

of society. It is a solemn appeal to God for the truth of what we declare ; and for our sincerity in what we promise. But what force or efficacy can such an appeal have with a person who thinks there is no God ?

THE experiment has been lately made—and blessed be God, not at our expence—the experiment, I say, has been actually made, what effects are produced by atheistic principles, when they assume the reins of Government, dictate public measures, and are diffused among the mass of the people. We see, and shudder at those effects. History indeed, in its extensive range, presents us with a solitary, speculative atheist here and there, who was a disgrace to our common nature. The number however was so small, that no material injury was done to society ; especially as the popular belief was always against them, and they were universally detested.\* But France has proved by practice, what was before demonstrable in theory, that Atheism, when it infects the mass of people, and influences public councils, is totally subversive of society, of human happiness, and all the comforts of life. And with such an example before us, for any one to desire a repetition of the experiment, would be just as wise and rational as to fling a man down a precipice, or discharge a loaded cannon at him, by way of experiment, and to try whether either would kill him ; although we are already apprized of the certain consequences.

BUT although I trust, and firmly believe, that those impious principles are not prevalent among us, nor any desire to try so dreadful an experiment : Yet it may not be improper

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\* When Diagoras, the Atheist, fled from Athens to avoid a trial on account of his principles, the Athenians offered a talent, about £.193 15s. sterling, to any one that would kill him. The charge of Atheism against Socrates, though false, was the cause of his being put to death.