

to the Reader.

ing and Doing all things in the World, as well Evil as Good; and thereby making them alike Necessary to us; from whence it would follow, that all Good and Evil Moral, are meer Thetical, Positive, and Arbitrary things, that is, not Nature, but Will; Which is the Defence of Natural, Eternal, and Immutable Justice, or Morality: The Other, That Necessity is not Intrinsicall to the Nature of Every thing, God and all Creatures, or Essentiall to all Action; but, That there is Something *ἐπ' ἡμῶν*, or, That we have some Liberty, or Power over our own Actions: Which is the Defence of a Distributive or Retributive Justice, dispensing Rewards and Punishments throughout the whole World. Wherefore we think fit here to advertize the Reader concerning these, That though they were, and still are, really intended by us; yet the Compleat Finishing and Publication of them, will notwithstanding depend upon many Contingencies; not onely of our Life and Health, the Latter of which, as well as the Former, is to us very Uncertain; but also of our Leisure, or Vacancy from other Necessary Employments.

In the next place, We must Apologize also, for the Fourth Chapter; inasmuch as, though in regard of its Length, it might rather be called a Book, then a Chapter; yet it doth not Answer all the Contents Prefixed to it. Here therefore must we again, confess our selves Surprized; who when we wrote those Contents, did not suspect in the least, but that we should have Satisfied them all within a lesser Compass. And our Design then was, besides Answering the Objection, against the Naturality of the Idea of God, from the Pagan Polytheism, (we having then so fit an Occasion) to give such a further Account of the Idolatry and Religion of the Gentiles, as might prepare our way for a Defence of Christianity, to be subjoyned in the Close: it being not onely agreeable to the Sense of Ancient Doctors, but also expressly declared in the Scripture, That One Design of Christianity, was to abolish and extirpate the Pagan Polytheism and Idolatry. And our Reasons for this Intended Defence of Christianity, were. First; Because we had Observed, that some Professed Opposers of Atheism, had either incurred a Suspicion, or at least suffered under the Imputation, of being meer Theists, or Natural Religionists onely, and no hearty Believers of Christianity, or Friends to Revealed Religion. From which either Suspicion or Imputation therefore, we thought it Justice to free our selves, we having so Unshaken a Belief, and firm Assurance, of the Truth of the whole Christian Doctrine. But, Secondly and Principally; Because we had further Observed it, to have been the Method of our Modern Atheists, to make their First Assault against Christianity, as thinking that to be the most Vulnerable; and that it would be an easy Step for them from thence, to Demolish all Religion, and
*
Theism.