

seed, or that every reproduction is a new creation, and immediate effect of the Almighty's will; because these hypotheses are questions of fact, and on which it is impossible to reason. We must also reject every hypothesis which might have final causes for its object; such as, we might say, that reproduction is made in order for the living to supply the place of the dead, that the earth may be always covered with vegetables, and peopled with animals; that man may find plenty for his subsistence, &c. because these hypotheses, instead of explaining the effects by physical causes, are founded only on arbitrary connections and moral agreements. At the same time we must not rely on these absolute axioms and physical problems, which so many people have improperly made use of, as principles; for example, there is no fecundation made apart from the body, *nulla fœcondatio extra corpus*; every living thing is produced from an egg; all generation supposes sexes, &c. We must not take these maxims in an absolute sense, but consider them only as signifying things generally performed in one particular mode rather than in any other.