

Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion

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DAVID HUME

Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion by David Hume Brand New Copy Complete Version It has been remarked, my Hermippus, that though the ancient philosophers conveyed most of their instruction in the form of dialogue, this method of composition has been little practised in later ages, and has seldom succeeded in the hands of those who have attempted it. Accurate and regular argument, indeed, such as is now expected of philosophical inquirers, naturally throws a man into the methodical and didactic manner; where he can immediately, without preparation, explain the point at which he aims; and thence proceed, without interruption, to deduce the proofs on which it is established. To deliver a SYSTEM in conversation, scarcely appears natural; and while the dialogue-writer desires, by departing from the direct style of composition, to give a freer air to his performance, and avoid the appearance of Author and Reader, he is apt to run into a worse inconvenience, and convey the image of Pedagogue and Pupil. Or, if he carries on the dispute in the natural spirit of good company, by throwing in a variety of topics, and preserving a proper balance among the speakers, he often loses so much time in preparations and transitions, that the reader will scarcely think himself compensated, by all the graces of dialogue, for the order, brevity, and precision, which are sacrificed to them. David Hume, 1711-25 August 1776, was a Scottish philosopher, historian, economist, and essayist known especially for his philosophical empiricism and skepticism. He was one of the most important figures in the history of Western philosophy and the Scottish Enlightenment. Hume is often grouped with John Locke, George Berkeley, and a handful of others as a British Empiricist. Beginning with his *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), Hume strove to create a total naturalistic science

of man that examined the psychological basis of human nature. In stark opposition to the rationalists who preceded him, most notably Descartes, he concluded that desire rather than reason governed human behavior, saying: Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions. A prominent figure in the sceptical philosophical tradition and a strong empiricist, he argued against the existence of innate ideas, concluding instead that humans have knowledge only of things they directly experience. Thus he divides perceptions between strong and lively impressions or direct sensations and fainter ideas, which are copied from impressions. He developed the position that mental behaviour is governed by custom, that is acquired ability; our use of induction, for example, is justified only by our idea of the constant conjunction of causes and effects. Without direct impressions of a metaphysical self, he concluded that humans have no actual conception of the self, only of a bundle of sensations associated with the self.

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(9780872204027): David Hume, Richard H. Popkin: Books. **Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion: Part I -**

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