

**VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU;  
AGAINST THE ATHEISTS: OR,  
ESSAYS AND DETACHED  
PASSAGES FROM THOSE  
WRITERS**

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Voltaire and Rousseau; Against the Atheists: Or, Essays and Detached Passages from Those Writers by J. Akerly

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**J. AKERLY**

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VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU

AGAINST THE ATHEISTS;

OR,

ESSAYS AND DETACHED PASSAGES FROM  
THOSE WRITERS,

IN RELATION TO

THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

By J. AKERLY.

\* \* \* Jovis omnis plena.—VIRGIL, (*Bucol. Ed. III.*)

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## VOLTAIRE.

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FROM "IL FAUT PRENDRE UN PARTI"—WE MUST  
CHOOSE OUR SIDE.

I do not allude to choosing sides between Russia and Turkey, for those countries will make peace sooner or later, without any interference of mine :

Nor is the question whether we shall declare ourselves in favor of a British party against some other party, for both will soon disappear and make way for new ones :

Nor do I propose to choose between the Christians of the Greek Church, the Arminians, the Eutychians, the Jacobites, the Christians denominated Papists, the Lutherans,

the Calvinists, the Anglicans, the Primitives styled Quakers, the Anabaptists, the Jansenists, the Molinists, the Socinians, the Pietists, and so many other *ists*. I desire to keep on good terms with all these gentlemen when I meet them, and to enter into no dispute with them; for there is not one among them all who, if he should have occasion to divide a guinea with me, would not perfectly understand how much was due him, or who would be willing to lose an *obolus* for the salvation of my soul or of his.

I shall not *take sides* between the old and new parliaments of France, for a few years hence we shall hear no more of either :

Nor between the ancients and the moderns, for that is a dispute which will never be settled :

Nor between the Jansenists and the Molinists, for they exist no longer, and five or six thousand volumes of their controversial works have become, thank God, as useless as the works of Saint Ephraim :



Nor between the French and Italian comic operas, for that is a matter of taste:

But that to which I refer is a trifling little question, viz.,—WHETHER THERE IS A GOD;— and this is what I am about to examine with great seriousness and good faith, for the subject is interesting to me and you too

#### ON THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION.

Every thing is in motion; every thing in nature acts and reacts.

Our sun turns on its axis with a rapidity which amazes us, and other suns turn likewise, while an innumerable multitude of planets revolve in their orbits around them. The blood circulates more than twenty times an hour in the lowest of our animals. A straw, borne by the wind, tends by its nature to the centre of the earth, as the earth is attracted by the sun, and the sun by it. The everlasting flux and reflux of the ocean is attributable to the same laws. It is in pur-

suance of the same laws that the vapors which form our atmosphere escape continually from the earth and fall again in the shape of dew, rain, hail, snow, and thunderstorms.

All is action; even death is active. The bodies of the dead are decomposed, transform themselves into vegetables, and afford nourishment for the living, who, in their turn, nourish others in the same manner.

What is the principle of this universal action?

That principle must be ONE. The constant uniformity discoverable in the laws which regulate the revolutions of the heavenly bodies and in the motion of our globe, and which is found to prevail also in every species and genus of animals, vegetables, and minerals, indicates *one* mover only. If there were two, they would be either different from each other, or hostile to each other, or similar to each other. Were they different, there would be no mutual adaptation in the

<sup>with</sup> works of nature. Were they hostile, all things would destroy each other. If they are similar, it is as if there were but one: there is, in that case, one more than is required.

I am confirmed in the belief that there is but a single principle, a single mover, the moment I direct my attention to the unchanging and uniform laws pervading all nature.

The same gravitation penetrates into all the heavenly bodies, and impels them toward each other, not in proportion to their extent of surface (for that might result from the influence of a fluid), but in proportion to their mass or quantity of matter.

The squares of the periodic times of the planets are to each other in the same proportion as the cubes of their distances from the sun; and this, let me remark in passing, establishes what Plato had divined (I know not how), that the world is the work of the *Everlasting Geometer. is it!*