

to move, or at least to look in the opposite direction.

7. In the utter destitution, for the present, of any argument, or even semblance of argument, that a God is—there is, perhaps, a certain duteous movement which the mind ought to take, on the bare suggestion that a God may be. The certainty of an actual God binds over to certain distinct and most undoubted proprieties. But so also may the imagination of a possible God—in which case, the very idea of a God, even in its most hypothetical form, might lay a responsibility, even upon atheists.

8. To make this palpable, we might imagine a family suffering under extreme destitution, and translated all at once into sufficiency or affluence by an anonymous donation. Had the benefactor been known, the gratitude that were due to him becomes abundantly obvious; and in the estimation of every conscience, nothing could exceed the turpitude of him who should regale himself on the bounties wherewith he had been enriched, and yet pass unheedingly by the giver of them all. Yet does not a proportion of this very guilt rest upon him who knows not the hand that relieved him, yet cares not to inquire? It does not exonerate him from the burden of all obligation, that he knows not the hand which sustains him. He incurs a guilt, if he do not want to know. It is enough to convict him of a great moral delin-