

## CHAPTER III.

*Of the Metaphysics which have been resorted to on the side of Theism.*

DR. CLARKE'S A PRIORI ARGUMENT ON THE BEING OF A GOD.

1. ALL have heard of the famous *a priori* argument of Dr. Clarke—an argument which Dr. Reid does homage to as the speculation of superior minds ; but whether it be as solid as it is sublime, he professes himself wholly unable to determine.\*

2. On this subject Dr. Thomas Brown is greatly more confident. “ I conceive,” he tells us, “ the abstract arguments which have been adduced to show that it is *impossible* for *matter* to have existed from eternity—by reasoning on what has been termed *necessary existence*, and the incompatibility of this *necessary existence* with the qualities of matter—to be relics of the mere *verbal logic* of the schools, as little capable of producing conviction as any of the wildest and most absurd of the technical scholastic reasonings, on the properties, or supposed properties, of entity and non-entity.”

3. But let us not dismiss an argument, which so deeply infused what may be called the Theistical Literature of England for the first half of the last century, without some examination.

\* “ These,” says Dr. Reid, “ are the speculations of men of superior genius—but whether they be solid as they are sublime, or whether they be the wanderings of imagination into a region beyond the limits of the human understanding, I am unable to determine.”