

The Alliance Between Demea and Philo in David Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*¹

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Abstract:

David Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* is concerned with whether God's nature can be known by us. When the dialogue begins, two of the speakers, Demea, who professes Mysticism, and Philo, a sceptical philosopher, maintain their agreement regarding the unknowability of the divine nature. The third speaker, Cleanthes, an empiricist philosopher, insists that, through the Argument from Design, we can establish that God possesses an intelligence which resembles human intelligence. This paper focuses on whether Demea and Philo maintain their alliance regarding the unknowability of God's nature throughout the discussion. This constitutes a departure from traditional scholarship on the *Dialogues*, as much of the literature focuses on the views of Cleanthes and Philo, rather than on Demea and Philo.

Keywords: the Argument from Design; divine attributes; mysticism; scepticism

Scholarship on David Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* typically concentrates on the exchange between Cleanthes and Philo. With the exception of Part 9, in which Demea presents his *a priori* Cosmological – Ontological Proof of God's necessary existence, little is usually made of Demea's contribution to the discussion, and to the exchange of views between Demea and Philo. Demea characterizes himself as a mystic – a believer in God who holds that nothing can be known about the divine nature. He regards God as “adorably mysterious” (D. 110). According to Demea, we can love God, pray to God, but the divine nature will always remain a mystery to us. Philo is regarded by the narrator, Pamphilus, as a “careless sceptic”, and he is often referred to by Cleanthes (the empiricist philosopher in the dialogue) as a “Pyrrhonian” or “extreme sceptic”. I begin my study by inquiring into Demea's views regarding the unknowability of the divine nature. Following this, I will turn to Philo's view on this topic, specifically, to determine whether Philo holds the same view as Demea on this topic.

A review of the *Dialogues* reveals at least 21 passages in which Demea is either spoken about, or speaks. Relevant pages regarding this point include page 96; 97; 107; 109; 110; 120; 122-123; 133; 138; 139; 140; 143; 148; 152; 153; 154; 156; 157-158; 170; and 171. Demea gives the fullest account

of his position in the opening paragraphs of Part 2. As noted above, he regards himself as a mystic, and emphasizes the adorable mysteriousness of the divine nature.

I must own, Cleanthes, said Demea, that nothing can more surprise me, than the light in which you have all along, put this argument. By the whole tenor of your discourse, one would imagine that you were maintaining the being of a God, against the cavils of atheists and infidels; and were necessitated to become a champion for that fundamental principle of all religion. But this, I hope, is not by any means, a question among us. No man; no man, at least, of common sense, I am persuaded, ever entertained a serious doubt with regard to a truth so certain and self-evident. The question is not concerning the Being, but the nature of God. This, I affirm, from the infirmities of human understanding, to be altogether incomprehensible and unknown to us. The essence of that supreme mind, his attributes, the manner of his existence, the very nature of his duration; these and every particular, which regards so divine a being, are mysterious to men. Finite, weak, and blind creatures, we ought to humble ourselves in his august presence, and, conscious of our frailties, adore in silence his infinite perfections, which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive them. They are covered in a deep cloud from human curiosity: It is profaneness to attempt penetrating through these sacred obscurities: And next to the impiety of denying his existence, is the temerity of prying into his nature and essence, decrees and attributes. (D. 107)

In the second paragraph in Part 2, he emphasizes that his view is that of almost all divines. Belief in God for Demea involves an unshakable commitment to the proposition that God exists; however, he is equally adamant that God's nature is unknowable, given the "infirmities of human understanding" (D.107).

Immediately following Demea's views on the knowability of God's existence and of the unknowability of God's nature, Philo - in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 2 - expresses agreement with Demea's position. The only difference between Demea's mode of expression and Philo's is to be found in the fact that Philo offers a philosophic defense of his position, whereas Demea's position represents the mystic's approach to language about God. Regarding the self-evidence of the existence of God, Philo utilizes the Causal Principle, and argues:

But surely, where reasonable men treat these subjects, the question can never be concerning the *being* but only the *nature* of the Deity. The former truth, as you will observe, is unquestionable and self-evident. Nothing exists without a cause, and the original cause of this universe (whatever it be) we call GOD; and piously ascribe to him every species of perfection. (D. 108)

And on the topic of the unknowability of God's nature, his early argument employs Hume's doctrine found in the *Treatise* and *First Enquiry*, namely, that without a precedent impression, we cannot have a correspondent idea.

Our ideas reach no farther than our experience: We have no experience of divine attributes and operations; I need not conclude my syllogism; you can draw the inference yourself. (D. 108)

In the sentence spoken by Philo which immediately follows this quotation, Hume reveals the role which Demea serves in the *Dialogues*:

And it is a pleasure to me (and I hope to you too) that just reasoning and sound piety here concur in the same conclusion, and both of them establish the adorably mysterious and incomprehensible nature of the Supreme Being. (D. 108)

In this passage, Philo insists on the total agreement between himself and Demea on the unknowability of the divine nature. As such, he is affirming that mysticism, as a version of religious commitment and belief, and philosophy, as a reasoned approach to the same, hold the same position regarding the unknowability of the divine nature. Demea's role, therefore, is to establish illustratively that Philo's position that God is adorably mysterious is not anti - religion. In fact, two pages later, Demea reinforces this reading, when he tells Philo that it is the latter "on whose assistance I depended, in proving the adorable mysteriousness of the divine nature ..." (D. 110). And, two pages later in Part 2, Philo picks up on this theme, and tells Demea:

I was from the beginning scandalized, I must own, with this resemblance which is asserted, between the Deity and human creatures; and must conceive it to imply such a degradation of the supreme Being as no sound theist could endure. With your assistance, therefore, Demea, I shall endeavor to defend what you justly call the adorable mysteriousness of the divine nature, and shall refute this reasoning of Cleanthes, provided he allows that I gave made a fair representation of it. (D. 112)

There are two passages in the *Dialogues* which appear to conflict with the interpretation offered here regarding the respective positions of Demea and Philo. The first appears in Parts 9, in which Demea puts forth the *a priori* Cosmological – Ontological Argument of God's necessary existence. According to Demea, the *a priori* Argument proves the "infinity" of the divine attributes, as well as the "unity" of the divine nature (D. 148). Accordingly, he appears to go against his earlier advocacy of mysticism with regard to the unknowability of God's attributes and nature. That Demea's position in Part 9 remains consistent with his mysticism can be established by looking at a passage (quoted earlier) in the opening paragraph of Part 2. In this passage, Demea urges that "we ought to humble ourselves in his august presence, and, conscious of our frailties, adore in silence his infinite perfections, which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive them" (D. 107). Whereas silence regarding divine attributes is the proper approach to dealing with divine attributes, Demea holds that using a term in regard to God's nature, as for example, "necessary existence", does not establish that we understand what the term means. The reference in this passage to God's infinite perfections "which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard" brings Demea in line with Philo's (and Hume's) view, that without the impressions or experiences of divine attribute and operations, there can be no ideas of these either, and, therefore, no understanding of them. I submit that in Part 9 Demea's point is that, through the *a priori*

Argument, we can establish certain features which pertain necessarily to the divine nature, but this, in no way, establishes that we can know, or understand, these features. Demea's mysticism can, therefore, be rendered consistent with his *a priori* proof in Part 9. The logic of an argument, as in Part 9, which leads to a certain conclusion about God's nature, in no way signals, or guarantees, that this conclusion can be understood by us.

Philo takes a similar approach to the disconnect between speaking about God's nature, and understanding what our words about God's nature mean. Early in Part 2, Philo says the following:

...[A]s all perfection is entirely relative, we ought never to imagine, that we comprehend the attributes of this Divine Being, or to suppose, that his perfections have any analogy or likeness to the perfections of a human creature. Wisdom, thought, design, knowledge; these we justly ascribe to him; because these words are honourable among men, and we have no other language or other conceptions, by which we can express our adoration of him. But let us beware, lest we think, that our ideas any wise correspond to his perfections, or that his attributes have any resemblance to these qualities among men. He is infinitely superior to our limited view and comprehension; and is more the object of worship in the temple than of disputation in the schools. (D. 108)

Therefore, the position that both Philo and Demea take is that the use of language about God is connected to our adoration of God; the use of language regarding divine attributes should never be taken as indicative of insight into God's nature.

The second passage which appears to be problematic to my reading is found in Part 12, when Philo insists that the controversy between the theist and the atheist is a verbal dispute, and he employs this discussion to draw the conclusion, in the penultimate paragraph of Part 12, that "the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence" (D. 184). This passage seems to support the view that there has been a change in Philo's position, for he now appears to hold that there is something that can be known about God. I will now establish that, in this discussion, Philo remains committed to his original position on the unknowability of the divine nature, and that, therefore, he remains in agreement with Demea on this point.

In his analogical Argument from Design, Cleanthes maintains that it is the means to ends relations and coherence of parts present in machines of human contrivance and throughout the design of the world, and our knowledge that machines are caused by intelligent beings, which countenances the conclusion that the cause of the design of the world is an intelligent being. Throughout his attack on the Argument from Design in Parts 2, and Parts 4 through 8, Philo insists that these features of design found in the world and in machines do not support the conclusion that the Designer of the world is an intelligent being. Nevertheless, at no point in the first eight Parts of the *Dialogues* does Philo establish what conclusion regarding the cause of the design of the world is supported by the means to ends relations and coherence of parts which are found in the design of the world and machines.

It is in the sixth paragraph of Part 12 that Philo begins an examination into the relevance of means to ends relations and a coherence of parts in reasoning analogically to an intelligent Designer of the world:

So little, replied PHILO, do I esteem this suspense of judgment in the present case to be possible, that I am apt to suspect there enters somewhat of a dispute of words into this controversy, more than is usually imagined. That the works of nature bear a great analogy to productions of art is evident; and according to all the rules of good reasoning, we ought to infer, if we argue at all concerning them, that their causes have a proportional analogy. But as there are also considerable differences, we have reason to suppose a proportional difference in the causes; and in particular ought to attribute a much higher degree of power and energy to the supreme cause than any we have ever observed in mankind. Here then the existence of a DEITY is plainly ascertained by reason; and if we make it a question, whether, on account of these analogies, we can properly call him a *mind* or *intelligence*, notwithstanding the vast difference, which may reasonably be supposed between him and human minds; what is this but a mere verbal controversy? No man can deny the analogies between the effects: To restrain ourselves from enquiring concerning the causes is scarcely possible: From this enquiry, the legitimate conclusion is, that the causes also have an analogy: And if we the are not contented with calling the first and supreme cause a GOD or DEITY, but desire to vary the expression; what can we call him but *mind* or *thought*, to which he is justly supposed to bear a considerable resemblance? (D. 174 - 175)

This passage makes it clear that Philo is, once again, raising his concern regarding the extent to which we can reason analogically to an intelligent Designer of the world. He is also explicit on what the dispute of words is about: the verbal dispute concerns whether the resemblances between the design of the world and the design of machines warrant calling the cause of the design of the world a mind or intelligence, in light of the differences which exist between the effects being compared. What cannot be disputed, Philo asserts, is that there are resemblances between the world and the productions of art, and this justifies concluding that “the causes also have an analogy”. Now, this concession might be taken as evidence that, the difference between the design of the world and machines notwithstanding, Philo is prepared to alter the position he has all along maintained, namely, that “we ought never to imagine, that we comprehend that attributes of the divine being, or to suppose, that his perfections have any analogy or likeness to the perfections of a human creature” (D. 108). I will now show that Philo has not altered his position, and that, in fact, he goes to great lengths to emphasize that there is no change in his position.

Philo begins the seventh paragraph by elaborating on the nature of a “verbal dispute” - the type of dispute which he claims is involved in trying to decide whether “on account of these analogies, we can properly call him [i.e., the Designer] a mind or intelligence, notwithstanding the vast difference, which may reasonably be supposed between him and human minds”. He explains that the only remedy for a verbal dispute arises “from clear definitions, from the precision of those ideas which enter into any argument, and from the strict and uniform use of those terms which are employed”. A verbal dispute, therefore, requires that both the language and ideas

employed not allow for accuracy in judgment: “But there is species of controversy, which, from the very nature of language and human ideas, is involved in perpetual ambiguity, and can never, by any pre-caution or any definitions, be able to reach a reasonable certainty or precision”. (D. 175) Philo locates verbal disputes in “the controversies concerning the degrees of any quality or circumstance”. He offers three examples of such disputes:

Men may argue to all eternity, whether Hannibal be a great, or a very great, or a superlatively great man, what degree of beauty Cleopatra possessed, what epithet of praise Livy or Thucydides is entitled to, without bringing the controversy to any determination.

And he locates the difficulty in each in the fact that we have no precise measure for quantifying these qualities:

The disputants may here agree in their sense and differ in their terms, or *vice versa*; yet never be able to define their terms, so as to enter into each other's meaning: Because the degrees of these qualities are not, like quantity or number, susceptible of any exact mensuration, which may be the standard in the controversy. (D. 175)

In other words, in regard to certain qualities, an accurate calculation of the degrees of that quality present in the object cannot be achieved.

Philo insists that “the dispute concerning theism is of this nature, and consequently is merely verbal, or perhaps, if possible, still more incurably ambiguous”. (D. 175) He shows this by addressing himself both to the theist and to the atheist. His initial comments are addressed to the theist:

I ask the theist, if he does not allow that there is a great and immeasurable, because incomprehensible, difference between the *human* and the *divine* mind: The more pious he is, the more readily will he assert to the affirmative, and the more will he be disposed to magnify the difference: He will even assert, that the difference is of a nature which cannot be too much magnified. (D. 175-176)

Although there is a reference in this passage to “the human and the divine mind”, the differences between them are characterized as “great and immeasurable, because incomprehensible”. Not only can the differences not be measured, they cannot be understood!

What, then, of the data which Cleanthes offers in the Argument from Design to support the claim of resemblance between us and God? Philo's views on the proper use of the data are expressed in his comments addressed to the atheist:

I next turn to the atheist, who, I assert, is only nominally so, and can never possibly be in earnest; and I ask him, whether, from the coherence and apparent sympathy in all the parts of this world, there be not a certain degree of analogy among all the operations of nature, in every situation and in every age; whether the rotting of a turnip, the generation of animal, and the structure of human

thought be not energies that probably bear some remote analogy to each other: It is impossible he can deny it: He will readily acknowledge it. Having obtained this concession, I push him still farther in his retreat; and I ask him, if it be not probable, that the principle which first and still maintains order in this universe, bears not also some remote inconceivable analogy to the other operations of nature, and among the rest to the economy of human mind and thought. However reluctant, he must give his assent. (D. 176)

In this passage, Philo is calling attention to the coherence of parts which Cleanthes' Argument from Design employs. When Philo advanced competing cosmogonies in the earlier Parts of the *Dialogues*, he attempted to account for the design of the whole world through a comparison with the design found in parts of the world, especially organisms (see, in particular, Parts 6 and 7). Since no system of cosmogony can be shown to be properly grounded, the sceptic urges a suspense of judgement as the only reasonable position to adopt. One of the matters which Philo's presentation of competing cosmogonies does reveal is that all sources of design are bound by the same general features of design, namely, means to ends relations and a coherence of parts. Now, whereas a suspense of judgement is held by Philo to be reasonable when systems of cosmogony are compared and contrasted, Philo has not yet established what position is reasonable in natural theology, once we grant that no system of cosmogony can be accepted, and that all sources of design are bound by identical features of design.

Philo's argument proceeds in two stages (beginning at D. 174), each engaging the principle "like effects prove like causes". In the first stage of his argument, he claims that the coherence of parts evident in all parts of the world countenances the conclusion that "there is certain degree of analogy among all the operations of nature". However, the resemblance found among all the effects in the world is so general that no specificity can be achieved when we attempt to determine the particular resemblance among the operations of nature. This explains why, in comparing the rotting of a turnip, the generation of an animal, and the structure of human thought, he concludes that these are energies "that probably bear some remote analogy to each other".

In the second stage of the argument, Philo calls upon the atheist, once again, to apply the principle "like effects prove like causes", but in this case, the order observed throughout the world is compared to the order observed to result from the other operations of nature. The basis of comparison is coherence in design (as it was in the first stage), and, as before, this feature reveals no specific resemblance between the design of the world and the designs resulting from the operations of nature within the world. The comparison of the design of the whole world with specific effects in nature in terms of coherence of design yields a conclusion which seems epistemologically much weaker than the conclusion obtained in the first stage: in the first stage of the argument, "some remote analogy" is conceded among all the operations of nature, whereas in the second stage, "some remote *inconceivable* analogy" is conceded between the principle of design of the whole world and the other operations of nature.

That the second stage is not epistemologically weaker than the first can be discerned by

reading several lines further when Philo reconciles the position of the theist and atheist. For, at that point, the atheist agrees that the original principle of order “bears some remote analogy” to the other operations of nature, with the term “inconceivable” omitted. Relying on Hume’s doctrine of impressions and ideas, Philo has insisted throughout the dialogue that the operations of nature are unknown to us:

But reason, in its internal fabric and structure, is really as little known to us as instinct or vegetation... The effects of these principle are all known to us from experience: But the principles themselves, and their manner of operation, are totally unknown. (D. 140)

As such, even when natural objects are compared in terms of coherence of design, the remote analogy between their causes should be regarded as “inconceivable”. If the principle cannot be known or understood at all, any claim of analogy between them must be inconceivable. Therefore, regardless of whether Philo includes the term “inconceivable” or not, any claim of analogy between principles of design must be inconceivable. Because all principles of design and their manner of operation are totally unknown, no claim of analogy between principles of order can be thought.

The theist holds that the differences between God and us are “great and immeasurable, because incomprehensible”. The atheist will allow “some remote inconceivable analogy” between the principle of order of the world and thought. I submit, therefore, that in the end, the unknowability of the divine nature is upheld.

The verbal dispute between the theist and atheist can now be grasped: since neither holds a position for which there are ideas which are determinate in nature, the degree of resemblance or difference between God and human intelligence cannot be ascertained.²

In light of the inconceivability, and consequent unknowability, of all the operations of nature, it is clear that when, in the penultimate paragraph of Part 12, Philo concludes that the whole of natural theology “resolves itself into one simple, though somewhat ambiguous, at least undefined proposition, that the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence”, no claim of understanding or comprehending this remote analogy is involved. The vast differences between the design of machines and the design of the world, despite the fact that both machines and the world exhibit means to ends relations and a coherence of parts, and the fact that the operations of nature are not revealed to us, combine to make any claim of resemblance between God and us unthinkable, and, therefore, unknowable. There has not, therefore, been a change in Philo’s position regarding the unknowability of the divine nature, and this reveals his agreement with Demea on this topic.

Early in the book, Pamphilus, the narrator of the dialogue, informs us that in Cleanthes he “could distinguish an air of finesse; as if he perceived some raillery or artificial malice in the reasonings of Philo.” (D.98 – 99) Or, again in the concluding paragraph of Part 7, following a series of criticisms that Philo has directed against Cleanthes’ Design Argument, the latter says the following to Philo:

I must confess, Philo, replied Cleanthes, that of all men living, the task which you have undertaken, of raising doubts and objections, suits you best, and seems, in a manner, natural and unavoidable to you. So great is your fertility of invention, that I am not ashamed to acknowledge myself unable, on a sudden, to solve regularly such out – of – the – way difficulties as you incessantly start upon me: Though I clearly see, in general, their fallacy and error... such whimsies, as you have delivered, may puzzle, but can never convince us. (D. 142)

In these passages, and others which can be cited, we get the sense that Cleanthes is not convinced of Philo's sincerity when he attacks the Argument from Design. However, in all that Philo presents in D. 172 to the top of D.177, which includes our study regarding the reconciliation of the theist and atheist, Philo insists that these are his "unfeigned sentiments on the subject" (D. 177). And, we have seen, that the conclusion reached is that God's nature is unknowable, which is precisely Demea's view on the subject.

Philo has established philosophically what Demea has all along maintained *que* mystic. With the departure of Demea at the end of Part 11, the discussion in Part 12 is confined to Philo and Cleanthes. It is of some interest to consider why Hume does not permit Demea to remain until the end of Part 12.

The ostensive reason given at the end of Part 11³ is that Demea was not pleased with Philo's treatment of the topic of divine benevolence in Parts 10 and 11. At the beginning of Part 12, Cleanthes makes two points: (i) he would rather discuss the topics of the dialogue one on one, rather than with Philo *and* Demea; and (ii) Philo's arguments/positions may at times have offended Demea.⁴ These are the only reasons given for Demea's departure in the text. The analysis offered in this paper provides an additional reason for Demea's departure.

It will be convenient to approach this by examining the text at the beginning of Part 4. Cleanthes begins this Part by pointing out to Demea that his mysticism renders his position indistinguishable from scepticism and atheism:

It seems strange to me, said CLEANTHES, that you, DEMEA, who are so sincere in the cause of religion, should still maintain the mysterious, incomprehensible nature of the Deity, and should insist so strenuously that he has no manner of likeness or resemblance to human creatures. The Deity, I can readily allow, possess many powers and attributes, of which we can have no comprehension: But if our ideas, so far as they go, be not just, and adequate, and correspondent to his real nature, I know not what there is in this subject worth insisting on. Is the name, without any meaning, of such mighty importance? Or how do you *mystics*, who maintain the absolute incomprehensibility of the deity, differ from sceptics or atheists, who assert, that the first cause of all is unknown and unintelligible? (D. 122)

Instead of offering a reasoned reply to Cleanthes' point, Demea accuses Cleanthes of name calling:

Who could imagine, replied DEMEA, that CLEANTHES, the calm, philosophical Cleanthes, would attempt to refute his antagonists, by affixing a nick-name to them; and like the common diggers and inquisitors of the age, have recourse to invective and declamation, instead of reasoning? Or does he not perceive, that these topics are easily retorted, and that *anthropomorphite* is an appellation as invidious, and implies as dangerous consequences, as the epithet of *Mystic*, with which he has honoured us. (D. 122)

The important point here is that Demea's temperament will not allow him to pursue a discussion in which his position is compared to that of the atheist. Now, as we have seen, a central concern in Part 12 is Philo's attempt to show that both the theist and atheist - the believer and the non-believer - must hold to the unknowability claim regarding "the principle which first arranged and still maintains order in the universe". Accordingly, given his temperament, Demea would be an obstacle in the way of completing the discussion in Part 12. Although he accepts the unknowability claim, Demea is unable to handle philosophically any comparison which involves his position and that of the atheist.

Demea's position, according to Philo, is the only position regarding God which natural theology can defend. It is, therefore, ironic that Demea will not be present when a philosophic defense of his position is put forth by Philo.

I showed earlier that Philo and Demea acknowledge that when they speak about God what they say should be regarded as indicative of their adoration of God, rather than as meaningful statements regarding the divine nature. The analysis which I have offered above in which Philo reconciles the theist and the atheist regarding the similarity or analogy between the human and divine mind is a further example of this practice. Philo establishes that the analogy or resemblance between God and us is inconceivable, and yet it is spoken about as though the claim is meaningful. My study reveals, therefore, that whereas claims about God made by Cleanthes are held by him to be taken literally, claims about God made by Philo and Demea are regarded by them as emanating from individuals who regard God as adorably mysterious and exceeding human understanding.

Endnotes:

1. All references to David Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* are to the Philosophy-in-Focus Edition, edited and with an Introduction by Stanley Tweyman, Routledge, London and New York, 1991. References will be indicated by D. followed by the page number(s).
2. "The theist allows, that the original intelligence is very different from human reason: The atheist allows that the original principle of order bears some remote analogy to it. Will, you quarrel, gentlemen, about the degrees, and enter into a controversy, which admits not of any precise meaning, nor consequently of any determination. If you should be so obstinate, I should not be surprised to find you insensibly change sides; while the theist on the one hand exaggerates the dissimilarity between the supreme Being, and frail, imperfect, variable, fleeting, and mortal creatures; and the atheist on the other magnifies the analogy, among all the operations of nature, in every period, every situation, and every position.

Consider then, where the real point of controversy lies, and if you cannot lay aside your disputes, endeavour, at least to cure yourselves of your animosity” (D. 176).

3. “Thus Philo continued to the last his spirit of opposition, and his censure of established opinions. But I could sense, that Demea did not at all relish the latter part of the discourse and he took occasion soon after, on some pretence or other, to leave the company” (D. 171).
4. “Your spirit of controversy, joined to your abhorrence of vulgar superstition, causes you strange lengths, when engaged in an argument; and there is nothing so sacred and venerable, even in your own eyes, which you spare on that occasion” (D. 172).

References:

Hume, David. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, edited and with an Introduction by Stanley Tweyman. London and New York: Routledge, 1991.