

though not sufficient to warrant its own absolute deliverance on the origin of evil, may suffice to disarm this mysterious theme of all that hostile application wherewith it has been turned to the prejudice of the faith.

19. The truth is, that an affirmation from the mouth of an enemy, and the counter-affirmation from the mouth of a friend wherewith it has been met, may both of them relate to a subject placed beyond the limit which separates our known from our unknown. The one nullifies the other. Both may be expunged: and, as in mathematics, when equals are taken from unequals the remainders may be unequal. In other words, after the termination of such a contest, the proper evidences of religion may remain in all their native superiority and force. A hostile argument had been conjured up by one party from the dim and shadowy region of invisibles; and had been laid by one in its own likeness, or by the defensive argument of another party raised from the same quarter and fashioned of the same materials. A hypothetical argument on the side of religion, though it should give birth to no positive conclusion, might at least match and so extinguish the hypothetical argument opposed to it. It is at best but an aerial contest on a *terra incognita*, which, after its settlement leaves all the supports of our faith that are planted on the *terra firma* or *terra cognita*, in a state of as unshaken strength and solidity as before. Such is the nature and such the effect of the controversy on the origin of evil. It is altogether a spectral warfare, stirred by one airy element, and dispersed