

THE
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

CLARKE'S ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY. II.*

AFTER our somewhat detailed examination of Clarke's *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* (1704), we now turn to his *Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation* (1705).³⁶ It will be remembered that the *Demonstration* was intended to afford the needed metaphysical foundation for the argument of the *Discourse*, the first part of which contains the detailed exposition of Clarke's ethical theory. Toward the end of Part I of this article, however, we were obliged to conclude that the logical relation between the First and the Second Boyle Lectures was much less close than their author had intended and supposed. In fact, the twelfth and concluding 'proposition' of the *Demonstration*—in which (including the proof) Clarke indicates in outline his characteristic ethical position, together with its implied metaphysical foundation—is plainly opposed to the general drift of the preceding argument. Instead of insisting upon the 'arbitrary' nature of the world order, as proving the existence of God,—as he had done before, after cutting loose from arguments which, if not identical with the ontological proof, at least presupposed that,—Clarke now insists, as emphatically as possible, upon ultimate distinctions involved in the very

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³⁶ The dates given are the years in which Clarke's First and Second Boyle Lectures were delivered. Each Lecture was published the year after it was delivered. The text of the *Discourse* used is that of the Second Edition, 1708, and references will be to the pages of that edition.