

**SHORT COLLECTIONS; OR, EXCERPTA  
FROM ANTIENT AND MODERN  
AUTHORS, FOR THE USE  
OF SCEPTICS, IN THE GREAT TRUTHS OF  
NATURAL RELIGION, OR SOCIAL AND  
MORAL DUTIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649217694

Short collections; or, Excerpta from antient and modern authors, for the use of sceptics, in the great truths of natural religion, or social and moral duties by Anonymous

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# **ANONYMOUS**

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IN THE  
GREAT TRUTHS OF NATURAL RELIGION;  
OR  
SOCIAL AND MORAL DUTIES.

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*"Est quoddam prodire genus."*

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BY A LAYMAN.

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London:  
CALKIN AND BUDD,  
BOOKSELLERS TO HIS MAJESTY,  
FALL-MALL.

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1829.

## NOTICE.

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WHOEVER has mixed much with the World, must have often met with many, who disapproving perhaps of some speculative Tenets, or certain practices in the systems of Faith and Religion, in which they may have been educated, have fallen by degrees, first into a general scepticism as to religious truths, and then from engaging deeply in the business or pleasures of life, have either lost the opportunity, or the relish for serious inquiries ; and thus float down the stream of life, and advance towards the end of their career, plunged into all the mental discomfort which attends uncertainty and doubt, on those points which most concern and conduce to their relative or ultimate happiness.

Whatever may be the march of intellect, and whether forward or retrograde, it seems but too obvious, that few willingly sit down in the present day to a long book of close and continued reasoning on serious topics, even from the pen of the most popular or able Writer. It has

therefore occurred to the Author of the following Collections, that such a selection from Writers of the highest authority, both antient or modern, and of various countries and ages, might be of some utility to the Sceptic and Indolent, since the perusal would require no long continued reading, or plan of study, and would obviate the too common objection of priestcraft or private interest thrown out by the Infidel, against all Systems and Treatises on Religious and Moral Subjects.

If the Work thus submitted to the Public, should awaken in the Thoughtless a turn for deeper Inquiry, or confirm the Wavering in a settled Belief of those Opinions, which must in truth form the basis of all Religion, whether natural or revealed, the Compiler's labour would be amply compensated; and it might lead to results of still higher importance to the individual.

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*Ζητῶ γὰρ τὴν ἀληθειαν, ὑφ' ἧς εὐχαις ἐλάβην.*

MARC. ANTON.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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*Deo optimo, Maximo, Unico, Rerum Universitatis conditori  
Conseruatorique.*

AMONG the opinions which it most highly concerns all men to *settle* and embrace, the chief are those which relate to Almighty *God!!* as the great Creator and Governor of the Universe. That there is really existing a Supreme Being from whom all other things derive their original, and the principal of their *motion*, not as from a dull and senseless power as the weight, for example, in a clock; but as from a cause endued with understanding and with freedom of choice. That this Eternal Being exercises a sovereignty not only over the whole world, or over *mankind in general*, but over every *individual*; whose knowledge nothing can escape; who, by virtue of his imperial right, hath enjoined men such certain duties by natural law, the observance of which will meet with his approbation, the breach

or the neglect with his displeasure: and that he will for this purpose require an exact account from every man of his proceedings, without corruption and without partiality.—*Puffend.* 155.

To him whose heart the true maxims have pierced, the shortest and most common hint is a sufficient memorial to keep him free of sorrow and fear.—*Anton.* 394. (Glasc. Ed.)

A man may at any hour he pleases retire into himself, and no where will he find a place of more quiet and leisure than in his own soul; especially if he has that furniture within, the view of which immediately gives him the fullest tranquillity. *Allow yourself continually this tranquillity, and refresh and renew yourself. Have also at hand some short elementary maxims, which may readily occur, and suffice to wash away all trouble, &c.*—*Anton.* (Glasc.) 140.

In the accounts remaining of the earliest times, the attention every where paid to religion, the deep interest taken in it by individuals and by communities, by people polished equally and unpolished, is peculiarly striking. A sense of dependency on some superior Being seems, indeed, inseparable from man; it is in a manner instinct in him. Πάντες δὲ Θεῶν κατέουσ' ἄνθρωποι. —*Homer's Odys.* 1. 3. c. 48. His own helplessness, compared with the stupendous powers of