds only, and him as but one; esteeming them profane who frame Images of Gods, out of perishable Matter, after the Likeness of Men*. And *Plutarch* assigns this Reason for *Numa's* removing Images out of Temples, *Because GOD cannot be conceived but by the Mind only*. In the third Commandment is implied, *GOD's Knowledge and Care of the Affairs, and even of the Thoughts of Men*. For this is the Foundation of an Oath, in which we call GOD to witness what passes in our Hearts, and at the same Time submit to his Vengeance; whereby we likewise acknowledge his Justice and Power. In the

<sup>18</sup> *Quia quod in Religionem divinam, &c. Cod. Lib. I. Tit. V. De Hæreticis, &c. Leg. IV.* But the bare Inscription of this Title shews, that *ARCADIUS* and *HONORIUS* extended their Maxim much farther than our Author designed to admit it; for what they called *A Crime against Religion*, consisted in not receiving all the Opinions of the Ecclesiasticks, who had got Possession of the Minds of those Princes.

XLV. (1) The Philosopher *Antisthenes* [and not *Antiphanes*, as our Author calls him in his *Exposition of the Decalogue*] said, as *CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS* informs us, that the Divinity being invisible, and resembling nothing which is the Object of our Senses, it follows, that no one can know him by any Image. (*Protreptic. Cap. VI. p. 61. Edit. Oxon.*) Which Thought *SENECA* seems to have borrowed, *Ipse, qui ea tractat, qui condidit, &c. Natur. Quæst. Lib. VII. Cap. XXX.* *PLUTARCH* says, that it was injurious to the Divinity, to resemble him to Things below him; and besides, that he was to be conceived only by the Thought. *Vit. Num. (p. 65. B. C. Vol. I. Edit.*

*Wech.*) See also *DIONYSIUS HALICARNASSENSIS*, upon *Numa's* Conduct, in Regard to the corporeal Representations of the Divinity. *GROTIUS*.

There is nothing upon this Head in *DIONYSIUS HALICARNASSENSIS*. Our Author, who refers us to him, as if it were in his *Roman Antiquities*, had the Fact from *St. CYRIL*, who might easily have taken one Author for another; for he, as well as *PLUTARCH*, makes it an Honour to the *Pythagorean* Philosophy, that *Numa* took Care to remove the Images from the Temples. *Contra Julian. Lib. VI. p. 193. Edit. Spanheim.* On the contrary, *DIONYSIUS HALICARNASSENSIS* endeavours to shew, *Lib. II. Cap. LIX.* that *PYTHAGORAS* lived four Generations after *Numa*, and that therefore the latter could not have learned the Philosophy of the other.

<sup>2</sup> In the Letter of *Agrippa* to the Emperor *Caligula*; and he speaks there of the Opinion which the *Jews* always had upon this Subject. (*De legat. ad Cajum. p. 1032. E.*) *GROTIUS*.

<sup>b</sup> Lib. 36. c. 2. n. 16.  
<sup>c</sup> Georg. l. 16. p. 1104. Ed. Amst. 761. Ed. Paris.  
<sup>d</sup> Inst. Divin. l. 5. c. 14. n. 12.  
<sup>e</sup> De Ira Dei, c. 7. n. 23.

XLV. Which are the most common Notions of a GOD, and how they are contained in the first Precepts of the Decalogue.

<sup>1</sup> In Fragm. (e lib. 40.)  
<sup>b</sup> Dion Cassius observes the same Thing. l. 36.  
<sup>c</sup> Hist. l. 5. c. 5. n. 8. See also Strabo, Geogr. l. 16.

*fourth* is delivered the Origin of the whole World, from GOD its Author, <sup>3</sup> in Memory of which the Sabbath was instituted of old, and that indeed to be observed with a peculiar Sanctity, above all other Rites. For the Breach of any other ceremonial Observations was, by the Law, left to be punished at the Discretion of the Judge: But of this the Punishment was capital; because the Violation of the Sabbath did, from the very Manner of its Institution, imply a Denial of GOD's Creation of the World. Now the very Notion of GOD's having created the World, gives a tacit Indication of his Goodness, and Wisdom, and Eternity, and Power.

3. And from these speculative Notions follow the practical, as, that *GOD is to be honoured, loved, worshipped, and obeyed.* Therefore, said *Aristotle*, <sup>4</sup> he who denies that GOD is to be honoured, or his Parents loved, must be reduced to better Reason, not by Argument but by Punishment. <sup>5</sup> And again, that in different Places different Notions, as to what is Virtue and Honesty, prevail, but in this of honouring GOD the Agreement is universal. Now the Truth of these speculative Notions, as we called them, may, no Doubt, be demonstrated by Arguments drawn from Nature, amongst which this is one of the strongest, That it is evident to Sense that some Things are made, or have a Beginning; now the Things that are made do necessarily lead us to acknowledge something that was never made. But because this Reason, and others like it, are not understood by all, it is sufficient that in all Ages, and through all Countries, a very few excepted, these Notions have been entertained, both by those who were too gross of Understanding to be conceived willing to impose upon others, and by those who were too wise to be imposed upon themselves: <sup>6</sup> Which general Consent, in so great a Variety, both of Laws and Opinions about other Matters, sufficiently shews that this Tradition has been derived to us from the very first Men in the World, and has never been solidly confuted, which even of itself is enough to make it be believed.

4. Agreeable to what we have now advanced, concerning GOD, is the Testimony of *Dion Prusænsis*, when he says, that *The Persuasion of a GOD is partly*

<sup>3</sup> The Author of the Answers to the orthodox Christians, at the sixty ninth Question, *ὡς ἐν φωνῇ, &c.* And therefore, that the Memory of the World's Creation might be preserved among Men, GOD, in Holy Writ, commanded a greater Honour to be paid to the seventh Number, than to any of the Rest. See also what goes before there. GROTIUS.

<sup>4</sup> *Topic. Lib. I. Cap. XI. p. 187. E. Vol. I. Edit. Paris.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid. Lib. II. Cap. XI. p. 205, A.*

<sup>6</sup> DIODORUS SICULUS says, that there is a natural Piety or Religion, *φυσικὴ εὐλαβεία.* Fragment. (E. Lib. XXIII. Eclog. XI.) The Emperor JULIAN asserts, that *Every one knows, without being taught, that there is a Divinity;* and adds, that he makes himself as perceptible to the Soul as the Light to the Eye. Ad Heraclium, (*Orat. VII. p. 209. C. Edit. Spanheim.*) PHILO the Jew reasons in this Manner, Chance produces no Work of Art, now nothing can be made with more Art than the World; it was therefore made by a most skillful and perfect Artist. Hence, adds he, we come to discover the Existence of GOD. *De Monarchia,* (p. 815. E.) TERTULLIAN says, that the internal Sense of a Divinity is natural to the Soul, *animæ enim a primordio, conscientia DEI, dos est.* Advers. Marcion. (*Lib. I. Cap. X.*) He observes elsewhere, that GOD is first known by Nature, and then by Doctrine: We know him by Nature from his Works; by Doctrine from the Preaching of the Gospel, *Lib. I. Adv. Marcion.* (Cap. XVIII.) St. CYPRIAN maintains, that it is the Height of Wickedness not to acknowledge him, of whose Existence it is impossible to be ignorant. *Atque hæc est summa delicti, &c.* De Idolorum

vanitate, (*Cap. V. Num. 9. Edit. Cellar.*) GROTIUS.

All these Passages, we see, tend to prove, that the Consent of Mankind in acknowledging a Divinity, arises from the Conformity of that great Truth to the natural Light of Reason; whereas, in the Text, our Author considers that Consent as a Proof of an universal Tradition, come down to us from the first Men. He seems thereby to return to the alternative, laid down by him in the first Edition; for in that he expresses himself thus, *Quæ consensus — satis ostendit, aut lucem aliquam animis instam, quæ vi suapte animum feriat, aut traditionem a primis hominibus, &c. quorum utrumvis ad fidem faciendam satis est.* However, in his Treatise upon *The Truth of the Christian Religion,* Lib. I. § 2. he does not ascribe the Consent in Question, to the Force of natural Lights, but advances another Alternative; namely, either a Revelation from GOD himself, or a Tradition come down from the first Men. Let us observe also, that St. CYPRIAN's Argument, which he cites here, is founded, as appears by what precedes, upon a poor Reason, I mean, upon those Expressions which dropt from the Pagans themselves, *O Deus, si dederit, &c.* See the *Octavius* of MINUCIUS FÆLIX, *Cap. XVIII. p. 90. Edit. Davis.* with the Note of that judicious *English* Commentator. Besides, the Passage is ill applied here. For St. CYPRIAN's Design is to prove the Unity of the Godhead; whereas the present Question relates only to the Existence of a Divinity in general; at least, the Proof deduced from the Consent of Mankind, can be alledged no otherwise; for Mankind are far from being agreed in acknowledging one only Divinity.

born with us, as being gained by Arguments of our own Reason; and partly <sup>7</sup> acquired by Tradition. <sup>8</sup> Plutarch calls the same, *An antient Opinion, which, for its Certainty, is equal to any Argument that can be brought or imagined, it being the common Foundation of Piety.* And <sup>9</sup> Aristotle says, *All Men are persuaded that there are Gods.* <sup>10</sup> Plato says something to the same Purpose, in his tenth Book of Laws.

XLVI. *That those who first violate these Notions are punishable.*

XLVI. 1. And therefore those Men are not entirely blameless, who, tho' they are too stupid to find out, or comprehend, the Arguments that serve to demonstrate these Notions, do yet reject them, since these Truths lead to Virtue; and besides, the contrary Opinion has not Arguments to support it. But because we are here discoursing of Punishments, and those such Punishments as relate to Men, we must distinguish between the Notions themselves, and the Manner of rejecting them. That there is a Deity, (one or more I shall not now consider) and that this Deity has the Care of human Affairs, are Notions universally received, and are absolutely necessary to the Essence of any Religion, whether true or false. *He that cometh to GOD, (that is, he who has any Religion, for Religion, by the Hebrews, is termed A Coming to GOD) must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Heb. xi. 6.

2. Thus <sup>1</sup> Cicero too, *There still are, and always have been, some Philosophers, who thought the Gods had no Regard at all to human Affairs; whose Opinion, if it were true, what Piety could there be, what Holiness, what Religion? For the Reason why we ought to practise these Virtues, with a holy and pure Heart towards the immortal Gods, is because they observe them, and have done good to Mankind.* The principal Part of Religion, says <sup>2</sup> Epictetus, *consists in having right Conceptions of the Gods, as of self-existent Beings, that superintend and dispose of all Things with Wisdom and Justice.* <sup>3</sup> Ælian remarks, that none, even of People the most unpolite and uncivilized, did ever sink so low as to entertain and profess Atheism, but that a Divinity, and a Providence, were allowed and affirmed by all. <sup>4</sup> Plutarch, in his Book of *Common Ideas*, declares, that *If we take away a Providence, we quite destroy the Notion of a GOD. For GOD must be conceived and understood to be, not only an immortal and an happy, but also an affectionate, a careful, and a beneficent Being.* Nor, as Lactantius, <sup>5</sup> *can there any Honour be due to GOD, if he does nothing for him who worships him; nor any Fear, if he is not angry with him who worships him not.* And indeed it is all one, if we regard the moral Effect of such Notions, whether we deny a GOD, or deny he is concerned in the Management of human Affairs.

<sup>1</sup> De Ira Dei, c. 6. n. 2.

3. Wherefore even out of meer Necessity, as it were, that these two Notions have for so many Ages been preserved <sup>5</sup> among all the People of the known World. And from hence Pomponius <sup>6</sup> ascribes Religion to the Law of Nations. And Socrates, in <sup>7</sup> Xenophon, says, that *To worship the Gods is a Law and Maxim that*

<sup>7</sup> Ἐπιπέτης Πικρή. Our Author does not say in what Discourse of that antient Orator this Passage is to be found. It is probably that which he cites below, in the next Paragraph, Num. 3. But I have not the Book at present, to look for the two Passages.

<sup>8</sup> In Amator. p. 756. B. Vol. II. Edit. Wech.

<sup>9</sup> De Cælo, Lib. I. Cap. III. p. 434. E. Vol. I. Edit. Paris.

<sup>10</sup> Lib. X. p. 887. Edit. Steph.

XLVI. (1) *Sunt enim Philosophi, &c.* De Natur. Deorum. Lib. I. Cap. II.

<sup>2</sup> (Enchirid. Cap. XXVIII. init.) SENECA says, the Worship of the Gods consists first in the Belief of their Existence, then in the Acknowledgment of their Majesty and Goodness, without which there is no true Majesty. *Primus est Deorum cultus, &c.* Epist. XCV. GROTIUS.

<sup>3</sup> Var. Hist. Lib. II. Cap. XXXI.

<sup>4</sup> De communib. notit. adv. Stoic. (p. 1075. E. Vol. II. Edit. Wech.)

<sup>5</sup> SENECA, Epist. CXVII. *That there are Gods; among other Arguments that might be urged to*

*prove it, we from hence conclude, because that such an Opinion is implanted in all Mankind: Nor is there any Nation so abandoned, so uncivilized, as not to believe it.* And in his fourth Book, De Beneficiis, Chap. IV. *Nor could all the World have conspired in so much Madness, as to address Deities who can neither hear their Prayers, nor give them any Assistance.* Add to this, PLATO, Protagor, and Lib. X. De legib. and some fine Passages in JAMBlichus, about the Beginning of his Treatise, concerning the Mysteries of the Egyptians, where he says, *It is as natural for Man to know there is a GOD, as it is for a Horse to neigh.* GROTIUS.

<sup>6</sup> *Veluti [Jus Gentium est] erga Deum religio, &c.* Digest. Lib. I. De Justit. & Jure, Leg. II. The Law of Nations is here understood to be that which the Light of Nature discovers, and which is therefore received by all Nations never so little civilized.

<sup>7</sup> XENOPHON, Memorab. Socrat. (Lib. IV. Cap. IV. § 19. Edit. Oxon.)

every where prevails. Which <sup>8</sup> Cicero, both in his first Book *Of the Nature of the Gods*, and in his second *Of Invention*, does also assert. And *Dion of Prusa*, Oration xii. calls it *An Opinion common to all Mankind, both to Greeks and to Barbarians, necessary for, and naturally implanted in all who have the Use of Reason.* And a little farther he styles it, *A powerful and eternal Persuasion, which at all Times, and in all Places, was begun, and is continued.* *Xenophon*, <sup>b</sup> in his *Feast*, says that both *Greeks and Barbarians* think and allow, that all Things, whether present or future, are known to the Gods.

<sup>b</sup> In conviv. c. 4. § 47.

4. It is my Judgment therefore, that those who first <sup>9</sup> attempt to destroy these Notions, ought, on the Account of human Society in general, which they thus, without any just Grounds, injure, <sup>10</sup> to be restrained, as in all well-governed Communities has been usual: It is what we read was practised towards <sup>11</sup> *Diagoras of Melos*, and towards the <sup>12</sup> *Epicureans*, who were expelled and banished all Cities that had any Regularity and good Manners amongst them. *Himerius*, an antient Rhetorician, in his Pleadings against *Epicurus*, <sup>13</sup> *Do you punish me then for my Opinion? No; but for your Impiety: You may propose your Sentiments, but you must not be impious.*

XLVII. 1. Other general Notions, as that *There is but one GOD, that No Object of our Sight is GOD, not the World, not the Heavens, not the Sun, nor the Air; that The World is not eternal, nor its compound Matter, but that it was created by GOD*, have not the same Degrees of Evidence as the former, and therefore the Knowledge of them in some Nations, through Length of Time, we find effaced, and almost extinguished; to this did contribute the Remisness of the Laws, which made but little Provision for them, because not deemed so absolutely necessary, but that without them some Sort of Religion might be kept up.

XLVII. But not others which is shewn by an Argument drawn from the Mosaick Law.

2. The Law of GOD, tho' delivered to a Nation, which by the concurrent Proof of Prophecies and Miracles, either seen or transmitted to them by uncontested Authority, was infallibly assured of the Truth of these Notions, tho' it utterly detested the Adoration of false Gods, did not sentence to Death every Offender in that Case, but such only whose Crime was attended with some particular Circumstance; as, for Instance, one who was the Ringleader and Chief in seducing others, *Deut. xiii. 1, &c. 6, &c.* or a City that began to <sup>1</sup> serve Gods unknown before, *Deut. xiii. 12, &c.* or him who paid divine Honour to any of the Host of Heaven, <sup>2</sup> hereby cancelling the whole Law, and entirely relinquishing the Worship

<sup>8</sup> Our Author here cites CICERO's first Book, *De Natur. Deor.* and his second, *De inventione.* The first Passage is, *Quæ est enim gens, aut quod genus hominum, quod non habeat sine doctrina anticipationem quamdam Deorum?* Cap. XVI. As to the other Treatise, I find nothing in it that has any Relation to the Subject, except the Beginning of a Passage already quoted, § 8. Note 5. See also the *Tusculan Questions*, Lib. I. Cap. XIII.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore those only who dogmatize can be lawfully punished. See what I have said upon PUFENDORF's *Law of Nature and Nations*, B. III. Chap. IV. § 4. Note 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Moxus* the *Lydian*, having taken the City of *Crambus* by Siege, drowned all the Inhabitants, *ὄν ἀθίσ.* *As Athiests*, because they neither acknowledged nor worshipped any GOD. *NICOLAUS DAMASCENUS*, in *Excerpt. Peires.* *GROTIUS.*

If a People, tho' Athiests, lived morally well, their Athiestm would be no Reason for extirpating them, whilst they did not endeavour to infect others with the bad Principles wherewith they are imbued. See above, Note 9.

<sup>11</sup> The *Athenians* expelled him their City; or, as others say, that Philosopher having fled for Fear of being punished, they set a Price upon his Head. See *ARISTOPHANES*'s Comedy of the *Birds*, with the Note of the *Greek Scholiast*, and *VALERIUS MAXIMUS*, Lib. I. Cap. I. Num. 7. *extern.*

<sup>12</sup> See *ÆLIAN*, *Var. Hist.* IX. 12. and the Commentators upon that Place.

<sup>13</sup> *HIMERIUS*, *Action. in Epicur.* Our Author has taken this Passage from the *Bibliothèque* of *PHOTIUS*. *Cod. CCXLIII. p. 1083. Edit. Rothom.* 1653.

XLVII. (1) The Passage of *Deuteronomy* does not speak of the Introduction of an idolatrous Worship, practised by all the Inhabitants, but of the Toleration of that Worship, practised by some particular Persons, who solicited others with Impunity. See Mr. *LE CLERC* upon that Place.

2 *PHILO*, upon the *Decalogue*, speaking of such Persons, *εἰσι δ' εἰ ἢ πρὸς ὑπερβάλλουσιν, &c.* *But there are some whose Impiety goes farther still, who do not so much as make an Equality between GOD and his Works, but give all the Honour to these alone; so far from letting him have a Share of it, that they do not vouchsafe that Universal Being a bare Memorial, these Wretches are unmindful of him whom alone they ought to remember, industriously contriving a voluntary Forgetfulness.* So *MAIMONIDES* expounds the Passage in *Deuteronomy*, Direct. III. 41. *GROTIUS.*

Our Author, in his Notes upon the New Testament, explains the Passage in *The Epistle to the Romans*, in another Manner, *viz. They have adored the Creature MORE than the Creator;* which, says he, is the common Signification of the Preposition *ὑπὲρ*, with an Accusative, when a Comparison is made;