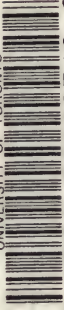


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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E S S A Y S  
ON THE  
CHARACTERISTICS  
OF THE  
Earl of SHAFTESBURY.

I. On RIDICULE, considered as a  
Test of Truth.

II. On the Motives to VIRTUE, and the  
Necessity of *Religious Principle*.

III. On *Revealed* RELIGION, and CHRIS-  
TIANITY.

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THE FIFTH EDITION.

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E S A Y S

THE HISTORY OF THE

CHARACTERS OF THE

EMPERORS OF THE

ROMAN EMPIRE

IN THE

REIGN OF

THE

EMPEROR

THE

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THE HISTORY OF THE

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EMPERORS OF THE

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ROMAN EMPIRE

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**ESSAYS**

ON THE  
**CHARACTERISTICS.**

BY  
**JOHN BROWN, D.D.**  
Vicar of NEWCASTLE.



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PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

JOHN BROWN, M.D.

Author of "The Elements of the Science of Life"

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1388  
B7  
1764

LONDON  
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T O

Ralph Allen, Esq.

S I R,

**D** I D this Address aim no further than at the common End of Dedicators, I should have been proud enough to have declined the Trouble, and *You* too wise to have approved this public Manner of offering it.

To praise *You*, were *impertinent*; and to tell others of my Obligations to *You*, would have the Appearance rather of *Vanity* than *Gratitude*.

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THE



THE Truth is; I make free with Your Name on this Occasion, not so much to *protect* my *Book*, as to *complete* my *Argument*.

I HAVE ventured to criticize the Works of a very celebrated Writer, who took it into his Head to oppose the solid Wisdom of the *Gospel*, by the *Visions* of *false Philosophy*. As His, at best, is but the Cause of *Wit* and *Eloquence*, all the Support he could give it was only to tell us *how PLATO wrote*: Mine being that of *Truth*, and *Christianity*, I have the Advantage of *realizing* all I say, in bidding the World take Notice *how YOU live*.

IN a word; I was willing to bring the Question to a short Iffue; and shew, by a *known* EXAMPLE, to what an Elevation true *Christianity* can exalt human Nature. Till therefore philosophic *Taste* can produce a parallel Effect, *Religion* must bear the *Palm*; and CHRISTIANITY, like her *Parent* WISDOM, *will be justified of her Children.*

*I am, S I R,*

*Your most obliged,*

*humble Servant,*

JOHN BROWN.





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# ESSAYS

ON THE

CHARACTERISTICS, etc.

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## ESSAY I.

On Ridicule, considered as a Test  
of Truth.

### SECTION I.

**I**T hath been the Fate of Lord SHAFTESBURY'S *Characteristics*, beyond that of most other Books, to be idolized by one Party, and detested by another. While the first regard it as a Work of *perfect Excellence*, as containing every Thing that can render Mankind wise and happy; the latter are disposed to rank it among the most pernicious of Writings, and brand it as one

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I.

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B

conti-

ESSAY continued Heap of *Fustian, Scurrility, and*  
 I. *Falsehood.*

THIS Circumstance hath always appeared to me a Demonstration, that Passion and Prejudice have had a greater Share than Reason, in deciding upon the Merits of this Work ; which many read with Displeasure, more with Admiration, but few with impartial Judgment. 'Tis probable, the Truth lies between the two Extremes of these discordant Opinions : and that the noble Writer hath mingled Beauties and Blots, Faults and Excellencies, with a liberal and unsparing Hand.

THESE, so far as they relate to *Religion* and *Morals*, it is my present Intention to point out, without regard to the bigoted Censures of his Friends or Enemies: While I foresee, that some will *frown* upon me for allowing him any Thing, and others treat me with a *contemptuous Smile* for presuming to differ with him at all.

THE first Thing that occurs to an unprejudiced Mind, in the Perusal of the *Characteristics*, is that generous Spirit of *Freedom* which shines throughout the whole. The noble Author every where asserts that natural Privilege of Man, which hath been  
 so

so often denied him, of seeing with his own Eyes, and judging by his own Reason. It may possibly appear strange to some, why he should so extremely labour a Point so plain. But in Justice to his Lordship these Gentlemen must remember, or be informed, that in former Times, some well-designing Men among ourselves, from a groundless Dread of an unlimited Freedom of the Press, attempted to make a most unnatural and cruel Separation between *Truth* and *Liberty*. Having shaken off the Corruptions of *Popery*, and established what they thought a pure and perfect System, they unhappily stopped short in their full Carrier of Glory; preposterously attempting to deprive others of that common Privilege which they had so nobly exercised themselves. This mistaken Spirit seemed entirely subdued by the excellent LOCKE and others, about the Time of the Revolution: But at the Period when our noble Author wrote, it not only revived, but was heightened by a terrible Accession of Bitterness and Rancour. Hence those frequent Sallies of Invective, which he throws out against this intolerant Principle, which he justly stigmatizeth as equally impolitic, irrational, and unchristian.

'TIS the Glory of our Days, that this accursed Spirit of Persecution is at least dying away. What Pity that we cannot add, it is wholly extinguished! It is true, we most of us profess ourselves Friends to a Freedom of Inquiry, *in the main*. But why, *in the main*? Why that needless Circumstance of Hesitation? Would we embrace Error? Or do we think that Truth can suffer by the most rigid Scrutiny? On the contrary, not only the Perfection, but the very Being of Knowledge depends on the Exercise of Freedom. For whatever some may fear from an open and unlimited Enquiry, it seems evidently the only Means vouchsafed us for the Attainment of Truth. The *Abuse* of it may be *hurtful*, but the *Want* of it is *fatal*. Such, indeed, are the clear and undoubted Principles of our Religion: Neither sure can these Declarations surprize us. For if human and political Establishments had been sacred or inviolable, where had been our *Protestantism*; nay, where our *Christianity*? Dare we then to desert or discountenance a Principle, on which not only the Purity, but the very Existence of our Religion depends? Nor is this Principle less consonant with the strictest Reason. It

is



is Falsehood only that loves and retires into Darkness. Truth delights in the Day; and demands no more than a just Light, to appear in perfect Beauty. A rigid Examination is its only Test: For Experience hath taught us, that even *Obstinacy* and *Error* can endure the *Fires* of Persecution: But it is genuine Truth, and that alone, which comes out pure and *unchanged* from the *severer Tortures* of Debate.

IT will ever be our truest Praise therefore, to join the noble Apologist in his Encomiums on *Freedom*; the only permanent Basis on which *Religion* or *Virtue* can be established. Nor can we less approve his frequent Recommendations of *Politeness*, *Chearfulness*, and *Good-humour*, in the Prosecution of our most important Inquiries. The morose, contemptuous, and surly Species of Composition is generally an Appendage to Bigotry, as appears in Instances innumerable, both among the mistaken Friends and Enemies of Religion. On the contrary, the amiable Qualities of Chearfulness and Good-humour cast a Kind of Sunshine over a Composition, and naturally engage us in Favour of the Writer. They resemble that gentle Smile that often lights

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up the human Countenance, the never-failing Indication of a humane Temper. How naturally then must we be disposed to listen; how open our Minds to receive Conviction, when we perceive our Opponent's Intention is benevolent! when we perceive that his Aim is not *Victory*, but *Information*: that he means not to *insult*, but to *instruct* us!

So far, out of an unfeigned Regard to Truth, it should be my Boast to take Party with the noble Writer: On the same Principle it will now be necessary to depart from him. For, not content with establishing the free Exercise of Reason, and the Way of Cheerfulness, in treating the Subjects of Religion and Morals; he revolts from the Principle on which the rational Advocates for Religion were willing to have joined him, and appeals to a new Test, *the Test of Ridicule*. This, in his two first Treatises, he attempts to establish as a surer Method of Conviction: And that *Ridicule*, which had hitherto been employed in *disgracing known Falsehood*, he informs us, may be successfully applied to the *Investigation of unknown Truth*.

HE

## Essay on RIDICULE.

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HE hath gained a numerous Train of Followers in this new Opinion : It may be therefore necessary to examine its Foundations.

SECT.

I.

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### SECTION II.

'TIS great Pity the noble Author hath not condescended to a little more *Precision* in treating the Question now before us. He indulges the Gaiety of Spirit, the Freedom of *Wit* and *Humour* so far, that a Reader, who seeks Information rather than Amusement, is often at a Loss to know where his Argument, or even his Opinion, lies. This, no doubt, was in part owing to a generous Abhorrence of that *Pedantry*, which he takes all Occasions of exposing to Contempt. Yet a better Reason may possibly be alledged : For in recommending the *Use of Ridicule*, what could be more natural and proper than the *Power of Ridicule* itself ? To draw a striking Picture of demure Folly and solemn Imposture, was a Master-piece of Prudence : But to have argued *seriously*, would have destroyed his Argument : It had been a tacit Confession, that there is a deeper Foundation, on which

SECT.

II.

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Ridicule itself must rest; he must therefore have overturned, even while he intended to establish, this new Pillar, and *Ground of Truth*.

HERE then we discover why the noble Author is so witty in Defence of Wit, and chuses to maintain the Cause of Raillery by Raillery itself. He smiles at his Adversary, who had attempted to find Coherence in his first Letter<sup>a</sup>. He glories in being an Adventurer in the Way of *Miscellany*; where “Cuttings and Shreds of Learning, “with various Fragments and Points of “Wit, are drawn together and tacked in “any fantastic Form. Where the Wild “and Whimsical, under the Name of the “Odd and Pretty, succeed in the Room of “the Graceful and Beautiful: Where Justness and Accuracy of Thought are set “aside, as too constraining, and of too “painful an Aspect, to be endured in the “agreeable and more easy Commerce of “Gallantry and modern Wit<sup>b</sup>.” Hence with Reason he proceeds to his Conclusion, that “Grounds and Foundations are of no “Moment, in a Kind of Work, which, ac-

<sup>a</sup> Vol. iii. p. 18, 20.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid. p. 5, &c.

“ cording to modern Establishment, has  
 “ properly neither *Top* nor *Bottom*, *Begin-*  
 “ *ning* nor *End*.”

IT must be confessed, that in the Con-  
 duct of the literary Warfare, they who de-  
 pend on the Regularity and Force of *Argu-*  
*ments*, have but a sorry Chance against  
 these nimble Adventurers in the *Sallies* of  
 Wit and Ridicule; these *Hussars* in Dis-  
 putation, who confide more in their Agi-  
 lity, than Strength or Discipline; and by  
 sudden *Evolutions* and timely *Skulking*, can  
 do great Mischiefs, without receiving any.  
 Ill qualified, indeed, is the *saturnine* Com-  
 plexion of the dry *Reasoner*, to cope with  
 this *mercurial* Spirit of modern *Wit*: The  
 Formalist is under a double Difficulty; not  
 only to *conquer* his Enemy, but to *find* him.  
 Though it must be owned, the Search is a  
 harder Task than the *Victory*; and more  
 mortifying, as it ends in shewing us that  
 this redoubted Figure of *Ridicule*, armed at  
 all Points like *Reason*, is no other than an  
 airy Phantom, tricked up by the Goddess  
 of Folly, to confound formal Wisdom; as  
 that other in the Poet, to mislead his Hero:

<sup>c</sup> Vol. iii. p. 8.

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I.

Tum dea nube cava *tenuem sine viribus umbram*  
In faciem Æneæ (visu mirabile monstrum)  
*Dardaniis ornat telis: clypeumque, jubaſque*  
*Divini affimilat capitis; dat inania verba,*  
Dat *sine mente ſonum*, gressusque effingit euntis.  
Illum autem absentem Æneas in prælia poſcit.  
Tunc levis haud ultra *latebras* jam *quærit* imago,  
Sed ſublime volans, *nubi ſe immiſcuit atræ*<sup>d</sup>.

SINCE, therefore, the noble Writer declines treating this Subject in the Way of cloſe Argument; we muſt take our Chance with him upon the Terms he hath been pleaſed to preſcribe. We muſt be content to go a *Gleaning* for his Opinions, and *pick them up* as they lie thinly ſcattered through a wide Extent of Pages.

BUT, however his Lordſhip's high Quality may exempt him from the eſtabliſhed Forms of Argument, it were the Height of Imprudence in Writers of inferior Rank, to attempt an Imitation of his peculiar Manner. His delicate Raillery, therefore, will beſt be repayed by ſober Reaſoning. This ſure, his moſt zealous Admirers cannot take amiſs: It is the noble Author's allowed Maxim, that "a Jeſt, which will not bear a  
" ſerious Examination, is certainly falſe  
" Wit<sup>e</sup>." Neither was he a Stranger to

<sup>d</sup> Virg. Æn. x. ver. 636, &c.

<sup>e</sup> Vol. i. p. 74.



the methodical Species of Composition: As appears from his Enquiry concerning Virtue; where he proceeds with a Pace equally regular and majestic. Indeed should we form our Idea of him from the Attitudes in which his sorry Mimics present him to our View, we should see him labouring through a confused Mass of Words and random Half-meanings, entangled in his own Argument, and throwing himself into every unnatural and aukward Posture, to make his Way, though in vain, into Sense. But this is a very bad Picture of the noble Author: Though it be all his affected Admirers can exhibit of him in their own Productions. Deformities are easily copied: True Features and graceful Attitudes are caught by the Hand of a *Master* only. And in Reality, none ever knew the Value of Order and Proportion better than Lord SHAFTESBURY. He knew that Confusion can only tend to *disgrace* Truth, or *disguise* Falsehood. Method, indeed, may degenerate into Stiffness, but to despise Order, is the silliest *Affectation*. Especially when the slovenly and confused Form of the Composition pretends to the Character of *Elegance*,

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I.

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gance, it becomes of all others the grossest and most contemptible Pedantry.

### SECTION III.

SECT.  
III.

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THE divine Author of our Being having given us several different Powers, *Sense*, *Imagination*, *Memory*, and *Reason*, as the Inlets, Preservers, and Improvers of Knowledge; it may be proper here briefly to remark their respective Provinces. As the *Senses* are the Fountains whence we derive all our Ideas; so these are infinitely combined and affociated by the *Imagination*: *Memory* preserves these Assemblages of Things: *Reason* compares, distinguishes, and separates them: By this Means determining their Differences, and pointing out which are *real*, and which *fictitious*.

THE *Passions* are no more than the several Modes of Pleasure and Pain, to which the Author of Nature hath wisely subjected us, for our own and each other's Preservation.

“ Love, Hope, and Joy, fair Pleasure’s smiling

“ Train;

“ Hate, Fear, and Grief, the Family of Pain.”



To these we may add two more of a mixed Kind, *Pity* and *Contempt*, which seem to partake of both Pain and Pleasure.

As the *Senses* and *Imagination* are the Sources of all our Ideas, it follows that they are the Sources of all our Modes of Pleasure and Pain; That is, of all our *Passions*. Nor is any Passion *strongly excited* in the Soul by mere Knowledge only, till the *Imagination* hath formed to itself some Kind of *Picture* or *Representation* of the Good or Evil apprehended. Thus ARISTOTLE justly defines Fear to be a Kind of Pain arising from the *Phantasy* or *Appearance* of future Evil<sup>f</sup>. Consistently with this, he again truly observes, that though all Men know they must die, yet, while *Death* is at a Distance, they never think of it<sup>g</sup>. The same may be observed concerning the Belief of *future Existence*; which never sways the Conduct of Mankind, till the *Imagination* is strongly *impressed* by steady and repeated Contemplation.

<sup>f</sup> Εσω δε φοβος, λυπη τις η ταραχη εκ ΦΑΝΤΑΣΙΑΣ μελλοντος κακου. Arist. Rhet. l. ii. c. 5.

<sup>g</sup> Ισασι γαρ παντες, οτι αποθανουσι· αλλ' οσι ουκ ειγυς, ουδεν φρονιζουσιν. Ib. l. ii. c. 5.

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I.

As therefore, it appears to be the Province of *Sense* and *Imagination* to present and associate Ideas, but not to mark their real Differences; and as the Passions are always excited according to the Suggestions of these two Powers; it follows, that *apparent* not *real* Good and Evil, are universally the Objects of all our Passions. Thus the respective Objects of Joy, Fear, Anger, are apparent Good, apparent Danger, apparent Injury. Universally, whether the Object be real or fictitious, while it is *apparent* (that is, while the Imagination represents it as *real*) it will produce its relative Passion.

It is the Province of *Reason*, alone, to correct the Passions. Imagination and Passion can never correct themselves. Every Assemblage of Ideas, every Impression made upon them, hath an Object *apparently real*: Therefore without the Aids of *Reason*, the *active* and *separating* Power, the Mind can never distinguish *real* from *fictitious* Objects. Again, as it is the Province of Reason only, thus to regulate the Senses and Imagination, and to determine when they impress a Truth, or suggest a Falshood: so it is no less the Province of the same corrective Power, to determine

determine concerning the Modes of *apparent* Good and Evil, and thus to fix both our *Opinions* and *Passions* on their proper Objects<sup>h</sup>.

UPON this just Dependance of Imagination and Passion on the superior and leading Faculty of Reason, the whole Weight of this Question concerning the Application and Use of *Ridicule* depends. But that we may obtain as wide a View as possible of our Subject, it may be proper to ascertain the Nature, Limits, and Ends of the different Kinds of literary Composition, which take their Rise from these three different Powers, as they subsist in Man. Thus we shall discover, to which of them *the Way of Ridicule* is to be referred, and determine how far

<sup>h</sup> Some of these Truths are both finely and philosophically expressed by our great Poet in the following Passage :

But know, that in the Soul  
Are many lesser Faculties, that serve  
Reason as chief : Among these, Fancy next  
Her Office holds : Of all external Things,  
Which the five watchful Senses represent,  
She forms Imaginations, aery Shapes,  
Which Reason joining or dis-joining, frames  
All what we affirm, or what deny, and call  
Our Knowledge, or Opinion.

*Parad. Lost*, B. v. ver. 100, &c.



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I.

it may, or may not, with Propriety be regarded as a *Test of Truth*.

PERHAPS there is no Species in Writing (except only that of mere *Narration*) but what will fall under the Denomination of *Poetry, Eloquence, or Argument*. The first lays hold of the Imagination; the second, through the Imagination, seizes the Passions; the last addresseth itself to the Reason of Mankind. The immediate, *essential* End therefore of Poetry is to *please*, of Eloquence to *persuade*, of Argument to *instruct*. To this End, the Poet dwells on such Images as are *beautiful*; the Orator selects every Circumstance that is *affecting*; the Philosopher only admits what is *true*. But as all these, in their several Kinds of Writing, address themselves to *Man*, who is compounded of *Imagination, Passion, and Reason*; so they seldom confine themselves to their respective Provinces, but lay hold of each other's Art, the more effectually to gain Admission and Success to their own. Yet still the *Masters* in these various Kinds of Composition, know how to keep their several Boundaries *distinct*; not to make unwarrantable Inroads into each other's Provinces, nor remove those Lines which Nature

ture hath prescribed: But so to limit their Excursions, that the Intelligent may always know what is designed, a *Poem*, an *Oration*, or an *Argument*<sup>i</sup>.

THUS the judicious Poet, though his immediate and universal Aim is beautiful Imitation, yet, in order to become more *pleasing*, endeavours often to be *interesting*, always to be *rational*. His Application being made to *Man*, should he let loose Imagination to its Random-flights, he must shock the *Reason* of every penetrating Observer. Hence appears the Necessity of cultivating that Maxim in poetical Composition, which the two best of *French* Critics, *Boileau* and *Bouhours* have so much insisted on; “that all  
“poetical Beauty must be founded in  
“Truth<sup>k</sup>.” Because in the unlimited Excursions of Fancy though one Faculty should approve, yet another is disgusted:

<sup>i</sup> Would it not carry us too far from our Subject, it might perhaps be both a new and pleasing Speculation, to point out the Writers in these several Kinds, who have been most remarkably excellent or defective, with Regard to *this just Union of these three Species of Composition*. At present it must suffice, to have hinted such a Criticism, which the Reader may easily prosecute.

<sup>k</sup> Que si on me demande ce que c'est cet agrément et ce sel—à mon avis, il consiste principalement à ne jamais presenter au lecteur que des *pensées vrais*,

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I.

Though Imagination *acquiesce* in false Beauty, Reason will *reject* it with Disdain. Thus, although the primary and essential End of Poetry is to *please* by Imitation; yet as it is addressed to Man, *Instruction* makes a necessary, though an *adventitious* Part of its Character<sup>1</sup>.

FROM this View of Things we may, in passing, further see the *Nature*, *Limits*, and *comparative Excellence* of the various Kinds of Poetry. The *Descriptive* holds entirely *et des expressions justes*. *Oeuvres de Boileau*, tom. i. *Pref.* p. 29.

Car enfin, pour vous dire un peu par ordre ce que je pense la dessus, *la verité* est la premiere qualite, et comme le fondement des pensees: les plus belles sont vitiueuses; ou plütöt celles qui passent pour belles, et qui semblent l'être, ne le sont pas en effet, si ce fonds leur manque. *Bouhours, Man. de bien pens.* p. 11.

<sup>1</sup> HENCE the Debate mentioned by *Strabo* (l. i.) between *Eratosthenes*, and some of the *Ancients*, may easily be decided. The first insisting that *Pleasure*, the other that *Instruction*, was the only End of *Poetry*. They were both wrong: as it appears that these two Ends must always be united in some Degree. However, *Eratosthenes* was nearer the Truth, as he alledged the *essential* End. 'Tis no bad Description, given by Mr. *Dryden*, and others, of the End of Poetry, that it is "to *instruēt*, by *pleasing*:" Though upon the whole, it throws more Weight on the Circumstance of *Instruction*, than the Thing will bear. Perhaps it had better been said, that it is "to *please*, consistently with *Instruction*." The Admirers of Lord *S.* who love pompous Declamation, may see a great deal said on this Subject, and with little Precision, in *Strada's* Third Prolusion.



of the Imagination, and may be termed *pure Poetry* or Imitation; Yet, with Regard to the *secondary* End of Instruction, it seems to merit only the lowest Place, because it is then perfect when it satisfies the Imagination; and while it offends not Reason, or the Affections, nothing further with Regard to these Faculties is expected from it. The *Tragic, Comic, Satiric*, and the *Elegy*, as they chiefly regard the *Passions* and the Heart of Man, so they draw much of their Force from the Sources of *Eloquence*. On the other hand, the *Didactic*, as it makes its chief Application to Reason, though it retains so much of the Graces of Imagination, as to merit the Name of Poetry, is principally of the *logical* Species. The *Epic*, by its great Extent, includes all these Kinds by turns, and is therefore the *noblest*, both in its *primary* and *secondary* Intention. Much indeed hath been occasionally asserted by several Writers, concerning the superior Dignity of the *tragic* Species<sup>m</sup>: But this hath been more in the Way of Affirmation than Proof. Their Opinion seems to have

<sup>m</sup> Thus the excellent Mr. Addison: "A perfect Tragedy is the noblest Production of human Nature." *Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 39.

ESSAY  
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been founded on a mistaken Interpretation of ARISTOTLE, whose supposed Authority on this Subject hath generally passed unquestioned. But whoever shall thoroughly examine the Sentiments of the *grand Master*, will find he only meant to assert, that the *Mode of Imitation* in *Tragedy* is more forcible, and therefore superior to that of the *Epic Kind*; because in the *last*, the Action is only *told*, in the former, it is *visibly represented*. This is the Truth. But if we consider, not the *Mode of Imitation*, but the *Subjects* imitated; if we consider the comparative *Greatness* of the Action which these two Kinds of Poetry can comprehend; and the moral Ends of *Instruction*, no less than the Variety and Beauty of *Description*, which constitutes the very Essence of Poetry; we shall find the Epic greatly superior, on account of the Extent and Importance of those *Actions*, and the Variety of *Characters* which it is capable of involving. Thus, for instance, such an Action as the Death of OEDIPUS or CATO may be more perfectly imitated. (because *visibly represented*) in *Tragedy*, than in the *Epos*: But a much greater and more extensive Action, such as the *Establishment of an Empire*, with  
all



all its subordinate Episodes, religious, political, and moral, cannot be comprehended or exhibited in *Tragedy*, while yet they may be perfectly described in the *Epopée*.

So much concerning *Poetry* will be found to have Relation to our Subject. But as the Question concerning *Ridicule* will turn chiefly on the proper Subordination of *Eloquence*, it will be necessary to consider this Kind of Composition in a more particular Manner.

ELOQUENCE then is no other than a Species of Poetry applied to the particular End of Persuasion. For Persuasion can only be effected by rowzing the Passions of the Soul; and these, we have seen, are only to be moved by a Force impressed on the Imagination, assuming the Appearance of Truth; which is the essential Nature of poetical Composition. Thus the Lord VERULAM:  
 “ In all Persuasions that are wrought by  
 “ Eloquence, and other Impression of like  
 “ Nature, which paint and disguise the true  
 “ Appearance of Things, the chief Recommendation unto *Reason*, is from the *Imagination*.” And the judicious *Strabo*, consistently with this Theory, tells us, that

\* De Aug. Scient. l. ii.

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in Fact “ the oratorical Elocution was but  
 “ an Imitation of the poetical : This ap-  
 “ peared first, and was approved : They  
 “ who imitated it, took off the Measures,  
 “ but still preserved all the other Parts of  
 “ Poetry in their Writings : Such were  
 “ CADMUS the Milesian, PHERECYDES, and  
 “ HECATÆUS. Their Followers then took  
 “ something more from what was left, and  
 “ at length Elocution descended into the  
 “ Prose which is now among us °.”

THUS as the Passions must have an *ap-  
 parent Object* of Good or Evil offered by the  
 Imagination in order to excite them ; so  
 Eloquence must offer *apparent Evidence*,  
 ere it can be received and acquiesced in :  
 For the Mind cannot embrace known  
 Falshood. So that every Opinion which  
 Eloquence instills, though it be the pure  
 Result of certain fictitious Images impressed  
 on the Fancy, is always regarded as the  
 Result of rational Conviction, and received  
 by the Mind as Truth.

ᾠ Πρωτιστα γὰρ ἡ ποιητικὴ κάλασκειν παρήλθεν εἰς τὸ  
 μέσον, καὶ εὐδοκίμησεν· εἰς αὐτὴν μιμνήμενοι, λυσάντες  
 τὸ μέτρον, τ' ἀλλὰ δὲ φύλαξαν τὰ ποιητικά, συνέγρα-  
 φαν οἱ περὶ Κάδμου, καὶ Φερέκυδην, καὶ Ἐκαταίου· εἰς  
 οἱ ὕμνον, ἀφαίρωντες αἰετὶ τὰν ποιητικῶν, εἰς τὸ νῦν εἶδος  
 κἀληγοῦσαν ὡς αὐτὸ ἀπὸ ὕψους τινος. Strabo, lib. i.

HENCE

HENCE we may perceive the just Foundation of the well-known Maxim in rhetorical Composition, *Artis est celare artem*. In every other Art, where the End is Pleasure, Instruction, or Admiration, the greater Art the Master displays, the more effectually he gains his Purpose. But where the End is Persuasion, the Discovery of his Art must defeat its Force and Design. For ere he can persuade, he must seem to apply to his Hearer's *Reason*, while, in Fact, he is working on his Imagination and Affections: Now this, once known, must defeat his Purpose; because nothing can persuade but what has the *Appearance of Truth*.

HENCE too we may see where the true Medium lies between the too frequent *Use*, and delicate *Avoidance* of poetical Images, in Eloquence. Metaphors, Similies, bold Figures, and glowing Expressions are proper, so far as they point the Imagination to the main Subject on which the Passion is to be excited: When they begin to *amuse*, they grow absurd. And here, by the way, lies the essential Difference between the *Epic* and *Tragic* Composition. For the *Epic*, tending chiefly to Admiration and Instruction, allows a full Display of Art: But

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the *Tragic*, being of the persuasive Kind, must only regard and touch upon poetical Images in this single-View, *as they tend to rowze the Passions of the Soul.* MACROBIUS<sup>p</sup> hath collected many elegant Examples of this *poetic Elocution* from the *Eneid*: He hath ranged them in Classes, and pointed out the Fountains whence the great Poet drew his *Pathos*: and sure it may with Truth be affirmed, that “the Master-strokes of that divine Work are rather “of the *Tragic* than the *Epic* Species.”

THESE Remarks will enable us to discover the Impropriety of an Opinion commonly held<sup>q</sup>; “that the Reason why Eloquence had such Power, and wrought such Wonders in *Athens* and *Rome*, was, “because it had become the general Taste “and Study of the Times: That consequently these Cities were more sensible “to its Charms, and therefore more warmly “affected by it.” Now, though with regard to pure *Poetry* or strict *Argument*, where either Pleasure or Truth are the purposed Ends, this Reasoning might hold; yet, when applied to *Eloquence*, it seems to

<sup>p</sup> Saturnal. l. iv. passim.    <sup>q</sup> See Mr. Hume's Essay on Eloquence.



be without Foundation: For where *Ignorance* is predominant, *there* any Application to the Fancy or the Passions is most likely to wear the Appearance of Reason, and therefore the most likely to persuade. As Men improve in Knowledge, such Application must proportionably lose its Force, and true Reasoning prevail. Hence it should seem, that they who make the constituent Principles of Eloquence familiar to their Imagination, must of all others be best enabled to separate *Truth* from its *Appearances*, and distinguish between *Argument* and *Colouring*. An artful Oration will indeed afford great Pleasure to one who hath applied himself to the Study of Rhetoric: Yet, not so as that he shall be *persuaded* by it: On the contrary, his Pleasure consists in a reflex Act of the Understanding; and arises from the very Circumstance which prevents Persuasion, a *Discovery of the Master's Art*.

THE true Reason therefore, why Eloquence gained such mighty Power in these famed Republics was, “because the Orators addressed themselves to the *People* as “their *Judges*.” Here the Art triumphed: for it had not *Reason* to instruct, but *Imagination* and *Passion* to controul. Accordingly

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we find, that no sooner was the popular Government destroyed, and the supreme Power lodged in a single Hand, than Eloquence began sensibly to languish and decay : The mighty Orators, who could sway the Passions of a mixed Multitude, found their Art baffled and overthrown when opposed to the cool Determinations of cunning Ministers, or the fantastic Will of arbitrary Masters. Thus with great Judgment, though not much Honesty, the *Roman* Poet exhorts his Countrymen to disdain the low Accomplishments of Eloquence : He knew they belonged to a Republic :

Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra —

*Orabunt causas melius* —

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento :

Hæ tibi erunt artes<sup>t</sup>.

With the same Penetration he lays the Scene in a *popular Assembly*, when he gives us a Picture of Eloquence triumphant. I mean in that fine Passage where he compares NEPTUNE *stilling the Noise of the Waves*, to an *Orator appeasing the Madness of the People* :

<sup>t</sup> *Eneid.* l. vi.

Ac veluti *magno in populo* cum sæpe coorta est  
Seditio, sævitque animis *ignobile vulgus*;

Jamque faces et faxa volant; furor arma mi-  
nistrat;

Tum pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum  
quem

Conspexere, silent, *arrectisque auribus astant* :

Ille *regit dictis animos*, et pectore mulcet :

Sic cunctus pelagi cecidit fragor<sup>s</sup>. —

'Tis true, we have a supposed Instance on Record, of the Power of TULLY'S Eloquence, after Liberty was destroyed, even on the great *Destroyer* himself. When we read the Oration<sup>t</sup>, we stand amazed at its Effects: For sure there is nothing *equal* to them in the Composition itself: so that it appears an Event almost unaccountable, that CESAR, who was himself an accomplished Orator, who knew all the Windings of the Art, and was at the same Time of the most determined Spirit, should be so shaken on this Occasion as to tremble, drop his Papers, and acquit the Prisoner. Though many have attributed this to the Force of TULLY'S *Elocution*<sup>u</sup>; it seems rather to have been the Effect of CESAR'S *Art*. We

<sup>s</sup> En. l. i.      <sup>t</sup> Pro Ligario.      <sup>u</sup> Casaubon, Sir  
W. Temple, Mr. Hume, &c.

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know with what unwearied Application he courted CICERO's Friendship; he saw where his Vanity and his Weakness lay: With perfect Address therefore he played back the Orator's Art upon himself; His Concern was *feigned*, and his Mercy *artificial*; as he knew that nothing could so effectually win TULLY to his Party, as giving him the Pride of having *conquered* CESAR.

BUT whatever of Truth there may be in this Conjecture; so much is evident, that the Scene where alone Eloquence can work its mighty Effects, is that of a *popular Assembly*. An absolute Monarch quencheth it at once. Nor can public Freedom itself give it any considerable Play, where the public Freedom hath any firmer Basis, than that of a mere Democracy. For where the Councils of a Nation depend on the united Reason of elected Representatives, or provident Statesmen, though the laboured Essays of Eloquence may often *amuse*, they will seldom *determine*. This seems to be the Case of our own Age and Country: And were it necessary to enlarge on this Subject, it might be made appear, that they who complain of the Decay of public Eloquence among us, assign a Cause which hath



no real Existence, when they attribute that Decay to a Neglect of that Art<sup>m</sup>, while, in Fact, it necessarily arises from the ruling Principles of the Times, and the Nature of our Constitution.

THUS Eloquence gains its End of Persuasion by offering *apparent* Truth to the Imagination; as Argument gains its proper End of Conviction by offering *real* Truth to the Understanding. Mr. HOBBS seems to have been well aware of this Distinction. “ This, says he, *viz.* laying Evidence before the Mind, is called *teaching*; the Hearer is therefore said to *learn*: But if there be not such Evidence, then such teaching is called *Persuasion*, and begetteth no more in the Hearer, than what is in the Speaker’s *bare Opinion* x.”

HERE then we perceive, that the Consequences of Eloquence, with regard to speculative *Instruction* and *Inquiry*, are of a very different Nature from those which relate to *Morals* and *Action*. To Instruction or Inquiry, every Species of Eloquence must forever be an Enemy: For though it may lead the Mind to acquiesce in a just Opinion, yet

x See Mr. Hume’s Essay on Eloquence.    \* Hobbes on Human Nature.

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it leads it to acquiesce upon a false Foundation : It puts the Hearer or Reader in the Speaker's or Writer's Power : And though he be so honest as to lead him in the Path of Truth, yet still he leads him *blind-fold*. In this Sense, and under this Limitation, Mr. LOCKE'S Remark is true : " We must  
 " allow that all the Art of Rhetoric, besides  
 " Order and Clearness, all the artificial and  
 " figurative Application of Words Elo-  
 " quence hath invented, are for nothing else  
 " but to *insinuate* *wrong* Ideas, *move the*  
 " *Passions*, and *thereby mislead* the Judgment,  
 " and so indeed are perfect Cheats."

BUT if we regard what is of more Importance to Man, than mere speculative Truth, I mean the *practical Ends* of human Life and moral Action ; then Eloquence assumes a higher Nature : Nor is there, in this practical Sense, any necessary Connexion between *moving* the Passions, and *misleading* the Judgment. For though the Ends of Truth and Persuasion are then essentially different when the Orator strikes the Imagination with fictitious Images, in which Case Falshood becomes apparent Truth, and Eloquence the Instru-

† Locke on Human Understanding.

ment of Deceit; yet the Ends of Persuasion and Conviction, Opinion and Knowledge *concur*, when such Impressions are made on the Imagination and Passions, as consist with the Dictates of right Reason. In this Case, Eloquence comes in to the Aid of Argument, and *impresses* the Truths which Logic teaches, in a warmer and more effectual Manner. It paints real Good and Evil in all the glowing Colours of Imagination, and thus inflames the Heart with double Ardor to embrace the one, and reject the other.

NAY, so far is Eloquence from being the universal Instrument of practical Deceit; that on the contrary, it should seem, the *moral* is more natural than the *immoral* Application of it. Because, ere the dishonest Application can take place, Circumstances must be wrested, and Misrepresentations imposed on the Fancy, in Opposition to Truth and Reason: Whereas in the proper Application, nothing further is necessary, than to draw out and impress those Images and Analogies of Things, which really exist in Nature.

IT may be further observed, that as Eloquence is of a vague, unsteady Nature, merely



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merely relative to the Imaginations and Passions of Mankind; so there must be several Orders or Degrees of it, subordinate to each other in Dignity, yet each perfect in their Kind. The common *End* of each is Persuasion: The *Means* are different according to the various Capacities, Fancies and Affections of those whom the Artist attempts to persuade. The pathetic Orator, who throws a *Congregation* of *Enthusiasts* into Tears and Groanings, would raise Affections of a very different Nature, should he attempt to proselyte an *English Parliament*: As on the other hand, the finest Speaker that ever commanded *the House*, would in vain point the Thunder of his Eloquence on a *Quaker-meeting*. So again, with regard to the Oratory of the *Bar*, at a *County Assize* (for the higher Courts of Justice admit not Eloquence) it is easy to observe, what a different Tour the learned Council takes, in addressing himself to the *Judge* or *Jury*: He is well aware, that what passes with the *one* for *Argument* of Proof, would be derided by the *other* as idle *Declamation*. This Difference in the Kind, with respect to the Eloquence of the *Pulpit*, is no less remarkable

able in different Countries. Thus the very agreeable and sensible VOLTAIRE observes, that “ in *France* (*where Reasoning hath little Connexion with Religion*) a Sermon is a long Declamation, spoken with Rap-  
 ture and Enthusiasm: That in *Italy* (*where Taste and Vertú give a Tincture to Superstition itself*) a Sermon is a Kind of devotional Comedy: That in *England* (*where Religion submits to Reason*) it is a solid Dissertation, *sometimes a dry one*, which is read to the Congregation without Action or Elocution<sup>2</sup>.” And he justly concludes, that the Discourse which raiseth a *French* Audience to the highest Pitch of Devotion, would throw an *English* one into a Fit of Laughter.

HENCE too, and hence alone, we may account for a Fact, which, however seemingly improbable, is too well-known to be doubted of: “ That although in *France*, the applauded Pulpit-Eloquence is of the

<sup>2</sup> The Passage in the Original, is thus: “ Un sermon en France est une longue declamation scrupuleusement divisé en trois points, & recitée avec enthousiasme. En Angleterre un sermon est une dissertation solide, et quelquefois seche, qu’un homme lit au peuple sans geste, et sans aucune éclat de voix. En Italie c’est une comedie spirituelle.”



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“ *Enthusiastic*, in *England* of the severe and  
 “ *rational* Species ; yet the Taste of these  
 “ two Nations in Tragedy or *Theatrical*  
 “ *Eloquence*, is mutually reversed : The  
 “ *English* are enthusiastic ; the *French* se-  
 “ vere and rational.” Now, though this  
 Fact may carry the Appearance of Self-  
 contradiction, yet, on the Principle here laid  
 down, the known Circumstances of the  
 two Kingdoms will explain it sufficiently.  
 In *England*, a general Spirit of *Reasoning* and  
 Enquiry hath extinguished the natural En-  
 thusiasms of the human Mind in *religious*  
*Subjects* ; while our unrestrained Warmth  
 of Imagination, and habitual Reverence for  
 the noble Irregularities of SHAKESPEAR,  
 concur to make us despise the rigid Laws  
 of the Stage : On the contrary, in *France*,  
 the Severities of the *Academy* have utterly  
 quenched the high Tragic Spirit ; while, as  
 yet, *religious Criticism* hath made but little  
 Progress among the Subjects of the *most*  
*Christian King*.

IN further Proof of this Principle, we  
 may appeal to ancient Fact : To the Pro-  
 gress of Eloquence in *Greece*. There we  
 find, it first appeared, decked in all the  
 glowing Colours of Poetry : afterwards, in

an Age of more polished Manners and extensive Knowledge, when the Rhetors attempted to carry this Kind of Eloquence to a still higher Degree, they found the Times would not bear it: They were baffled in their Attempt. As succeeding Ages grew more knowing, they grew more fastidious and refined: The Orators were obliged gradually to lower and bring down Eloquence from its high Standard: Till at length it gained a Form and Character entirely new, as we find it in XENOPHON'S chastised Manner of *Attic Elegance* <sup>a</sup>.

To conclude with one Proof more in Favour of this Principle. It appears that these different Kinds were acknowledged sufficiently in ancient *Rome*; though the true Distinction between them seems not to have been thoroughly perceived, unless by TULLY himself. The correct and *Attic* Species having gained a Number of Admirers under the Patronage of SALLUST, who first encouraged it in *Rome* <sup>b</sup>, many

<sup>a</sup> See the Passage quoted above from Strabo, p. 22.  
§ 3.

<sup>b</sup> Sic, *Sallustio* vigente, amputatæ sententiæ, et verba ante expectatum cadentia, et obscura brevitatis, suæ pro cultu. Senec. *Epist.*

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were the Debates concerning the superior Force and Propriety of *this* or the more elevated Manner. The Patrons of the *Attic* Style derided CICERO, as being *loose, tumid,* and *exuberant*<sup>c</sup>: On the contrary, he too had his Partizans, who despised the calm and correct Species, as void of Energy and Power<sup>d</sup>. Thus, by overlooking the *relative* Nature of Eloquence, they mutually fell into an Extreme: both forgetting that either of these Kinds might be of superior Propriety and Force, according to the Imaginations, Passions, and Capacities of those to whom they should be applied. But TULLY, with a superior Sagacity, saw clearly where the true Distinction lay. For, speaking of CALVUS, a Patronizer of the *Attic* Manner, he says, “HENCE his Elo-  
“ quence gained a high Reputation among  
“ *the Learned and Attentive*; but among

<sup>c</sup> Constat nec Ciceroni quidem obtretractores defuisse, quibus inflatus et tumens, nec satis pressus, supra modum exultans, et superfluens, et *parum Atticus* videretur. *Dialog.* apud Tacit.

<sup>d</sup> Mihi falli multum videntur, qui solos esse Atticos credunt tenues et lucidos et significantes, sed quam eloquentiæ frugalitate contentos, ac manum semper intra pallium continentes. Quintil.

“ *the Vulgar*, for whom Eloquence was chiefly formed, it was of no Esteem <sup>e</sup>.”

Now among these several Kinds of Eloquence, Justness of Thought and Expression, striking Figures, Argument adorned with every pathetic Grace, are the Characters of the *highest*: Sophistry and Buffoonry, ambiguous and dishonest Hints, coarse Language, false and indecent Images, are the Characters of the *lowest*. Between these two Extremes, there lies a Variety of intermediate Kinds, each ascending towards the highest in proportion as they abound with its proper Characters. For as the Imagination and Passions are then most refined and just, when they bear to the same Point with Reason; so, that Species of Eloquence is the noblest which tends to conduct them thither <sup>f</sup>. On this Principle, and on this

<sup>e</sup> Sed ad *Calvum* revertamur—ejus oratio, nimia religione attenuata, doctis et attente audientibus erat illustis; à multitudine autem et à foro, cui nata eloquentia est, devorabatur. In *Brut*.

<sup>f</sup> Les Egyptiens comparoient ceux qui préfèrent le coloris au dessein dans la peinture, à ceux qui en matière d'éloquence et de poésie préfèrent les pensées brillantes aux pensées justes. Cicéron, le maître et le modèle de l'éloquence latine, a dit en appliquant sa réflexion à l'orateur, que nous laissons bientôt des Tableaux qui nous attirent d'abord par la force du coloris; au lieu que



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alone, we may with Propriety and Precision determine the comparative Excellence and Dignity of those who aspire to the Palm of Eloquence. On this Principle it seems to be, that a severe, but able, Judge prefers DEMOSTHENES to TULLY<sup>s</sup>: and on this Principle he deserves the Preference.

THUS we are at length arrived at the Point where Eloquence and Argument, Persuasion and Conviction unite; where the Orator's Art becomes subservient to the Interests of *Truth*, and only labours to adorn and recommend Her.

WE now come to the third Species of Composition, that of *Argument*: Which applying solely to the Reason of Man, and to the Proof or Investigation of Truth, is of a more simple and uncompounded Nature in its Principles, and therefore needs not to be so particularly explained. For Pleasure being the primary End of Poetry, and Persuasion that of Eloquence, the real Nature of Things is often in part disguised, and compelled to bend to the Imagination

nous revenons toujours à ceux qui excellent par la beauté du dessein, qui est le vrai caractère de l'antique. *Scythos*, l. ii. p. 80.

<sup>s</sup> See Dr. Swift's Letter to a young Clergyman.

and

and the Passions : But *Truth* being the End of Argument, the varying Colours of Imagination and Passion must be drawn off ; and human Reason itself bend to the real, uniform Nature of Things.

YET on this Occasion it may be proper to remark, that the *rational Faculty* in Man cannot be comprehensive or perfect in its Operations, without a Union with a *strong Imagination*. And this, not only in the Arts of Poetry or Eloquence, but in the *severest Investigations* of Truth. For Reason alone cannot search out new Ideas, but only compare and distinguish those which Sense and Imagination present to her : and the Senses being of small Extent, Imagination is therefore the great universal Instrument of human Knowledge and human Action. Without the Aids of Imagination therefore Reason works in a contracted Sphere, being destitute of Materials ; unable to make the necessary Excursions into the Immensity of Nature ; and wanting that Power which alone can range through the whole Extent of created Being, and bring home all the possible and apparent Analogies of Things, setting them before her discerning Eye, and submitting them to her sovereign Appro-

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bation or Dislike. From this noble Union arises that *Boundless Penetration*, which so far surpasseth *mere Judgment*: and which, according as it is exerted in Poetry, Eloquence, Philosophy, Morals, or Religion, strikes into the various and untrodden Paths of Nature and Truth; forms the distinguished Names of HOMER, SHAKESPEAR, MILTON, DEMOSTHENES, TULLY, ARISTOTLE, BACON, LOCKE, BAYLE, PASCAL, NEWTON, HOOKER, BERKLEY, WARBURTON, giving that essential Superiority and Preheminence, which hath ever been, first the *Envy*, and then the *Admiration* of Mankind.

THUS as it appeared above, how necessary the Restraints of Reason are, to the Perfection of Works of Imagination; so here it is evident, that a full Union of Imagination is necessary to the perfect Operations of Reason. Taken singly, they are each *defective*: When their Powers are joined, they constitute TRUE GENIUS.

BUT however requisite the Force of Imagination may be, to the Perfection of Reason and the Production of *true Genius*, yet still Reason remains the superior and corrective Power: Therefore every Representation

sentation of Poetry or Eloquence, which only apply to the Fancy and Affections, must finally be examined and decided upon, must be *tried, rejected, or received*, as the *reasoning Faculty* shall determine.

AND thus REASON alone is the *Detector of Falsehood*, and the TEST OF TRUTH.

SECTION IV.

HE who would judge aright of the Proportions of a spacious Dome must not creep from one Corner to another by the Help of a glimmering Taper, but rather light up a central Branch, which may illuminate the whole. By doing something like this in our Remarks on the three different Kinds of Compositions, we have enabled the intelligent Reader to see with ease: “ That Wit, Raillery, and Ridicule, “ in every Shape they can possibly assume, “ are no other than so many Species of “ *Poetry or Eloquence.*”

PURE *Wit*, when not applied to the Characters of Men, is properly a Species of Poetry. It amuses and delights the *Imagination* by those sudden *Assemblages* and pleasing Pictures of Things which it creates:  
and



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and from every common Occasion can raise such striking Appearances, as throw the most phlegmatic Tempers into a Convulsion of good-humoured Mirth, and *undesigned Laughter*.

BUT *Ridicule* or *Raillery*, which is the Subject of our Inquiry, hath a farther Scope and Intention. It solely regards the Opinions, Passions, Actions, and Characters of Men: and may properly be denominated “that Species of Writing which excites  
“Contempt and Laughter.”

STILL more particularly we may observe, that as Eloquence in general is but the Application of Poetry to the End of Persuasion, so *Ridicule* in particular is no more than the Application of that particular Species of Poetry called *Wit*, to the same End of Persuasion. It tends to excite *Contempt*, in the same Manner as the other Modes of Eloquence raise Love, Pity, Terror, Rage, or Hatred, in the *Heart* of Man.

Now, that *Contempt* which certain Objects raise in the Mind, is a particular *Mode of Passion*. The Objects of this Passion are apparent *Falseness*, *Incongruity*, *Impropriety*, or *Turpitude* of certain Kinds. But as the Object of every excited Passion must be  
examined

examined by Reason ere we can determine whether it be proper or improper, real or fictitious; so, every Object that excites Contempt must fall under this general Rule. Thus, before it can be determined whether our Contempt be *just*, Reason alone must *examine* Circumstances, separate Ideas, distinguish Truth from its Appearances, decide upon, restrain, and *correct the Passion*.

Thus *Ridicule* is no other than a *Species of Eloquence*: and accordingly we find it mentioned and expressly treated as such, by the best Writers of Antiquity. ARISTOTLE, as in every subject, leads the Way. “As Ridicule seems to be of some Use in *pleading*, it was the Opinion of GORGIAS, that you ought to confound your Adversary’s *serious Arguments* by *Raillery*, and his *Raillery* by *serious Argument*. And he judged well<sup>h</sup>.” Here he first gives the Sentiments of a *Sage*; and then confirms them by his own Authority.

To offer all that TULLY hath said upon the Subject of Ridicule, would be to tran-

<sup>h</sup> περι δε των γελοιων, επειδη τινα δοκει χρησιμν εχειν εν τοις αγωσι, και δευ εφη Γοργιας την μεν σπουδην ρ’αφθειρειν των εναντιων γελωι, του δε γελωια σπουδη. ορθως λεγων. Arist. Rhet. l. iii. c. 18.

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cribe a considerable Part of his second Book *De Oratore*. After having gone through several Topics of the Rhetoric, he comes at length to this of *Ridicule*: and assigns to the elder CESAR the Task of explaining the Force and Application of this Art. In the Course of his Reasoning on this Subject, he affirms First, That Ridicule is a Branch of Eloquence <sup>i</sup>. 2dly, That certain Kinds of Turpitude or Incongruity are its proper Object <sup>k</sup>. 3dly, That the Orator must be temperate in the Application of it <sup>l</sup>. 4thly, That its Force may consist either in Thought or Expression, but that its Perfection lies in a Union of both <sup>m</sup>. And lastly, That af-

<sup>i</sup> Est autem plane oratoris movere risum—Res sæpe, quas argumentis dilui non facile est, joco, risuque dissolvit.

<sup>k</sup> Locus autem et regio quasi ridiculi, turpitudine quadam et deformitate continetur.—Nec insignis improbitas et scelere juncta, nec rursus miseria insignis agitata ridetur—Quamobrem materies omnis ridiculorum est in istis vitiis, —quæ neque odio magno, nec misericordia maxima digna sunt.

<sup>l</sup> In quo, non modo illud præcipitur, ne quid insulse; sed etiam, si quid perridicule possis: vitandum est oratori utrumque; ne aut scurrilis jocus sit, aut mimicus.

<sup>m</sup> Duo sunt genera facetiarum, quorum alterum re tractatur, alterum dicto.—Nam quod quibuscunque verbis dixeris, facetum tamen est, re continetur: quod, mutatis verbis, salem amittit, in verbis habet leporem omnem.—maxime autem homines delectari, si quando risus conjuncte, re verboque moveatur.

ter all, it is but the lowest kind of Eloquence<sup>n</sup>.

SECT.  
IV.

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QUINTILIAN builds chiefly on TULLY, when he treats of Ridicule in the sixth Book of his Institutions. He too considers it as a Branch of Eloquence, and gives Rules for its Efficacy and Restraint<sup>o</sup>.

Now, in consequence of these Proofs, a few Observations will naturally arise with regard to *Ridicule in particular*, similar to those which were made in the last Section, upon *Eloquence in general*.

As first: Ridicule must render every Proposition it supports *apparently true*, ere it can be received and acquiesced in. Thus every Opinion which Ridicule instills, tho' it be the pure Result of certain Images impressed on the Imagination, by which the Passion of Contempt is excited, is always

<sup>n</sup> Est, mea sententia, vel tenuissimus ingenii fructus. *De Oratore*, l. ii. *passim*.

<sup>o</sup> Risum judicis movendo, et illos tristes solvit affectus, et animum ab intentione rerum frequenter avertit: et aliquando etiam reficit, & à satietate vel à fatigatione renovat.—Habet enim, ut *Cicero* dicit, sedem in deformitate aliqua et turpitudine. — Rerum autem sæpe, ut dixi, maximarum momenta vertit, cum odium iramque frequentissime frangat. — Ea quæ dicit vir bonus, omnia salva dignitate ac verecundia dicet: nimium enim risus pretium est, si probitatis impendio constat. *Quint. Inst.* l. vi.

regarded



regarded as the Conviction of Reason, and received by the Mind as Truth. And thus, by offering apparent Truth, Ridicule gains its End of Persuasion.

AGAIN, it may be observed, that the Consequences of Ridicule with Regard to *speculative* Instruction or Inquiry, are of a very different Nature from those which relate to Morals and Action. To the first it must ever be an *Enemy*: But to the latter it may be an Enemy or Friend according as it is fairly or dishonestly applied. It comes in to the Aid of Argument, when its Impressions on the Imagination and Passions are consistent with the real Nature of Things: When it strikes the Fancy and Affections with fictitious Images, it becomes the Instrument of Deceit.

THUS Ridicule may befriend either Truth or Falsehood; and as it is morally or immorally applied, may illustrate the one, or disguise the other. Yet it should seem, that the moral is more natural, than the immoral Application of Ridicule; inasmuch as Truth is more congenial to the Mind than Falsehood, and so the *real* more easily made *apparent*, than the *fictitious* Images of Things.

RIDICULE, therefore, being of a vague, unsteady Nature, merely relative to the Imaginations and Passions of Mankind, there must be several Orders or Degrees of it, suited to the Fancies and Capacities of those whom the Artist attempts to influence. Among these several Kinds of Ridicule, Justness of Thought and Expression, adorned with striking Figures, is the *highest*: Coarse Language, Buffoonry, false and indecent Images, are the Characters of the *lowest*. For as the Imagination and Passions are then most refined and just, when they bear to the same Point with Reason; so, the species of Ridicule is most genuine which tends to conduct them thither.

BUT, however Ridicule may *impress* the Idea of apparent Turpitude or Falseness on the Imagination; yet still Reason remains the superior and corrective Power. Therefore, every Representation of Ridicule, which only applies to the Fancy and Affections, must *finally* be *examined* and *decided* upon, must be *tried*, *rejected*, or *received*, as the *reasoning Faculty* shall *determine*.

AND thus *Ridicule* can never be a *Detecter of Falseness*, or a *Test of Truth*.

ESSAY  
I.

## SECTION V.

SECT.  
V.

IN further Confirmation of these Truths, the direct Proofs of which may possibly lie somewhat remote from common Apprehension, let us appeal to Experience; to the general Sense and Practice of Mankind. And here we shall find, that Contempt and Ridicule are always founded on *preconceived Opinion*, whatever be the Foundation of it, whether *Reason* or *Imagination*, *Truth* or *Falseness*.

FOR in fact, do not we see every different Party and Association of Men despising and deriding each other according to their various Manner of Thought, Speech, and Action? Does not the Courtier deride the Fox-hunter, and the Fox-hunter the Courtier? What is more ridiculous to a Beau, than a Philosopher: to a Philosopher than a Beau? Drunkards are the Jest of sober Men, and sober Men of Drunkards. Physicians, Lawyers, Soldiers, Priests, and Free-thinkers, are the standing Subjects of Ridicule, to one another. Wisdom and Folly, the Virtuous and the Vile, the Learned and Ignorant, the Temperate and Debauched, all

all give and return the Jest. According to the various Impressions of Fancy and Affection, the Aspects of Things are varied; and consequently the same Objects, seen under these different Lights and Attitudes, must in one Mind produce *Approbation*, in another *Contempt*.

IF we examine the Conduct of *political* Bodies or *religious* Sects, we shall find it of a similar Nature. Each of these *railly* every other, according to the Prejudices they have imbibed in Favour of their own System. How contemptible and ridiculous are the *European* Forms of Government, in the Eyes of an *Asiatic*<sup>a</sup>! And do not we on this Side the *Hellespont* repay them in their own Kind? Are we a whit more united among ourselves in our Ideas of the *Ridiculous*, when applied to Modes of Empire? What is more contemptible to an *Englishman*, than that slavish Submission to arbitrary Will and lawless Power, which prevails almost universally on the Continent? And they are little acquainted with the State

<sup>a</sup> A *Venetian* was introduced to the King of *Pegu*: When this Prince was informed by him, that the *Venetians* had no King, he laughed so excessively, that he lost his *Breath*, and could not speak for a good while. *Recueil des Voyages, &c.*



ESSAY  
I.

of Affairs *abroad*, who know not that, within the Precincts of Tyranny, *English Freedom* is one of the commonest Topics of Raillery and Ridicule : Every Man's judging for himself, is the Subject of the *Frenchman's* Drollery : One Man's judging *for all*, is the subject of ours. The Case is parallel with regard to religious Tenets, where People are at Liberty to speak their Thoughts. Is there any Species of Invective which the Church of *Rome* hath not exercised upon all who have dissented from its Measures? And have not the Divines of the *reformed* Churches been as arrant *Drolles*, in Vindication of their respective Systems? What Ribaldry and coarse Banter hath been thrown (nay rather, what hath *not* been thrown) by the *Freetinkers*, on Religion and *Christianity*? And how basely have some of our Divines prostituted their Pens in former Days, by descending to the same dirty Level? Even the Soureness of Puritanism, nay, the Sullenness of *Quakerism* have sometimes relaxed, and yielded themselves up to the Love of *Joking* : And sly Hints, in demure Phrase and sober Countenance, have as plainly spoken their Contempt of those they pitied, as the loud Laughter and Grimace  
of

of worldly Men, the Disdain of those they profess to hate.

BUT what need we wonder that a Difference of Opinion in such weighty Affairs as those of Government and Religion should inspire a mutual Contempt, when we see that any considerable Variation of Manners in the most ordinary Circumstances of Life has the same Effect? The Customs of ancient Times have been held so ridiculous by many Moderns, that honest HOMER hath been branded as a Dunce, only because he hath recorded them. What Raillery hath been thrown on the venerable Bard, as well as the Hero he describes, only because he hath told us, that PATROCLUS acted in the Capacity of *Cook* for himself, and his Friend *Achilles*? That the Princess *Nausicaa*, followed by all her Maids, went down to wash the King's and Queen's Cloaths along with her own? *Rebecca* and her *Historian* have fallen under the same ignorant Censure, because she went down to draw *Water*: And so have the Daughters of AUGUSTUS, for spinning their Father's Cloaths,

<sup>a</sup> *Il.*

<sup>r</sup> *Odyss.*

<sup>s</sup> *Genes.*

when he was Master of the World. Thus the undebauched Simplicity of ancient Times, becomes the Jest of modern Luxury and Folly. From the same Principle, any new Mode of Speech or Action, seen in our own Times, appears ridiculous to those who give Way to the Sallies of *uninformed* Contempt and Laughter. What superior Airs of Mirth and Gayety may be seen in a Club of Citizens, passing Judgment on the *Scotch*, the *Western*, or any other *remote provincial Dialect*; while at *the other End of the Town*, the Stream of *Ridicule* runs as strong on the Manners and Dialect of the *Exchange*! The least unusual Circumstance of Habit, beyond what the Fashion prescribes, is by turns so sensibly ridiculous, that one half of the Expence of Dress seems to consist in accommodating it to the Dictates and Caprice of the current Opinion. Nay, it is a just Complaint of the greatest Tragic Poet of the Age, that this indulged Spirit of Ridicule is a fundamental Obstruction to the Improvement of the *French Theatre*. “ We dare not, says he, hazard any thing new upon the Stage, in the Presence of a People whose constant  
“ Practice

“ Practice is, *to ridicule every thing that is not fashionable*.”

NEITHER is the Taste of Mankind less capricious with regard to the Methods of Ridicule, than the Objects of it. How many *Sayings* and *Repartées* are recorded from Antiquity as the Quintessence of Rail-ery, which among *us* only raise a Laugh, because they are *insipid*? TULLY himself often attempts in vain to extort a Smile from his modern Reader. Even the *sales Plautini* have in great Measure lost their *Poignancy*. There is a certain *Mode* of Ridicule peculiar to every Age and Country. What a curious Contrast to each other are an *Italian* and a *Dutch* Buffoon? And I suppose the Rail-ery of a *French* and a *Russian* Drole are as different, as the nimble Pranks of a *Monkey*, from the rude Gambols of a *Bear*. Even the same Country hath numerous Subdivisions and *Under*

\* Nous craignons de hazarder sur la scene de spectacles nouveaux devant une nation accoutumée à tourner en ridicule tout ce qui n'est pas *d'Usage*. Voltaire, *Disc. sur la Trag.*

† Quænam tandem in loquendo, aut in scribendo, quasi titillatione risum laceffunt? dictum unum, aut alterum: brevicula narratio: nonnihil repentinum, et fortuitum, et recens, et novitate sua primum. Vavassior, *De ludicra dictione.*



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I.

*Species* of Ridicule. What is high Humour at *Wapping*, is rejected as nauseous in the *City*: What is delicate Raillery in *the City*, grows *coarse* and *intolerable* as you approach *St. James's*: And many a well meant Joke, that passeth unheeded in all these various Districts, would set an innocent Country Village in an Uproar of Laughter.

THIS Subject might be much enlarged on: For the Modes and Objects of Ridicule are as indefinite as the imagined Combinations of Things. But from these Examples drawn from the Conduct of Particulars it appears, no less than from the general Nature and Faculties of Man, that Ridicule hath no other Source than Imagination, Passion, Prejudice, and preconceived Opinion: And therefore can never be *the Detector of Falsehood, or Test of Truth.*

SECT.  
VI.

## SECTION. VI.

THE Cause might be safely rested here; yet, to throw a still clearer Light on the Subject of our Enquiry, let us now examine what his Lordship hath advanced in Support of his new Method of Investigation.

And as the noble Writer hath not thought it expedient to descend often to the argumentative Way; we must make the most of what we find in him that looks like a Reason,

HE tells his Friend, “ that nothing is ridiculous except what is deformed; nor is any thing Proof against Raillery, except what is handsome and just:—one may defy the World to turn real Bravery and Generosity into Ridicule. A Man must be soundly ridiculous, who, with all the Wit imaginable, would go about to ridicule Wisdom, or laugh at Honesty or good Manners.”

HERE we have a Mixture of equivocal Language and pompous Declamation. If he means to assert, that “ nothing is ridiculous, except what is *apparently* deformed,” the Proposition is true, but foreign to the purpose: Because, through the Error of Imagination, Things *apparently deformed* may be *really beautiful*. If he means to assert, that “ nothing can be made to appear ridiculous, but what is *really* deformed,” I should be glad to know where the noble Author had conversed: In the

” Vol. i. p. 128, 129.

ESSAY  
I.

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*Platonic Republic*, it may be so: But, in our *Gothic Systems*, Matters go quite otherwise; So far as common Observation reaches, it is the easiest of all Things to make that *appear* ridiculous, which is not *really* deformed: And how should it be otherwise, while the human Imagination is liable to be imposed on, and capable of receiving *fictitious* for *real* Representations.

THE noble Author tells us next, that “nothing is Proof against Raillery, except “what is handsome and just.”—No indeed, nor *that* neither, at all Times. Though it be true, that nothing of the opposite Kind is proof against Raillery; yet sure it is a strange Mistake to imagine, that what is really handsome and just is always Proof against it. For, by fictitious Images impressed on the Fancy, what is *really* handsome and just, is often rendered *apparently* false and deformed; and thus becomes *actually* contemptible and ridiculous.

BUT “one may defy the World to turn “real Bravery and Generosity into Ridic- “cule.” True, my Lord; while they retain their *native Appearance*, and Beauty, of Proportion. But alas, how easy is it to *disguise* them! It is but concealing, varying,

or

or adding a Circumstance that may strike the Fancy, and they at once assume new Shapes, new Names, and Natures. Thus the *Virtues*, which, seen in a direct Light, attract our Admiration by their *Beauty*; when beheld through the oblique Mediums of Ridicule start up in the Forms of *Ideots*, *Hags*, and *Monsters*.

BUT the noble Writer enforces these general Appeals of Fact, by one extraordinary Instance. He tells us, “ The divinest Man  
“ who had ever appeared in the Heathen  
“ World, was in the Height of witty Times,  
“ and by the wittiest of all Poets, most  
“ abominably ridiculed, in a whole Co-  
“ medy writ and acted on Purpose: But  
“ so far was this from sinking his Reputa-  
“ tion, or suppressing his Philosophy, that  
“ they each increased the more for it\*.” It must be owned, this is an extraordinary Assertion, unless he means to affirm, that the Reputation and Philosophy of SOCRATES arose from his Blood, as “ the *Christian* Sect  
“ sprung from the Blood of Martyrs.” For it appears from all the Records of Antiquity, that the Wit of ARISTOPHANES was the most formidable Enemy that ever attacked

\* Vol. i. p. 31.

• Vol. i.



ESSAY  
I.

the divine Philosopher: This whetted the Rage of a *miffed* Multitude, and dragged to Death that Virtue which hath ever fince been the Admiration of Mankind. In this Opinion, we have the Concurrence of the firft Writer of the prefent Age<sup>2</sup>: And the Confeflion of another, who, although of a Turn conceited and fantaftical enough, is yet of unquestioned Credit for his Ingenuity and Learning. This Writer, fpeaking of the wild Wit of an ARISTOPHANES, tells us, that “the Comedy infcribed *The Clouds*, is an execrable Attempt to expose one of the wifeft and beft of Men to the Fury and Contempt of a *lewd Multitude*, in which it had but *too much Succels*.”

'TIS true PALMERIUS, a learned *French* Critic of the laft Age, had from the Number of Years between the acting *The Clouds* of ARISTOPHANES, and the Death of SOCRATES, pretended that ÆLIAN was miftaken in affigning this Play as one of the principal Caufes of his Destruction. P. BRUMOY, who hath wrote fo excellently of the *Greek Theatre*, after having examined

<sup>2</sup> Ded. to the *Div. Leg. of Mofes*, p. 20.    <sup>2</sup> *Letters on Mythology*, p. 262.

the Affair with the utmost Candour, concludes thus: " His Account (*ÆLIAN'S*)  
" seems only defective, in that he hath not  
" remarked the long Interval that passed be-  
" tween the Representation of *The Clouds*,  
" and the Condemnation of *SOCRATES*.  
" But although the Comedy did not give  
" the finishing Stroke to *SOCRATES*; yet it  
" might have indisposed the Minds of the  
" People, since these *comic Accusations* be-  
" came *very serious ones*, which at length  
" destroyed the wisest of the *Greeks*<sup>b</sup>."

But since the noble Author seems to have adopted the other Opinion, and, as I am told, some shallow Mimics of modern Platonism have lately stolen *PALMERIUS'S* Criticism, and revived this stale Pretence, of the Number of Years between the Representation of *The Clouds*, and the Death of *SOCRATES*; it may be necessary to transcribe the following Passage from *PLATO'S Apology*, which puts the Matter beyond all Doubt: " But it

<sup>b</sup> Son recit ne semble defesteux que pour n'avoir pas marqué le long intervalle qui se passa entre la representation des Nuees, et la condamnation de Socrate. Concluons que, bien que sa comedie n'ait pas porté le dernier coup à Socrate, elle a pu indisposer les esprits, puisque les accusations comiques devinrent des accusations tres serieuses, qui perdirent enfin le plus sage des Grécs.  
Tom. v. p. 360.

ESSAY  
I.

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“ is just, O *Athenians*, that I should first  
 “ reply to the false Charge of my FIRST  
 “ ACCUSERS. Because several laid their  
 “ groundless Accusations against me, MANY  
 “ YEARS AGO: *whom I DREAD MORE than*  
 “ *the Adherents of ANYTUS*; though these  
 “ too be very powerful in Persuasion: But  
 “ those are still *more powerful*, who have pos-  
 “ sessed and sway’d you FROM YOUR VERY  
 “ INFANCY, in laying false Accusations  
 “ against me. Many, indeed, have been  
 “ these my Accusers, and LONG HAVE  
 “ THEY CONTINUED thus to accuse me,  
 “ and *persuaded* and *mised* you at that  
 “ EARLY AGE, when you were MOST  
 “ EASY OF BELIEF: While I, in the  
 “ mean Time, was without one Defender.  
 “ And, what is worst of all, I know  
 “ not so much as their Names, *except*  
 “ *only that of THE COMEDIAN*.—What  
 “ then do my Accusers say?—SOCRA-  
 “ TES is criminal, in that he enquires  
 “ too curiously concerning what is under  
 “ the Earth, and in the Heavens, and in  
 “ that he can make the worse appear the  
 “ better Reason; and that he teaches these  
 “ Things to others. Such then is the Ac-  
 “ cusation: *For such Things you saw in*  
 “ ARI-

“ ARISTOPHANES’S COMEDY, where a  
 “ fictitious SOCRATES is carried about af-  
 “ firming, that he takes Journeys through  
 “ the Air, and talking much more idle  
 “ Stuff of the same Nature.”

SECT.  
 VI.

HERE we see, the Philosopher refers their  
 Accusation to its *original Cause*: And this,  
 he positively affirms, was no other than the  
*old impressions* made against him on the

° Πρωτον μιν ουν δικαιος εμι απολογησασθαι, ω ανδρες  
 Αθηναιοι, προς τα πρωτα με ψευδη κληροσημενα, και  
 προς τους πρωτους κληροσους—εμου γαρ πολλοι κλη-  
 γοροι γεγονασι προς υμας, και παλαι πολλα ηδη ετη,  
 και ουδεν αληθες λεγοντες· ους εγω μαλλον φοβουμαι η  
 τους αμφι Ανυτον, καιπερ οντας και τουτους δεινους·  
 αλλ’ εκεινοι δεινοτεροι, ω ανδρες, οι υμων τους πολλους  
 εκ παιδων παρεσλαμβανοντες, επειθον τε και κληροσου-  
 νου εμου ουδεν αληθες· επειτα εισιν ουτοι οι κληροσοι πολλοι,  
 και πολυ ηδη χρονον κληροσηκοιες· ει δε εν ταυτη τη  
 ηλικια λεγουτες προς υμας, εν η αν μαλιστα επισευσατε,  
 παιδες ούτες ενιοι υμων και μερακια αλεχνως, ερημην  
 κληροσουντες, απολογουμενου ουδενος· ο δε παύλων αλογω-  
 τάλον, οσι ουδε τα ονομασα οιον τε αυτων ειδεναι και ειπειν·  
 πλην εις κωμωδοποιος τυγχανει ων.—τι δε λεγουτες διε-  
 βαλλον οι διαβαλλοντες;—Σωκρατης αδικει, και περιερα-  
 ζεται ζητων τα τε υπο γην και τα επουρανια· και του  
 ητω λογον κρειττω ποιων· και αλλοις ταυτα διδασκων·  
 ποιοαυτη τις εσι. ποιαυτα γαρ εωρατε και αυτοι εν τη  
 Αριστοφανους κωμωδια, Σωκρατην τινα εκει περιεφερο-  
 μενον, φασκοντα τε αεροβατειν, και αλλην πολλην φλυα-  
 ριαν φλυαρουντα. Plat. *Apol. Soc.*



ESSAY  
I.  
Minds of the Athenians, by the Comedy of  
THE CLOUDS<sup>d</sup>.

So much for the Silencing, which is the only Conviction, of Obstinacy and Ignorance. But in Reality, it is a Matter of small Consequence, in the present Question, Whether the Ridicule of the comic Poet was in Fact destructive to the divine Philosopher or not. As it demonstrably was, it is therefore a Case in Point. However, suppose it was not; what is the Consequence? Why, only this: That dishonest

<sup>d</sup> As so much stir has been made about the Case of Socrates with regard to Ridicule, it may not be amiss to shew what his Opinion of it was in general, when considered as a *Test of Truth*. In the fifth Book of Plato's Republic, Socrates proposes that Women should engage in all the public Affairs of Life, along with Men. This, to Glauco, appears *ridiculous* in some of its Circumstances. Socrates replies, "That may be: But let us go to the Merits of the Question, setting aside all Raillery, advising the Railleurs to be serious, and putting them in Mind, that the very Practice now approved in Greece (of Men appearing naked) was, not long ago, treated there with the highest Ridicule: as it is to this Day among many Barbarians."

πόρευτεον προς το τραχυ του νομου, δεηθεισι τε αυτων, μη τα αυτων πραττειν, αλλα σπουδαζειν, και υπομνησασιν οτι ου πολυς χρονος εξ ου τις Ελλησιν εδοκει αισχρα ειναι και γελοια απερ νυν τοις πολλοις των βαρβαρων, γυμνους ανδρας ορασθαι. The following Part of this Passage I would recommend to the modern Patronizers of the *Way of Ridicule*.

Ridicule

Ridicule failed of its desired Success *in one Instance*. And how does this affect the Question, so long as Ten thousand other Instances may be alledged to the contrary, which no Man, that is not void of common Sense or common Honesty, can possibly deny?

FROM the Appeals to Fact, already made<sup>9</sup>, may be drawn innumerable Instances of this Nature. There we see Truth, Wisdom, Virtue, Liberty, successfully disguised and derided; by this very means the Cause of Falshood, Folly, Vice, Tyranny, maintained: If to these it were necessary to add more; we cannot perhaps in History find a more flagrant Proof of the Power of Ridicule against *Virtue herself*, than in that Heap of *execrable Comedies*, which have been the Bane and Reproach of this Kingdom thro' a Series of ninety Years. During this Period, the Generality of our comic Poets have been the unwearied *Ministers of Vice*: And have done her Work with so thorough an Industry, that it would be hard to find one Virtue, which they have not *sacrificed* at her Shrine. As Effects once established are not easily removed, so not only this, but the

<sup>9</sup> See above § 5.

ESSAY  
I.

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succeeding Generation will probably retain the Impressions made in the two preceding ones; when Innocence was the Sport of abandoned Villainy; and the *successful Adulterer* decked out with all the *Poet's Art*, at the Expence of the *ridiculed* and *injured Husband*: When moral Virtue and Religion were made the Jest of the *licentious*; and female *Modesty* was banished, to make Way for shameless *Effrontery*:

The Fair sat panting at a *Courtier's* Play,  
And not a Mask went unimprov'd away:  
The *modest* Fan was lifted up no more,  
And Virgins *smil'd* at what they *blush'd* before<sup>f</sup>.

### S E C T I O N VII.

SECT.  
VII.

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HERE then we have accumulated Proofs of the fatal Influences of Ridicule, when let loose from the Restraints of Reason.

YET still his Lordship insists that "Truth, 'tis supposed, may bear all Lights<sup>g</sup>." To which it is replied, that "Truth will indeed bear every Light, *but a false one*." He adds, that "one of those principal Lights or natural Mediums by which

<sup>f</sup> Essay on Criticism.

<sup>g</sup> Vol. i. p. 61.

" Things

“ Things are to be viewed, in order to a  
“ thorow Recognition, is Ridicule itself<sup>h</sup>.”

This is full as wise a Method to manifest the Rectitude and Truth of Things as it would be to shew the Rectitude of a ruling Staff, by immersing one Part of it in clear Water. The Staff indeed would still continue strait, but the two *Mediums*, in which it lies, though both *natural* ones, would concur to make it appear crooked. Just so might it fare with Truth, when half shewn by the *Medium of Reason*, and the other half, by the *Medium of Ridicule*.

BUT the noble Writer asks us, “ How  
“ can any one of the least Justness of  
“ Thought endure a Ridicule wrong  
“ placed<sup>i</sup> ?” — I answer, by being *mised* or  
*mistaken*; and then Men are ready to bear  
any thing. Shew me him whose Imagi-  
nation never received or retained a false Im-  
pression, and I shall readily allow he can  
never *endure a Ridicule wrong placed*. But  
of this *infallible* Race I know none, except  
the Inhabitants of *Utopia*. ’Tis true, he  
candidly acknowledges, that “ the *Vulgar*  
“ may swallow any *sordid Jest*, any mere  
“ *Drollery* and *Buffoonry*<sup>k</sup>.” Indeed! How

<sup>h</sup> Vol. i. p. 61.

<sup>i</sup> Ibid. p. 11.

<sup>k</sup> Ibid.



ESSAY  
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then can he *defy the World to turn real Bravery or Generosity into Ridicule, or laugh successfully at Honesty or Good-manners?* And where was the Wonder or Improbability, that the Wit of ARISTOPHANES should incite a *lewd Multitude* to destroy the *divine Philosopher*<sup>1</sup>?

BUT then he tells us, “it must be a finer and truer Wit that takes with the Men of *Sense* and *Breeding*.” This Sentence it must be owned is artful enough: Because it obliges one to make a Separation that may look like *ill-natured*, before one can expose its Weakness. A truer Wit indeed may be necessary to take with the *Men of Sense*; but these, I apprehend, may sometimes be distinguished from the *Men of Breeding*: For it is certain, that in most Countries the *Vulgar* are a much more considerable Body, than is generally imagined. Yet, although neither *Reason* nor the *Passions* gain any Advantages from *high Life*,

<sup>1</sup> L'Impudence qu'il avoit de tourner en ridicule la religion, devoit être reprimée: car une refutation serieuse ne fait pas à beaucoup près, tant de mal, que les railleries d'un homme d'esprit. Les jeunes gens se laissent gater par ces sortes de moqueurs plus que l'on ne sçauroit dire. Bayle, art. BION.

<sup>m</sup> Fol. i. p. 11.

it must be owned, the Imagination acquires a certain *Delicacy*, which the *low Vulgar* are generally Strangers to. The coarse Pranks of a *merry Andrew* that engages the Attention of a *Country Fair*, would make but a poor Figure at *St. James's*. But still it is only in the *Modes*, not the Objects of Ridicule, with Regard to which the *Courtier* differs from the *Clown*. The *Peasant* and his Lord are equally susceptible of false Impressions; equally liable to have Falseness obtruded on them for Truth, Folly for Wisdom, Vice for Virtue: The Methods only of Ridicule, the Engines of Deceit must vary; must be accommodated to the different Views of Things and Circumstances of Life, among which they have respectively been conversant. Thus it must indeed be a *finer*, but by no means a *truer* Kind of Wit, that takes with the *Men of Breeding*.

THE noble Writer proceeds to ask,  
“ What Rule or Measure is there in the  
“ World, except in the considering the real  
“ Temper of Things, to find which are  
“ truly serious, and which ridiculous? And  
“ how can this be done, unless by applying

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“ the Ridicule, to see whether it will  
 “ bear?—Yes sure, there is another Rule:  
 The Rule of Reason: Which alone can  
 distinguish Appearances from Realities, and  
 fix the true Nature of Things: From whose  
 Determinations alone, we ever can distin-  
 guish true from pretended Gravity, just  
 from groundless Raillery. But the Way of  
 Investigation here proposed by his Lordship,  
 inverts the very Order and Constitution of  
 Things: By this means Appearances take  
 the Place of Realities: Imagination usurps  
 the Sovereignty which belongs to Reason;  
 and RIDICULE IS MADE THE TEST OF  
 WHAT IS RATIONAL, INSTEAD OF REA-  
 SON BEING MADE THE TEST OF WHAT  
 IS RIDICULOUS.

YET still the noble Author suspects ill  
 Consequences: That Subjects “ may be very  
 “ grave and weighty *in our Imagination*, but  
 “ very ridiculous and impertinent in their  
 “ own Nature.” True: and on the other  
 hand Things may appear ridiculous and  
 impertinent *in our Imagination*, which are  
 very grave and weighty in their own Na-  
 ture. What then is the Consequence in  
 either Case? Why, only this: That *Ima-*

<sup>a</sup> Vol i, p. 12.      <sup>o</sup> Ibid. p. 11.

*gination,*

gination, and therefore *Ridicule* which depends upon it, can never be a *Test* of Truth.

BUT his Lordship insists, that “Gravity is of the very *Essence* of *Imposture*.” Yet this will do little for his Purpose, unless he can prove too, that “*Imposture* is of the *Essence* of *Gravity*.” And if so, what will become of the *Inquiry concerning Virtue*? Gravity, it is true, is commonly an Attendant of *Imposture*: And so is *Laughter*, generally speaking, of *Folly*. With as much Reason therefore as the noble Writer infers from hence, that *Gravity* is *Imposture*, we may infer, that *Laughter* is *Folly* in Disguise. In truth, the Inference is groundless in both Cases. Though every Knave should affect Gravity, yet every grave Man is not a Knave: Though every Fool will be laughing, yet every Man that laughs is not a Fool: We may be serious and honest, as well as merry and wise. Mirth and Gravity are both harmless Things, provided they be properly applied: And we have seen that it is the Province of Reason alone, to determine when they are so.

BUT after all, the Proposition, that *Gravity is of the Essence of Imposture*, is false:

<sup>p</sup> Vol. i. p. 11.



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It is only an occasional, though, indeed, a pretty close Attendant, in consequence of a Maxim long ago taken for granted, that *Reason was the Test of Truth*. Let once his Lordship's be generally embraced, that *Ridicule is the Test of Truth*, and we should soon see *Buffoonry* as close an Attendant on *Imposture*, as now *Gravity*. The Tryal has been made; and successfully enough too, by him who has kept the Multitude in Opinion for twenty Years, that Learning and Religion are better taught in his Conventicle, than in all the Universities and Churches of *Christendom* put together. And sure if any thing be the *Essence* of his *Imposture*, it is *Buffoonry*.

AND here let us not forget to observe, that the noble Writer often (as in the Passage last cited) confounds *Mirth*, *Urbanity*, or *Good-humour*, with *Raillery* or *Ridicule*: Than which, no two Things in Nature are more diametrically opposite. The first, as it ariseth solely from *sudden* and *pleasing Resemblances* impressed on the Imagination, is justly regarded by all, as the best *Mediator* in every Debate. The last, as it ariseth solely from *Contempt*, is therefore no less justly regarded by most, as an *Embroider* and *Incendiary*.

*Incendiary.* He sets out with a formal Profession of proving the Efficacy of Humour and Ridicule in the Investigation of Truth: Yet, by shifting and mixing his Terms, he generally slides insensibly into mere Encomiums on *Good-breeding, Chearfulness, Urbanity, and free Enquiry*; and then, from these Premises, often draws Consequences in Favour of *Ridicule*, as if it were an *equivalent Term*. This indeed keeps something like an Argument on Foot, and misleads the superficial Reader.

BUT the noble Author triumphs in another Observation: When speaking of *modern Zealots*, he tells us, that “ whatever  
“ they think grave and solemn, they suppose  
“ must never be treated out of a grave  
“ and solemn Way. Though what another  
“ thinks so, they can be contented to treat  
“ otherwise: And are forward to try the  
“ Edge of Ridicule against any Opinions besides  
“ their own” Now, if this be so; how is *Gravity of the Essence of Imposture*, as he had before affirmed? But whatever becomes of that Proposition, the Remark is just. And whomsoever he means to compliment with the Name of *Zealots*, whe-

<sup>a</sup> Vol. i. p. 60.

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ther in Religion or Freethinking, I shall not compliment as Exceptions to the Truth of it. There is scarce a Topic of Religion, either for its Dishonour or Support, that hath not been exposed to the illiberal Jokes of some Bungler in Controversy. And a much coarser Advocate in the Cause of Ridicule<sup>r</sup>, hath wrote an elaborate and most tedious Dissertation, to prove that the Way of Raillery hath been successfully applied by every Sect of Religionists and Infidels, to the Destruction of each other's Tenets, and the Establishment of their own. How he gains his Conclusion, that an Engine which tends to fix Mankind in their preconceived Opinions, and establish so many Species of Error, is of Importance and Efficacy in the Search of Truth, may not be so easy to determine. In the mean time, in Reply to his whole Treatise, as well as to the last mentioned Remark of our noble Author, it may be sufficient to observe, that Mankind often retain their own, and oppose other's Opinions, from an imperfect View of the Nature of Things: Their peculiar Tenets in Religion, as in other Subjects, are often founded in Imagination only: Their Ob-

<sup>r</sup> Supposed to be Mr. Collins.

jections to those of others are often as groundless and fanciful. How natural then is it for them to communicate their Opinions on that Foundation on which they receive them? How natural, that they should throw the Colours of their own Imagination on the Tenets they oppose? That they should obtrude the like fictitious Images on others, which themselves have embraced as Truth? That they should hold forth Appearances for Realities; employ Eloquence instead of Logic; and endeavour to *persuade* whom they should, but cannot, *convince*?

IT seems therefore that his Lordship's Observation (which contains the Quintessence of his Associate's Work, and which probably was the *Leaven* that *leavened* the whole *Lump* of Malice and Dulness) instead of being favourable to Ridicule as a Test of Truth can only tend to disgrace it. For since every religious and unbelieving Sect hath *alike successfully* employed it in supporting their respective Tenets, and in rendering those of their Adversaries contemptible; it follows, inasmuch as Doctrines which are essentially regnant cannot all be true, that

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FUL



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FUL ENGINES, BY WHICH ERROR CAN  
BE MANTAINED AND ESTABLISHED.

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WE shall only mention one more of the noble Writer's Arguments in Favour of his new *Test*: But it is, indeed, the very *Key-Stone* of this visionary Arch, which he hath with such fantastic Labour thrown over the Depths of Error, in order to invite Mankind over it as a short and secure Passage to the Abode of Truth and Wisdom.

HE tells us, that a new Species of Enthusiasts (*French Prophets*) having lately risen up among us, "We have delivered  
" them over to the cruellest Contempt in  
" the World. I am told for certain, that  
" they are at this very Time the Subject  
" of a choice Droll or Puppet-show at  
" Bart'lmy-Fair. — And while Bart'lmy-  
" Fair is in Possession of this Privilege, I  
" dare stand Security to our national Church,  
" that no Sect of Enthusiasts, no new Vend-  
" ers of Prophecy or Miracles, shall ever  
" get the Start, or put her to the Trouble  
" of trying her Strength with them, in any  
" Case."

<sup>s</sup> Vol. i. p. 27, 28.

So far, for Peace-sake, we venture to agree with the noble Writer: But now comes a finishing Stroke indeed.

FOR he proceeds to congratulate the present Age, that in the Beginnings of the Reformation, when Popery had got Possession, *Smithfield* was used in a more *tragical Way*. And that “ had not the Priests, as is usual, “ preferred the Love of Blood to all other “ Passions, they might, in a *merrier Way*, “ perhaps, have *evaded the greatest Force* “ *of our reforming Spirit*.”

AND, now, for Form's sake, let us suppose the noble Author to be what he assumes, a Friend to Religion and Reformation: Under this Character, he recommends *Ridicule* to us, as of sovereign Use to investigate Truth, try Honesty, and unmask formal Hypocrisy and Error. To prove this Use, he tells us, what we should least have expected, that if, instead of the tragical Way of *Smithfield*, the *Romish* Priests had preferred the comic Drollery of Bartl'my-Fair, they had perhaps gained their Point, and *evaded the greatest Force of our reforming Spirit*. Here the noble Writer forgets his Part, which is that of a *Believer* and a *Pro-*

<sup>t</sup> Vol. i. p. 28.

*testant*; alledging an Instance, which none but a staunch *Papist* could *consistently* apply: And in his Scarcity of Proofs for the Use of Ridicule in the *Establishment of Truth*, he hath offered at one, which, if a Fact, would sufficiently have evinced the Power of Ridicule in its *Destruction*. Here then lies the Dilemma: Let his Followers get him off as they can. If their Master be a Believer, he has reasoned ill; if a Freethinker, he has managed worse. Had he been a little more knowing in the Times he speaks of, he might have found an Instance more pertinent to his Argument, and more conformable to his Character; an Instance which shews, not what Ridicule might be supposed capable of doing, but what it actually effected. And this not to stop *Reformation*, but to discredit *Popery*. Bishop BURNET tells us, that in the Year 1542, “ Plays and Interludes were a great Abuse: “ In them, Mock-Representations were “ made both of the Clergy and of the Pa- “ geantry of their Worship. The Clergy “ complained much of these as an Intro- “ duction to Atheism, when Things sacred “ were thus laughed at: And said, they that “ begun to laugh at Abuses, would not cease “ till

“ till they had *represented* all the Myſteries  
 “ of Religion as *ridiculous*: The graver  
 “ Sort of Reformers did not approve of it :  
 “ But political Men encouraged it; and  
 “ thought nothing could more *effectually*  
 “ *pull down* the Abufes that yet remained,  
 “ than the expoſing them to the *Scorn* of  
 “ the Nation.”

THIS curious Piece of Hiſtory is remarkable; and tends no leſs to ſupport our general Argument, than to recommend, what the noble Writer is pleaſed to ſneer at, the Sobriety of our *reforming Spirit*. Political Men, ſays the Hiſtorian, whoſe Buſineſs, and therefore whoſe Aim, was to *perſuade*, encouraged the Way of Ridicule: But the *graver Sort of Reformers*, whoſe nobler Miniſtry, and conſequently whoſe Purpoſe, was to *convince*, did not *approve* of it.

BUT his Lordſhip is ſo fond of his Reflection, that he pushes it ſtill further. “ I  
 “ never heard (ſays he) that the ancient  
 “ Heathens were ſo well adviſed in their *ill*  
 “ *Purpoſe* of ſuppreſſing the *Chriſtian* Re-  
 “ ligion in its firſt Riſe, as to make uſe at  
 “ any time of this Bart’lmy-Fair Method.

! *Hiſtory of the Reformation, A. D. 1542.*

BUT



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“ But this I am persuaded of, that, had *the*  
 “ *Truth of the Gospel* been any way *sur-*  
 “ *mountable*, they would have bid much  
 “ fairer for the silencing it, if they had  
 “ chosen to bring our primitive Founders  
 “ upon the Stage in a pleasanter Way, than  
 “ that of Bear-Skins and Pitch-Barrels w.”  
 Was ever an Argument so unfortunately ap-  
 plied?—What?—Could nothing *surmount*  
 and *destroy* the *Truth* of the Gospel, except  
 only *Ridicule*, the very *Test* of *Truth*?—  
 And as to the *Jews*, he says, that “ with all  
 “ their Malice and Inveteracy to our Savi-  
 “ our and his Apostles after him, had they  
 “ but taken the Fancy to act such Puppet-  
 “ Shows in his *Contempt*, as at this Hour  
 “ the Papiſts are acting in his Honour; I  
 “ am apt to think they might possibly have  
 “ done our Religion more Harm, than by  
 “ all their other Ways of Severity x.”

WHAT a Favourite is that *facetious Droll*  
*of Wood and Wire*, the *Bart'lmey-Fair Hero*,  
 with these modern Advocates for Mirth and  
 Raillery! And indeed, not without Cause,  
 for of him they seem to have learnt their  
 very wittiest Practices. *Who* taught them  
 to turn their Backs upon their Betters? to

w Vol. i. p. 29.

x Ibid.

disturb the most serious Scenes, with an *un-  
savory* Joke ; to be at once blind and bold,  
and make a Jest of the Devil ? Indeed they  
have so well taken off his Manners, that one  
Description will serve them both. And  
whether you suppose the fine one which  
follows to be meant of the *Original*, or one  
of the *Copies*, you are equally sure you have  
a good Likeness.

Sed præter reliquos incedit *Homuncio*, *rauca*  
*Voce strepens* ;—*Pygmæum* territat agmen  
Major, et immanem miratur turba gigantem.  
Hic magna fretus mole, imparibusque lacertis  
Confusus, gracili *jaëtat convitia vulgo*,  
Et crebro solvit (*lepidum caput !*) ora *cachinno*.  
Quanquam res agitur solenni *seria pompa*,  
*Spernit* sollicitum intractabilis ille tumultum,  
Et *risu* importunus adest, atque *omnia turbat*.

BUT to return to our Argument. Be  
you well assured of this, kind Reader, that  
whatever Impressions are made upon a Po-  
pulace in the Way of *Scenery* and *dramatic*  
Representation, are no more than so many  
Kinds of *silent Eloquence* and *Persuasion* :  
That Facts which ought to be proved, are  
always *taken for granted*, and Things and  
Persons often rendered *apparently absurd*,  
which really are not so. That *the Vulgar*

*v* *Musæ Angl.* MACH. GEST. by Mr. *Addison*.

(both

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(both *high* and *low*) are apt to swallow any sordid Jest or Buffoonry, so it be but accommodated to their *preconceived Opinions*: That this Way of Ridicule, like every other, as it is fairly or dishonestly applied, will sweep away Truth or Falsehood without Distinction: That it will confound *French Prophets* with *English Reformers*, and on the same false Foundation establish the Truths of Protestantism, or the Absurdities of Popery. That as *Virtue* herself cannot bear up against a Torrent of Ridicule, so neither can *Religion*: That therefore Christianity had indeed more to fear from the contemptuous Misrepresentations, than the bitterest Rage of its Enemies: That Christianity did in Fact endure this more than fiery Trial: That its divine Founder was derided <sup>2</sup> as well as crucified: That they who in succeeding Times suffered for the Faith, endured cruel Mockings no less than Scourgings, Bonds, and Imprisonment: That many a brave Martyr offered up his Prayers to Heaven, that he might be released by Death from the Contempt of his Enemies: And after being baited in the Bear-Skin, found a Refuge in the Faggot, or the Pitch-Barrel.

<sup>2</sup> *Prophecy unto us, who it was that smote thee!*

SECTION IX.

HOWEVER, the noble Writer's Modesty must not be forgotten. For while he might have arrogated to himself the Glory of this wondrous Discovery, he hath informed us of an *ancient Sage*, whose Idea of Ridicule coincided with his own. "'Twas the Saying of an ancient Sage, that Humour was the only Test of Gravity<sup>a</sup>."

THE Reader will probably be surprized to find that the Passage here referred to by the noble Writer, is no other than what hath been already quoted from ARISTOTLE<sup>b</sup> as a Direction to the Conduct of an Orator. 'Tis likewise remarkable, that his Lordship, in quoting the original Passage in his *Margin*, has, by the *prudent* Omission of an emphatical Expression, converted it from a particular Rule of Rhetoric into a general Maxim of Philosophy<sup>c</sup>. But 'tis of all most remarkable, that, in his pretended Translation, he hath entirely perverted the Sense of the Author, whose Authority he attempts to build upon.

<sup>a</sup> Vol. i. p. 74.

<sup>b</sup> See above, p. 43.

<sup>c</sup> The Words, τὸν ἐναντίον—*Adversariorum*—are omitted.



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“ As Ridicule (says the great Philosopher) seems to be of some Use in Pleading; it was the Opinion of GORGIAS, that you ought to confound your Adversary’s serious Argument by Raillery, and his Raillery by serious Argument.” This is almost a literal Translation of the Passage. But how the noble Author could so far impose upon himself or others, as to strip it of its native Dress, and disguise it under the fantastical Appearance of a Maxim, “ that Humour is the only Test of Gravity, and Gravity of Humour,”—this is not so easy to account for.

HOWEVER this came to pass, ’tis certain, that the Observation, as it lies in ARISTOTLE, is a just and a fine one: at it lies in the noble Writer’s maimed Translation, it is *false*, if not *unmeaning*.

THAT an Orator should *confound his Adversary’s Raillery by serious Argument*, is rational and just. By this means he tears off the false Disguises of Eloquence, and distinguisheth real from apparent Truth. That he should *confound his Adversary’s serious Argument by Raillery*, is, if not a just, yet a legal Practice. The End of the Advocate or Orator is Persuasion only; to  
Truth

Truth or Falsehood as it happens. If he hath Truth on his Side, it is likely what he will have then to do, will be to *confound his Adversary's Raillery by serious Argument*. If Truth be against him, he will be forced to change Weapons with his Adversary, *whose serious Argument he must try to confound by Raillery*. This is all the Mystery there is in the Matter: By which it appears, that whenever in this case Ridicule is opposed to reasoning, it is so far from being the *Test* or Support; that it is the *Destruction of Truth*. And the judicious QUINTILIAN fairly confesses it, where he assigns the Cause why Ridicule is of such mighty Force in Oratory—"Quia animum ab intentione rerum frequenter avertit"—*Because it draws off the Mind from attending to the real Nature of Things*. Thus you see the Propriety and Beauty of the *Saying of our ancient Sage*, when fairly represented.

BUT as the noble Writer hath translated the Passage, it is a Curiosity indeed. "Humour is the only Test of Gravity, and Gravity of Humour." He applies it not to Eloquence, but Philosophy: not to Persuasion, but Conviction. And so, by the strangest Conversion in Nature, makes the

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Trier, and the Thing tried, each in their turns, become Agent and Patient to one another. But what Artist ever attempted to try the Justness of his *Square* or *Level*, by the Work which he has formed by the Assistance of those Instruments? Or was ever the Gold which hath been put to the Test, reciprocally applied to try the Touch-stone? If therefore *Gravity*, or Reasoning, be the Test of *Humour*; Humour never can be the Test of Gravity: As the on the other hand, if Humour be the Test of Gravity, then Gravity can never be the Test of Humour.

SINCE therefore this *see-saw* Kind of Proof returns into itself, and consequently ends in an Absurdity; 'tis plain, that one half of the noble Writer's Proposition must effectually destroy the other: Let us see then, which Moiety deserves to be supported. His own Comment on the Passage will help us to determine. Which, however, he seems desirous his Reader should receive as a Part of the *Saying of his ancient Sage*: But whoever will turn to the Passage as it lies in ARISTOTLE, will find that GORGIAS is entirely innocent of the whole affair.

“ GRAVITY,

“GRAVITY, says his Lordship, is the  
 “Test of *Humour*: Because a Jest that will  
 “not bear a serious Examination, is cer-  
 “tainly false Wit.” True: here we have a  
 rational Test established. Next he inverts  
 the Proposition, sets it with its Head down-  
 wards, like a Traytor’s Scutcheon, and  
 now, says he, behold “Humour is the Test  
 “of Gravity.” To prove this, Reason re-  
 quires he should have added “Because an  
 “Argument, which can be successfully ri-  
 “diculed, is certainly false Logic.” But  
 this was too hardy a Proposition to be di-  
 rectly advanced: He therefore contents  
 himself with hinting, that “a Subject which  
 “will not bear Raillery is *suspicious!*” Now  
 we know that *Suspicion* is often groundless:  
 That what is suspected to be false, may  
 yet be true. So that the noble Writer  
 again suffers this new Test to slip through  
 his Fingers, even while he is holding it up  
 to your Admiration. But if any thing fur-  
 ther be necessary to clear up this Point, it  
 may be observed in short, that Gravity or  
 Argument is the Test of Humour, because  
 Reason marks the real Differences of  
 Things: That Humour can never be the



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Test of Gravity, because Imagination can only suggest their apparent Analogies.

THUS the Sentiment of GORGIAS is grossly mistaken or designedly misrepresented by the noble Writer; as it lies in ARISTOTLE, it is rational and consistent: as it is taken up by his Lordship, it is chimerical and groundless.

IT might have been difficult to assign a Reason, why the noble Writer should have attempted to establish this *two-fold* Method of Proof, had not he explained his Intention in another Place. He there<sup>d</sup> wisely recommends the old *scholastic Manner* to the Clergy, as being most suitable to their Abilities and Character: The *Way of Ridicule* he appropriates to the Men of Taste and Breeding; declaring it ought to be kept sacred from the impure Touch of an Ecclesiastic. For as Clubs and *Cudgels* have long been appropriated to Porters and Footmen, while every Gentleman is ambitious to understand a *Sword*; so the Clumsy Way of *Argumentation* is only fit for Priests and Pedants, but *pointed Wit* is the Weapon for the Man of Fashion: This decides a Quarrel *handsomely*. The *pretty Fellow* is at your

<sup>d</sup> Vol. iii. Misc. v. c. 2. § 65, &c.

Vitals in a Moment; while the Pedant keeps labouring at it for an Hour together.

BUT still higher is the noble Writer's Idea of Wit and Ridicule: While he applies it not only to *Conquest*, but *Investigation*: And we must own, it was an Attempt worthy of his Genius, to establish this new and *expeditious* Method of Search and Conviction. In which, by the sole Application of so cheap and *portable an Instrument* as that of *Raillery*, a Gentleman might obtain the certain Knowledge of the *true Proportion* of Things, without the tedious and vulgar Methods of *Mensuration*. In the mean time, we, whom the noble Author hath so often condescended to distinguish by the honourable Title of Formalists and Pedants, finding ourselves incapable of this *sublime* Way of Proof, must be content to drudge on in the old and beaten Tract of *Reasoning*. And after all, 'tis probable this new Attempt will succeed no better than the curious Conceit of the *learned Taylor* in *Laputa*: Who, being employed in making a Suit for the facetious GULLIVER; disdained the *vulgar Measures* of his Profession, and took that Gentleman's *Altitude* by the Help of a *Quadrant*. This, it must

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be acknowledged, was a Theory no less sublime than our noble Author's: Yet it failed miserably when applied to Practice: For the sagacious Traveller informs us, that, notwithstanding the Acuteness and Penetration of the Artist, his Cloaths were *wretchedly ill made*.

## SECTION X.

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VI.

WE have now obviated every Thing material, that the noble Writer hath advanced in Support of his new System. But as one of his most zealous Followers hath undertaken *in Form* to explain and defend his Notions on this Subject<sup>e</sup>, it may be proper to examine how far this Gentleman's Argument is consistent with Truth.

HE tells us, that “to ask whether Ridicule be a Test of Truth, is in other Words to ask, whether that which is ridiculous can be morally true, can be just and becoming; or whether that which is just and becoming, can be ridiculous.”

HERE, as the Foundation of all, we see the same Kind of Ambiguity lurking, as

<sup>e</sup> See a Note on the *Pleasures of Imagination*, a Poem, Book iii.

was observed in the noble Writer, in the Passage already remarked on<sup>f</sup>. For it by “that which is ridiculous,” he means that which is *really* ridiculous, it is allowed this can never be morally true: But this is so far from proving Ridicule to be a Test of Truth, that it implies the contrary: It implies some further Power, which may be able to distinguish what is *really* ridiculous, from what is only *apparently* so. On the contrary, if by “that which is ridiculous,” he means that which is *apparently* ridiculous, it may be affirmed, this may be morally true: Because Imagination and Passion often take up with Fictions instead of Realities, and can never of themselves distinguish them from each other. He tells us his Question “does not deserve a serious Answer.” At least it wanted an Explanation.

THE Gentleman proceeds: For it is “most evident, that as in a metaphysical Proposition offered to the Understanding for its Assent, *the Faculty of Reason* examines the Terms of the Proposition; and finding one Idea which was supposed equal to another, to be in Fact unequal, of Consequence rejects the Proposition as

<sup>f</sup> See above, p. 55.

“ a False-



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“ a Falsehood : So in Objects offered to the  
 “ Mind for its Esteem or Applause, the  
 “ *Faculty of Ridicule* feeling an Incongruity  
 “ in the Claim, urges the Mind to reject it  
 “ with Laughter and Contempt.”

HERE the *Faculty of Reason* is excluded from the Examination of moral Truths, and a *new Faculty*, never before heard of, the *Faculty of Ridicule*, is substituted in its Place. Now when a *Stranger* is introduced into good Company, and sure these can be no better than the *Public*, it is usual not only to tell his Name, but *what he is*, and what his *Character* : This the Gentleman hath not condescended to do : 'Tis true, in a preceding Page, he tells us, that “ the Sensation of Ridicule is not a bare Perception of the Agreement or Disagreement of Ideas ; but a *Passion or Emotion of the Mind, consequential to that Perception.*” In another Place he expressly calls it “ a gay Contempt.” Now, if the *Faculty of Ridicule* be the same as the *Sensation of Ridicule*, or a *gay Contempt*, then by substituting the plain old Term of *Contempt*, instead of the *Faculty of Ridicule*, we shall clearly see what the above-cited Passage contains. “ As in a metaphysical Proposition, the *Fa-*  
 “ *culty*

“ *culty of Reason* examines the Terms, and  
 “ rejects the Falseness; so in Objects of-  
 “ fered to the Mind for its Esteem and Ap-  
 “ plause, *the Passion of Contempt* feeling an  
 “ Incongruity in the Claim, urges the Mind  
 “ to reject it *with Laughter and CON-*  
 “ TEMPT!—Why was not honest *Reason*  
 admitted of the Council, and set on the  
*Seat of Judgment*, which of right belongs  
 to her? The Affair would then have stood  
 thus: “ As in a metaphysical Proposition,  
 “ the Faculty of Reason examines the  
 “ Terms, and rejects the Falseness; so in  
 “ Objects offered to the Mind for its Esteem  
 “ or Applause, *the same Faculty of Reason*  
 “ finding an Incongruity in the Claim, urges  
 “ the Mind to reject it with *Contempt* and  
 “ *Laughter.*” This would have been Sense  
 and Argument; but then it had not been  
*Characteristical.*

WE shall now clearly discover the Dis-  
 tinction that is to be made on the following  
 Passage: “ And thus a double Advantage is  
 “ gained: For we both *detect* the moral  
 “ Falseness *sooner* than in the Way of spe-  
 “ culative Enquiry, and impress the Minds  
 “ of Men with a stronger Sense of the Va-  
 “ nity

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“nity and Error of its Authors.”—  
Here 'tis evident, that the Design “of de-  
“*tecting* the moral Falsehood *sooner* than  
“in the Way of speculative Enquiry” is  
an absurd Attempt: But that “to impress  
“the Minds of Men with a stronger Sense  
“of the Vanity and Error of its Authors;”  
when Reason hath made the proper  
Search, is both a practicable and a rational  
Intention.

“BUT it is said, continues he, that the  
“Practice is dangerous, and may be incon-  
“sistent with the Regard we owe to Ob-  
“jects of real Dignity and Excellence<sup>h</sup>.”  
Yet this is but a secondary Objection: The  
principal one is, *that the Attempt is absurd*.  
However, the Circumstance of Danger is  
not without its Weight: Nor is the Gen-  
tleman's Reply at all sufficient—“that the  
“Practice *fairly managed* can never be dan-  
“gerous.” For though Men are not disho-  
nest in obtruding false Circumstances upon  
us, we may be so *weak* as to *obtrude* them  
upon ourselves. Nay, it can hardly be  
otherwise, if, instead of exerting our Rea-  
son to correct the Suggestions of Fancy and  
Passion, we give them an unlimited Range,

<sup>s</sup> Ibid. p. 106.

<sup>h</sup> Ibid. 106.



and acquiesce in their partial or groundless Representations, without calling in Reason to decide upon their Truth or Falsehood. By this means we shall often “view Objects of real Dignity and Excellence,” in such Shapes and Colours as are foreign to their Nature; and then sit down and laugh most profoundly at the Phantoms of our own creating.

BUT still he insists, that though false Circumstances be imposed upon us, yet “the Sense of Ridicule always *judges right* ;” or in more vulgar Terms, “The Passion of Contempt always judges right.” Whereas, in truth it never *judges* at all; being equally excited by Objects real or imaginary that present themselves.

OBSERVE therefore what a Number of *new* Phrases and *blind* Guides this of Ridicule, if once admitted, would bring in upon us, and all on equal Authority. For with the same Reason, as the Passion of Contempt is styled the *Sense of Ridicule*, the Passion of Fear may be called the *Sense of Danger*, and Anger the *Sense of Injury*. But who hath ever dreamt of exalting these Passions into so many Tests of the Reality of their Respective Objects? The Design must have been re-  
jected



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jected as absurd, because it is the Province of Reason alone, to correct the blind Sallies of every Passion, and fix it on its proper Object. Now, the Scheme of Ridicule is of the same Nature. It proposes the Passion of Contempt as the Test of moral Falsehood, which, from the very Terms, appears to be a Project full as wise, as to make Fear the Test of Danger, or Anger the Test of Injury.

THE Gentleman proceeds next to the Case of SOCRATES. He owns “the SOCRATES OF ARISTOPHANES is a truly ridiculous a Character as ever was drawn: “But it is not the Character of SOCRATES, “the divine Moralist and Father of ancient “Wisdom.”—No indeed: and here lay the Wickedness of the Poet’s Intention, and the Danger of his Art: in imposing Fictions for Realities on the misled Multitude; and putting a Fool’s Coat on the Father of ancient Wisdom. ’Tis true, the People laughed at the *ridiculous Sophist*; but when the *ridiculous Sophist* was doomed to drink the Poison, what think you became of the *Father of ancient Wisdom*?

BUT then he tells us, that as the comic Poet introduced foreign Circumstances into the

the Character of SOCRATES, and built his Ridicule upon these; “ So has the Reasoning of SPINOZA made many Atheists; “ he has founded it indeed on Suppositions utterly false, but allow him these, and his Conclusions are unavoidably true. And “ if we must reject the Use of Ridicule, “ because, by the Imposition of false Circumstances, Things may be made to seem “ ridiculous, which are not so in themselves; why we ought not to reject the “ Use of Reason, because, by proceeding on “ false Principles, Conclusions will appear “ true which are impossible in Nature, let “ the vehement and obstinate Declaimers “ against Ridicule determine<sup>1</sup>.”

BUT why so much Indignation against *Declaimers* in one who writes in Defence of *Ridicule*, a Species of *Declamation*? Then as to *rejecting* the Use of Ridicule, a very material Distinction is to be made: As a *Mode of Eloquence* nobody attempts totally to reject it, while it remains under the Dominion of Reason: But as a *Test of Truth*, I hope the Reader hath seen sufficient Reason totally to reject it.

NEITHER will the Parallel by any means

<sup>1</sup> Page 106.

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hold good, which the Gentleman hath attempted to draw between the Abuse of *Ridicule* and *Reason*. Because the Imagination, to which the Way of Ridicule applies, is apt to form to itself innumerable fictitious Resemblances of Things which tend to confound Truth with Falsehood: Whereas the natural Tendency of Reason is to separate these apparent Resemblances, and determine which are the *real*, and which the *fictitious*. Although therefore SPINOZA hath advanced many Falsehoods in the Way of speculative Affirmation, and founded his Reasonings on these, yet still Reason will be her own Correctress, and easily discover the Cheat. But if the Imagination be impressed with false Appearances, and the Passion of Contempt strongly excited, neither the *Imagination* nor the *Passion can ever correct themselves*; but must inevitably be misled, unless *Reason* be called in to rectify the Mistake, and bring back the Passion to its proper Channel.

NAY, so far is the Use of Ridicule, when prior to rational Conviction, from being parallel to Reason, or co-operative with it; that, on the contrary, it hath a strong Tendency to prevent the Efforts of Reason, and to confound its Operations. It is not pretended



tended that human Reason, though the *ultimate*, is yet in all Cases an *adequate* Test of Truth : It is always fallible, often erroneous : But it would be much less erroneous, were every Mode of Eloquence; and Ridicule above all others, kept remote from its Operations; were no Passion suffered to blend itself with the Researches of the Mind. For Ridicule, working on the Imagination and Passions; disposes the Mind to receive and acquiesce in any Opinion without its proper Evidence. Hence Prejudice arises; and the Mind, which should be *free* to examine and weigh those *real* Circumstances which PROVE SOCRATES to be indeed a divine Philosopher, is drawn by the *prior* Suggestions of *Ridicule* to receive and acquiesce in those false Circumstances, which PAINT him as a *contemptible Sophist*.

To conclude : 'Tis no difficult Matter to point out the Foundation of this Gentleman's Errors concerning Ridicule. They have arisen solely from his mistaking *the Passion of Contempt* for a *judicial Faculty* : Hence all those new-fangled Expressions of — “ the Faculty of Ridicule ” — “ the Sense of Ridicule ” — and “ the feeling of the Ridiculous : ” In the Use of which



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he seems to have imposed upon himself new Phrases for Realities, and Words for Things. I cannot better illustrate this Remark, than by transcribing a Passage from the incomparable LOCKE. — “ Another great Abuse  
 “ of Words is, the taking them for Things.  
 “ To this Abuse Men are most subject,  
 “ who confine their Thoughts to any one  
 “ System, and give themselves up to the  
 “ firm Belief of the Perfection of any re-  
 “ ceived Hypothesis; whereby they come  
 “ to be persuaded, that the Terms of that  
 “ Sect are so suited to the Nature of Things,  
 “ that they perfectly correspond with their  
 “ real Existence. Who is there that has  
 “ been bred up in the Peripatetic Philoso-  
 “ phy, who does not think the ten Names  
 “ under which are ranked the ten Predica-  
 “ ments, to be exactly conformable to the  
 “ Nature of Things? Who is there of that  
 “ School, that is not persuaded, that *sub-*  
 “ *stantial Forms, vegetative Souls, Abhorrence*  
 “ *of a Vacuum, intentional Species, etc.* are  
 “ something real? — “ There is scarce any  
 “ Sect in Philosophy has not a distinct Set  
 “ of Terms that others understand not.  
 “ But yet this *Gibberish*, which, in the  
 “ Weakness of human Understanding, serves  
 “ so

“ so well to palliate Men’s Ignorance, and  
 “ cover their Errors, comes by familiar Use  
 “ amongst those of the same Tribe, to seem  
 “ the most important Part of Language, and  
 “ of all other the Terms the most signifi-  
 “ cant<sup>k</sup>.” And now, to save the Trouble  
 of Repetition, the Reader is left to deter-  
 mine how far “ *the Faculty of Ridicule*  
 “ feeling the Incongruity”—and “ *the Sense*  
 “ *of Ridicule always judging right*”—may  
 with Propriety be placed among the learned  
*Gibberish* above-mentioned.

’Tis strange this Gentleman should have  
 erred so wildly in so plain a Subject ; when  
 we consider, that he hath accidentally  
 thrown out a Thought, which, if pursued,  
 would have led him to a full View of the  
 Point debated : “ The Sensation of Ridi-  
 “ cule is not a bare *Perception* of the Agree-  
 “ ment or Disagreement of Ideas ; but a  
 “ *Passion* or *Emotion* of the Mind conse-  
 “ *quential to that Perception*<sup>l</sup>.”

<sup>k</sup> Locke on Hum. Understanding, B. iii. c. 10. § 14.

<sup>l</sup> P. 103. Another late thoughtful Writer [See  
 “ *Elements of Criticism*”] hath touched upon this  
 Question in the same Manner as the Gentleman here  
 animadverted on. But as his Principles are precisely  
 the same, so the same Reply may seem sufficient. He  
 expressly builds on this Foundation, that “ whatever  
 “ is *ridiculous* is an object of *Taste* only, and not of

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TO return therefore to the noble Writer. As it is evident, that *Ridicule* cannot in general without Absurdity be applied as a Test of Truth; so can it least of all be admitted in *examining Religious Opinions*, in the Discussion of which his Lordship seems principally to recommend it. Because, “by  
 “inspiring the contending Parties with *mutual Contempt*, it hath a violent Tendency  
 “to destroy *mutual Charity*, and therefore  
 “to prevent *mutual Conviction*.”

To illustrate this Truth, let us consider the following Instance, which seems clear and full to the Point.

THERE is not perhaps in any Language a bolder or stronger Ridicule, than the well-known Apologue of *The Tale of a Tub*. Its manifest Design is to recommend the *English Church*, and to disgrace the two Extremes of *Popery* and *Puritanism*<sup>m</sup>. Now, if we  
 “Reason; and that *Taste* is not subject to the *Cogni-*  
 “*zance of Reason*.” But if so, let me only ask, in the Name of *Common Sense*, why this Gentleman hath written three large *critical* Volumes, in an *argumentative* Way; the sole Intention of which is to *regulate Taste by Reason*?

<sup>m</sup> Some indeed have pretended otherwise. Thus Mr. *Wotton*, in his *Reflections on Learning*, says, “It is a de-  
 consider

consider this exquisite Piece of Raillery as a Test of Truth, we shall find it impotent and vain: For the Question still recurs, whether MARTIN be a just Emblem of the *English*, *Jack* of the *Scotch*, or *Peter* of the *Roman Church*. All the Points in Debate between the several Parties are taken for granted in the Representation: And we must have Recourse to *Argument*, and to that alone, ere we can determine the Merits of the Question.

IF we next consider this Master-piece of Wit as a Mode of *Eloquence*, we shall find it indeed of great *Efficacy* in confirming every Member of the *Church of England* in his own Communion, and in giving him a thorough Distaste of those of *Scotland* and *Rome*: And so far as this may be regarded

“ signed Banter upon all that is esteemed sacred among  
“ Men.” And the pious Author of the *Independent Whig* affirms it was “ the sole open Attack that had been  
“ made upon *Christianity* since the Revolution, except  
“ the *Oracles of Reason*, and was not inferior in Ban-  
“ ter and Malice, to the Attacks of *Celsus*, or *Julian*,  
“ or *Porphyry*, or *Lucian*.” p. 399. Where, by the  
Way, the Oddity of the Contrast is remarkable enough;  
that he should pronounce the *Tale of a Tub* to be a *Libel*  
*on Christianity*, while it is in Fact a *Vindication of our*  
*Ecclesiastical Establishment*; and at the same time entitle  
his own Book a *Vindication of our Ecclesiastical Estab-*  
*lishment*, while in Fact it is a *Libel on Christianity*.



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as a Matter of *public Utility*, so far the Ridicule may be laudable.

BUT if we extend our Views so as to comprehend a larger Plan of *moral Use*; we shall find this Method of Persuasion is such as Charity can hardly approve of: For by representing the one of these Churches under the Character of *Craft and Knavery*, the other under that of *incurable Madness*, it must needs tend to inspire every Member of the *English Church* who believes the Representation, with such *Hatred* of the one, and *Contempt* of the other, as to prevent all *friendly Debate*, and *rational Remonstrance*.

ITS Effect on those who hold the Doctrines of CALVIN, or of *Rome*, must be yet worse: Unless it can be proved, that the Way to attract the Love, and convince the Reason of Mankind, is to shew that we hate or despise them. While they revere what we deride, 'tis plain, we cannot *both* view the Subject in the same Light: And though we deride what appears to us *contemptible*, we deride what to them appears *sacred*. They will therefore accuse us of misrepresenting their Opinions, and abhor us as *unjust* and *impious*.

THUS

THUS although this noted Apologue be indeed a Vindication of our *English* Church, yet it is such as had been better spared: Because its natural Effect is to create Prejudice, and inspire the contending Parties with mutual Dislike, Contempt, and Hatred.

BUT if the Way of Ridicule is thus wholly to be rejected in treating every *controverted religious* Subject; it will probably be asked, “Where then is it to be applied? Whether “it is reasonable to *calumniate and blacken* “it *without distinction*? And whether it is “not Impiety, thus to vilify the Gifts of “our Maker?”

AND 'tis certain, that to do this, were absurd and impious. As on the other hand, there is an equal Absurdity and Impiety in confounding that Order of Things which the Creator hath established, and endeavouring to raise a blind Passion into the Throne of Reason. One Party or other in this Debate hath certainly incurred the Censure: The Censure is severe, and let it fall where it is deserved. I know none that endeavour to vilify and blacken Ridicule without Distinction, unless when it presumes to elevate itself into a *Test of Truth*: And then, as a Rebel to the Order and Constitution of Nature,

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Nature, it ought to be resolutely encountered and repelled, till it take Refuge in its own inferior Station.

THE proper Use of Ridicule therefore is, “to disgrace known Falsehood:” And thus, negatively at least, “to enforce known Truth.” Yet this can only be affirmed of certain Kinds of Falsehood or Incongruity, to which we seem to have appropriated the general Name of *Folly*: And among the several Branches of this, chiefly, I think, to AFFECTATION. For as every *Affectation* arises from a false Pretence to *Praise*, so a *Contempt incurred* tends to convince the Claimant of his *Error*, and thus becomes the natural Remedy to the Evil.

MUCH more might be said on this Head. We might run through numerous Divisions and Subdivisions of *Folly*: But as the Task would be both insignificant and endless, I am unwilling to trouble the Reader with such elaborate Trifles.

IT seems an Observation more worthy of our Attention and Regard; that *Contempt*, whence Ridicule arises, being a *selfish Passion*, and nearly allied to *Pride*, if not absolutely founded on it; we ought ever to keep a strict Rein, and in general rather curb than forward



forward its Emotions. Is there a more important Maxim in Philosophy than this, that we should gain a Habit of controuling our Imaginations and Passions by the Use of Reason? Especially those that are rather of the selfish than the benevolent Kind? That we should not suffer our Fears to sink us in Cowardice, our Joys in Weakness, our Anger in Revenge? And sure there is not a Passion that infests human Life, whose Consequences are so generally pernicious as those of *indulged Contempt*. As the common Occurrences of Life are the Objects which afford it Nourishment, so by this means it is kept more constantly in Play, than any other Affection of the Mind: And is indeed the general Instrument by which Individuals, Families, Sects, Provinces, and Nations, are driven from a State of mutual Charity, into that of Bitterness and Dissension. We proceed from Raillery to Railing; from Contempt to Hatred. Thus if the Love of Ridicule be not in itself a Passion of the malevolent Species, it leads at least to those which are so. Add to this, that the most ignorant are generally the most contemptuous; and they the most forward to *deride*, who are most incapable or most unwilling



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to *understand*. Narrow Conceptions of Things lead to groundless Derision: And this Spirit of Scorn, in its Turn, as it cuts us off from all Information, confirms us in our preconceived and groundless Opinions.

THIS being the real Nature and Tendency of Ridicule, it cannot be worth while to descant much on its Application, or explore its Subserviency to the Uses of Life. For though, under the severe Restrictions of Reason, it may be made a proper Instrument on many Occasions, for disgracing *known Folly*; yet the Turn of Levity it gives the Mind, the Distaste it raises to all candid and rational Information, the Spirit of Animosity it is apt to excite, the Errors in which it confirms us when its Suggestions are false, the Extremes to which it is apt to drive us, even when its Suggestions are true; all these conspire to tell us, it is rather to be wished than hoped, that its Influence upon the whole can be considerable in the Service of *Wisdom and Virtue*.

LORD SHAFTESBURY himself, in many other Parts of his Book, strongly insists on the Necessity of bringing the Imagination and Passions under the Dominion of Reason. "The only Poison to Reason, says he,

“ he, is *Passion*: for *false Reasoning* is soon  
 “ redressed, where *Passion* is removed ”.

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And it is difficult to assign any Cause that will not reflect some Dishonour on the noble Writer, why he should thus strangely have attempted to privilege this *Passion* of *Contempt* from so necessary a Subjection. Let it suffice, in Conclusion, to observe, that Inconsistencies must ever rise and be persisted in, when a roving Fancy, conducted by *Spleen* and *Affectation*, goes in quest of idle Novelties, without subjecting itself to the just Restraints of *Reason*.

UPON the whole: This new Design of *discovering Truth* by the *Vague* and *unsteady Light* of *Ridicule*, puts one in mind of the honest *Irishman*, who applied his *Candle* to the *Sun-Dial*, in order to see how the *Night* went.

<sup>a</sup> *Wit and Humour*, Part ii. § 1.



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# ESSAYS

ON THE

CHARACTERISTICS, etc.

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## ESSAY II.

On the Motives to Virtue, and the  
Necessity of Religious Principle.

### SECTION I.

**H**AVING considered the noble Writer's two first Treatises, so far as they regard the *Use of Ridicule*, we now come to his *Soliloquy*, or *Advice to an Author*. And here, bating only a few accidental Passages, which will be occasionally pointed out hereafter, we shall have little more to do, than to approve and admire: The whole Dissertation being, in its general Turn, one continued

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tinued Instance of its Author's Knowledge and refined Taste in Books, Life, and Manners. I could dwell with Pleasure on the Beauties of this Work, if indeed they needed an Explanation: But that noble Union of Truth and Eloquence which shines through the whole, as it supercedes, so it would disgrace any Attempt of this Kind. To the Work itself therefore I recommend the Reader.

THE noble Writer having thus prepared us for the Depths of Philosophy, by enjoining an unfeigned and rigorous *Self-Examination*; proceeds to that highest and most interesting of all Subjects, *The Motives to virtuous Action*. And here it will probably appear, that, with a Variety of useful Truths, he hath blended several plausible Mistakes, which, when more nearly viewed, seem to be attended with a Train of very extraordinary Consequences. What he hath given us on this Subject, lies chiefly in the two Treatises, which compose his second Volume: But as he frequently refers us to the other Parts of his Writings, where he hath accidentally treated the same Points in a more explicit Manner; so the same Liberty of comparing one Passage with another,

other, will, I apprehend, be judged reasonable by the candid Reader. Thus we shall more effectually penetrate into his true Scope and Intention; and draw off, as far as may be, that Veil of *Mystery*, in which; for Reasons best known to himself, he hath so often wrapped his Opinions.

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'TIS no uncommon Circumstance in Controversy, for the Parties to engage in all the Fury of Disputation, without precisely instructing their Readers, or truly knowing themselves, the Particulars about which they differ. Hence that fruitless Parade of Argument, and those opposite Pretences to Demonstration, with which most Debates, on every Subject, have been infested. Would the contending Parties first be sure of their own Meaning (a Species of Self-Examination, which, I think, the noble Writer hath not condescended to mention) and then communicate their Sense to others in plain Terms and Simplicity of Heart, the Face of Controversy would soon be changed: And real Knowledge, instead of imaginary Conquest, would be the noble Reward of literary Toil.

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IN the mean time; a History of *Logomachies*<sup>a</sup>, well executed, would be no unedifying Work. And in order to open a Path to so useful an Undertaking, I will venture to give the present Section as an Introduction to it: For sure, among all the Questions which have exercised the Learned, this concerning *the Motives to Virtue* hath given Rise to the greatest Profusion of loose Talk and ambiguous Expression. The Argument hath been handled by several of great Name: And it might possibly be deemed Presumption to differ from any of them, had they not so widely differed among themselves. Much hath been said, and various hath been their Opinions concerning our *Motives to Virtue*; but little hath been said in any definitive Manner, on the previous and fundamental Question, *What Virtue is?* By which I do not mean, what Actions are called Virtuous, for, about that, Mankind are pretty well agreed; but, what that *characteristic Circumstance* is, on account of which, these Actions are called *virtuous*. Till we have determined this with all possible Precision, we cannot determine “ upon what Foundation Man-

<sup>a</sup> A Strife about Words.



kind can be moved to the Practice of  
“ them.” Our first Inquiry therefore must  
be, concerning the *Nature of Virtue*: In  
the Investigation of which the Moralists  
of most Ages seem to have been remarkably  
defective.

LET us first consider what our noble Au-  
thor hath said on this Subject. He tells  
us, “ The Mind cannot be without its Eye  
“ and Ear; so as to discern Proportion, dis-  
“ tinguish Sound, and scan each Sentiment  
“ and Thought which comes before it. It  
“ can let nothing escape its Censure. It  
“ feels the soft and harsh, the agreeable  
“ and disagreeable in the Affections; and  
“ finds a *foul* and *fair*, an *harmonious* and a  
“ *dissonant*, as really and truly here, as in  
“ any musical Numbers, or in the outward  
“ Forms and Representations of sensible  
“ Things. Nor can it withhold its Admi-  
“ ration and Extasy, its Aversion and Scorn,  
“ any more in what relates to one, than to  
“ the other of these Subjects. So that to  
“ deny the common natural Sense of a  
“ *sublime* and *beautiful* in Things, will ap-  
“ pear an *Affectation* merely to any one  
“ who considers duly of this Affair <sup>b</sup>.” The

<sup>b</sup>. *Inquiry concerning Virtue*, Part iii. § 3.



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Perception of this Beauty he calls the *moral Sense* or *Taste*; and affirms, that Virtue consists in “ a perfect Conformity of our Affections and Actions with this supreme Sense and Symmetry of Things.” Or, to use his own Words, “ The Nature of Virtue consists in a certain just Disposition or proportionable Affection of a rational Creature towards the *moral Objects* of *Right and Wrong*.”

THE next Writer I shall mention is the learned and amiable Dr. CLARKE. He thinks it necessary to reject this Idea of Virtue, which the noble Writer had established; and as a surer Foundation, than what mere *Affection, Sense, or Taste* could produce, lays the Basis of Virtue in *Reason*: And insists that its true Nature lies in “ a Conformity of our Actions, with certain eternal and immutable Relations and Differences of Things. That from these, which are necessarily perceived by every rational Agent, there naturally arise certain *moral Obligations*, which are of themselves incumbent on all, antecedent to all positive Institution, and to all Expectation of Reward or Punishment.”

<sup>c</sup> *Inquiry concerning Virtue*, Part iii. § 1.

<sup>d</sup> Clarke's *Demonst.* passim.

AFTER these, comes an ingenious and candid Writer, and in opposition to both these Schemes of Moral, fixes the Nature of Virtue in “ a Conformity of our Actions with *Truth*.” He affirms, that “ no Act, whether Word or Deed, of any Being, to whom moral Good and Evil are imputable, that interferes with any *true* Proposition, or *denies* any thing to be as it is, can be *right*. That on the contrary, every Act is right which does not contradict Truth, but treats every thing as being what it is.”

THERE are, besides these, several other philosophical Opinions concerning the Nature of Virtue: As, that it consists in following *Nature*—in avoiding all *Extremes*—in the Imitation of the *Deity*. But these are still more loose and indeterminate Expressions, if possible, than the former. If therefore the first should appear vague and ineffectual, the latter must of Course fall under an equal Censure.

Now it will appear, that all the three Definitions of Virtue, which LORD SHAFTESBURY, DR. CLARKE, and MR. WOLLASTON have given us, in designed Opposition to

\* Wollaston's *Rel. of Nat.* § 1. *passim*.

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each other, are equally defective; “Be-  
 “ cause they do not give us any more parti-  
 “ cular or determinate Ideas, than what we  
 “ have from that *single Word*, which with  
 “ so much fruitless Labour they attempt  
 “ to define.”

LET us first examine the noble Writer’s  
 Definition in this View. He says, that  
 “ Virtue consists in a Conformity of our Af-  
 “ fections with our natural Sense of the  
 “ Sublime and Beautiful in Things, or with  
 “ the moral Objects of Right and Wrong.”  
 —Now, what new Idea do we gain from  
 this pompous Definition? Have we not the  
 same general Idea from the Word *Virtue*, as  
 from the more diffused Expression of *the*  
*Sublime and Beautiful of Things*? And can-  
 not we gather as much from either of these,  
 as from the subsequent Phrase, “ the *moral*  
 “ *Objects of Right and Wrong*?”—They are  
 all general Names, relative to something  
 which is yet unknown, and which is no  
 more explained by the pretended Definition,  
 than by the Word which is attempted to  
 be defined. Indeed, when his Lordship  
 further affirms, that to relieve the Needy, or  
 help the Friendless, is an Instance of this  
 Sublime and Beautiful of Things, we then  
 obtain



obtain a more determinate Idea, with regard to that particular Case. But still we are as much as ever at a Loss for a general *Criterion* or *Test*, by which the Virtue of our other Actions is to be determined. To say, therefore, that Virtue consists in acting according to the *fair*, the *handsome*, the *sublime*, the *beautiful*, the *decent*, the *moral Objects* of *Right* and *Wrong*, is really no more than ringing Changes upon Words. We might with equal Propriety affirm, “ that *Virtue* consists in *acting virtuously*.” This Deficiency Mr. WOLLASTON clearly saw. “ They (says he) who reckon nothing to be “ (*morally*) good, but what they call *bonestum*, may denominate Actions according as that is, or is not, the Cause or End “ of them : But then, what is *bonestum* ? “ Something is still wanting to measure “ Things by, and to separate the *bonesta* “ from the *inbonesta*†.”

DR. CLARKE’S Definition seems not to include any thing more precise or determinate than the noble Writer’s. He affirms, that “ Virtue consists in a Conformity of our “ Actions with right Reason, or the eter- “ nal and immutable Relations and Dif-

† *Rel. of Nat.* p. 22.

“ ferences



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“ferences of Things.” Here then a parallel Question ariseth, “What is *right Reason*, and what these *eternal Relations* which “are affirmed, by the learned Writer, to be “the Test or Criterion of Virtue?” And ’tis observable, that when he comes to prove the Truth and Reality of these *Relations*, he is forced to resolve into a *self-evident* Proposition. “These Things (saith he) are so “notoriously plain and *self-evident*, that nothing but the extremest Stupidity of “Mind, Corruption of Manners or Per- “verseness of Spirit, can possibly make any “Man entertain the least Doubt concerning “them.” Thus too, his ingenious *Advocate*, when pushed by his Adversary to declare, whether he perceives the Truth of these *Relations* by *Proof* or *Intuition*, confesses “they may be looked upon as *self-evident*.” Here then we may observe a strong Coincidence between the noble Writer’s System of Expression, and this of Dr. CLARKE: For as one affirms, that the *Sublime* and *Beautiful* of Things is *self-evident*, so the other affirms the same of the *Fit* and *Reasonable*. And as the *Sublime* and

\* *Demonst.* p. 50.

23 *Balguy’s Tracts*, 2d Part, of *Mor. Goodness*, p. 10.

*Beautiful* give us no more determinate Ideas than the *Virtuous*, so neither can we obtain any additional Information from the *Fit* and *Reasonable*. We are equally at a Loss to know what is *fit* and *reasonable*, as to know what is *virtuous*: Therefore the *one* can never be an adequate Definition of the other. Here too Mr. WOLLASTON plainly saw the Want of Precision. “As to those (he saith) “ who make *right Reason* to be a Law— “ it is true, that whatever will bear to be “ tried by right Reason, is right; and that “ which is condemned by it, wrong:—But “ the Manner in which they have delivered “ themselves, *is not yet explicit enough*. It “ leaves Room for so many Disputes and “ *opposite right Reasons*, that nothing can “ be settled, while every one pretends that “ *his Reason his right* <sup>is</sup>!”

Now it will doubtless appear a Circumstance of Singularity that Mr. WOLLASTON, who saw the essential Defects of these two Definitions, should himself offer a *third*, which is precisely liable to the same Objection. “Virtue (saith this learned Writer) consists in a Conformity of our “ Actions with Truth; in treating every

<sup>1</sup> *Rel. of Nat.* p. 23.

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“ thing as being what it is.” Well : Be it so. Yet the Question still recurs, What is *moral Truth* ? And this demands a *Definition* no less than *Virtue*, which was the Thing to be defined. Had Lord SHAFTESBURY lived to see this new Theory proposed, how naturally would he have retorted Mr. WOL-  
 LASTON’s Objection ? “ You, Mr. WOL-  
 LASTON, reckon nothing to be *morally*  
 “ *Good*, but what you call *Truth* : And you  
 “ may indeed denominate Actions, accord-  
 “ ing as that is, or is not, the Cause or End  
 “ of them : But then, what is *Truth* ?  
 “ Something further is still wanting to mea-  
 “ sure Things by, and to separate *Truth*  
 “ from *Falsehood*.”—Thus too would Dr.  
 CLARKE have naturally replied : “ ’Tis  
 “ true, that whatever will bear to be tried  
 “ by *Truth*, is right ; and that which is con-  
 “ demned by it, wrong : But the Manner  
 “ in which you have delivered yourself, is  
 “ not yet explicit enough. You have ra-  
 “ ther confounded my Definition, than  
 “ given a new one of your own : All that  
 “ you have added, is an Impropriety of  
 “ Speech. I speak of the *Rectitude* of  
 “ Actions, you of the *Truth* of Actions ;  
 “ which I call an Impropriety of Speech,  
 “ because

“ because *Truth* relates to *Affirmations*, not  
 “ to *Actions*; to what is *said*, not to what  
 “ is *done*. But, supposing the Propriety of  
 “ your Expressions, what further Criterion  
 “ have you gained? You confess, that *Truth*  
 “ is discovered by *Reason* only; for you  
 “ say, that *to deny Things to be as they are,*  
 “ *is the Transgression of the great Law of our*  
 “ *Nature, the Law of Reason*<sup>k</sup>. If so, then  
 “ Reason is as good a Guide as Truth?  
 “ We can as certainly know what is *right*  
 “ *Reason*, as what is *Truth*. If therefore  
 “ my Definition is defective, your’s must be  
 “ so too. If mine leaves room for so many  
 “ Disputes, and *opposite right Reasons*, that  
 “ nothing can be settled, while every one  
 “ pretends that his Reason is *right*; your’s  
 “ must of necessity be liable to the same  
 “ Objection, must leave room for so many  
 “ Disputes, and *opposite Truths*, that nothing  
 “ can be settled, while every one pretends  
 “ that his Idea of *Truth* is the *right* one.  
 “ Truth, then, can never be a better Cri-  
 “ terion than Reason, because our Idea of  
 “ *Truth* must always depend upon our  
 “ *Reason.*”

<sup>k</sup> *Rel. of Nat.* p. 15.



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THUS it should seem, that our three celebrated Writers have not given the Satisfaction which might have been expected in an Affair of such philosophical Importance. Their common Attempt is to define the Nature, or fix the Criterion of Virtue: To this End, the first affirms, it consists in a Conformity of our Actions to the *Fair* and *Handsome*, the *Sublime* and *Beautiful* of Things: The Second, the *Fitness*, *Reasons*, and *Relations* of Things: The Third, the *Truth* of Things. But inasmuch as these general Terms of *Beauty*, *Fitness*, *Truth*, convey not any more determinate Idea, than that of *Virtue*, which they are brought to define; the several pretended Definitions are therefore *inadequate* and *defective*!

<sup>1</sup> Let it be observed once for all, that the Definitions here censured as defective, are little more than direct Transcripts of what the old *Greek* Philosophers, and *Tully* after them, have said on the same Subject. To shew how generally this Kind of Language infects the Writers on Morality, we need only transcribe the subsequent Passage from a Follower of the noble Writer. "We need not therefore be at a Loss, said he, for a Description of the sovereign Good—We may call it Rectitude of Conduct.—If that be too contracted, we may enlarge, and say, 'tis—to live perpetually selecting and rejecting according to the Standard of our Being. If we are for still different Views, we may say, 'tis—to live in the Discharge of Moral Offices—to

*On the Motives to VIRTUE.*

I 23

WHAT then is *Virtue*? Let us consider its true Nature in the following Section.

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SECTION III.

THERE are few among Mankind, who have not been often struck with Admiration at the Sight of that Variety of Colours and Magnificence of Form, which appear in an Evening *Rainbow*. The *uninstructed* in Philosophy consider that splendid Object, not as dependent on any other, but as being possessed of a *self-given* and *original Beauty*. But he who is led to know, that its Place and Appearance always varies with the Situation of the *Sun*; that when the latter is in his Meridian, the former becomes an inconsiderable Curve skirting the Horizon; that as the Sun descends, the *Rainbow* rises; till at the Time of his *Setting*, it encompasses the Heavens with a glorious Circle; yet *dies* away when he *disappears*; the Inquirer is then convinced, that this gay Meteor did but shine

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“ live according to Nature—To live according to *Virtue*—  
“ To live according to *just Experience* of those Things  
“ which happen around us.” Three Treatises by *J. H.*  
Treat. 3<sup>d</sup>, p. 27.

with

with a *borrowed* Splendor, derived from the Influence of that mighty *Luminary*.

THUS, in like manner, though the *Beauty, Fitness, Truth*, or VIRTUE, of all those Actions which we term *morally Good*, seem at first View to reside in the several Actions, in an original and independent Manner; yet on a nearer Scrutiny we shall find, that, properly speaking, their Nature ariseth from their *Ends* and *Consequences*; that as these *vary*, the Nature of the several Actions *varies* with them; that from these alone, Actions gain their *Splendor*, are denominated *morally Good*, and give us the Ideas of *Beauty, Fitness, Truth*, or *Virtue*.

THE first Proofs in Support of this Opinion shall be drawn from those very Writers who most zealously oppose it. And here 'tis first remarkable, that “ while they “ attempt to fix their several Criterions of “ absolute independent Beauty, Fitness, “ and Truth; they are obliged to admit “ *Exceptions*, which effectually destroy what “ they design to establish.” The following Instance, from one of these celebrated Writers, is equally applicable to the other two.



MR. WOLLASTON speaks in the following Manner: "To talk to a Post, or otherwise  
 " treat it as if it was a Man, would surely  
 " be reckoned an *Absurdity*, if not *Dif-*  
 " *traction*. Why? Because this is to treat  
 " it as being what it is not, And why  
 " should not the Converse be reckoned as  
 " bad; that is, to treat a Man as a Post?  
 " As if he had no Sense, and felt not In-  
 " juries which he doth feel; as if to him  
 " Pain and Sorrow were not Pain; Hap-  
 " piness not Happiness<sup>m</sup>." Now, you see  
 that on his Scheme of absolute irrelative  
 Truth, the Absurdity of *talking to a Post* is  
 precisely of the same Nature with that of  
*injuring a Man*: For in both Cases, we  
 treat the Post and the Man, as being *what*  
*they are not*. Consequently, on this Philo-  
 sophy, if it be morally Evil, to *injure a Man*,  
 'tis likewise morally Evil to *talk to a Post*.  
 Not that I suppose Mr. WOLLASTON would  
 have maintained this Consequence. He  
 knew that the first of these Absurdities  
 would only deserve the Name of *Folly*;  
 the latter, of a *Crime*. As therefore he  
 allows that Truth is equally violated in  
 either Case; as there is something *highly*

<sup>m</sup> *Rel. of Nat.* p. 15.



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*immoral* in the one, and *nothing immoral* in the other, here is an Exception which overturns his Principle: which proves that the Morality or Immorality of Actions depends on something *distinct* from mere abstract, irrelative *Truth*.

THE same Exception must be admitted on Dr. CLARKE'S System of Expression. For sure 'tis neither *fit* nor *reasonable*, nor agreeable to the Relations of Things, that a Man should talk to a Post. Yet, although it be admitted as *irrational* and *absurd*, I do not imagine, any of Dr. CLARKE'S Defenders would say it was *immoral*. So again, with regard to Lord SHAFTESBURY, 'tis clear there can be nothing of the *Sublime* or *Beautiful* in this Action of talking to a Post: On the contrary, there is (to use his own Manner of Expression) an apparent Indecency, Impropriety, and *Dissonance* in it. Yet, although his Admirers might justly denominate it *incongruous*, they would surely be far from branding it as *vile*. Here then the same Exception again takes place, which demonstrates, that *Virtue* cannot consist either in *abstract Fitness* or *Beauty*; but that something further is required in order to constitute its Nature.

POSSIBLY

POSSIBLY therefore, the Patrons of these several Theories may alledge, that Actions which relate to *inanimate Beings* only, can properly be called no more than *naturally* beautiful, fit, or true: But that *moral* Fitness, Beauty, or Truth, can only arise from such Actions as relate to Beings that are *sensible* or *intelligent*. Mr. BALGUY expressly makes this Exception: He affirms, that “moral Actions are such as are knowingly directed towards some Object intelligent or sensible.”

AND so far indeed this Refinement approaches towards the Truth, as it excludes all *inanimate* Things from being the Objects of moral Good and Evil. Yet even this Idea of moral Beauty, Fitness, or Truth, is highly indeterminate and defective: Because innumerable Instances may be given, of Actions directed towards Objects sensible and intelligent, some of which Actions are manifestly *becoming*, *fit*, or *true*; others as manifestly *incongruous*, *irrational*, and *false*; yet none of them, in any degree, *virtuous* or *vicious*, *meritorious* or *immoral*. Thus to speak to a Man in a Language he understands, is an Action *becoming*, *fit*, or *true*;

<sup>n</sup> *First Treat. on Moral Goodness*, p. 28.

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'tis treating him according to the Order, Relations, and Truth of Things; 'tis treating him according to *what he is*. On the contrary, to speak to him in a Language he understands not, is an Action neither *becoming, fit, nor true*; 'tis treating him according to *what he is not*; 'tis treating him *as a Poet*. But although the first of these Actions be undeniably becoming, fit, or true, who will call it *Virtue*? And though the latter be undeniably incongruous, irrational, and false, who will call it *Vice*? Yet both these Actions are directed towards a Being that is sensible and intelligent. It follows therefore, that an Action is not either morally Good or Evil, merely because it is conformable to the Beauty, Fitness, or Truth of Things, even though it be directed towards an Object both *sensible and intelligent*; but that something still further, some more distinguishing and characteristic Circumstances is necessary, in order to fix its real Essence.

WHAT this peculiar Circumstance may be, we come now to inquire. And the first Lights in this Inquiry shall be borrowed from these very celebrated Writers, whom we have here ventured to oppose.

For



For such is the Force and Energy of Truth, that, while they are attempting to involve her in a Cloud of Metaphysics, she breaks through the mystic Veil they had prepared and woven for her with so much Art, and diffuseth a Stream of genuine Lustre, which the most obdurate Prejudice can hardly withstand.

AND first, though the *noble* Writer every where attempts to fix an original, independent, moral Beauty of Action, to which every thing is to be referred, and which itself is not to be referred to any thing further<sup>n</sup>: Yet when he comes to an Enumeration of those *particular* Actions, which may be called morally Beautiful, he always singles out such as have a direct and necessary Tendency to the *Happiness of Mankind*. Thus he talks of the Notion of a *public Interest*<sup>o</sup>, as necessary towards a proper Idea of Virtue: He speaks of public Affection in the same Manner; and reckons Generosity, Kindness, and Compassion, as the Qualities which alone can render Mankind truly virtuous. So again, when he fixes the Bounds of the social Affections, he evidently refers

<sup>n</sup> *Essay on Wit—Soliloquy—Enquiry—Moralists, Miscellanies—passim.*

<sup>o</sup> *Enqu. B. i. p. 2. § 3.*



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us to the same End of human Happiness. “ If Kindness or Love of the most natural  
 “ Sort be immoderate, it is undoubtedly  
 “ vicious. For thus over-great Tenderness  
 “ *destroys the Effect of Love*; and excessive  
 “ Pity renders us incapable of giving Suc-  
 “ cour<sup>a</sup>.” When he fixes the proper De-  
 grees of the *private Affections*, he draws his  
 Proof from this one Point, “ that by  
 “ having the Self-Passions too intense or  
 “ strong, a Creature becomes miserable<sup>r</sup>.”  
 Lastly, when he draws a Catalogue of such  
 Affections, as are most opposite to Beauty and  
 moral Good, he selects “ *Malice, Hatred of*  
 “ *Society — Tyranny — Anger — Revenge —*  
 “ *Treachery — Ingratitude*.” In all these  
 Instances, the Reference to human Happi-  
 ness is so particular and strong, that from  
 these alone an unprejudiced Mind may be  
 convinced, that the Production of *human*  
*Happiness* is the great universal Fountain,  
 whence our Actions derive their *moral*  
*Beauty*.

THUS again, though the excellent Dr.  
 CLARKE attempts to fix the Nature and  
 Essence of Virtue in certain Differences,  
 Relations, and Fitnesses of Things, to which

<sup>a</sup> *Enq. B. i. p. 2. § 3.*<sup>r</sup> *Ibid.*<sup>s</sup> *Ibid.*

our Actions ought ultimately to be referred; yet in enumerating the several Actions which he denominates *morally Good*, he mentions none but what evidently promote the same great End, “the Happiness of Man.” He justly speaks of the *Welfare* of the *Whole*, as being the *necessary* and most *important* Consequences of *virtuous* Action. He tells us, “That it is *more fit* that GOD should regard “the *Good* of the *whole* Creation, than that “he should make the Whole continually “miserable: That all Men should endeavour to promote the *universal Good* and “*Welfare* of all; than that all Men should “be continually contriving the *Ruin* and “*Destruction* of all<sup>t</sup>.” Here again, the Reference is so direct and strong to *the Happiness of Mankind*, that even from the Instances alledged by the worthy Author, it appears, that a Conformity of our Actions to this great End, is the very Essence of *moral Rectitude*.

MR. WOLLASTON is no less explicit in this Particular: For in every Instance he brings, *the Happiness* of Man is the single End to which his Rule of Truth verges in an unvaried Manner. Thus in the Passage

<sup>t</sup> *Demonst.* p. 45, &c.

already cited, though he considers the talking to a Post as an Absurdity, he is far from condemning it as an immoral Action: But in the same Paragraph, when he comes to give an Instance of the Violation of moral Truth, he immediately has Recourse to *Man*; and not only so, but to the *Happiness* of Man. “Why (saith he) should not the  
 “Converse be reckoned as bad; that is, to  
 “treat a *Man* as a Post, as if he had no  
 “Sense, and felt not *Injuries*, which he  
 “doth feel; as if to him Pain and Sorrow  
 “werenot Pain; Happiness not Happiness?”  
 At other Times he affirms, that “the Importance of the Truths on the one and the other Side should be diligently compared.”  
 And I would gladly know, how one Truth can be more important than another, unless upon this Principle, and in reference to *the Production of Happiness*. Himself indeed confirms this Interpretation, when he speaks as follows: “The Truth violated  
 “in the former Case was, B had a Property  
 “in that which gave him such a Degree of  
 “*Happiness*: That violated in the latter was,  
 “B had a Propriety in that which gave him  
 “a *Happiness* vastly superior to the other:

† *Rel. of Nat.* p. 19.

“ The Violation *therefore* in the latter Case  
“ was upon this Account a vastly greater  
“ Violation than in the former \*.”

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THESE Evidences may seem sufficient :  
But that all possible Satisfaction may be  
given in a Circumstance which is of the  
greatest Weight in the present Question,  
these further Observations may be added.

As therefore these celebrated Writers  
give no Instances of moral Beauty, Fitness,  
or Truth, but what finally relate to the  
Happiness of Man ; so, if we appeal to the  
common Sense of Mankind, we shall see  
that the Idea of Virtue hath never been uni-  
versally affixed to any Action or Affection  
of the Mind, unless where this Tendency  
to produce Happiness was at least *apparent*.  
What are all the black Catalogues of Vice  
or moral Turpitude, which we read in  
History, or find in the Circle of our own  
Experience, what are they but so many In-  
stances of *Misery produced*? And what are  
the fair and amiable Atchievements of *Le-  
gislaters, Patriots, and Sages* renowned in  
Story, what but so many Efforts to raise  
Mankind from Misery, and establish the  
public Happiness on a sure Foundation ?

\* *Rel. of Nat.* p. 21.



The first are *vicious, immoral, deformed*, because there we see Mankind *afflicted, or destroyed*: The latter are *virtuous, right, beautiful*, because here we see Mankind *preserved and assisted*.

BUT that *Happiness* is the last Criterion or Test, to which the moral Beauty, Truth, or Rectitude of our Affections is to be referred, the two following Circumstances *demonstrate*: First “ those very Affections and  
“ Actions, which, in the ordinary Course of  
“ Things, are approved as virtuous, do  
“ change their Nature, and become vicious  
“ in the strictest Sense, when they contra-  
“ dict this fundamental Law, of the greatest  
“ public Happiness.” Thus, although in general it is a Parent’s Duty to prefer a Child’s Welfare to that of another Person, yet, if this natural and just Affection gain such Strength, as to tempt the Parent to violate the *Public* for his Child’s *particular* Welfare; what was before a *Duty*, by this becomes immoderate and *criminal*. This the noble Writer hath allowed: “ If Kindness  
“ or Love of the most natural Sort be *im-*  
“ *moderate*, it is undoubtedly *vicious*.” And hence, he says, “ the Excess of motherly

“ Love is owned to be a vicious Fond-  
“ nefs<sup>z</sup>.” The same *Variation* takes place  
with regard to every other Relation between  
Man and Man. Infomuch, that the supe-  
rior Regards which we owe to our Family,  
Friends, Fellow-Citizens, and Countrymen  
—Regards which, in their proper Degree,  
aspire to the amiable and high Names of  
*domestic Love, Friendship, Patriotism,*—  
when once they desert and violate the grand  
Principle of *universal Happiness*, become a  
*vicious Fondness*, a mean and odious *Parti-*  
*ality*, justly stigmatized by all, as ignomi-  
nious and *unworthy*.

SECONDLY, with such uncontroled Au-  
thority does this great Principle command  
us; that “ Actions, which are in their own  
“ Nature most shocking to every *humane*  
“ Affection, lose at once their moral Deformi-  
“ mity, when they become subservient to  
“ the general Welfare; and assume both  
“ the Name and the Nature of Virtue.”  
For what is more contrary to every gentle  
and kind Affection, that dwells in the hu-  
man Breast, than to shed the Blood, or de-  
stroy the Life of Man? Yet the ruling Prin-  
ciple above-mentioned, can reconcile us

<sup>z</sup> *Enq. on Virtue.*

even to *this*. And when the Necessity of public Example compels us to make a Sacrifice of this Kind; though we may lament the *Occasion*, we cannot condemn the *Fact*: So far are we from branding it as *Murder*, that we approve it as *Justice*: and always defend it on this great Principle alone, *that it was necessary for the public Good*.

THUS it appears, that those Actions which we denominate Virtuous, Beautiful, Fit, or True, have not any absolute and independent, but a relative and reflected Beauty: And that their Tendency to produce Happiness is the only Source from whence they derive their Lustre. Hence therefore we may obtain a just and adequate Definition of Virtue: Which is no other than “the<sup>a</sup> Conformity of our Affections with the

<sup>a</sup> The Gentlemen above examined seem to have mistaken the *Attributes* of Virtue for its *Essence*. Virtue is procuring Happiness: To procure Happiness is *beautiful, reasonable, true*; these are the Qualities or Attributes of the Action; But the Action itself, or its *Essence*, is procuring Happiness.

The Reader who is curious to examine further into this Subject, may consult the *Prelim. Dissert. to Dr. LAW's Translation of KING's Origin of Evil*: Together with several Passages in the Translator's Notes, where he will find *Sense* and *Metaphysics* united in a very eminent and extraordinary Degree.

“ public

“ public Good:” Or “ the voluntary Pro-  
“ duction of the greatest Happiness.”

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SECTION IV.

IT may possibly seem strange that so much has been thought necessary to be opposed to these metaphysical *Refinements* concerning the Nature of Virtue: But in Reality, 'tisa Point of the utmost Consequence: For these Refinements have given Rise to a plausible Objection, which hath been retailed in a popular Manner by a late wordy Writer; whose least Merit it is to have supplied our modish Coffee-house Philosophers with such a Variety of fashionable Topics, that they have never felt the least Want of that antiquated Assistance derived from Knowledge, Parts, and Learning.

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THIS Gentleman, taking Advantage of these metaphysical Refinements, and particularly of the noble Writer's imaginary Scheme of *absolute, irrelative* Beauty, “ the  
“ Hunting after which (he elegantly af-  
“ firms) is not much better than a wild  
“ Goose Chase<sup>b</sup> ;” attempts from hence to demonstrate, for the *Benefit* of his *Country*,

<sup>b</sup> *Fable of the Bees*, vol. i. p. 380. oct. Ed.

that



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that we are utterly mistaken, when we  
 “ look upon Virtue and Vice as permanent  
 “ Realities, that must ever be the same in  
 “ all Countries and all Ages<sup>c</sup>; And thus  
 he prosecutes his Argument.

THE Worth or Excellence of every thing,  
 he says, varies according to fancy or Opin-  
 ion. “ Even in human Creatures, what  
 “ is beautiful in one Country, is not so in  
 “ another. — Three hundred Years ago,  
 “ Men were shaved as closely as they are  
 “ now; since that, they have wore Beards,  
 “ — How mean and comical a Man looks,  
 “ that is otherwise well-dressed, in a narrow-  
 “ brimed Hat, when every body wears  
 “ broad ones? And again, how monstrous  
 “ is a very great Hat, when the other Ex-  
 “ tremehas been in Fashion for a considerable  
 “ Time? — The many Ways of laying out a  
 “ Garden judiciously are almost innumera-  
 “ ble; and what is called Beautiful in them,  
 “ varies according to the different *Taste* of  
 “ Nations and Ages<sup>d</sup>.” Thus capricious  
 “ and uncertain, he tells us, are our Ideas of  
 natural Beauty; and these he brings home  
 to the Point of Morals: “ In Morals there  
 “ is no greater Certainty: Plurality of

<sup>c</sup> *Fable of the Bees*, p. 372.<sup>d</sup> P. 376.

“ Wives

“ Wives is odious among *Christians*, and all  
“ the Wit and Learning of a great Genius  
“ in Defence of it, has been rejected with  
“ Contempt. But Polygamy is not shock-  
“ ing to a *Mabometan*. What Men have  
“ learnt from their Infancy enslaves them,  
“ and the Force of Custom warps Nature,  
“ and at the same time imitates her in such  
“ a Manner, that it is often difficult to  
“ know, which of them we are influenced  
“ by. In the East formerly, Sisters mar-  
“ ried Brothers, and it was meritorious for  
“ a Man to marry his Mother. Such Al-  
“ liances are abominable: But it is certain,  
“ that whatever Horror we conceive at the  
“ Thoughts of them, there is nothing in  
“ Nature repugnant against them, but what  
“ is built upon Mode and Custom. A re-  
“ ligious *Mabometan* may receive as great an  
“ Aversion against Wine<sup>c</sup>.” Hence, with  
great Stretch of Reasoning, he concludes,  
“ that Virtue and Vice are not permanent  
“ Realities,” but vary as other Fashions,  
and are subject to no other Law, than that  
of *Fancy* and *Opinion*.

AND so far indeed, this Gentleman seems  
to have argued justly while he contends

<sup>c</sup> *Fable of the Bees*, p. 377, 379.

that

that mere *Approbation* and *Dislike*, the mere Idea of *Beauty* and *Deformity*, *Truth* or *Rectitude*, without Reference to some further *End*, can never constitute a real or permanent Foundation of *Vice* or *Virtue*. For, as he hath observed, there *have* indeed been considerable Differences of Opinion upon *some Kinds* of moral Beauty and Deformity, in the different Nations and Ages of the World: And each Age and Nation hath ever been alike positive in asserting the Propriety of its own. Therefore, unless we have some further Test, some other distinguishing and characteristic Circumstance to refer to, besides that of mere *Approbation* and *Dislike*, how shall we ever know, which of these *anomalous* Opinions are *right* or *wrong*? If we have nothing further to appeal to, than the mere Propriety of *Taste*, though each may be thoroughly satisfied of the Justness of his own; yet he ought in Reason to allow the same Right of Choice to the rest of Mankind in every Age and Nation: And thus indeed, *moral Beauty* and *Deformity*, *Virtue* and *Vice*, could have no other Law, than that of *Fancy* and *Opinion*.

BUT when the great End of public Happiness is ultimately referred to, as the *one*,

*uniform* Circumstance that constitutes the *Rectitude* of human Actions; then indeed *Virtue* and *Vice* assume a more *real* and *permanent* Nature: The common *Sense*, nay, the very *Necessities* of Mankind, will urge them to make an unvaried and just *Distinction*: For *Happiness* and *Misery* make too strong an Appeal to all the Faculties of Man, to be borne down by the *Caprice* of Fancy and Opinion. That it was either an accidental or a designed Inattention to the great Principle of *Happiness*, that gave this coarse Writer an Occasion to call in question the permanent *Reality* of Vice and Virtue, the following Considerations may sufficiently convince us.

SHOULD any one ask, whether *Health* and *Sickness* are two different Things, no doubt we should answer in the Affirmative: And would surely suspect any Man's Sincerity, who should tell us, that what was accounted Health in one Age or Nation, was accounted Sickness in another. There are likewise such Things as wholesome Food and Poisons: Nor would we entertain a much better Opinion of him who should affirm that all depends upon *Fancy*; that *Bread* or *Milk* are nourishing or destructive,  
that



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that *Arsenic* and *Sublimate* are wholesome or poisonous, as *Imagination* and *Opinion* dictate. On the contrary, we know their Nature, with respect to Man, is invariable: The one universally wholesome, the other, poisonous. Further: we know there have been Debates among Physicians, about *Regimen* and *Diet*: That some have maintained the Wholesomeness of *animal*, others of *vegetable* Food: Some recommended the Drinking of *Water*, others of *Wine*. Yet none was ever so weak as to conclude from these different Opinions about wholesome *Diet*, that the nourishing Qualities of *Bread* or the noxious ones of *Arsenic*, were not *permanent* Realities with regard to Man: or, that the first could be made poisonous, the latter, wholesome, by Dint of *Fancy* and *Opinion*.

Now, the Case we are debating is exactly parallel. For sure, the *Happiness* and *Misery* of Mankind are Things as distinct as *Health* and *Sickness*: Whence it follows, that certain Actions, under the same Circumstances, must universally produce Happiness or Misery, as naturally as Food produceth Health, or Poison Sickness and Death. We have already seen, that whatever

ever

ever tends to the Good of all, is, by the Consent of all, denominated *Virtue*; that whatever is contrary to this great End, is universally branded as *Vice*: in the same Manner, as whatever nourishes the Body is called *Food*; whatever destroys it, *Poison*. Accordingly, we find the Agreement among Mankind as uniform on the one Subject, as on the other. All Ages and Nations having without Exception or Variance maintained, that Humanity, Fidelity, Truth, Temperance, and mutual Benevolence do as naturally produce Happiness, as Food gives Health to the Body: That Cruelty, Treachery, Lying, Intemperance, Inhumanity, Adultery, Murder, do as naturally give Rise to Misery, as Poison brings on Sickness and Death.

BUT hath not this Author given such Instances as prove, that what is detested as *Vice* in one Country, is applauded as *Virtue* in another? That *Polygamy* and *incestuous Marriages* have been in some Nations reputed *lawful*, in others *meritorious*? And if one Virtue or Vice be imaginary or *variable*, doth it not clearly follow that all are so?

Now a Man of a common Turn of Thought would be apt to make a very different

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ferent Inference. If from the *Variety* of Opinions among Mankind as to *some* Virtues or Vices, he concluded *these* were *variable*; then from the universal *Agreement* of Mankind with regard to *other* Virtues and Vices, he would conclude *these* were *fixed* and *invariable*. The *Consent* of Mankind in the *one*, proves as much as their *Disagreement* in the other. And 'tis evident that both their Consent and Disagreement arise from the same Principle: A Principle which destroys the Tenets, which this Author labours to establish. For, to resume our Illustration, as the various Opinions concerning the superior Wholesomeness of this or that Kind of *Diet*, does not change the Nature of *Bread* or *Poison*; so neither can the various Opinions concerning *Polygamy* or *Incest*, affect or change the Nature of *Benevolence* and *Generosity*, *Adultery* and *Murder*. 'Tis plain, these various Opinions have been formed “ upon such Actions only “ as are not universally and clearly connected with the Happiness or Misery of “ Mankind.” As these Actions have been deemed productive of the *one* or the *other*, they have been regarded as *Virtues* or *Vices*: But this Variety of Opinions does no  
more

more unsettle the Nature of those Actions, whose *Tendency* is clear and *certain*; than the Debates on the superior Wholesomeness of animal or vegetable *Diet* can change the Nature of *Bread* and *Poison*. Hence it appears, that *Virtue* and *Vice* are permanent Realities, and that their Nature is fixed, certain, and *invariable*.

THUS one Extreme produceth another. For the noble Writer and this Gentleman, through a strong Dislike of each other's System, have *both* endeavoured to prove *too much*, and in Consequence have proved *nothing*. The one, contending for the permanent *Reality* of *Virtue*, and, not content to fix it on its proper Basis, attempts to establish certain *absolute* and *immutable* Forms of *Beauty*, without Regard to any *further End*; and thus, by laying a chimerical Foundation, *betrays* the Cause which he so generously defends. The other, intent on destroying the permanent *Reality* of *Virtue* and *Vice*, and perceiving how weak a Basis the noble Writer had laid for their Establishment, after proving *this* to be imaginary, as wisely as honestly infers, there is no real one in Nature. We now see the Folly of these Extremes: That as on the



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one Part, *Virtue* and *Vice* are Things merely *relative* to the *Happiness* of Man; so on the other, while Man continues what he is, all those *Relations* which concern his *Happiness*, and arise from his present Manner of Existence, are likewise *permanent* and *immutable*.

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BUT this idle Objection against the permanent *Reality* of *Virtue* and *Vice*, is not the only one which the Writer last mentioned hath laboured, for the Destruction of Religion and *Virtue*. For the main Drift and Intention of his Book is to prove no less a Paradox than this, that “private *Vices* are “public *Benefits*.” Now, till this Objection be removed, our Idea and Definition of *Virtue* can never be thoroughly established. For if *private Vices* be *public Benefits*, then private *Virtues* are public *Mischiefs*. And if so, what becomes of our *Definition*?

THE first notable Circumstance in this formidable Assertion of Dr. MANDEVILLE, is its utter Inconsistency with all that he hath advanced in order to destroy the Reality of *Vice* and *Virtue*. For if indeed  
these

these be mere *Names*, the Creatures of Fancy and Opinion, how can they be attended with any uniform Effects? How can they be either public Benefits, or public Evils?—If, on the contrary, they really produce certain uniform Effects, as he hath attempted to prove, how can they be mere *Non-Entities*, the Creatures of Fancy and Opinion? Here lies a gross and palpable Incoherence: Take which of his two Theories you please, the other absolutely destroys it. If Vice be a public Benefit, it must be a permanent Reality: If it is not a permanent Reality, it cannot be a public Benefit.

LET us now examine the Foundations on which he hath built this strange Hypothesis. His Book may be analysed into four different Principles, which he hath variously combined, or rather jumbled together, according as each in their Turn would best serve his Purpose.

THE first Principle he lays down, or rather takes for granted, is, “that Man is a Compound of evil Passions:” In other Words, “that the Gratification of the natural Appetites is in itself a Vice.” There are in his Book at least a hundred Pages

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of the lowest common-place Declamation, all founded on this one Principle, brought from the *solitary Caves* and *Visions* of the *Desart*. Thus the Desire of being esteemed by others, he stigmatizes with the Name of *Pride*: The natural Desire of social Converse between the two Sexes, he distinguisheth by a *grosser* Appellation. In a word, through the whole Course of his Argument, he *supposes* that every *selfish* Appetite (that is, every Appetite which hath regard to *ourselves*) is in its own Nature vile and abominable. This the candid Reader will probably think a little hard upon human Nature: That no Man can be *virtuous*, while he endeavours to be *esteemed*, while he loves to quench his Thirst, minister to Posterity, or eat his Dinner. On the Weight of these plain Instances, the Value of this first Principle may be safely left to any Man's impartial Trial.

HAVING thus branded every Gratification of the natural Appetites; he gains from hence a proper Foundation for the second *Pillar* of this *Temple* of Vice. For he acquaints us with great Solemnity, that, of all other Vices, that of *Luxury* is most beneficial to a State: And that if this were  
banished

banished the Nation, all Kinds of manual Occupations would immediately languish and decay<sup>f</sup>. He says indeed, that *Pedants* make Objections to this Vice of Luxury, and tell you, that it *enervates* a People: But he adds, that, “since he has seen the World, “the Consequences of Luxury to a Nation “seem not so dreadful to him as they did<sup>g</sup>.” Had he left the Matter here, we should have been at a Loss to know how he would have made out this strange Tale: But the Riddle is cleared up at once, when we hear him say, that “every thing is Luxury, that “is not immediately necessary to make Man “subsist as he is a living Creature<sup>h</sup>.”

WE should have been startled perhaps had he assured us, that he had a *Wind-mill* which laid *Eggs*, and bred *young* ones: But how easily had he reconciled us to his Veracity in only saying, that by a *Wind-mill* he meant a *Goose*, or a *Turkey*?

THUS, when he affirms that Luxury produceth public Happiness, we stand ready for some deep and subtile Speculation, to support so wondrous a Paradox. But when he poorly tells us, “that every thing is

<sup>f</sup> *Fable of the Bees*, passim.

<sup>g</sup> *Ibid.* p. 247.

<sup>h</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108.



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“Luxury that is not immediately necessary  
 “to make Man subsist as he is a Living  
 “Creature; we laugh not so much at his  
 Impudence, as at our own Folly in giving  
 Ear to so idle a Prater, who, when we  
 thought we had him reforming States, and  
 new-modelling Philosophy, is all the while  
 playing at *Crambo*.

LEST it should be suspected, that the  
 Features of this Man's Folly are here ag-  
 gravated, take a Copy of his Countenance  
 in one instance out of many that might be  
 given. “The Consequence (saith he) of  
 “this Vice of Luxury to a Nation, seem  
 “not so dreadful to me as they did —For  
 “clean Linen weakens a Man no more  
 “than Flannel<sup>1</sup>.” Now from these Pas-  
 sages laid together, it appears; first, that  
 Luxury is a Vice; secondly, that to wear  
 clean Linen is Luxury; and therefore, it  
 comes out as clear as the Day, “that to  
 “wear clean Linen is a Vice.”

SERIOUSLY: The Sophistry here em-  
 ployed is such an Insult as hath been but  
 seldom offered to the human Understanding.  
 Did ever any Man before—except only a  
 Set of wrong-headed Enthusiasts, whose

<sup>1</sup> *Fable of the Bees*, p. 119.

Visions he is here obliged to adopt—did ever any Man maintain, that to use the Bounties of Nature, or enjoy the Conveniences of Life, was a criminal Indulgence? Did ever any Man maintain, that *he* could be *viciously* luxurious, who neither *hurt* his *Neighbour* nor *himself*? At this Rate, by an arbitrary Use of Words, and putting one Expression for another, we might boldly advance the most palpable Contradictions, and maintain that Dr. M—D—LE was a Man of Modesty and Virtue.

THUS far we have seen this Writer endeavouring to throw the *false* Colours of *Vice*, upon the *natural Passions*, and such a *Use* of the Gift of Nature as is really *Innocent*. In examining his two remaining Principles, we shall find him acting a Part the very *reverse*; and, with the same Effrontery, endeavouring to throw the *false* Colours of *public Utility* on such *Actions* and *Affections* as are really *criminal* and *destructive*.

To this Purpose he boldly selects some of the most flagrant Crimes; and assures us, that without their happy Influence the Public would suffer exceedingly. Who had ever dreamt, that Mankind receives Benefit

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from *Thieves* and *House-breakers*? Yet he tells us, that “if all People were strictly  
“honest, half the Smiths in the Nation  
“would want Employment<sup>k</sup>?”

HIGHWAYMEN too, and *Robbers* are useful in their Generation. For “if a Miser  
“should be robbed of five hundred or a  
“thousand Guineas<sup>l</sup>, it is certain, that, as  
“soon as this Money should come to circu-  
“late, the Nation would be the better for  
“the Robbery, and receive the same and as  
“real a Benefit from it, as if an Archbishop  
“had left the same Sum to the Public<sup>m</sup>.”

HE is abundantly rhetorical on “the large  
“Catalogue of solid Blessings that accrue  
“from, and are owing to, intoxicating  
“Gin<sup>n</sup>.” Infomuch, that if the Drunken-

<sup>k</sup> *Fable of the Bees*, p. 82.

<sup>l</sup> There is a common Error with regard to *Misers*, on which this pretended Argument is built. They are generally accounted the greatest Enemies of *Society*, because they hoard the Wealth which ought to circulate. Now, to give even a Miser his Due, this is really a groundless Charge: For they seldom hoard more than certain useless Papers in the Shape of *Notes*, *Bonds*, and *Mortgages*: While the Wealth, which they thus hoard in Imagination, circulates freely among all Ranks of People. The Guilt of the Miser's Passion lies in its being essentially destructive both of Justice and Benevolence.

<sup>m</sup> *Fable of the Bees*, p. 83.

<sup>n</sup> *Ibid.* p. 89.

ness and Frenzy arising from the excessive Use of this salutary Liquor were curbed by the Magistrate, he seems to foretell the most fatal Consequences to the public Wealth and Welfare.

HERE then he enumerates several real Crimes, which are *necessarily* attended with *great Evils*; and these, he demonstrates, are *accidentally* productive of *some Good*. And this indeed is the only Part of his Argument, that is attended with any Degree of Plausibility: For here, it must be owned, there is Room for a dishonest Mind to *confound*, though by no means to *convince*, an impartial Reader. Because the Consequences of these Crimes being of a various and *discordant* Nature, some having the Appearance of *Good*, and others of *Ill* to Society; a *rhetorical* Display of the *former* may possibly induce a superficial Inquirer, who is caught by a Glare of Eloquence, to doubt whether *these* do not really *predominate*. But a moderate Share of Attention will convince us, that this is impossible. Because all the real Vices he mentions, though they be accidentally productive of some Good; yet 'tis such as might effectually be obtained without them. Thus the  
Money



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Money taken wrongfully by Stealth or Robbery, is only of Service to the Public by its Circulation: But Money may circulate without Stealth or Robbery; and therefore 'tis neither the Stealth nor Robbery that is of Service to the Public. On the other part, there are great and substantial Evils, which these Crimes, and these alone give Rise to. On this Occasion one might be very large on the Terrors and Distress, the Murders, and consequent Miseries, which the Villanies patronized by this Writer do necessarily produce. One who was Master of Dr. MANDEVILLE'S *Town-Experience*, might draw a striking Picture of honest and industrious Families roused from Sleep at Midnight, only to be plundered and destroyed; of the horrid Attempts of abandoned Wickedness, let loose from Fear by the Security of Darkness; the Shrieks of ravished Maids and Matrons; the dying Groans of Brothers, Fathers, Husbands, weltring in their Blood; the Cries of innocent and helpless Orphans weeping over their murdered Parents, deprived at once of all that were dear to them, of all that could yield them Consolation or Support; and suffering every vile Indignity, that unrelenting

relenting Villainy can suggest or perpetrate. And how, think you, does this Scene of domestic Horror change its original Nature, and rise at length into a public Blessing? Why, because the Adventurers, having made off with their Booty, may possibly “lay it out upon a *Harlot*, or squander it “in a *Night-Cellar* or *Ginshop*.” And thus the Money circulates through the Nation. But, in the mean time, our Philosopher hath forgot the helpless Family reduced to Beggary by the Prowess of his *nocturnal Heroes*: He hath forgot that the fond and indulgent Parent might no less probably have laid out the Money in the temperate Maintenance and liberal Education of his Children, which is now squandered in unprofitable *Riot* and *Excess*: That these Destroyers of other Men’s Happiness and their own, had they been employed in honest Labour, in the Cultivation of *Lands*, or the Improvement of *Manufactures*, might have done substantial Services to the Public and themselves, without the guilty *Alloy* of unprovoked Mischief. From these Circumstances, impartially compared, ’tis evident, that the only essential Consequence of

° *Fable of the Bees*, p. 84, 85.

private Vice is public Misery: And thus our Author's new-fashioned System of Morals falls back again into nothing.

HIS fourth Principle is much less plausible. Indeed he never applies to this, but when reduced to the last Necessity: When therefore every other Foundation fails him, he attempts to impose upon his Reader's Negligence or Simplicity, by representing Vice as a *Cause*, where in Reality 'tis a *Consequence*. Thus he tells us, "Great Wealth  
" and foreign Treasure will ever scorn to  
" come among Men, unless you'll admit  
" their *inseparable Companions*, Avarice and  
" Luxury: Where Trade is considerable,  
" Fraud will intrude. To be at *once well-*  
" *bred and sincere*, is no less than a Contra-  
" diction: And therefore whilst a Man ad-  
" vances in Knowledge, and his Manners  
" are polished, we must expect to see at the  
" same time his Desires enlarged, his Ap-  
" petites refined, and his *Vices increased* <sup>p.</sup>"  
So again, having been driven from his other strong Holds by certain impertinent Remarks, whom he wisely dismisseth with an Air of Superiority and Contempt, he takes refuge in the same ambiguous Phrases:

<sup>p</sup> *Fable of the Bees*, p. 201.

As that "Vice is *inseparable* from great and "potent Societies, in the same Manner as "dirty Streets are a necessary Evil, inseparable from the *Felicity* of London<sup>a</sup>."

Now, though this happy *Simile* may work Wonders in a *Coffee-house*, amongst those who see every *dirty Alley* pregnant with Demonstration; yet, 'tis to be hoped, more serious Readers may distinguish better; and be enabled to tell him, that, before they grant his Position, *that private Vice is public Benefit*, they expect he should prove, "that the Dirt in *London Streets*, is "the Cause or Instrument whereby *London* "becomes a populous and flourishing City:" A Proposition almost as remote from common Apprehension, as that *Tenterden Steeple* is the Cause of *Goodwin Sands*. Thus we see how dexterously he puts the Change upon the unwary Reader; and, while he pretends to exhibit an *essential Cause*, flurs him off with an *accidental Consequence*.

INTO these four Principles, all evidently *False* or *Foreign* to the Purpose, his whole Book may be justly analysed. Nor is there one Observation in the Compass of so many hundred Pages, which tends to support the

<sup>a</sup> *Fable of the Bees*, Preface, p. 9, &c.



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pernicious Falsehood that disgraceth his *Title-Page*, but what will naturally resolve itself into one or other of these wretched *Sophisms*. 'Tis therefore unnecessary to lead the Reader through all the *Windings* of this immense *Labyrinth* of Falsehood; 'tis enough, to have given the *Clue* which may safely conduct him through them.

## SECTION VI.

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HAVING at length gained an adequate Idea of Virtue, and found that it is no other than “the voluntary Production of the greatest public Happiness;” we may now safely proceed to consider, “what are “the *Motives* by which Mankind can be “induced to the Practice of it?”

AND here we shall find another metaphysical *Cloud* resting upon *this* Path, in itself plain and easy to all Mankind. For the very Notion of the *Motives* to Virtue hath been as much confounded by moral Writers, as the Idea of *Virtue* itself. And here we might travel through another System of *Logomachies*; while one asserts, that we ought to be *moved to love and pursue* Virtue, because *she is beautiful*; another, because

because Virtue is good; another, because Virtue is good in itself; a fourth, because Virtue is Truth; a fifth, because it is agreeable to Nature; a sixth, because it is agreeable to the Relations of Things.

BUT 'tis supposed that the intelligent Reader, from a Review of the first Section of this Essay, may be convinced, that all these *amusing* Expressions amount to no more than this, “ that there is some Reason or other why we ought to practise Virtue; but that the particular Reason doth not appear, notwithstanding all this refined Pomp of Affirmation.” And as it hath already been made evident, that the *Essence* of Virtue consists in a Conformity of our Affections and Actions, with the greatest *public Happiness*; so it will now appear, that “ the only Reason or Motive, by which Individuals can possibly be induced to the Practice of Virtue, must be the Feeling immediate, or the Prospect of future *private Happiness*.”

DOUBTLESS, the noble Writer's Admirers will despise and reject this, as an unworthy Maxim. For so it hath happened, that in the height of their Zeal, for supporting his Opinions, they generally stigmatize *private Happiness*,

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*Happiness*, as a Thing scarce worth a wise Man's inquiring after. Indeed, the many ambiguous Phrases of their Master have contributed not a little to this *vulgar Error*. For in one Place, he brands the modern Philosophers and Divines with the Name of Sophisters and Pedants, "for rating Life " by the Number and Exquisiteness of the " pleasing Sensations<sup>r</sup>." At other Times he speaks of *Pleasure*, with all the Contempt of an ancient *Stoic*<sup>s</sup>. In the same high Style of the *Athenian Porch*, he passeth Judgment on the Hopes of the Religious: "They have made Virtue so mercenary a Thing, and have talked so much " of its *Rewards*, that one can hardly tell " what there is in it, after all, which can " be *worth* rewarding<sup>t</sup>." So again, he derides those "modern Projectors, who would " new-frame the human Heart; and have a " mighty Fancy to reduce all its Motions, " Balances, and Weights to that one Principle and Foundation of a cool and deliberate *Selfishness*: And thus, Love of " one's Country, and Love of Mankind, " must also be *Self-Love*<sup>v</sup>."

<sup>r</sup> *Wit and Hum.* Part iii. § 4.    <sup>s</sup> *Moral.* Part iii. § 3.  
<sup>t</sup> *Wit*, Part iii. § 3.    <sup>v</sup> *Ibid.*

Now ere we proceed further, it may be necessary to remark, that in some Degree there hath been a *Strife about Words* in this Particular too. For these Expressions of *Selfishness* and *Disinterestedness* have been used in a very *loose* and *indeterminate* Manner. In one Sense a *Motive* is called *disinterested*; when it consists in a pure *benevolent* Affection, or a Regard to the *moral Sense*. In another, no Motive is *disinterested*: For even in acting according to these Impulses of Benevolence and Conscience, we gratify an Inclination, and act upon the Principle or *immediate Feeling* of *private Happiness*. Thus when we say, “We love Virtue for Virtue’s Sake;” ’tis only implied, that we find immediate Happiness from the Love and Practice of Virtue, without Regard to external or future Consequences.

ANOTHER Source of mutual Misapprehension on this Subject hath been “the Introduction of *metaphorical* Expressions instead of *proper* ones. Nothing is so common among the Writers on Morality, as “the Harmony of Virtue.”—“The Proportion of Virtue.” So the noble Writer frequently expresseth himself. But his fa-



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vourite Term, borrowed indeed from the Ancients, is “the BEAUTY of Virtue.” — *Quæ si videri posset, mirabiles excitaret amores*<sup>w</sup>. — Of this our Author and his Followers, especially the most ingenious of them<sup>x</sup>, are so *enamoured*, that they seem utterly to have forgot they are *talking in Metaphor*, when they describe the Charms of this *sovereign Fair*. Infomuch, that an unexperienced Person, who should read their *Encomiums*, would naturally fall into the Mistake of him, who asked the Philosopher “Whether the Virtues were not “living Creatures<sup>y</sup>?” Now this *figurative* Manner, so essentially interwoven into philosophical Disquisition, hath been the Occasion of great Error. It tends to mislead us both with regard to the Nature of Virtue, and our Motives to the Practice of it. For first, it induceth a Persuasion, that Virtue is *excellent* without Regard to any of its Consequences: And secondly, that he must either want Eyes, or common Discernment, who doth not at first Sight fall in Love with this *matchless Lady*.

THEREFORE setting aside, as much as may be, all ambiguous Expressions, it seems

<sup>w</sup> Cicero. <sup>x</sup> Mr. Hutcheson. <sup>y</sup> Senecæ Epist. cxiv.  
evident,

evident, that “ a Motive, from its very Nature, must be something that affects *ourselves*.” If any Man hath found out a Kind of Motive which doth not affect *himself*, he hath made a deeper Investigation into the “ Springs, Weights, and Balances” of the human Heart, than I can pretend to. Now what can possibly affect *ourselves*, or determine us to Action, but either the Feeling or Prospect of *Pleasure* or *Pain*, *Happiness* or *Misery*?

BUT to come to the direct Proof: 'Tis evident, even to Demonstration, that no *Affection* can, in the strict Sense, be more or less *selfish* or *disinterested* than another; because, *whatever* be its *Object*, the *Affection* itself is *still* no other than a *Mode* either of *Pleasure* or of *Pain*; and is therefore equally to be referred to the Mind or Feeling of the Patient, whatever be its external Occasion. Indeed, a late Writer of Subtilty and Refinement, hath attempted to make a Distinction here. He says, “ It hath been observed, that every Act of Virtue or Friendship is attended with a secret Pleasure; from whence it hath been concluded, that Friendship and Virtue could not be disinterested. But the

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“ Fallacy of this is obvious. The virtuous  
 “ Sentiment or Passion *produces* the Plea-  
 “ sure, and does not arise from it. I feel  
 “ a Pleasure in doing good to my Friend  
 “ *because* I love him : but I do not love him  
 “ for the Sake of that Pleasure<sup>z</sup>.” Now  
 to me, the Fallacy of *this* is obvious. For  
 in Fact, neither the *Passion*, nor the *Plea-  
 sure*, are either the *Cause* or the *Consequence*  
 of each other ; they neither *produce* nor  
*arise* from each other ; because in Reality,  
 they are the *same Thing* under *different Ex-  
 pressions*. This will be clear, if we state the  
 Case as follows : “ To *love* my Friend is  
 “ to *feel* a *Pleasure* in *doing him Good* :” And  
 conversely ; “ to *feel* a *Pleasure* in *doing*  
 “ *Good* to my Friend, is to *love him*.”  
 Where 'tis plain that the *Terms* are *synony-  
 mous*. The *Pleasure* therefore is the very  
*Passion itself* ; and neither *prior* nor *posterior*  
 to it, as this Gentleman supposeth.

AGAIN, that the Pleasures of Benevo-  
 lence, and the moral Sense, are strictly  
*Selfish*, in this Sense of the Word, like  
 every other Enjoyment, seems evident from  
 some parallel Concessions of the noble  
 Writer. For these seemingly disinterested

<sup>z</sup> Hume's *Essays, Mor. and Polit.* p. 125.

Pleasures he perpetually sets on a Level with the Perceptions of natural Beauty, Order, Harmony, and Proportion. These last are, by all, acknowledged to be of the selfish Kind; therefore the others are so too; being only a *higher Order of the same*, and expressly called so by the noble Writer<sup>b</sup>.

THE Reasons why the great universal Principle of *private Happiness* hath not been so clearly seen in the *Benevolent*, as in the *Self-Passions*; seem to be these. First, Ambiguous Expressions, such as have been remarked above. 2dly, Perhaps some Degree of *Pride*, and Affectation of *Merit*; because *Merit* seems to appear in what is called *Disinterest*. 3dly, And perhaps principally, because in the Exercise of the benevolent Passion, the Happiness is essentially *concomitant* with the Passion itself, and therefore is not easily separated from it by the *Imagination*, so as to be considered as a *distinct End*. Whereas in the Passions called *Selfish*, the Happiness sought after is often *unattainable*, and therefore easily and necessarily distinguished by the *Imagination* as a *positive End*. This Circumstance of Union however, as is judiciously remarked

<sup>b</sup> *Moralists*, P. et ii.



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by one of the noble Writer's Followers<sup>b</sup>, proves the great Superiority and Excellence of the benevolent Affections, considered as a Source of Happiness, beyond the Passions and Appetites, commonly called the *Selfish*.

BUT although these Observations be necessary, in order to clear up an Affair, which hath been much perplexed with philosophical, or *unphilosophical* Refinements; yet, on a closer Examination, it will appear, in the most direct Manner, from the noble Writer himself, that "there is no other Principle  
"of human Action, but that of the *immediate or foreseen* Happiness of the Agent:" That all these amusing Speculations concerning the *Comely, Fit, and Decent*; all these *verbal* Separations between *Pleasure, Interest, Beauty, and Good*, might have been sunk in one *precise* and plain Disquisition, concerning such Actions and Affections as yield a lasting, and such as afford only a short and transient Happiness. For thus, after all, his Lordship explains himself: "That *Happiness* is to be pursued, and, in  
"Fact, is always sought after; that the  
"Question is not, who *loves himself*, and

<sup>b</sup> Three Treatises, by J. H. Treat. 3d. *On Happiness*, p. 189.

" who

“ who *not*; but who *loves* and *serves* himself  
 “ the *rightest*, and after the *truest* Manner—  
 “ That ’tis the Height of *Wisdom*, no doubt,  
 “ to be *rightly Selfish*.”—“ Even to leave  
 “ Family, Friends, Country, and Society,  
 “ —in good Earnest, *who would not*, if it  
 “ were *Happiness* to do so?”

THESE Expressions are so strongly pointed, as to leave no further Doubt concerning the noble Writer’s Sentiments on this Subject. Indeed, they are the natural Dictates of common Sense unsophisticated with false Philosophy. In every subsequent Debate therefore, wherein his Lordship’s Opinions are concerned, we may safely build on this as an acknowledged and sure Foundation; “ that the Motives of Man to the  
 “ Practice of Virtue, can only arise from a  
 “ Sense of his *present*, or a Prospect of his  
 “ *future-Happiness*.”

SECTION VII.

NOW this Conclusion will carry us to another Question of a very interesting and abstruse Nature: That is, “ How far, and  
 “ upon what Foundation, the uniform

<sup>c</sup> *Wit and Humour*, Part iii. § 3.

“ Practice of Virtue, is really and clearly  
 “ connected with the Happiness of every  
 “ Individual ?” For so far, as we have seen,  
 and no further, can every Individual be nat-  
 urally moved to the Practice of it.

THIS is evidently a Question of *Fact*:  
 And as it relates to the *Happiness* of *Man*,  
 can only be determined by appealing to his  
*Constitution*. If *this* be indeed *uniform* and  
*invariable*; that is, if every Individual hath  
 the same Perceptions, Passions, and Desires;  
 then indeed the Sources of Happiness must  
 be *similar* and *unchangeable*. If, on the con-  
 trary, different Men be differently consti-  
 tuted; if they have *different* Perceptions,  
 Passions, and Desires; then must the  
 Sources of their Happiness be equally *va-*  
*rious*.

IT should seem therefore, that “ while  
 “ Moralists have been enquiring into hu-  
 “ man Happiness, they have generally con-  
 “ sidered it as arising from an *uniform* and  
 “ *particular* Source, instead of tracing it up  
 “ to those various Fountains whence it really  
 “ springs; which are indefinitely various,  
 “ combined, and indeterminable.” And  
 this seems to have been the most general  
 Foundation of Error.

IF we speak with Precision, there are but three Sources in Man, of Pleasure and Pain, Happiness and Misery: These are *Sense*, *Imagination*, and the *Passions*. Now the slightest Observation will convince us, that these are associated, separated, and combined in Man, with a Variety almost infinite. In some, the Pleasures and Pains of *Sense* predominate; Imagination is dull; the Passions inactive. In others, a more delicate Frame awakens all the Powers of Imagination; the Passions are refined; the Senses disregarded. A third Constitution is carried away by the Strength of Passion: The Calls of Sense are contemned; and Imagination becomes no more than the necessary Instrument of some further Gratification.

FROM overlooking this plain Fact, seems to have arisen the Discordance among Philosophers concerning the Happiness of Man. And while *each* hath attempted to exhibit one favourite Picture, as the *Paragon* or *Standard* of human Kind; they have *all* omitted some Ten thousand other Resemblances which actually subsist in Nature.

THUS most of the *Epicurean* Sect, tho' not the Founder of it<sup>d</sup>, have discarded Be-

<sup>d</sup> Επικουρος ο φιλοσοφος επι ταις, &c. *Epicurus,*  
*nevolence*



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*nevolence*; and *Virtue* from their System of *private* Happiness. The modern Patronizers of this Scheme, Mr. HOBBS, Dr. MANDEVILLE, and several *French* Writers, after heaping up a Collection of sordid Instances which prove the *sensual* Inclinations and *Selfishness* of Man, leap at once to their desired Conclusion, that the pretended public Affections are therefore no more than the same low Passions in Disguise. That *Benevolence* makes no Part of Man's Nature; that the human Kind are absolutely unconnected with each other in Point of Affection: And that every Individual seeks and finds his *private* Happiness in and from himself alone.

THE noble Writer, on the contrary, viewing the brighter Parts of human Nature, through the amiable Medium of the *Socratic* Philosophy; and fixing his Atten-

Philosophus, in libro quem Ratas Opiniones inscribit, vitam cum *Justitia* conjunctam *perturbatione* vacare pronunciat; *injustam* vero *perturbatione* quamplurima *referatam* esse; brevi dicto multæ veræ sententiæ, et, ut summatim dicatur id quod hominum improbitatem probe corrigere queat, complexus. Injustitia enim metropolis omnium malorum, non inimæ tantum conditionis hominibus, sed semel ut comprehendamus omnia, etiam gentibus, et civitatum populis et regibus, maximas producit calamitates. *Dionysius Sic. Eclog. l. 25.*

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tion on the *public Affections*, as the Instruments both of public and private Happiness; rejects the *Epicurean's* Pretences with Disdain: And fully conscious of the high Claims and Energy of Virtue, affirms that the *private Affections* are, by no means, a Foundation for *private Happiness*: That, on the contrary, we must universally promote the Welfare of others, if we would effectually secure our own: And that in every Case, “*Virtue is the Good and Vice the Ill of every one*.”

It is plain, no two Systems of Philosophy can be more discordant than these; yet each of them hath obtained a Number of Partizans in all Ages of the World. The Question relates to a *Fact*, and the Fact lies open to the *personal Examination* of all Mankind: Whence then can so strange an Opposition of Sentiments arise?

THIS seems to have arisen, not from a *false*, but a *partial* View and Examination of the Subject. The *Stoic* Party dwell altogether on the *social* or *public*, the *Epicurean* no less on the *private* or *selfish* Affections: On these respectively they declaim; so that, according to the one, Mankind are naturally

\* *Inquiry concerning Virtue, passim.*

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a Race of *Demi-Gods*; according to the other, a Crew of *Devils*. Both forgetting, what is unquestionably the Truth, that these *social* and *private* Affections are blended in an endless Variety of Degrees, and thus form an infinite Variety of Inclinations and of Characters. Many of the particular Facts, therefore, which these two Sects alledge, are true: But the *general* Consequence they draw from these *particular* Facts, is groundless and imaginary. Thus, 'tis true, that Mankind reap high Enjoyments from the Senses, Imagination, and Passions, without any Regard to the public Affections: But the Consequence which the *Epicurean* would draw from hence, that “ therefore the Public Affections are never, “ in any Case, a Source of private Happiness;” this is entirely void of Evidence: It supposeth Mankind to be *one uniform* Subject, while it is a Subject infinitely *various*; that every Individual has the same Feelings, Appetites, Fancies, and Affections, while, in Fact, they are mixed and combined in an endless Variety of Degrees. So, on the contrary, it must appear to every impartial Observer, that “ the Exercise of the “ public Affections is a Source of the highest  
“ Grati-

“ Gratification to many Individuals.” But the *Stoic’s* Conclusion, that “ therefore the “ uniform Exercise of the public Affecti- “ ons, in Preference to every other, is the “ only Source of Happiness to every Indi- “ vidual;” this is a Conclusion equally void of Evidence. For, like its opposite Extreme, it supposeth Mankind to be one uniform Subject, while, in Fact, it is a Subject indefinitely various. It supposes that every Individual has the same Feelings, Appetites, Fancies, and Affections, while, in Reality, they are mixed and combined in an endless Variety of Degrees.

LET us now assign the most probable Foundation, on which these *narrow* and *partial* Systems have been so commonly embraced. For, that two Theories so opposite, and so devoid of all rational Support, should have made their Way in the World, without some *permanent* Cause beyond the Instability of mere *Chance*, seems hardly credible.

IT should seem therefore, that “ while “ the Patronizers of these two Systems have “ attempted to give a general Picture of the “ human Species, they have all along taken “ the Copy from themselves: And thus “ their



“ their Philosophy, instead of being a true  
 “ History of Nature, is no more than the  
 “ History of their own *Imaginations* or *Af-*  
 “ *fections.*”—This Truth may receive suf-  
 ficient Confirmation from the Lives and  
 Conduct of all the old Philosophers, from  
 the *elegant* PLATO walking on his rich *Car-*  
*pets*, to the *unbred* CYNIC snarling in his  
*Tub*. As every Man’s *Constitution* led him,  
 so he adopted this or that Sect of *Philoso-*  
*phy*, and reasoned concerning *Fitness*, *De-*  
*cency*, and *Good*. Read the Characters of  
 CATO and CESAR, and you will clearly dis-  
 cover the true Foundation on which the  
 one became a rigid *Stoic*, the other, a gross  
*Epicurean*. The first, yet a *Boy*, discovered  
 such an *inflexible* Adherence to the Privi-  
 leges of his Country, that he refused his As-  
 sent to what he thought a Violation of  
 them, though threatened with immediate  
 Death<sup>f</sup>. The *latter*, yet unpractised in the  
 Subtilties of Philosophy, and under the sole  
 Dominion of natural Temper, discovered, at  
 his first Appearance in the World, such  
 Traits of *Art*, *Spirit*, and *Ambition*, that  
 SYLLA declared, he saw something more  
 formidable than MARIUS rising in him<sup>g</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> Plutarch *Cato Utic.*<sup>g</sup> Suetonii *Julius Cesar.*

To bring down the Observation to modern Times; 'tis evident, that the Patronizers of these two Systems inlist themselves according to the secret Suggestions of their several Passions. 'Tis well known that the Writer of the *Fable of the Bees* was neither a *Saint* in his Life, nor a *Hermit* in his Diet: He seems to have been Master of a very considerable *Sagacity*, much Knowledge of the World, as it appears in populous *Cities*, extremely sensible to all the grosser *bodily* Enjoyments; but for *Delicacy* of Sentiment, Imagination, or Passion, for an exquisite *Taste* either in *Arts* or *Morals*, he appears to have been *incapable* of it.— The noble Writer is known to have been of a Frame the very Reverse of this: His *Constitution* was neither more nor less opposite to Dr. MANDEVILLE'S, than his Philosophy. His sensual Appetites were weak; his Imagination all alive, noble, and capacious; his Passions were accordingly refined, and his public Affections (in *Fancy* at least) predominant. To these Instances, a moderate Share of Sagacity and Knowledge of the World may add others innumerable, in observing the Temper and Conduct of the Followers of these two Systems; who always

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ways take Party according to the Biass of their own Constitution. Among the *Epicureans* we ever find Men of high Health, florid Complexions, firm Nerves, and a Capacity for Pleasure: Of the *Stoic* Party are the delicate or sickly Frames, Men incapable of the grosser sensual Enjoyments, and who either *are*, or *think* themselves, *virtuous*. Now from these accumulated Proofs we may be convinced, that “ they who give “ us these *uniform* Pictures of a Subject so “ *various* as *Mankind*, cannot have drawn “ them from *Nature*: That, on the contrary, they have copied them from their “ own *Hearts* or *Imaginations*; and fondly “ erected *themselves* into a general Standard “ of the *human Species*.”

BUT although these Observations may afford sufficient Proof, that the *Stoic* and *Epicurean* Pictures of Mankind are equally partial; yet still it remains to be enquired how far, upon the whole, the human Kind in Reality leans towards the *one* or the *other*: That is, “ how far, and in what Degree, “ the uniform Practice of Virtue constitutes “ the Happiness of Individuals?” Now the only Method of determining this Question, will be to select some of the most striking

*Features* of the human Heart: By this Means we may approach towards a real *Likeness*, though, from that infinite Variety which subsists in Nature, the *Draught* must ever be inadequate and *defective*.

To begin with the lowest Temperature of the human Species; “there are great “Numbers of Mankind, in whom the “*Senses* are the chief Sources of Pleasure “and Pain.” To the Harmony of Sounds, the Beauty of Forms, the Decorum of Actions, they are utterly insensible. They are sagacious and learned in all the Grati- fications of Sense; but if you talk to them of the public Affections, of Generosity, Kindness, Friendship, Good-will, you talk in a Language they understand not. They seem, in a Manner, unconnected with the rest of their Kind; they view the Praises, Censures, Enjoyments, and Sufferings of others, with an Eye of perfect Indifference. To Men thus formed, how can Virtue gain Admittance? Do you appeal to their *Taste* of Beauty? They have none. To their acknowledged Perceptions of *Right* and *Wrong*? These they measure by their private *Interest*. To the Force of the public *Affections*? They never felt them. Thus



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every Avenue is foreclosed, by which *Virtue* should enter.

THE next remarkable Peculiarity is, “where not the Senses, but *Imagination* is “the predominant Source of Pleasure.” Here the Taste always runs into the elegant Refinements of polite Arts and Acquirements; of Painting, Music, Architecture, Poetry, Sculpture: Or, in Defect of this truer Taste, on the false Delicacies of Dress, Furniture, and Equipage. Yet Experience tells us, that this Character is widely different from the virtuous one: That all the Powers of Imagination may subsist in their full Energy, while the *public Affections* and *moral Sense* are weak or utterly inactive. Nor can there be any necessary Connexion between these different Feelings; because we see Numbers immersed in all the finer Pleasures of Imagination, who never once consider them as the Means of giving Pleasure to others, but merely a *selfish* Gratification. This the noble Writer seems to have been aware of; and, not without great Address, endeavours to convert the Fact into a Proof of his main Theory, though, in Reality, it affords the strongest Evidence against him. “The *Venustum*, the *Honestum*, the  
“*Decorum*”

“ *Decorum* of Things, will force its Way.  
“ They who refuse to give it Scope in the  
“ nobler Subjects of a rational and moral  
“ Kind, will find its Prevalency elsewhere,  
“ in an inferior Order of Things—as either  
“ in the Study of common *Arts*, or in the  
“ Care and Culture of mere mechanic  
“ *Beauties*.—The *Spectre* still will *haunt* us,  
“ in *some Shape or other*; and when driven  
“ from our cool Thoughts, and frighted  
“ from the Closet, will meet us even at  
“ Court, and fill our Heads with Dreams of  
“ Grandeur, Titles, Honours, and a false  
“ Magnificence and Beauty<sup>b</sup>.” All this is  
ingenious and plausible: And the very ele-  
gant Allusion, of “ the Spectre still haunt-  
“ ing us in some Shape or other,” seems at  
first View to imply, that even the most ob-  
stinate Endeavours to get rid of the Force  
of moral Beauty, are ineffectual and vain.  
But a nearer Examination will convince us,  
that the noble Writer applies here to *Elo-*  
*quence*, rather than *Argument*; and puts us  
off with a *Metaphor* instead of a *Reason*.  
For the Pleasures of Imagination, whether  
they run in the Channel of polite Arts, Fur-  
niture, Planting, Building or Equipage, are

<sup>b</sup> *Wit and Humour*, Part iv. § 2.

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indeed no *Spectres*, but independent *Realities* fairly existing in the Mind: They have no immediate or necessary Connexion with the Happiness of Mankind, which is often and *designedly* violated in order to gain the Possession of them. 'Tis true, the Pleasures of Imagination and Virtue are often *united* in the same Mind; but 'tis equally true, that they are often *separate*; that they who are most sensible to the *one*, are entire Strangers to the *other*; that one Man, to *purchase* a fine *Picture*, will *oppress* his Tenant; that another, to *relieve* his distressed Tenant, will *sell* his Statues or his Pictures. The Reason is evident: The one draws his chief Pleasure from *Imagination*; the other from *Affection* only. 'Tis clear therefore, that “where *Imagination* is naturally the pre-  
“dominant Source of Pleasure,” the Motives to Virtue must be very *partial* and *weak*, since the chief Happiness ariseth from a Source entirely distinct from the *benevolent Affections*.

ANOTHER, and very different Tempera-  
ture of the Heart of Man is, that “wherein  
“neither Sense nor Imagination, but the  
“PASSIONS are the chief Sources of Plea-  
“sure and Pain.” This often forms the

*best* or the *worst* of Characters. As it runs either, First, Into the Extreme of Selfishness, Jealousy, Pride, Hatred, Envy, and Revenge; or, 2<sup>dly</sup>, Into the amiable Affections of Hope, Faith, Candour, Pity, Generosity, and Good-will; or, 3<sup>dly</sup>, Into a various Mixture or Combination of these; which is undoubtedly the most common Temperature of human Kind.

Now to the first of these Tempers, how can we affirm with Truth, that there is a natural Motive to Virtue? On the contrary, it should seem, that, if there be any Motive, it must be to *Vice*. For 'tis plain, that from the Losses, Disappointments, and Miseries of Mankind, such vile Tempers draw their chief Felicity. The noble Writer indeed, in his Zeal for Virtue, considers these black Passions are *unnatural*, and brands them as a Source of *constant Misery*<sup>i</sup>. And sure it would be matter of Joy to all good Men, to find his Proofs convincing. But if indeed this be not a true Representation of the Case, I see not what Service can be done to the Interest of *Virtue*, by *disguising Truth*. 'Tis not the Part of a Philosopher to write *Panegyrics*, but to *investigate* the

<sup>i</sup> Enquiry.



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real State of human Nature ; and the only Way of doing this to any good Purpose, is to do it *impartially* : For with regard to human Nature, as well as Individuals, “ Flattery is a Crime no less than Slander.”

WHEN therefore the noble Writer calls these Affections *unnatural*, he doth not sufficiently explain himself. If indeed by their being unnatural, he means that “ they are “ such in their Degrees or Objects as to “ violate the public Happiness, which is the “ main Intention of Nature ;” in this Sense, ’tis acknowledged they are *unnatural*. But this Interpretation is foreign to the Question ; because it affects not the *Individual*. But if, by their being *unnatural*, he would imply, that they are “ a Source of constant “ Misery to the Agent ;” this seems a Proposition not easy to be determined in the Affirmative.

FOR the main Proof which he brings in Support of his Assertion, is, “ that the “ Men of *gentlest Dispositions*, and *best of “ Tempers*, have at some time or other been “ sufficiently acquainted with those Dis- “ turbances, which, at ill Hours, even small “ Occasions are apt to raise. From these “ slender Experiences of Harshness and ill “ Humour,

“ Humour, they fully know and will confess the ill Moments which are passed, when the Temper is ever so little galled and fretted. How must it fare therefore with those, who hardly know any better Hours in Life; and who, for the greatest Part of it, are agitated by a thorow *active Spleen*, a close and settled Malignity and Rancour<sup>k</sup>?”

Now, this Instance is by no means sufficient to support the Affirmation. For 'tis plain, that in the Case of the “ Men of gentlest Dispositions, and best of Tempers, occasionally agitated by ill Humour;” there must be a strong Opposition and Discordance, a violent Conflict between the habitual Affections of Benevolence, and these accidental Eruptions of Spleen and Rancour which rise to obstruct their Course. A Warfare of this Kind must indeed be a State of complete Misery, when all is Uproar within, and the distracted Heart set at Variance with itself. But the Case is widely different, where “ a thorow active Spleen prevails, a close and *settled* Malignity and Rancour.” For in this Temper, there is no parallel Opposition of contending Pas-

<sup>k</sup> *Enquiry*, Book ii. Part 2, § 3.

sions: Nor therefore any similar Foundation for inward Disquiet and intense Misery. So much the noble Writer himself is obliged to own elsewhere. "Is there that sordid Creature on Earth, who does not prize his own Enjoyment?—Is not *Malice* and *Cruelty* of the *highest Relish* with some Natures<sup>1</sup>?" Again, and still more fully to the Purpose: "Had we Sense, we should consider, 'tis in Reality the *thorow* Profligate, the very *complete unnatural Villain* alone, who can any way *bid* for *Happiness* with the honest Man. True Interest is wholly on the one Side or the other. All between is Inconsistency, Irresolution, Remorse, Vexation, and an *Ague-fit* <sup>m</sup>." Neither is this Acknowledgment peculiar to himself: "To be *consistent* either in *Virtue* or in *Vice*," was the farthest that some of the most penetrating among the Ancients could carry the Point of *Morals*<sup>n</sup>. Thus where the *selfish* or *malevolent* Affections happen to prevail, there can be no internal *Motive* to *Virtue*.

ON the contrary, where the amiable Affections of Hope, Candour, Generosity, and

<sup>1</sup> *Moralists*, Part i.      <sup>m</sup> *Wit and Hum.* Part iv. § 1.  
<sup>n</sup> See Arrian, *Epist.* lib. iii. c. 15.

Benevolence predominate, in this best and happiest of Tempers, Virtue hath indeed all the Force and Energy, which the noble Writer attributes to her Charms. For where the Calls of Sense are weak, the Imagination active and refined, the public Affections predominant; there the moral Sense must naturally reign with uncontrouled Authority; must produce all that Self-Satisfaction, that Consciousness of merited Kindness and Esteem, in which, his Lordship affirms, the very Essence of our Motives to Virtue doth consist. This shall with Pleasure be acknowledged, nay asserted, as “the happiest of all Temperaments,” whenever it can be *found* or *acquired*. To a Mind thus formed, Virtue doth indeed bring an *immediate* and *ample Reward* of perfect Peace and sincere Happiness in all the common Situations of Life. It may therefore be with Truth affirmed, that a Temper thus framed must indeed be naturally and internally *moved* to the uniform Practice of Virtue.

THERE are, besides these, an endless Variety of Characters formed from the various Combinations of these essential *Ingredients*; which are not designed as a full  
*Expression*



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*Expression* of all the Tempers of Mankind; They are the Materials only, out of which these Characters are formed. They are no more than the several Species of *simple Colours* laid, as it were, upon the *Pallet*; which, variously *combined* and associated by the Hand of an experienced Master, would indeed call forth every striking *Resemblance*, every changeful Feature of the *Heart* of *Man*.

Now, among all this infinite Variety of Tempers which is found in Nature, we see there cannot be any uniform Motive to Virtue, save only “where the Senses are weak, “the Imagination refined, and the public “Affections strongly predominant.” For in every other Character, where either the Senses, gross Imagination, or selfish Passions prevail, a natural Opposition or Discordance must arise, and destroy the uniform Motive to Virtue, by throwing the Happiness of the Agent into a different Channel. How seldom this sublime Temper is to be found, is hard to say; But this may be affirmed with Truth, that every Man is not *really* possessed of it in the Conduct of Life, who *enjoys* it in *Imagination*, or *admires* it in his *Closet*, as it lies in the *Enquiry concerning*  
*Virtue.*

*Virtue.* A Character of this supreme Excellence must needs be *approved* by most : And the *Heart* of Man being an unexhausted Fountain of *Self-Deceit*, what it *approves*, is forward to think itself possessed of. Thus a lively *Imagination* and unperceived *Self-Love*, fetter the Heart in certain *ideal* Bonds of their own creating : Till at length some turbulent and furious Passion arising in its Strength breaks these fantastic Shackles which Fancy had imposed, and leaps to its Prey like a *Tiger* chained by *Cobwebs*.

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SECTION VIII.

FROM these different Views of human Nature, let us now bring this Argument to a Conclusion.

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THE noble Writer's Scheme of 'Morals therefore, being grounded on a Supposition, which runs through the whole Course of his Argument, that "all Mankind are naturally capable of attaining a *Taste* or *Relish* " for *Virtue*, sufficient for every Purpose " of social Life," seems essentially defective. For, from the Enquiry already made into the real and various Constitution of Man, it appears, that a great Part of the Species

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Species are naturally incapable of this *fancied* Excellence. That the various Mixture and Predominancy of *Sense, Imagination, and Passion*, give a different Cast and Complexion of Mind to every Individual: That the *Feeling* or *Prospect* of Happiness can only arise from this Combination: That consequently, where the benevolent Affections and moral Sense are weak, the selfish Passions and Perceptions headstrong, there can be no internal Motive to the *consistent* Practice of Virtue,

THE most plausible Pretence I could ever meet with, amidst all the Pomp of Declamation thrown out in Support of this *All-sufficiency* of a *Taste* in Morals, is this: “ That although the Force and Energy of  
“ this Taste for Virtue appears not in every  
“ Individual, yet the Power lies dormant in  
“ every human Breast; and needs only be  
“ called forth by a *voluntary Self-discipline*,  
“ in order to be brought to its just Per-  
“ fection. That the Improvement in our  
“ Taste in Morals is parallel to the Progress  
“ of the Mind in every other Art and Ex-  
“ cellence, in *Painting, Music, Architecture,*  
“ *Poetry*: In which, a true Taste, how-  
“ ever natural to Man, is not born with  
“ him,

“ him, but formed and brought forth to  
“ Action by a proper *Study* and *Applica-*  
“ *tion.*”

THE noble Writer hath innumerable Passages of this Kind: So many indeed, that it were Labour lost to transcribe them°. And one of his Followers hath affirmed, in still more emphatical Expressions, if possible, than his Master, “ that the Height of “ *Virtuosity* is VIRTUE P.”

Now this State of the Case, though at first View it carries some Degree of Plausibility, yet, on a closer Examination, destroys the whole System. For if, as it certainly is, the *Capacity* for a Taste in *Morals*, be similar to a *Capacity* for a Taste in *Arts*; 'tis clear, that the most assiduous Culture or Self-Discipline can never make it even *general*, much less *universal*. One Man, we see, hath a Capacity or Genius for Painting, another for Music, a third for Architecture, a fourth for Poetry. Torture each of them as you please, you cannot infuse a Taste for any, but his own *congenial* Art. If you attempt to make the Poet an Architect, or the Painter a Musician, you may make a pre-

° *Charact. passim.*

P *Letters of Hydaspes to Philemon,* Let. vi.



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tending *Pedant*, never an accomplished *Master*. 'Tis the same in Morals: Where the benevolent Affections are naturally strong, *there is a Capacity for a high Taste in Virtue*: Where these are *weak or wanting*, there is in the same Proportion *little or no Capacity for a Taste in Virtue*. To harangue, therefore, on the superior Happiness attending the Exercise of the public Affections, is quite foreign to the Purpose. This superior Happiness is allowed, where the public Affections can be *found, or made*, predominant. But how can any Consequence be drawn from hence, so as to influence those who never felt the Impulse of public Affection? Are not the Pleasures of Poetry, Painting, Music, sublime, pure, and lasting, to those who *taste* them? Doth it therefore follow, that all Mankind, or any of them, can be harangued into a *Taste and Love* of these elegant Arts, while the very Capacity of receiving Pleasure from them is *wanting*? Thus in Morals, where a similar Incapacity takes place through the natural Want of a lively Benevolence, no Progress can ever be made in the *Taste or Relish* for virtuous Enjoyment. Though therefore you should prove, as indeed one of Lord SHAFTES-

BURY'S Followers hath done, "that Virtue  
 " is accommodate to all Places and Times,  
 " is *durable, self-derived, and indeprivable*,"  
 whence he concludes, it has the best Title  
 to the Character of the sovereign Good ;  
 yet all the while, the main Point in Debate  
 is taken for granted, that is, " whether the  
 " Possession of it be any *Good* at all." Now  
 to those who receive no Increase of *internal*  
 Happiness from it, it cannot be a *Good* :  
 And where there is a natural *Defect* of be-  
 nevolent Affection, it can give no *internal*  
 Happiness : Consequently, though it have  
 all the other Characters of the *Summum*  
*Bonum*, though it be *durable, self-derived,*  
 and *indeprivable*, it can never, by such, be  
 regarded as the *sovereign Good*.

'TIS pleasant enough to observe the Ar-  
 gumentation of the Writer last mentioned.  
 After describing " the fairest and most amia-  
 " ble of Objects, the true and perfect Man,  
 " that Ornament of Humanity, that god-  
 " like Being, without Regard either to Plea-  
 " sure or Pain, uninfluenced either by Pro-  
 " sperity or Adversity, superior to the World,  
 " and its best and worst Events" — He then  
 raiseth an Objection — " Does not this

' Three Treat. by J. H. Treat. 3d. On Happiness.

" System

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“ System border a little upon the Chimerical?”—On my Word, a shrewd Question, and well worth a good Answer; and thus he clears it up.—“ It seems to require, “ said I, a Perfection to which no Individual ever arrived. That very Transcendence, said he, is an Argument on its Behalf. “ Were it of a Rank inferior, it would not “ be that Perfection which we seek. Would “ you have it, said I, beyond Nature? If you “ mean, replied he, beyond any particular “ or individual Nature, most undoubtedly “ I would.” ’Tis not therefore to be wondered at, that this ingenious Gentleman, wrapped up in *Visions* of ideal Perfection, should express “ his Contempt of those superficial Censurers, who profess to refute “ what they want even Capacities to comprehend.” Doubtless he means those *groveling* Observers, who draw their Ideas of Mankind “ from particular or individual “ Natures,” and have not yet risen to “ the “ *beatific Vision* of the perfect Man.” Indeed, the Gentleman frankly owns, “ that “ Practice too often *creeps*, where Theory

Three Treat. by J. H. Treat. 3d. *On Happiness*, p. 215.      Ibid. p. 108.      Ibid.

“ can soar.” And this I take to be a true Account of the Matter.

THUS, as, according to these Moralists, the *Relish* or *Taste* for Virtue is similar to a Taste for Arts; so what is said of the Poet, the Painter, the Musician, may in this Regard with equal Truth be said of the Man of Virtue—*Nascitur, non fit*. Hence it is evident, that the noble Writer’s System, which supposeth all Men capable of this exalted Taste, is chimerical and groundless.

BUT even supposing all Men capable of this high Taste in Morals, there would arise an unanswerable Objection against the Efficacy of this refined Theory. Though it were allowed, that all Mankind have the same delicate Perception of *moral*, as some few have of *natural*, Beauty, yet the Parallel would by no Means hold, that “ as the *Virtuoso* always pursues his Taste in Arts “ *consistently*, so the Man of *Virtue* must be “ equally *consistent* in *Action* and *Behaviour*.” For the *Virtuoso* being only engaged in mere *Speculation*, hath no opposite Affections to counteract his Taste: He meets with no Obstructions in his Admira-

\* Three Treat. by J. H. Treat. 3d. On Happiness, p. 108.



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tion of Beauty : His Enthusiasm takes its unbounded Flight, not retarded by any Impediments of a discordant Nature. But the Man of *Virtue* hath a different and more difficult Task to perform : He hath often a numerous Train of Passions, and these perhaps the most violent, to oppose: He must labour through the surrounding Demands and Allurements of selfish Appetite: Must subdue the Sollicitations of every the most natural Affection, when it opposes the Dictates of a pure Benevolence. Hence even supposing the most refined Taste of Virtue common to all, it must ever be retarded in its Progress, often baffled and overthrown amidst the *Struggle* of contending *Passions*.

THIS seems to be a full and sufficient Reply to all that can be urged in Support of this fantastic System from a View of *human Nature*. But as the noble Writer hath attempted to confirm his Theory by some collateral Arguments of another Kind, it may be proper here to consider their real Weight.

HE urges, therefore, the Probability at least, if not the certain Truth, of his Hypothesis from hence, “ That it would be an  
“ Imputation on the Wisdom of the Deity  
“ to

“ to suppose that he had formed Man so  
“ imperfect, that the true Happiness of the  
“ individual should not always coincide  
“ with that of the whole Kind<sup>w</sup>.” And  
beyond Question, the Assertion is true: But  
the Consequence he draws from it, “ that  
“ therefore human Happiness must always  
“ consist in the immediate Feeling of virtu-  
“ ous Enjoyment,” is utterly groundless.  
This Inference seems to have been drawn  
from a View of the *Brute* Creation; in  
which we find, *Instincts* or *immediate Feel-  
ings* are the only Motives to Action; and in  
which we find too, that these immediate  
Propensities are *sufficient* for all the Pur-  
poses of their Being. In this Constitution  
of Things the Creator’s Wisdom is emi-  
nently displayed; because, through a Defect  
of *Reason* or *Reflexion*, no other Kind of  
Principle could possibly have taken place.  
But the Conclusion drawn from thence,  
“ that Man must have a similar Strength of  
“ Instinct implanted in him, in order to di-  
“ rect him to his supreme Happiness,”  
this is without Foundation: Because the  
Deity hath given him not only present Per-  
ceptions, but *Reason*, *Reflexion*, and a *Fore-*

<sup>w</sup> Enquiry.

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*sight* of future Good and Evil, together with a sufficient Power to obtain the one, and avoid the other. As therefore Man hath sufficient Notices of the *moral Government* of GOD, which will at length produce a perfect Coincidence between the *virtuous* Conduct and the Happiness of every Individual, it implies no essential Defect of Wisdom in the Creator, to suppose that he hath not given this *universal* and *unerring* Biass towards Virtue to the whole human Species. Man is enabled to pursue and obtain his proper Happiness by *Reason*; Brutes by *Instinct*.

AGAIN, the noble Writer often attempts to strengthen his Argument, by “representing the external Good which naturally flows from Virtue, and the external Evils which naturally attend on Vice<sup>x</sup>.” But sure this is rather deserting than confirming his *particular* Theory; which is, to prove that Happiness is *essential* to *Virtue*, and *inseparable* from it: “That Misery is *essential* to *Vice*, and inseparable from it.”—Now, in bringing his Proofs from Happiness or Misery of the *external* Kind, he clearly deserts his original Intention: Because these *Externals* are not *immediate*, but

<sup>x</sup> Enquiry, B. ii. p. i. § 3.

*consequential*; not certain, but contingent: They are precisely of the Nature of *Reward* and *Punishment*; and therefore can have no Part in the Question now before us; which relates solely to “that Happiness or Misery arising from the inward State of the *Mind*, *Affections*, and *moral Sense*, on the Commission of Vice, or the Practice of *Virtue*.” And this hath been already considered at large.

HOWEVER, that nothing may be omitted which can even remotely affect the Truth; we may observe, in passing, that after all the laboured and *well-meant* Declamation on this Subject, 'tis much easier to prove, “that *Vice* is the Parent of *external* Misery, than that *Virtue* is the Parent of *external* Happiness.” 'Tis plain, that no Man can be vicious in any considerable *Degree*, but he must suffer either in his *Health*, his *Fame*, or *Fortune*. Now the Generality of Moralists, after proving or illustrating this, have taken it for granted, as a certain Consequence, that the external Goods of Life are, by the Law of Contraries, in a similar Manner annexed to the Practice of *Virtue*. But in Reality the Proof can reach no further than to shew the happy Consequences of *Innocence*, which



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is a very different Thing from *Virtue*; for *Innocence* is only the *abstaining* from *Evil*; *Virtue*, the actual Production of *Good*. Now 'tis evident indeed, that by *abstaining* from *Evil*, (that is, by *Innocence*) we *must* stand clear of the Miseries to which we expose ourselves by the *Commission* of it: And this is as far as the Argument will go. But if we rigorously examine the external Consequences of an *active* *Virtue*, in such a World as this; we shall find, it must be often maintained at the Expence both of *Health*, *Ease*, and *Fortune*; often the Loss of Friends, and Increase of Enemies; not to mention the unwearied Diligence of *Envy*, which is ever watchful and prepared to blast distinguished Merit. In the mean time, the *innocent* Man sits unmolested and tranquil; loves *Virtue*, and *praiseth* it; avoids the *Miseries* of *Vice*, and the *Fatigue* of *active* *Virtue*; offends no Man, and therefore is beloved by all; and for the rest, makes it up by fair *Words* and civil Department.

“ Thus *Innocence*, and not *Virtue*; *Ab-*  
 “ *stinence* from *Evil*, not the *Production* of  
 “ *Good*, is the furthest Point to which  
 “ Mankind in general can be carried, from  
 “ a Re-

“ a Regard to the *external* Consequences of  
“ Action.”

BUT whenever Appearances grow too strong against the noble Writer's System, he takes Refuge in an—*apage Vulgus!*—As he had before allowed, “ that the Vulgar may swallow any fordid Jest or Buffoonry,” so here he frequently suggests, that among the same Ranks, “ any kind of fordid Pleasure will go down. But as it must be a finer Kind of Wit that takes with the Men of Breeding, so in Morals the *Relish* or *Taste* for Virtue, is what naturally prevails in the higher Stages of Life: That the *liberal* and *polished* Part of Mankind are disposed to treat every other Principle of Actions as groundless and *imaginary* : But that among these, the *Taste* in Morals, if properly cultivated, must needs be sufficient for all the Purposes of Virtue.”

IN reply to this, which is perhaps the weakest Pretence of all that the noble Writer hath alledged, we need only observe, that those who are born to *Honours*, *Power*, and *Fortune*, come into the World with the

† See Misc. 3d c. 2. and many other detached Passages.

same *various* Mixture and *Predominancy* of *Sense, Imaginations, and Affections*, with the *lowest* Ranks of Mankind. So that if they really enjoy better Opportunities of being completely virtuous, these must arise not from their internal *Constitution*, but their external *Situation* of Life. Let us examine how far this may give a Bias either towards Vice or Virtue.

Now 'tis plain that, with regard to the *Senses* or bodily *Appetites*, the Possession of Power and Fortune must be rather hurtful than favourable to Virtue. Wealth gives Opportunity of *Indulgence*, and Indulgence naturally *inflames*. Hence the Habits of *sensual* Inclination must in general be stronger in the *Lord* than the *Peasant*: Therefore, as nothing tends so much to imbrute the Man, and sink every nobler Affection of the Mind, as a servile Attendance on sensual Pleasure; so in this Regard, the Possession of Power and Fortune is rather *dangerous* than favourable to Virtue.

THE same may be affirmed in respect to the *Passions* or *Affections*. Can any thing tend so much to render any Passion ungovernable, as to know that we *need not* govern it? That our Power, Riches, and Authority,

thority, raise us *above Controul*? That we can hate, oppress, revenge, with *Impunity*? Are not the *Great*, of all others, most obnoxious to *Flattery*? Does not this tend to produce and nourish an *overweening* Opinion of *themselves*, an unjust *Contempt* of *others*? and is not *true Virtue* more likely to be *lost* than improved, amidst all these surrounding Temptations?

THE *Imagination* indeed is often refined, and *Reason* improved, in the higher Ranks of Life, beyond the Reach of the *mere Vulgar*. But they are little acquainted with human Nature, who think that *Reason* and *Imagination*, among the Bulk of Mankind, are any thing more than the *Ministers* of the *ruling Appetites* and *Passions*: Especially where the Appetites and Passions are inflamed by the *early* and *habitual* Possession of Honours, Power, and Riches.

BUT still it will be urged, that the *Great* are under the Dominion of a powerful Principle, which is almost unknown among the *Vulgar*:—The Principle of HONOUR— which is a perfect *Balance* against all these surrounding Difficulties, and a full *Security* to *Virtue*.

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WITH regard to this boasted Principle, a very material Distinction must be made. By *Honour*, is sometimes meant “ an Affection of Mind determining the Agent to the Practice of what is right, without any Dependance on other Men’s Opinions.” Now this is but the *moral Sense*, under a new Appellation: It ariseth too, not from any particular *Situation* of Life, but from the natural *Constitution* of the Mind. Accordingly, it is not confined to any one Rank of Men, but is seen promiscuously among the *Great* and *Vulgar*. ’Tis therefore entirely beyond the present Question, which only relates to such Circumstances are as peculiar to *high Life*.

THE other, and more common Acceptation of the Word *Honour*, and in which alone it belongs peculiarly to the *Great*, is “ an Affection of the Mind determining the Agent to such a Conduct, as may gain him the *Applause* or *Esteem* of those whose good Opinion he is fond of.” Now this Love of *Fame*, and Fear of *Disgrace*, though as a *secondary* Motive to Action, it be often of the highest Consequence in Life; though it often *counterfeits*, sometimes even *rivals*, Benevolence itself; yet as  
a prin-

a *principal* Motive, there cannot be a more *precarious* Foundation of Virtue. For the Effects of this Principle will always depend on the Opinions of others: It will always take its particular Complexion from *these*, and must always *vary* with them. Thus 'tis a Matter of mere *Accident*, whether its Consequences be good or bad, wholesome or pernicious. If the applauded Maxims be founded in Benevolence, the Principle will so far lead to Virtue: If they be founded in Pride, Folly, or Contempt, the Principle will lead to Vice. And, without any designed Satire on the *Great*, it must be owned, the latter of these hath ever been the predominant Character of *Honour*. It were false indeed to affirm, that the Principle hath no Mixture of benevolent Intention; yet 'tis equally clear, that its chief Design is not so much to secure the Happiness of all, as to maintain the Superiority of a few: And hence this Principle hath ever led its Votaries to abhor the Commission, not so much of what is unjust, as of what is contemptible. Thus it is clear, that the Principle of *Honour*, as distinguished from *benevolent* Affection and the *moral Sense*, can ever be a

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sufficient Foundation for the uniform Practice of Virtue.

THESE are the main Arguments by which the noble Writer hath attempted to support this imagined *All-sufficiency* of the *Relish* or *Taste* in *Morals*. Had human Nature been indeed that uniform and noble Thing, which he seems to have thought it, he had surely been right in fixing the *Motives* to *Virtue*, on so generous and amiable a Principle. But as on Examination it appears, that he hath all along supposed his human Nature to be *what it is not*, his System is visionary and groundless; and his applauded Theory only fit to find a Place with the boasted Power of the great old *Geometer*, when he said—*δος παρ εω, και τλω γλω κινησω*<sup>2</sup>.

MOST full indeed and clear to this Purpose are the Words of the noble Writer himself: Who, in his *miscellaneous* Capacity, and in a *merry* Mood, seems to have spoken more of Truth, than, I believe, he would care to stand to. — “ Such has been  
“ of late our dry Task. No wonder if it  
“ carries, indeed, a *meagre* and *raw* Ap-  
“ pearance, it may be looked on in Philo-

<sup>2</sup> Give me but a *Place* to set my Foot on, and I will move the whole Earth,

“ fophy, as worfe than a mere *Egyptian*  
 “ Imposition. For to make Brick without  
 “ Straw or Stubble, is perhaps an eafier  
 “ Labour, than to prove Morals without a  
 “ World, and eftablifh a Conduct of Life,  
 “ without the Suppofition of any Thing  
 “ living or extant befides our *immediate*  
 “ *Fancy*, or World of *Imagination*<sup>a</sup>.”

THESE Sallies might poffibly have feem-  
 ed difficult to account for, had not the no-  
 ble Writer himfelf faved us the Labour of  
 this Task. For he elfewhere tell us, that  
 “ all found *Love* and *Admiration* is ENTHU-  
 “ SIASM: The Transports of Poets, Ora-  
 “ tors, Muficians, Virtuofi; the Spirit of  
 “ Travellers and Adventurers; Gallantry,  
 “ War, Heroifm; all, all Enthusiafm! ’Tis  
 “ enough: I am content to be this new EN-  
 “ THUSIAST<sup>b</sup>.” — And thus in another  
 Place he describes the Effects of this high  
 Paflion; That “ *Enthusiafm* is wonderfully  
 “ powerful and extenfive:—For when the  
 “ Mind is *taken up in Vifion*,—its Horror,  
 “ Delight, Confufion, Fear, *Admiration*, or  
 “ *whatever Paflion* belongs to it, or is upper-  
 “ moft on this Occafion, will have something  
 “ *vaf*t, *immane*, and, as Painters fay, BEYOND

<sup>a</sup> *Misc.* iv. c. 2.

<sup>b</sup> *Moralifts*, *sub. fin.*



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“ LIFE. And this is what gave Occasion  
“ to the Name of *Fanaticism*, as it was used  
“ by the Ancients in its original Sense, for  
“ *an APPARITION transporting the MIND*.”

### SECTION IX.

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HAVING sufficiently evinced the *slimzy*, though curious, Contexture of these *Cobweb* Speculations *spun* in the *Closet*, let us now venture abroad into the World; let us proceed to something applicable to Life and Manners; and consider what are the real Motives, by which Mankind may be sway'd to the *uniform* Practice of *Virtue*.

AND first, in Minds of a *gentle* and *generous* Disposition, where the sensual Appetites are weak, the Imagination refined, and the benevolent Affections naturally predominant; these very Affections, and the *moral Sense* arising from them, will in all the common Occurrences of Life secure the Practice of Virtue. To these fine Tempers thus happily formed, the inward Satisfaction of a virtuous Conduct exceeds that of every outward Acquisition; and affords to its Possessor a more true and lasting Happiness,

\* *Letter on Enthusiasm.*

than Wealth, or Fame, or Power can bestow.

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SECONDLY, Where the same Degrees of public Affection subsist, but stand opposed by sensual or selfish Passions of equal Violence, even here the Agent may rise to very high Degrees of Virtue, but not without the Aids of *Discipline* and *Culture*. Yet 'tis observable, that the Virtues of such a Temper are rather *conspicuous* than *consistent*: Without some strengthening Assistance, the Progress of the Mind towards Perfection is often broke by the Sallies of disordered Passion.

THERE is yet another Character, essentially different from these, but seldom distinguished, because generally taken for the *first*. Many esteem themselves, and are esteemed by others, as having arrived at the most *consummate Virtue*, whose Conduct never merits a higher Name than that of being *innocent*. This is generally the Case of those who love *Retreat* and *Contemplation*, of those whose Passions are naturally *weak*, or carefully *guarded* by what the World calls *Prudence*. Now, as in the last mentioned Character, a *Curb* from *Irregularity* was requisite, so here a *Spur* to *Action* is equally necessary

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necessary for the Support and Security of Virtue.

As we descend through more common and inferior Characters, the internal Motives to virtuous Actions grow less and less effectual. *Weak* or *no* Benevolence, a moral Sense proportionably *dull*, strong sensual *Appetites*, a clamorous Train of *selfish* Affections, these mixed and varied in endless Combinations, form the real Character of the *Bulk* of Mankind: Not only in *Cottages*, but in *Cities*, *Churches*, *Camps*, and *Courts*. So that some stronger Ties, some Motives more efficacious are necessary, not only for the Perfection of *Virtue*, but the Welfare, nay the very Being of *Society*.

'Tis not denied, nay 'tis meant and insisted on, that, among all these various Characters and Tempers, the Culture of the benevolent Affections ought to be assiduously regarded. For though we have seen that the Design of introducing an universal high *Relish* or *Taste* for Virtue be *visionary* and *vain*, yet still a lower, or a lower Degree may *possibly* be instilled. We have only attempted to prove, that the Capacity for this high Taste in Morals is not universally or essentially interwoven with the human Frame,

Frame, but dispensed in various Degrees, in the same Manner as the Capacity for a Taste in *inferior Beauties*, in *Architecture, Painting, Poetry, and Music*.

To remedy this *Defect* of *unerring Instinct* in Man, by which he becomes a Creature so much less consistent than the Brute Kinds, Providence hath afforded him not only a Sense of *present*, but a Foresight of *future Good and Evil*.

HENCE the Force of human Laws; which, being established by common Consent, for the Good of all, endeavour, so far as their Power can reach, by the Infliction of Punishment on Offenders, to establish the general Happiness of Society, by making the *acknowledged Interest* of every *Individual* to coincide and unite with the *public Welfare*.

BUT as human Laws cannot reach the *Heart* of Man; as they can only inflict *Punishment* on Offenders, but cannot bestow *Rewards* on the Obedient; as there are many Duties of *imperfect* Obligation which they cannot recognize; as *Force* will sometimes *defy*, and *Cunning* often *elude* their Power; so without some further Aids, some Motives to Action more *universally* interest-



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ing, Virtue must still be left betrayed and deserted.

Now as it is clear from the Course of these Observations, that nothing can work this great Effect, but what can produce “an entire and universal Coincidence between private and public Happiness;” so is it equally evident, that nothing can effectually convince Mankind, that their own Happiness universally depends on *procuring*, or at least *not violating*, the Happiness of others, save only “the lively and active Belief of an All-seeing and All-powerful God, who will hereafter make them happy or miserable, according as they designedly promote or violate the Happiness of their Fellow-Creatures.” And this is the *Essence* of RELIGION.

THIS, at first View, should seem a Motive or *Principle* of Action, sufficient for all the Purposes of Happiness and Virtue. Indeed the Bulk of Mankind seem agreed in this Truth. Yet refining Tempers, who love to quit the common Tracks of Opinion, have been bold enough to call even this in Question. Among these, the noble Writer hath been one of the most diligent :

It

It will therefore be necessary to consider the Weight of his Objections.

To prevent Misinterpretation, it may be proper to observe, that Lord SHAFTESBURY sometimes talks in earnest of the *Nobleness* and *Dignity* of *Religion*. But when he explains himself, it appears, he confines his Idea of it to that Part which consists solely in Gratitude to, and Adoration of, the Supreme Being, without any Prospect of future Happiness or Misery. Now, though indeed this be the noblest Part, yet it is beyond the Reach of all, save only those who are capable of the most *exalted* Degrees of Virtue. His Theory of *Religion* therefore is precisely of a Piece, with his Theory of the *moral Sense*; not calculated for Use, but Admiration; and only existing in the Place where they had their Birth; that is, as the noble Writer well expresseth it, in *a Mind taken up in Vision*.

HE sometimes talks, or seems to talk, in earnest too, on the *Usefulness* of *Religion*, in the common Acceptation of the Word. With regard to which 'tis only necessary to observe, that whatever he hath said on this Subject I readily assent to: But this is no Reason why it may not be necessary to ob-

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viate every thing he hath thrown out to the contrary to prejudice common Readers against Religion, through the Vanity of being thought *Original*. To *invent* what is *just* or *useful*, is the Character of *Genius*: 'Tis a far *different* Thing, to broach *Absurdities*.

FIRST, therefore, he often asserts, that  
 “ the Hope of future Reward and Fear of  
 “ future Punishment is utterly unworthy  
 “ of the free Spirit of a Man, and only fit  
 “ for those who are destitute of the very  
 “ first Principles of common Honesty: He  
 “ calls it *miserable, vile, mercenary*: And  
 “ compares those who allow it any Weight,  
 “ to *Monkies* under the Discipline of the  
 “ Whip<sup>d</sup>.”

IN ANSWER to these general Cavils (probably aimed chiefly at *Revelation*) which are only difficult to confute, as they are vague and fugitive, let it be observed, first, that whatever can be objected against *religious* Fear, holds good against the Fear of *human* Laws. They both threaten the Delinquent with the Infliction of Punishment, nor is the Fear of the one more unworthy, than of the other. Yet the noble Writer

<sup>d</sup> Wit and Humour—Enquiry—&c.

himself often speaks with the highest Respect of *Legislators*, of the Founders of *Society* and *Empire*, who, by the Establishment of wise and wholesome Laws, drew Mankind from their State of natural Barbarity, to that of cultivated Life and social Happiness: Unless indeed he supposes that ORPHEUS and the rest of them did their Business *literally* by *Taste* and a *Fiddle*. If therefore the just Fear of *human* Power might be enforced without insulting or violating the *Generosity* of our Nature, whence comes it, that a just Fear of the *Creator* should so miserably degrade the Species? The religious Principle holds forth the same Motive to Action, and only differs from the other, as the Evil it threatens is infinitely greater and more lasting.

FURTHER: If we consider the religious Principle in its true Light, there is nothing in it either *mean*, *slavish*, or *unworthy*. To be in a *Fright* indeed, to live under the Suggestions of *perpetual Terror* (in which, the noble Writer would persuade us, the religious Principle consists) is far from an amiable Condition. But this belongs only to the *Superstitious* or the *Guilty*. The first of these are *falsely* religious; and to the last I



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imagine the noble Writer's most zealous Admirers will acknowledge, it *ought* to belong. But to the rest of Mankind, the *religious* Principle or *Fear* of God is of a quite different Nature. It only implies a lively and habitual Belief, that we shall be hereafter miserable, if we disobey his Laws. Thus every wise Man, nay, every Man of common Understanding, hath a *like Fear* of every *possible Evil*; of the destructive Power of natural Agents, of *Fire, Water, Serpents, Poison*: Yet none of these Fears, more than the religious one, imply a State of *perpetual* Misery and Apprehension: None of them are inconsistent with the most generous Temper of Mind, or truest Courage. None of them imply more than a *rational Sense* of these several Kinds of Evil; and from that Sense, a *Determination to avoid them*. Thus the noble Writer himself, when it answers a different Purpose, acknowledges, that “a Man of Courage may be *cautious* without “real *Fear*.” Now the word *Caution*, in its very Nature, implies a Sense of a Possibility of Evil, and from that Sense a Determination to avoid it: Which is the very

*Enquiry*, B. ii. Part ii. § 3.

Essence of the religious Principle or the Fear of God.

AND as to the other Branch of religious Principle, “ the Hope and Prospect of “ higher Degrees of future Happiness and “ Perfection :”—What is there of *mean, slavish, or unworthy* in it? Are all Mankind to be blown up into the *Mock-majesty* of the *kingly* STOIC, seated on the Throne of *Arrogance*, and *lording* it in an *empty* Region of CHIMÆRA’S? Is not the Prospect of Happiness the great universal Hinge of human Action? Do not all the Powers of the Soul centre in this one Point? Doth not the noble Writer himself elsewhere acknowledge this<sup>f</sup>; and that our Obligations to Virtue itself can only arise from this one Principle, that gives us real Happiness? Why then should the Hope of a happy Immortality be branded as *base* and *slavish*, while the Consciousness or Prospect of a happy Life on Earth is regarded as a just and honourable Motive?

THE noble Writer indeed confesseth, that “ if, by the Hope of Reward, be understood “ the Love and Desire (he ought to have “ said, the *Hope*) of *virtuous Enjoyment*, it

<sup>f</sup> See above, Sect. VI. of this *Essay*.

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“ is not derogatory to Virtue.” But that in every other Sense, the indulged Hope of Reward is not only mean and mercenary, but even *hurtful* to Virtue and common *Humanity*: “ For in this religious Sort of Discipline, the Principle of *Self-Love*, which “ is *naturally so prevailing* in us (*indeed?*) “ being no way moderated or restrained, “ but rather improved and made stronger “ every Day, by the Exercise of the Passions in the Subject of more extended “ Self-Interest; there may be Reason to “ apprehend lest the Temper of this Kind “ should extend itself in general through “ all the Parts of Life.”

THIS, to say the best of it, is the very *Phrenzy* of Virtue. Religion proposeth true Happiness as the End and Consequence of virtuous Action: This is granted. It proposeth it by such Motives as must influence Self-Love, and consequently hath given the best Means of procuring it. Yet, it seems, Self-love being not restrained, but made stronger, will make Mankind miss of true Happiness. That is, by leading Self-Love into the Path of true Happiness, Religion will inevitably conduct it to a *false*; by commanding us to cherish our public Affections,

Affections, it will certainly inflame the private ones; by assuring us, that if we would be happy hereafter, we must be virtuous and benevolent, it will beyond Question render us *vile* and *void of Benevolence*. But this Mode of Reasoning is common with the noble Writer.

HOWEVER, at other Times his Lordship can descend to the Level of common Sense; and prosecute his Argument by Proofs diametrically opposite to what he here advanceth. For in displaying the Motives to Virtue, after having modelled the inward State of the human Mind according to his own Imagination, he proceeds to consider the *Passions* which regard *ourselves*, and draws another and indeed a stronger Proof from *these*.—He there proves<sup>2</sup> the Folly of a vicious Love of Life, “because Life itself  
“may often prove a Misfortune.” So of *Cowardice*, “because it often robs us of  
“the Means of Safety.” Excessive *Resentment*, “because the Gratification is no  
“more than an Alleviation of a racking  
“Pain.”—The Vice of Luxury “creates  
“a Nauseating, and Distaste, Diseases, and  
“constant Craving.” He urges the same

<sup>2</sup> *Enquiry*, Book ii. Part 2. § 3.



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Objections against intemperate Pleasure of the amorous Kind. He observes that Ambition is ever “suspicious, jealous, captious, “and incapable of bearing the least Dis- “appointment.” He then proceeds thro’ a Variety of other Passions, proving them all to be the Sources of some internal or external Misery. Thus he awakens the same Passions of *Hope* and *Fear*, which, in a religious View, he so bitterly inveighs against. Thus he exhibits a Picture of future *Rewards* and *Punishments*, even of the most *selfish* Kind: He recommends the Conformity to Virtue, on the Score both of present and future *Advantage*: He deters his Reader from the Commission of Vice, by representing the Misery it will produce. And these too, such *Advantages* and such *Miseries*, as are entirely distinct from the mere Feeling of virtuous Affection or its contrary: From the Considerations of Safety, Alleviation of *bodily* Pain, the Avoidance of *Distaste* and *Diseases*. Now doth not his own Cavil here recoil upon him? “That in this Sort of Discipline; and by “exhibiting such Motives as these, the Prin- “ciple of Self-Love must be made stronger, “by the Exercise of the Passions in a Sub- “ject

ject of more extended Self-Interest: And  
 so there may be Reason to apprehend, lest  
 the Temper of this Kind should extend  
 itself in general through all the Parts of  
 Life." Thus the Objection proves equal-  
 ly against both: In Reality, against neither.  
 For, as we have seen, the *Sense*, or *Pro-  
 spect* of Happiness, is the only possible  
 Motive to Action; and if we are taught to  
 believe that *virtuous Affection* will produce  
*Happiness*, whether the expected Happiness  
 lies in *this* Life or *another*, it will *tend*, and  
*equally* tend, to produce *virtuous Affection*.  
 The noble Writer, therefore, and his Ad-  
 mirers, might as well attempt to remove  
 Mountains, as to prove that the *Hope* and  
 Prospect of a happy Immortality, can justly  
 be accounted more servile, mercenary, or  
*hurtful*, than the View of those transient and  
 earthly Advantages, which his Lordship  
 hath so rhetorically and honestly display'd,  
 for the Interest and Security of *Virtue*. In  
 Truth, they are precisely of the same Na-  
 ture, and only differ in Time, Duration, and  
 Degree. They are both established by our  
 Creator for the same great End of Happi-  
 ness. And what GOD hath thus *connected*,

it

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it were absurd, as well as impious, to attempt to *separate*<sup>h</sup>.

THERE is yet another Circumstance observable in human Nature, which still further proves, that the Hope of a happy Immortality hath no Tendency to produce selfish Affection, but its contrary. For let the *stoical* Tribe draw what Pictures they please of the human Species, this is an undoubted Truth, “ that *Hope* is the most universal Source of human *Happiness*: And

<sup>h</sup> Hence we may see the Weakness and Mistake of those *falsely religious*, who fall into an *Extreme* directly *opposite* to this of the noble Writer; who are *scandalized* at our being determined to the Pursuit of Virtue through any Degree of Regard to its happy Consequences in this Life; which Regard they call *worldly, carnal, profane*. For it is evident, that the religious Motive is precisely of the same Kind; only stronger, as the Happiness expected is greater, and more lasting. While therefore we set the *proper* and *proportioned* Value upon each, it is impossible we can act irrationally, or offend that GOD, who established *both*.

This naturally leads to a further Observation, which shews the Danger, as well as Folly, of *groveling* in *Systems*. Virtue, we see, comes recommended and enforced on three Principles. It is attended with *natural* and immediate *Pleasure* or Advantage:—It is commanded by human *Laws*:—It is enjoined by *Religion*.—Yet the *Religionists* have often decry’d the first of these Sanctions: The *fanatical Moralists*, the *last*: And even the *second* hath not escaped the Madness of an *enthusiastic* Party; which, however, never grew considerable enough in this Kingdom, to merit Confutation.

“ that

“ that Man is never so sincerely and heartily  
 “ *benevolent*, as when he is truly *happy* in  
 “ himself,” Thus the high Consciousness  
 of his being numbered among the Children  
 of God, and that his Lot is among the  
 Saints; that he is destined to an endless  
 Progression of Happiness, and to rise from  
 high to higher Degrees of Perfection, must  
 needs inspire him with that Tranquillity  
 and Joy, which will naturally diffuse itself  
 in Acts of sincere Benevolence to all his  
 Fellow-Creatures, whom he looks upon as  
 his Companions in this Race of Glory.  
 Thus will every noble Passion of the Soul  
 be awakened into Action: While the joy-  
 less Infidel, possessed with the gloomy Dread  
 of Annihilation, too naturally contracts his  
 Affections as his Hopes of Happiness de-  
 crease; while he considers and despiseth  
 himself, and his Fellow-Creatures, as no  
 more than the Beasts that perish.

THE noble Writer indeed insinuates, that  
 “ there is “ a certain Narrowness of Spirit,  
 “ occasioned by this Regard to a future  
 “ Life, peculiarly observable in the *devout*  
 “ Persons and *Zealots* of almost every reli-  
 “ gious Persuasion<sup>i</sup>.” In reply to which,

<sup>i</sup> *Inquiry*, B. i. Part iii. § 3.



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'tis only necessary to affirm, what may be affirmed with Truth, that with regard to *devout* Persons the Infination is a *Falshood*. It was prudently done indeed to join the *Zealots* (or *Bigots*) in the same Sentence; because it is true, that *these*, being under the Dominion of *Superstition*, forget the true Nature and End of *Religion*; and are therefore scrupulously exact in the Observation of outward *Ceremonies*, while they neglect the superior and *essential* Matters of the Law, of *Justice*, *Benevolence*, and *Mercy*.

AND as to the Notion of confining the Hope of future Reward to "that of virtuous Enjoyment only:" This is a *Refinement* parallel to the rest of the noble Writer's System; and, like all Refinements, contracts instead of enlarging our Views. 'Tis allowed indeed, that the Pleasures of Virtue are the highest we know of in our present State; and 'tis therefore commonly supposed, they may constitute our chief Felicity in another. But doth it hence follow, that no other Sources of Happiness may be dispensed, which as yet are utterly unknown to us? Can our narrow and partial Imaginations set Bounds to the Omnipotence of God? And may not our Creator vouchsafe

us such Springs of yet untasted Blifs, as shall exceed even the known Joys of Virtue, as far as *these* exceed the Gratifications of Sense? Nay, if we consider, what is generally believed, that our Happiness will arise from an Addition of new and higher Faculties; that in the present Life, the Exercise of Virtue itself ariseth often from the *Imperfection* of our State; if we consider these Things, it should seem highly probable, that our future Happiness will consist in something quite beyond our present Comprehension: Will be “such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive.”

S E C T I O N X.

BUT beyond these Objections, the noble Writer hath more than once touched upon another, which merits a particular Consideration. For he affirms, that “after all ’tis not merely what we call *Principle*, but a *Taste*, which governs Men.” That “even Conscience, such as is owing to religious Discipline, will make but a slight Figure, where this Taste is set amiss <sup>k</sup>.”

<sup>k</sup> *Misc.* iii. c. ii.

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THE Notion here advanced is not peculiar to himself. He seems to have drawn it from a much more considerable Writer, who hath endeavoured to support the same Proposition by a great Variety of Examples<sup>1</sup>. Several Authors of inferior Rank have borrowed the same Topic, for popular Declamation. Nay, one hath gone so far as to assert, “that Man is so unaccountable a Creature, as to act most commonly against his Principle<sup>m</sup>.”

THE Objection, indeed, carries an Appearance of Force: Yet on a near Examination it entirely vanisheth.

IT must be owned, that in most Countries, a considerable Part of what is called *Religion*, deserves no other Name than that of *Absurdity* made *sacred*. And it were strange indeed, should *Bigotry* and *false Religion* produce that Uprightness of Heart, that Perfection of Morals, which is the genuine Effect of *Truth*.

IT must be owned, that with Regard to religious Principle, as well as moral Practice, every Man has the Power of being a *Hypocrite*. That Knaves, in order to be

<sup>1</sup> BAYLE, *Pens. sur une Comete*.

<sup>2</sup> *Fable of the Bees*.

accounted *honest*, may appear *devout*. And we may reasonably suppose, if we consider the innumerable Artifices of Villainy, that the outward Profession of Religion becomes a frequent *Disguise* to an *atheistical* and *corrupted* Heart.

BUT though these Circumstances may sufficiently account for the Appearance in many particular Cases, yet, with Regard to the *general* Fact, *here* seems to lie the proper Solution of the Difficulty. “That even “ where true Religion is known, professed, “ and in Speculation *assented* to, it is seldom “ so thoroughly *inculcated* as to become a “ Principle of Action.” We have seen that Imagination is the universal Instrument of human Action; that no Passion can be strongly excited in the Soul by mere Knowledge or Assent, till the Imagination hath formed to itself some kind of Picture or Representation of the Good or Evil apprehended<sup>n</sup>. Now the Senses and their attendant Passions are continually urging their Demands, through the immediate Presence of their respective Objects: So that nothing but the *vivid Image* of some greater Good or Evil in Futurity can possibly resist and

<sup>n</sup> See above, *Essay* i. § 3.



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overbalance their Sollicitations. The *Idea* therefore of future Happiness and Misery must be strongly impressed on the Imagination, ere they can work their full Effects, because they are *distant* and *unseen*: But this *Habit* of Reflexion is seldom properly fixed by *Education*: and thus, for want of a proper Impression, “religious Principle is seldom *gained*, and therefore seldom operates.”

BUT where a sincere and lively Impression takes place; where the Mind is convinced of the Being of a God; that he *is*, and is a *Rewarder* of them that diligently seek him; where the *Imagination* hath gained a Habit of connecting this great Truth with every Thought, Word, and Action; there it may be justly affirmed, that Piety and Virtue cannot but *prevail*. To say, in a Case of this Nature, that Man will not act according to his Principle, is to contradict the full Evidence of known Facts. We see how true Mankind commonly are to their Principle of *Pride*, or mistaken Honour; how true to their Principle of *Avarice*, or mistaken Interest; how true to their Principle of a Regard to *human* Laws. Why are they so? Because they have strongly and habitually

tually connected these Principles in their Imagination with the Idea of their own Happiness. Therefore, whenever the religious Principle becomes in the same Manner habitually connected in the Imagination, with the Agent's Happiness; that is, whenever the religious Principle takes place at all, it must needs become infinitely more powerful than any other; because the *Good* it promiseth, and the *Evil* it threatens, are infinitely greater and more lasting. Hence it appears, that the Corruption of Mankind, even where the purest Religion is *professed*, and in Theory *assented* to, doth not arise from the *Weakness* of religious Principle, but the *Want* of it.

AND indeed, on other Occasions, and to serve different Purposes, the noble Writer and his Partizans can allow and give Examples of all that is here contended for. Nothing is so common among these Gentlemen, as to declaim against the terrible Effects of *priestly Power*. 'Tis the favourite Topic, to represent Mankind as groaning under the Tyranny of the *sacred Order*. Now what does this Representation imply, but "the Force of religious Principle im-

properly directed?" If Mankind can be

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swayed by religious Hope and Fear, to resign their Passions and Interests to the *Artifice* or Advantage of the *Priest*, why not to the *Benefit* of *Mankind*? 'Tis only impressing a different Idea of *Duty*: The Motive to Action is in both Cases the same, and consequently must be of equal Efficacy. Thus if religious Principle were void of *Force*, the Priesthood must be void of *Power*. The Influence therefore of the Priesthood, however dishonestly applied, is a Demonstration of the Force of *religious Principle*.

THIS therefore seems to be the Truth. Although, by timely and continued Culture, the religious Principle might be made more universally predominant; yet even as it is, though not so thoroughly inculcated as to become generally a consistent Principle of Action; in Fact it hath a frequent and considerable, though partial and imperfect Influence. None but the thoroughly Good and Bad act on continued or consistent Principles; all the intermediate Degrees of Good and Bad act at different Times on various and inconsistent Principles; that is, their *Imaginations* are by turns given up to *Impressions* of a *different*, or  
even

even *contrary* Nature. This explains the whole Mystery: For, hence it appears that the consistent or inconsistent Conduct of Men depends not on the Nature of their Principles, but on having their Principles, whatever they are, *counteracted* by opposite ones. Although therefore, through a Failure of timely Discipline, Numbers of Men appear to be of that capricious Temper as not to be steady to any Principle, yet still the religious one will *mix* with the rest, and naturally *prevail* in its *Turn*. This is certainly a common Circumstance among the looser and more inconsiderate Ranks of Men; who, although by no means uniformly swayed by the Precepts of Religion, are yet frequently struck with Horror at the Thought of Actions peculiarly vile, and deterred, by the Apprehension of an All-seeing GOD, from the Commission of Crimes *uncommonly atrocious*.

HERE then lies the essential Difference between the Efficacy of *Taste* and *religious* Principle: That the first, being a Feeling or Perception dispensed in various Degrees, and in very weak ones to the Bulk of Mankind, is incapable, even through the most assiduous Culture, of becoming an universal



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or consistent Motive to Virtue: But the religious Principle, arising from such Passions, as are common to the whole Species, must, if properly inculcated, *universally* prevail.

'Tis evident therefore, that in the very first Dawns of Reason, Religious Principles ought to be impressed on the Minds of Children; and this early Culture continued through the succeeding Stages of Life. But as the noble Writer hath strangely attempted to ridicule and dishonour Religion in every Shape; so here, he hath endeavoured to throw an Odium on this Method of religious Discipline, by representing it as the Enemy to true Morals and practical Philosophy, as it fetters the Mind with early Prejudices. “ Whatever Manner in Philosophy happens to bear the least Resemblance to that of *Catechism*, cannot, I am persuaded, of itself seem very inviting. “ Such a smart Way of questioning ourselves in our Youth, has made our Mankind more averse to the *expostulatory* Discipline: And though the metaphysical Points of our Belief, are by this Method with admirable Care and Caution instilled into tender Minds; yet the Manner of this *anticipating* Philosophy may make “ the

“ the After-work of Reason, and the in-  
 “ ward Exercise of the Mind at a riper  
 “ Age, proceed the more heavily, and with  
 “ greater Reluctance.—’Tis hard, after  
 “ having by so many pertinent Interroga-  
 “ tories and decisive Sentences, declared  
 “ *who* and *what* we are; to come leisurely  
 “ in another, to inquire concerning our *real*  
 “ *Self* and *End*, the Judgment we are to  
 “ make of *Interest*, and the Opinion we  
 “ should have of *Advantage* and *Good* :  
 “ Which is what must necessarily determine  
 “ us in our *Conduct*, and prove the leading  
 “ Principle of our Lives °.”

IN reply to this *most philosophical* Para-  
 graph, let it be observed, that it is not the  
 Design of Religion to make *Sophists*, but  
*good Subjects*, of Mankind. That, Man be-  
 ing designed, not for *Speculation*, but *Action*,  
 religious Principle is not to be instilled in a  
*philosophical* but a *moral* View : Therefore  
 with Regard to *Practice*, nothing can be  
 more fit and rational than to impress ac-  
 knowledged *Truths* at an Age when the *Re-*  
*ipient* is incapable of their *Demonstrations* ;  
 in the same Manner as we teach the *Me-*

° *Advice, &c.* Part iii. § 2.

*chanic* to work on Geometric Principles, while the Proofs are *unknown* to him.

BUT then, the *Prejudices of Education*—yes, these are the great *Stumbling-block* to a modern *Free-thinker*: It still runs in his Head, that all Mankind are born to dispute *de omni scibili*<sup>9</sup>. Let therefore this *minute* Philosopher reflect, first, that a *Prejudice* doth not imply, as is generally supposed, the *Falseness* of the Opinion instilled; but only that it is taken up and held without its proper *Evidence*. Thus a Child may be prejudiced in Favour of Truth, as well as Falseness; and in him neither the one nor the other can properly be called more than an *Opinion*. Further: The human Mind cannot remain in a State of *Indifference*, with regard either to *Opinion* or *Practice*: 'Tis of an *active* Nature; and, like a *fertile* Field, if by due Cultivation it be not made to produce good *Fruit*, will certainly spring up in *Tares* and *Thistles*. Impressions, Opinions, *Prejudices*, of one kind or other, a Child will inevitably contract, from the Things and Persons that *surround* him: and if rational Habits and Opinions be not infused, in order to *anticipate* Absurdities;

<sup>9</sup> On all Subjects.

Absurdities will rise, and anticipate all rational Habits and Opinions. His Reason and his Passions will put themselves in Action, however untoward and inconsistent, in the same manner as his Limbs will make an Effort towards progressive Motion, however awkward and absurd. The same Objection therefore that lies against instilling a salutary Opinion, will arise against teaching him to walk erect: For this too, is a kind of “anticipating Philosophy:” And sure, a Child left to his own Self-Discipline, “till “he could come leisurely to inquire concerning his real Self and End,” would stand as fair a Chance to grovel in Absurdity, and bring down his Reason to the sordid Level of Appetite, as to crawl upon all four, and dabble in the Dirt. Thus the noble Writer’s Ridicule would sweep away the whole System of Education along with the religious Principle: Not an Opinion or Inclination must be controuled, or so much as controverted; “left by this anticipating “Philosophy, the Work of Reason, and the “inward Exercise of the Mind, at a riper “Age, should proceed the more heavily, “and with greater Reluctance.” The Caprice of Infancy must rule us, till the very  
Capacity



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*Capacity* of Improvement should be *de-  
stroyed*; and we must turn *Savages*, in order  
to be made perfect in the *sovereign Philo-  
sophy*.

'TIS no difficult Matter therefore to de-  
termine whether a Child should be left to  
the Follies of his own *weak* Understanding  
and *nascent* Passions; be left to imbibe the  
Maxims of corrupt Times and Manners;  
Maxims which, setting aside all Regard to  
their speculative Truth or Falseness, do  
lead to certain Misery; or, on the other  
hand, shall be happily conducted to embrace  
those religious Principles, which have had  
the Approbation of the best and wisest Men  
in every Age and Nation; and which are  
known and allowed to be the only Means  
of true Happiness to Individuals, Families,  
and States.

THIS therefore ought to be the early and  
principal Care of those who have the Tui-  
tion of Youth: And they will soon find the  
happy Effects of their Instruction. For as  
the Child's Understanding shall improve,  
what was at first instilled only as an *Opinion*,  
will by Degrees be embraced as *Truth*:  
Reason will then assume her just Empire;  
and the great, universal, religious Principle,  
a rati-

a rational Obedience to the Will of God, will raise him to his utmost Capacity of moral Perfection ; will be a wide and firm Foundation, on which the whole Fabric of Virtue may rise in its just Proportions ; will *extend* and *govern* his *Benevolence* and *moral Sense* : will strengthen them, if weak ; will confirm them, if strong ; will supply their Want, if naturally defective : In fine, will direct all his *Passions* to their proper *Objects* and *Degrees* ; and, as the great *Master-spring* of Action, at once *promote* and *regulate* every Moment of his *Heart*.

It must be owned, the noble Writer's Caution against this "anticipating Philosophy" hath of late been deeply imbibed. In consequence of it, we have seen *religious Principle* declaimed against, ridiculed, lamented. The Effect of this hath been, an abandoned Degree of Villainy in one Class of Mankind ; a lethargic Indifference towards Virtue or Vice in another ; and in the third, which boasts the Height of modern Virtue, we seldom see more than the first natural Efforts, the mere *Buddings* of Benevolence and Honour, which are too generally blasted ere they can ripen into *Action*. This Contempt of Religion hath

hath always been a fatal *Omen* to *free* States. Nor, if we may credit Experience, can we entertain any just Hope, that this fantastic Scheme, this boasted *Relish* for Beauty and Virtue, can ever give Security to Empire, without the more solid Supports of religious Belief. For it is remarkable, that in the Decline of both the *Greek* and *Roman* States, after Religion had lost its Credit and Efficacy, this very *Taste*, this *sovereign Philosophy* usurped its Place, and became the common Study and Amusement (as it is now among ourselves) both of the *Vile* and *Vulgar*. The Fact, with regard to *Greece*, is sufficiently notorious; with regard to *Rome*, it may seem to demand a Proof. And who would think, that *QUINTILIAN* in the following Passage was not describing our own Age and Nation? “Nunc autem quae vel  
“ ut propria philosophiae afferuntur, passim  
“ tractamus omnes: Quis enim modo de  
“ JUSTO, AEQUO, ac BONO, non et VIR  
“ PESSIMUS loquitur<sup>1</sup>”—*What was formerly the Philosopher’s Province only, is now invaded by all: We find every wicked and worthless Fellow, in these Days, haranguing on VIRTUE, BEAUTY, and GOOD. What*

<sup>1</sup> *Quint. Prooemium.*

this *Leprosy* of *false* Knowledge may end in, I am unwilling to say: But this may be said with Truth, because it is justified by Experience; that along with the Circumstance now remarked, every other *Symptom* is rising among us, that hath generally attended the dark and troubled *Evening* of a *Commonwealth*.

DOUBTLESS, many will treat these Apprehensions with *Derision*: But this *Derision* is far from being an Evidence of their Falseness. For no People ever fell a Sacrifice to themselves, till *lulled* and *infatuated* by their own Passions. *Blind Security* is an essential Characteristic of a People devoted to Destruction. The Fact is equally undeniable, whether it ariseth from the moral Appointment of Providence, or the Connexion of natural Causes. Though this is seen and acknowledged by those who are conversant with the History of Mankind; yet 'tis hard to convey this Evidence to those who seldom extend their Views beyond their own short Period of Existence; because they see the Prevalence of the Cause assigned, while yet the pretended *Consequence* appears not. But they who look back into ancient Time are convinced, that the *public* Effects  
of



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of *Irreligion* have never been sudden or *immediate*. One Age is *falsely* polite, *irreligious*, and *vile*; the next is sunk in *Servitude* and *Wretchedness*. This is analogous to the Operation of other Causes. A Man may be intemperate for twenty Years, before he feels the Effects of Intemperance on his Constitution. The Sun and Moon raise the Tides; yet the Tides rise not to their Height, till a considerable Time after the Conjunction of these two Luminaries. We cannot therefore justly decide concerning the future *Effects* of Irreligion, from its present State. The Examples of former Times are a much better *Criterion*: And these are such, as ought to make every Man among us, that regards Posterity, tremble for his Posterity while he reads them.

FOR this is but too just an *Epitome* of the Story of Mankind. That TYRANNY and SUPERSTITION have ever gone Hand in Hand; mutually supporting and supported; taking their Progress, and fixing their Dominion, over all the Kingdoms of the Earth; overwhelming it in one general Deluge, as the Waters cover the Sea. Here and there a happy Nation *emerges*; breathes for a while in the enlightened Region of KNOW-

LEDGE, RELIGION, VIRTUE, FREEDOM:  
'Till, in their appointed Time, IRRELIGION  
and LICENTIOUSNESS appear; *mine* the  
Foundations of the *Fabric*, and sink it in  
the general Abyſs of IGNORANCE and  
OPPRESSION.

POSSIBLY the fatal Blow may yet be averted from us. 'Tis ſurely the Duty of every Man, in every Station, to contribute his Share, however *inconfiderable*, to this great End. This muſt be my Apology for oppoſing the noble Writer's fantaſtic Syſtem; which, by exhibiting a falſe Picture of human Nature, is, in Reality, an *Inlet* to *Vice*, while it ſeems moſt favourable to *Virtue*: And while it pretends to be drawn from the *Depths* of *Philoſophy*, is, of all others, *moſt unphiloſophical*.



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E S S A Y S

ON THE

CHARACTERISTICS, etc.

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ESSAY III.

On Revealed RELIGION, and  
CHRISTIANITY.

SECTION I.

**I**N the Course of the preceding *Essay*, we have seen the noble Writer assuming the Character of the professed *Dogmatist*, the *Reasoner in Form*. In what remains to be considered, concerning *Revealed Religion* and CHRISTIANITY, we shall find him chiefly affecting the *miscellaneous Capacity*;

SECT.  
I.

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city; the Way of *Chat*, *Raillery*, *Innuendo*, or *Story-telling*: In a word; that very Species of the present modish Composition, which he so contemptuously ridicules; “ where, as “ he tells us, Justice and Accuracy of “ Thought are set aside as too constraining; “ where Grounds and Foundations are of “ no Moment; and which hath properly “ neither *Top* nor *Bottom*, *Beginning* nor “ *End*<sup>a</sup>.” In this, however, his Lordship is not quite so much to blame as might be imagined. In his Critical Progress, he had treated this *dysballe* of Composition, as the Man in the Fable did his Pears; unconsci-ous he should be ever afterwards reduced to diet on them himself. The Truth of the Matter is, that the broken Hints, the ambiguous Expression, and the Ludicro-serious of the gentle Essayist, perfectly se-cure him from the rough Handling of the Logical-Disputer.

INDEED the noble Author has a double Advantage from this *Cloud*, in which the *Graces* so frequently secure their Favourite. He not only eludes the Force of every Argu-ment the Defenders of Christianity alledge in its Support, but even pleads the Privilege of

<sup>a</sup> See above, *Essay* i. § 2.

being ranked in the Number of *sincere* Christians. He takes frequent Occasions of expressing his Abhorrence of *idle Scepticks* and *wicked Unbelievers* in Religion: He declares himself of a more resigned Understanding, a ductile Faith, ready to be moulded into any shape that his spiritual Superiors shall prescribe. At other Times, and in innumerable Places, he scatters such Insinuations against *Christianity*, and that too with all the Bitterness of *Sarcasm* and *Invective*, as must needs be more effectual in promoting *Irreligion*, than a formal and avowed Accusation. For in the Way of open War, there is fair Warning given to put Reason upon Guard, that no pretending Argument be suffered to pass without Examination. On the contrary, the noble Writer's concealed Method of *Raillery*, steals insensibly on his Reader; fills him with endless Prejudice and Suspicion; and, without passing thro' the *Judgment*, fixeth such Impressions on the Imagination, as *Reason*, with all its Effects, will be hardly able afterwards to efface.

THESE inconsistent Circumstances in his Lordship's Conduct, have made it a Question among some, what his real Sentiments were concerning Religion and *Christianity*.

If it be necessary to decide this Question, we may observe, that a disguised Unbeliever may have his Reasons for making a formal Declaration of his Assent to the Religion of his Country : But it will be hard to find what should tempt a real *Christian* to load *Christianity* with Scorn and *Infamy*. Indeed, the noble Writer, to do him Justice, never designed to leave us at a Loss on this Subject. For he hath been so good, frequently to remind his Reader, to *look out* for the true Drift of his *Irony*, lest his real Meaning should be mistaken or disregarded.

HERE then lies the Force of his Lordship's Attack on *Christianity*; "In exciting Contempt by Ridicule." A Method which, as we have already seen<sup>b</sup>, tho' devoid of all rational Foundation, is yet most powerful and efficacious in working upon vulgar Minds. Thus the Way of *Irony* and false Encomium, which he so often employs against the blessed Founder of our Religion, serves him for all Weapons, the deeper he strikes the Wound, the better he shields himself.

WE are not therefore to be surprized, if we find the noble Writer frequently affecting a Mixture of *solemn Phrase* and *low*

<sup>b</sup> *Essay* i. passim.

*Buffoonry*; not only in the same *Tract*, but in the same *Paragraph*. In this Respect, he resembles the facetious Drole I have somewhere heard of, who wore a *transparent Masque*: Which, at a Distance, exhibited a Countenance wrapt up in profound Solemnity; but those who came nearer, and could see to the Bottom, found the native Look distorted into all the ridiculous Grimace, which Spleen and Vanity could imprint.

## SECTION II.

BUT as *natural* Religion is the only Foundation of *revealed*; it will be necessary, ere we proceed to the last, to obviate any Insinuations which the noble Writer may have thrown out against the Former.

As to the Expectation of future Happiness, considered as the natural Consequence of virtuous Action; his Lordship hath not, that I know of, either affirmed, or insinuated, any thing against its Reasonableness. But with regard to the other Branch of Religion, “the Belief of a future State of Misery or Punishment, considered as the appointed Consequence of Vice,” this he



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hath frequently endeavoured to discredit in such a Manner as would be no small Degree of Guilt to transcribe, were it not to shew at once the Impiety and Falsehood of his Affirmations.

IN his Letter on *Enthusiasm*, he hath obliged us with several Passages of this Kind. These, it must be owned, are so obscure, that we must be content, to refer them rather to the Reader's equitable Construction, than urge them as direct Proofs.

THE Apprehension and *Fear* of something *supernatural*, so universal among Mankind, he seems all along to deride, as a visionary and groundless Panic<sup>c</sup>. He adds that, "while some Sects, such as the *Pythagorean* and latter *Platonick*, joined in "with the Superstition and Enthusiasm of "the Times; the *Epicurean*, the *Academic* "and others, were allowed to use all the "Force of Wit and Raillery against it<sup>d</sup>." To convince us how much he approves the Conduct of these libertine Sects, he boldly follows their Example. He assures us that "such is the Nature of the liberal, polished, and refined Part of Mankind; so "far are they from the mere Simplicity of

<sup>c</sup> *Lett. on Enthusiasm*, passim.

<sup>d</sup> *Ib.*

"Babes

“ Babes and Sucklings ; that, instead of  
 “ applying the Notion of a future Reward  
 “ or Punishment, to their immediate Be-  
 “ haviour in Society ; they are apt much  
 “ rather, thro’ the whole Course of their  
 “ Lives, to shew evidently, that they look  
 “ on the pious Narrations to be indeed no  
 “ better than Children’s Tales, and the  
 “ Amusement of the mere Vulgar<sup>e</sup>.” He  
 confirms these Opinions by assigning the  
 Reason why Men of Sense should stand  
 clear of the Fears of a Futurity : “ GOD  
 “ is so good, as to exceed the very best of us  
 “ in Goodness : And after this Manner we  
 “ can have no Dread or Suspicion to render  
 “ us uneasy ; for it is Malice only, and not  
 “ Goodness, which can make us afraid<sup>f</sup>.”

Is this the *Philosopher* and *Patriot*, the  
 Lover of his Country and Mankind ! *This*  
 the Admirer of ancient Wisdom, of venera-  
 ble Sages, who founded “ Laws, Constitu-  
 “ tions, civil and religious Rites, whatever  
 “ civilizes or polishes Mankind<sup>g</sup>.”

*Tu pater et Rerum inventor ! Tu patria nobis  
 Suppeditas præcepta !*

THIS, sure, is unhinging Society to the

<sup>e</sup> Misc. iii. c. 2. <sup>f</sup> Lett. on Enth. <sup>g</sup> Moralists P. i. § 3.

utmost of his Power : For the Force of *religious Sanctions* depends as much on their being believed, as the Force of *human Laws* depends on their being executed. To *destroy* the *Belief* of the *one* therefore, is equivalent to suspending the *other*.

BUT as the present Debate concerns not the *Utility*, but the *Truth*, of *Religion*, 'tis chiefly incumbent on us, to shew, that the noble Writer's *Opinion* and *Reasoning*, on this Subject, are void of all Foundation.

'TIS observable therefore, First, that his Lordship, in other Places, allows, that “ If  
“ there be naturally such a Passion as Enthusa-  
“ siasm, 'tis evident, that Religion itself is of  
“ the kind, and must be natural therefore to  
“ Man<sup>h</sup>.” And in his *Letter on Enthusiasm*, even while he derides the Proneness of Mankind to the *conscientious Fear*, he adds, “ that tho' *Epicurus* thought these Appre-  
“ hensions were *vain*, yet he was forced to  
“ allow them in a Manner *innate* : —  
“ From which Concession, a *Divine*, me-  
“ thinks, might raise a *good Argument*  
“ against him, for the *Truth* as well as  
“ *Usefulness* of Religion.” Now as some may possibly be at a Loss to determine here,

<sup>h</sup> *Misc.* ii. c. i.

whether the noble Writer be in *Jest* or *Earnest*, the Argument he hints at is plainly this: That if we look round the Works of Nature, we shall find an Analogy established, which seems a Proof, that this natural Fear, which *presseth* so universally on the human Mind, hath a real and proportioned Object. The Argument hath been urged by many of great Name, in Favour of the *Hope* of future *Good*; and 'tis surely of equal Force, whatever the Force may be, when apply'd to the *Fear* of future *Ill*. For we see thro' the whole Creation, every Animal, of whatever Species, directed by its Nature, or the Hand of Providence, to fear and shun its proper and appointed Enemy. We find these Apprehensions universally suited to the Nature and Preservation of every Species among Birds, Beasts, Fishes, Insects. Nor is there one *Fear*, tho' sometimes *excessive* in its *Degree*, that is *erroneous* with regard to its *Object*. The *religious Fear*, therefore, which *forceth itself* so universally on the human Mind, in every Age and Nation, ignorant or knowing, civilized or barbarous; hath *probably* an Object suited to its Nature, ordained for the Welfare of the human Species. At least, this Argument



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ment must ever be of Weight with those, who draw their Ideas of future Existence from the *Instincts, Hopes, and Expectations* of the human Mind.

INDEED, on the noble Writer's refined Scheme of Morals, in which the natural Affections of the Mind are represented, as all-sufficient for the Purposes of human Happiness, this Argument must lose its Force; because, on this Supposition, the religious Fear is *supernumerary* and *useless*: But then this shews the Supposition itself to be *monstrous, absurd*, and contrary to the established Course of Nature; because Nature gives no Power or Passion, but to some proper and appointed End: The very *Existence* of the Passion, therefore, is a Proof of its Necessity.

Now, if indeed the religious Fear be *necessary*, as, we presume, hath been sufficiently proved in the preceding Essay; then, from hence will arise a strong and convincing Proof, that the Object of religious Fear is *real*. For we find thro' the whole Extent of created Being, that the Author of Nature hath annexed to all his Designs and Purposes, the proper Means or Objects, by which they may be fulfilled.

As

As therefore the religious Fear is not only interwoven with the Frame of Man, but *absolutely necessary* to his *Happiness*, its Object must be *real*; because, if *not*, you suppose the Creator to have given a NECESSARY *Passion*, without its *proper* and *appointed* Object; which would be a Contradiction to the *universal* and *known* Constitution of Things.

ON this Occasion, we may observe the Weakness of the *Epicurean* System, concerning *Providence*: For that Sect hath ever deny'd, that the Deity concerns himself with the *moral* Conduct of Man. But from the wise and benevolent Constitution of the natural World itself, a strong Proof ariseth in Support of GOD's *moral* Government of it, and of the Truth of the *Fears* and *Expectations* of the human Mind. For if we allow that he regards and preserves the natural Order and Symmetry of the Creation; that he hath formed this immense System of Being, and secured its Continuance and Welfare, by certain Laws, necessary to the Happiness of his Creatures; then we must on the same Foundation conclude, that he hath likewise established such *Motives* and *Laws* of *Action*, as may determine  
*Man*

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*Man* to prosecute the same End. It were an Imputation on the Wisdom of the Deity, to conceive him as doing the *one*, and omitting the *other*: Unless *Mind* and *Morals* be less worthy of his Regard, than *Matter* and *Motion*.

BUT still the noble Writer proceeds in the Spirit of Derision, to expose the Absurdities and Mischiefs this misguided religious Principle hath occasioned; he often expatiates on the *superstitious Horrors*, and *furious Zeal*, which have had their Source in this Principle; and thence, in the Way of Insinuation, concludes it irrational and groundless.

THE Facts, it must be owned, are notorious and undeniable: But the Consequence is no less evidently chimerical and vain. LORD SHAFTESBURY himself hath observed, that in Failure of a just Prince or Magistrate, Mankind are ready to submit themselves even to a Tyrant: “ Like  
“ new-born Creatures, who have never  
“ seen their *Dam*, they will fancy one for  
“ themselves, and apply (as by Nature  
“ prompted) to some like Form for Favour  
“ and Protection. In the Room of a true  
“ Foster-Father and Chief, they will take  
“ after

“ after a false one ; and in the Room of a  
 “ legal Government and just Prince, obey  
 “ even a Tyrant<sup>i</sup>.” And hence he draws  
 a strong Proof of the Force of the *social* or  
*berding* Principle, even from *despotic* Power  
 itself. Again he hath remarked, that *He-*  
 “ *roism* and *Philanthropy* are almost one and  
 “ the same ; yet by a small Misguidance  
 “ of the Affection, a Lover of Mankind  
 “ becomes a Ravager ; a Hero and Deli-  
 “ verer becomes an Oppressor and Destroy-  
 “ er<sup>k</sup>.” ’Tis the same in Religion. Where  
 the human Mind (ever restless in it’s Search  
 for the great Centre of created Being, on  
 which alone it can perfectly repose itself)  
 seeks, but cannot find the true GOD, it  
 naturally sets up a false one in his Place :  
 Here too, Mankind, “ like new-born Crea-  
 “ tures, who have never seen their *Dam*,  
 “ will fancy one for themselves, and apply  
 “ (as by Nature prompted) to some like  
 “ Form for Favour and Protection. In the  
 “ Room of a true Foster-Father, they will  
 “ take after a false one ; and in the Room  
 “ of an All-perfect GOD, worship even an  
 “ Idol.” The religious Principle, thus  
 misguided, breaks forth indeed, into Enor-

<sup>i</sup> *Wit and Humour*, Part iii. § 2.<sup>k</sup> *Ib.* § 2.



mities the most pernicious and destructive ! Hence indeed, “ by a small Misguidance of “ the Affection, a *Lover of Mankind* be- “ comes a *Ravager* ; a *Saint*, an *Oppressor* “ and *Destroyer*.” But as from the Abuse of the social Principle, so here, in that of the religious one, no other Consequence can be justly drawn, but that it is natural and strong.

BUT further, the noble Writer finds the Notion of future Punishment, *inconsistent* with his Idea of *divine Goodness*. Therefore, says he, “ We can have no dread or Suf- “ picion to make us uneasy : For it is “ Malice only, and not Goodness, which “ can make us afraid<sup>1</sup>.”

YET, on another Occasion, his Lordship can affirm, and justly, that “ a Man of Tem- “ per may resist or punish without Anger.” And if so, why may not divine Goodness make us afraid ? For as divine Goodness regards the greatest Happiness of all it's Creatures ; so, if Punishment be necessary to that End, divine Goodness will therefore ORDAIN PUNISHMENT. To this Purpose, a Writer of distinguished Rank and Penetration : “ In Reality, Goodness is the natu-

<sup>1</sup> *Enquiry*, B. ii. part ii. § 2.

“ ral and just Object of Fear to an ill Man.  
 “ Malice may be appeas'd or satiated :  
 “ Humour may change : But Goodness is  
 “ as a fixed, steady, immoveable Principle  
 “ of Action. If either of the former holds  
 “ the Sword of Justice, there is plainly  
 “ Ground for the greatest of Crimes to hope  
 “ for Impunity. But if it be Goodness,  
 “ there can be no possible Hope, whilst  
 “ the Reasons of Things, or the Ends of  
 “ Government call for Punishment. Thus  
 “ every one sees how much greater Chance  
 “ of Impunity an ill Man has in a partial  
 “ Administration, than in a just and up-  
 “ right one. It is said, that the Interest or  
 “ Good of the whole, must be the Interest  
 “ of the universal Being ; and that he can  
 “ have no other. Be it so. This Author  
 “ (Ld S.) has proved that Vice is naturally  
 “ the Misery of Mankind in this World :  
 “ Consequently it was for the Good of the  
 “ Whole, that it should be so. What Sha-  
 “ dow of Reason then is there to assert,  
 “ that this may not be the Case hereafter?  
 “ Danger of future Punishment (and if  
 “ there be Danger, there is Ground of Fear)  
 “ no more supposes Malice, than the pre-  
 “ sent Feeling of Punishment does<sup>m</sup>.”

<sup>m</sup> Dr. Butler's Sermons, Preface, p. 21.

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THUS the noble Writer's Derision and Argumentation are equally chimerical and impious; as it appears, that the natural Fears and Expectations of the human Mind are at least founded in Probability.

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HIS Lordship's Opinions being so little favourable to natural Religion, we cannot wonder, if we find him, on every possible Occasion, throwing out Insinuations and virulent Remarks, in order to disgrace *revealed*. The first that will deserve our Notice, are such as tend to invalidate the Credibility of Scripture History.

HE tells us, "He who says he believes  
" for certain, or is assured of what he be-  
" lieves, either speaks ridiculouſly, or ſays in  
" effect, he believes ſtrongly, but is not ſure :  
" So that whoever is not conſcious of Reve-  
" lation, nor has certain Knowledge of any  
" Miracle or Sign, can be no more than  
" ſceptick in the Caſe: And the beſt Chri-  
" ſtian in the World, who being deſtitute  
" of the Means of Certainty, depends only  
" on Hiſtory and Tradition for his Belief  
" of theſe particulars, is at beſt but a ſcep-  
" tick Chriſtian<sup>n</sup>."

<sup>n</sup> *Miſc.* ii. c. 2.

Now it should seem, that the Dexterity of this Passage lies in a new Application of two or three Words. For, by "*certain* and "*assured*" he means more; by "*Scepticism*" he means much less, than it is ever used to signify. And thus as in Dr. *Mandeville's* Philosophy, (already ° criticized) wherever we have not Demonstration, 'tis plain we must needs be *Sceptics*.

BUT if indeed we must be Sceptics in Revealed Religion on this Account; the same Consequence will follow, with Regard to every other Kind of Knowledge that depends on human Testimony. We must be Sceptics too, in our Belief of every past Transaction; nay of every thing transacted in our own Times, except only of what falls within the narrow Circle of our proper Observation. The Manners of Men, the Site of Countries, the Varieties of Nature, the Truths of Philosophy, the very Food we eat, and Liquids we drink, are all received on the sole Evidence of human Testimony. But what Name would he merit among Men, who in these Instances should say, "he does not believe for certain, or is not assured of what he believes," till in every Case he

° See above, *Essay* ii.



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should be impelled by the Force of *Demonstration*, or the Evidence of *Sense*?

AND indeed, on other Occasions, where *Christianity* is not concerned, the noble Writer can speak in a very different, and much juster Manner. For thus he appeals to Nature, in Proof of the Wisdom and Goodness of the Creator. “ Thus, too, in  
 “ the System of the *bigger* World. *See there*  
 “ the mutual Dependency of Things: The  
 “ Relation of one to another; of the Sun to  
 “ this inhabited Earth; and of the *Earth*  
 “ and *other Planets* to the *Sun!* The *Order,*  
 “ *Union,* and *Coherence* of the *whole!* And  
 “ know, my ingenious Friend, that by this  
 “ *Survey* you will be obliged to own the  
 “ *universal System,* and *coherent Scheme* of  
 “ Things; to be *established on* ABUNDANT  
 “ PROOF, capable of convincing any fair  
 “ and just Contemplator of the Works of  
 “ Nature P.” His Lordship’s Argument is surely just. Yet, is there one to be found among five hundred of those, who are thus convinced of the wise Structure of the Universe, who have ever taken a *Survey* of this immense System, except only in the *Books* and *Diagrams* of *experienced Philosophers*?

P *Moralist*, P. ii. § 4.

How few are capable even of comprehending the *Demonstrations*, on which the Truth of the *Copernican System* is established; or receiving on any other Proof than that of *human Testimony*, “the Relation of the *Earth* and *other Planets* to the *Sun*, the *Order*, *Union*, and *Coherence* of the *whole*?” It cannot be supposed, that even the noble Writer himself ever went thro’ the tedious Process of *Experiment* and *Calculation*, which alone can give absolute *Certainty* in this extensive Subject. Yet we find, he is not in any Degree, “sceptical in the Case;” but very rationally determines, that the Wisdom of the Deity, in “this universal System, is established on abundant Proof, capable of convincing any fair and just Contemplator of the Works of Nature.”

It appears then, that a Confidence in the Veracity of others is not peculiar to the Belief of *Revealed Religion*: The same takes Place in almost every Subject. More particularly, we see, that in the *History of Nature*, as in that of *Revelation*, the Evidence of human *Testimony* is the only Sort of Proof that can be given to Mankind: And whoever allows this Proof, as being “abun-

dant and convincing” in the *one*, and dis-

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allows or despiseth it in the *other*, how self-satisfied soever he may be in his own *Imagination*, is neither a *fair* nor a *just* Contemplator of the Works and the Ways of *Providence*.

IF therefore any Objection lies against the Credibility of the *Scripture History*, it must consist in maintaining, not “that human Testimony is insufficient to support it,” but “that, in Fact, it is not sufficiently supported by the Evidence of human Testimony.” If so; this Defect must arise, either from a Want of *External Evidence*: Or, Secondly, because the Facts, Doctrines, and Composition of the Bible, are such, that no Testimony whatever can convince us that it is a *divine Revelation*.

WITH REGARD to the first of these, “the Testimony on which the Authenticity of the Gospel History is founded:” This the noble Writer hath attacked by a long Chain of Insinuations, in his last *Miscellany*<sup>1</sup>. Where, in the Way of *Dialogue*, he hath indeed amply repaid the Treatment, which in the preceding Chapter he charges upon the *Clergy*. For here he hath introduced two of that *Order*, who, to use his own Ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Misc.* v. c. 3.

pression, “are indeed his very legitimate and  
 “obsequious *Puppets*, who co-operate in the  
 “most officious Manner with the Author,  
 “towards the Display of his own proper  
 “Wit, and the Establishment of his pri-  
 “vate Opinion and Maxims<sup>r</sup>.” “Where,  
 “after the poor Phantom or Shadow of an  
 “Adversary has said as little for his Cause  
 “as can be imagined, and given as many  
 “Opens and Advantages as could be de-  
 “fired, he lies down for good and all; and  
 “passively submits to the killing Strokes  
 “of his unmerciful Conqueror<sup>s</sup>.”

To these Gentlemen the noble Writer  
 assigns the *Herculean* Labour, of proving  
 the Necessity of an absolute *Uniformity* in  
 Opinion. *A hopeful Project indeed!* as his  
 Lordship calls it elsewhere. No Wonder  
 he comes off *Conqueror* in such a Debate.  
 But here lies the Peculiarity of his Conduct:  
 That while he pretends only to prove, that  
 the Scripture cannot be a Foundation for  
 Uniformity of Opinion *in all Things*; he  
 hath thrown out such Insinuations, as evi-  
 dently imply, that there can be no Founda-  
 tion for believing the Truth of *any Thing*  
 the Gospel History contains. He says, he

<sup>r</sup> Ib. c. 2.<sup>s</sup> Ib.



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began by desiring them “to explain the  
 “ Word *Scripture*, and by enquiring into  
 “ the Original of this Collection of anti-  
 “ enter and later Tracts, which in general  
 “ they comprehend under that Title :  
 “ whether it were the *apocryphal* Scripture,  
 “ or the more *canonical*? the *full* or *half-*  
 “ *authorized*? the *doubtful* or the *certain*?  
 “ the *controverted* or *uncontroverted*? the  
 “ *singly* read, or that of *various* Reading?  
 “ The Texts of *these* Manuscripts or of  
 “ *those*? the Transcripts, Copies, Titles,  
 “ Catalogues of this Church and Nation,  
 “ or of *that other*? of this Sect and Party,  
 “ or of another? of those in one Age called  
 “ Orthodox, and in Possession of Power, or  
 “ of those, who, in another, overthrew their  
 “ Predecessor’s Authority; and, in their  
 “ Turn also, assumed the Guardianship and  
 “ Power of holy Things? For how these  
 “ sacred Records were guarded in those  
 “ Ages, might easily (he said) be *imagined*  
 “ by any one who had the least Insight  
 “ into the History of those Times, which  
 “ we called *Primitive*, and those Charac-  
 “ ters of Men, whom we styled Fathers of  
 “ the Church.”

† *Misc.* v. c. 3.

HERE,

HERE, as his Lordship drags us into the *beaten Track of Controversy*, the best Compliment that can be paid the Reader, is to carry him through by the shortest Way. The stale Objections here raked together by the noble Author have been so often, and so fully refuted, by a Variety of excellent Writers, that, to many, it may seem a needless Task, even to touch upon the Subject<sup>v</sup>.

HOWEVER, for the Satisfaction of those who may think it necessary, a summary View of the Evidence is here subjoined.

THE Authenticity, therefore, of the Books of the *New Testament*, appears to be founded on the strongest moral Evidence, because, from the earliest Ages, we find them ascribed to the Apostles and Evangelists, whose Names they bear. Thus St. PAUL'S Epistles are mentioned by St. PETER, and cited by CLEMENS ROMANUS, who lived in the Reign of CLAUDIUS, even before St. PAUL was carried Prisoner to ROME. POLYCARP and IRENÆUS were for some Time contemporary with St. JOHN: They both cite

<sup>v</sup> *Du Pin, Le Clerc, Tillemont, Whitby, Lardner, Phil. Lipsiensis, &c.* and very lately Dr. Fortin, in his learned Remarks on *Ecclesiastical History*.

the four Gospels, and affirm they were all written by the Apostles and Evangelists, whose Names they bear. JUSTIN MARTYR and CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS confirm their Accounts in the following Century: And the great ORIGEN, with whom I shall close the Catalogue, and who lived in the Reign of SEVERUS, in his Book against CELSUS, hath cited *all* the Gospels, and *most*, if not *all* the Epistles, under the Names they now bear: And the Words of the several Citations perfectly agree with those of the New Testament, now in use. Such a full Proof of the Genuineness of these sacred Records, as is not to be parallel'd, concerning any other Book, of *equal* or even of much *less* Antiquity.

The internal Proof of their Genuineness, arising from their Style and Composition, is no less eminent and particular. The Genius of every Book is so perfectly agreeable to the Character and Education of it's respective Author; every Custom described or alluded to, either *Jewish*, *Greek*, or *Roman*, so entirely suited to the Times; every Incident so natural, so occasional, so particular, so perfectly identify'd, that it were the very

Extreme

Extreme of Ignorance and Folly, to raise a Doubt on this Subject.

THAT the Gospel History hath been transmitted to us, pure and uncorrupted, we have no less Reason to believe. 'Tis well known how zealous the primitive Christians were in the Preservation of the Scriptures: We know, they regarded them as their chief and dearest Treasure; and often laid down their Lives, rather than deliver the sacred Records to their Enemies, who used every Art of Terror, to seize and destroy them. Again, the Scriptures were not then locked up from the Laity, as now in the *Roman Church*: But Copies were taken, dispersed, and became immensely numerous. They were universally read at the Times of public Worship, in different Nations of the World. To this we may add, that as *now*, so *then*, different Sects and Parties subsisted, who all appealed to Scripture for Proof of their several Opinions; and these, 'tis evident, must have been so many *Checks* upon each other, to the general Exclusion of Mistake and Fraud \*.

\* The JEWS and SAMARITANS were *Checks* upon each others in the same Manner for the Preservation of the Purity of the *Pentateuch*. The *Samaritan Pentateuch*.



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THIS being the real State of the Case; let us now consider the noble Writer's Questions. He asks, whether by Scripture be understood "the apocryphal or more canonical? the full or half authorized? the doubtful or the certain? the controverted or uncontroverted?" These Questions are nearly synonymous, and one short Reply will clear them all. There are many Books, concerning which there never was *any Doubt*. There are some, concerning which the Doubts have been fully *cleared up*. There are others, concerning which the Doubts have been *confirmed*. Of the first Kind are *all the Gospels*, and *most of the Epistles*: Of the second, are the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, the *second of Peter*, *second and third of John*, that of *Jude*, and the *Apocalypse*: Of the third Kind, are the *apocryphal Books*; therefore indeed so called.

THE noble Author goes on. "The *single read*, or that of *various Reading*?"

*teuch* was printed in the last Century: And, "after *Two Thousand Years* Discord between the two Nations, varies as little from the other, as any *Classic* Author in less Tract of Time has disagreed from itself by the unavoidable Mistakes of so many Transcribers." See *Phil. Lipsiens.*

My

My Lord, if by *single read*, you mean a Book in which there are no various Readings, there are none *single read*: Nor, probably, was there ever any Book *single read*, that went thro' more than one Edition: at least, before the Invention of *Printing*. And as the Scriptures were oftner transcribed than any other Book, so a greater Variety of Readings must naturally take place. But I must inform your Lordship, from the learned PHILELEÜTHERUS LIPSIENSIS, that this is the most illiterate of all Cavils: For that in Fact, we have the *Sense* of those ancient Authors most *entire*, where the various Readings are most numerous: As, of those Authors where the Varieties are *fewest*, the Sense is most mutilated or obscure<sup>y</sup>. But if by *single read*, your Lordship means an authentic Text collected and composed out of the various Readings, I beg leave to inform you, there is no such in the Protestant Churches. They have been too modest to attempt any such thing. Nor does the *Truth* suffer by it: For as the learned Critic, just before quoted, observes, the most faulty Copy of the New Testament now in

<sup>y</sup> For a full View of this Argument, See *Phil. Lipsiens.*

being,

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being, does not obscure one moral Doctrine, or one Article of Faith.

AGAIN the noble Writer goes on, in a Profusion of synonymous Terms: "The  
" Transcripts, Copies, Titles, Catalogues,  
" of this Church or that? of this Sect or  
" Party, or another? of those in one Age  
" called Orthodox, or those who in another  
" Age overthrew them?" What unexpe-  
rienced Person would not imagine from  
hence, that *different* Churches, Sects, or  
Parties, had *each* of them a Bible different  
from the rest? Yet 'tis certain, that how-  
ever these Parties differed in Opinions, we  
find from their Writings now subsisting,  
that they all appealed to one common Scrip-  
ture for their Support.

THE noble Writer takes his Leave by  
paying a Compliment to these primitive  
Writers, called the Fathers of the Church.  
" How these sacred Records were *guarded*  
" in those Ages, might be easily *imagined*,"  
&c.—But to *imagine*, is a much easier  
Task than to *prove*; especially when Ima-  
gination is helped forward by Inclination.  
*Guarded* indeed they were, as we have seen,  
from Interpolation and Falsehood. But if  
he means to insinuate, that they were *guard-*  
*ed*

ed from *Inspection* and *Criticism*, he does great Injustice to Christianity. For whatever Marks of secular Views may be discovered in the Conduct of the ancient Christians in the succeeding Ages, we may safely bid Defiance to the noble Writer's Admirers, to shew any thing of this Kind in the Characters of those to whose Testimony we have here appealed; and on whose Testimony, joined to that of their numerous and ingenuous Contemporaries, the Authenticity of the Gospel-History depends. They were far from acting or writing with a View to temporal Advantage; they were struggling under the Weight of heavy Persecutions; had no Motives to preach or write, but the great Expectation of Happiness hereafter, founded on a firm Belief of that holy Religion, which they propagated with an Effect *almost*, if not *indeed*, *miraculous*.

ON this Occasion I cannot but observe a strange Insinuation thrown out elsewhere by the noble Writer; which, however, is so glaring a Falsehood, that he finds himself obliged to disavow it, even while he labours to impress it on his Reader's Imagination, in all the Colours of Eloquence. "If,  
" says



“ says he, the collateral Testimony of other  
 “ ancient Records were destroyed, there  
 “ would be less Argument or Plea remain-  
 “ ing against that natural Suspicion of those  
 “ who are called Sceptical, that the holy  
 “ Records themselves were no other than  
 “ the pure Invention or artificial Compile-  
 “ ment of an interested Party, in Behalf of  
 “ the *richest Corporation*, and most *profita-*  
 “ *ble Monopoly* in the World<sup>z</sup>.” Now if  
 his Lordship be indeed in earnest in urging  
 this Insinuation, he must believe, that *one*  
*Set* of Men *preached*, and *wrote*, and en-  
 dured *Bonds* and *Imprisonment*, *Torments*,  
 and *Death*; to the End that *another Set* of  
 Men, some *three* or *four hundred Years*  
 after, might enjoy the *rich Corporations* and  
*profitable Monopoly* of *Church Preferments*.  
 How far this may be a Proof of the noble  
 Writer’s *Sagacity*, I shall leave others to de-  
 termine. But if he *believes not* the Insinua-  
 tion, as indeed he seems to *disbelieve* it,  
 then we cannot surely hesitate a Moment  
 concerning the Measure of his *Sincerity*.

THE Gentleman therefore who makes  
 so ridiculous a Figure in the supposed Con-  
 versation, had he not been a poor *obsequious*

<sup>z</sup> *Misc.* v. c. 1.

*Puppet*, might have returned one general and satisfactory Answer to all these extraordinary Questions. He might have desired his Lordship “to chuse which he should “like *best* or *worst* among all these contro- “verted Copies, various Readings, Manu- “scripts, and Catalogues adopted by what- “ever Church, Sect, or Party.” Nay, he might have desired him to chuse any of the almost infinite Number of Translations made of these Books in distant Countries and Ages : And taking that to be the Scripture he appealed to, might safely have relied on it, as amply sufficient for all the great Purposes of *Religion* and *Christianity*.

## SECTION IV.

SINCE therefore the *Scripture History* appears to be supported by *higher Degrees* of human Testimony, than any other ancient Writing ; the only Objection of real Weight against it, must be drawn from its *internal Structure* ; from the Facts it *relates*, the Doctrines it *inculcates*, or the Form of its *Composition*.

THE *Facts* related, being as it were the Foundation of all, will naturally come first under

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under Consideration. “ Now these, say  
 “ the Enemies of Christianity, are *miracu-*  
 “ *lous or out of Nature*, and therefore ab-  
 “ surd: For *as they can prove nothing*, so it  
 “ is impossible that Accounts of this Kind  
 “ could be so essentially mingled with a  
 “ Religion that should come from GOD.”

ON this Foundation the noble Writer  
 hath taken frequent Occasion to deride what  
 he calls the “ Mockery of Miracles<sup>a</sup>,” par-  
 ticularly those of Our Saviour<sup>b</sup>. Here we  
 shall find him striking at the very Basis of  
 all revealed Religion, while he asserts, that,  
 even supposing the Truth of the Facts,  
 “ Miracles cannot witness either for GOD  
 “ or Men, nor are any Proof either of Di-  
 “ vinity or Revelation<sup>c</sup>.” But that his Ar-  
 gument may be fairly represented, let it  
 appear in his own Words. “ The Con-  
 “ templation of the Universe, its Laws  
 “ and Government, was (I aver’d) the only  
 “ Means which could establish the found  
 “ Belief of a Deity. For what though  
 “ innumerable Miracles from every Part  
 “ assailed the Sense, and gave the trembling  
 “ Soul no Respite? What though the Sky  
 “ should suddenly open, and all kinds of

<sup>a</sup> *Misc.* ii. c. 2.    <sup>b</sup> *Ib.* c. 3.    <sup>c</sup> *Mor.* p. ii. § 5. *passim.*

“ Prodiges appear, Voices be heard, or  
 “ Characters read? What would this evince  
 “ more, than that there were certain Powers  
 “ could do all this? But what Powers;  
 “ whether one or more; whether superior  
 “ or subaltern; mortal or immortal; wise or  
 “ foolish; just or unjust; good or bad: This  
 “ would still remain a Myſtery; as would  
 “ the *true Intention*, the *Infallibility* or *Cer-*  
 “ *tainty* of whatever *theſe Powers aſſerted*<sup>d</sup>.”

’TIS remarkable, that the noble Writer pretends here only to ſhew, that Miracles are no Proof of the *Exiſtence* of GOD: Yet in the Concluſion of his Argument, he brings it home to the Caſe of *Revelation*: To “ the true *Intention*, the *Infallibility* or “ *Certainty* of whatever theſe Powers AS-  
 “ SERTED.” This is clearly the Scope of his Argument: And ſo indeed hath it been underſtood by his *Under-workmen* in *Inſidelity*, who have with great Industry retailed this Objection. As it is a Circumſtance of the laſt Importance in regard to the Truth of *Chriſtianity*, it cannot be an unreaſonable Taſk, to ſhew in the full-eſt Manner the Vanity and Error of this trite Cavil.

BUT, inſtead of conſidering *ſingle Acts* of ſupernatural, or *miraculous Power*, as be-

<sup>d</sup> Ib.



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ing performed in Attestation of any particular Doctrine, (which hath been the general Way of treating this Question) 'tis my Design to consider as one Object, "that vast Series  
" and Concatenation of miraculous Acts,  
" recorded in the Old and New Testament,  
" wrought thro' a long Succession of Ages,  
" for the Carrying on, Support, and Com-  
" pletion of the *Christian Dispensation*."

WITH this View therefore let us first consider the Means by which Mankind are justly convinced of the *Being* of a *God*. Now this Conviction, 'tis allowed by all, ariseth from an *Union* of *Power*, *Wisdom*, and *Goodness*, displayed in the visible Creation. From this Union alone arises the Idea of an *All-perfect Being*: So that a Failure in any of these three essential Circumstances, would destroy the Idea of a *GOD*. The Goodness of the Deity is seen in the designed End or Purpose of the Creation, which is, "The  
" Happiness of all his Creatures:" His Wisdom is seen, in the proper Means employed for the Accomplishment of this great End: His Power fulfills what Goodness had intended and Wisdom contrived, by putting these Means in Execution. Hence then alone we obtain the Idea of a Divinity, from a Union of perfect Goodness, Wisdom, and Power.

'TIS

'TIS likewise, I think, acknowledged by all *Theists*, that, as to the divine Power, it may work its Intentions, either by a continued and uninterrupted Superintendency, or Agency on Matter, or by impressing certain original and permanent Qualities upon it. Which of these two Kinds of Operation may really prevail in Nature, is perhaps beyond the Reach of human Knowledge, clearly to determine. The *Newtonian* Philosophy indeed renders it highly probable, that the *continued Agency* of God prevails. But a Determination in this Subject is indeed of no Consequence; since, which soever of these Methods be ordained, the *divine Power* is equally display'd while it ministers to the Ends of *Goodness* and *Wisdom*.

'TIS equally plain, that, if the divine Goodness should determine to raise Mankind to *higher Degrees* of *Knowledge* and *Virtue*, than what they could attain to by the pre-established Laws of Nature; or to free them from *Defects* and *Miseries*, occasioned by any incidental and *voluntary* Corruptions, *posterior* to their *Creation*; 'tis equally plain, I say, that an Exertion of *supernatural Power* for the Accomplishment

of *this End*, would be a *Display, Proof, or Revelation* of the *Divinity*, entirely similar to that which arises from the Works of Nature. For both *here*, and in the Works of *Nature*, the Proof of the Divinity ariseth, not from mere uniform Acts of Power, but from the *Subserviency* of divine *Power* to this one great End, the *Production* of human *Happiness*. Here then, the noble Writer's Objection is essentially defective: What he affirms is either *false*, or *foreign* to the Question. For if we suppose (and the present Question is put upon this Footing only) that the miraculous or supernatural Effects are evidently subservient to similar Ends of *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, as appear in the Works of the Creation; then sure, we have equal Reason to conclude, and be convinced, that they are the Effects of *one Power*; — of one *superior* and *immortal* Power; — of one Power, *wise, just, and good*; — In a word, of that Power, which first brought Nature into Being, established Laws for the Welfare of his Creatures; and, when the Happiness of his Creatures requires an Interposition, gives still further Evidences of his *Goodness, Wisdom, and Omnipotence*.

*nipotence*, by controuling those Laws which himself had established.

LET us now apply these Principles to the *Christian* Dispensation. “ This, we  
“ say, was a Scheme of Providence, which  
“ still continues operating; whereby the  
“ Deity determined to raise fallen and cor-  
“ rupted Man to higher Degrees of *Know-*  
“ *ledge, Virtue, and Happiness*, than what  
“ by Nature he could have attained.” In  
this Design, the *divine* GOODNESS is emi-  
nently displayed.

THE Means, whereby this great Design was accomplished, was, “ by separating a  
“ peculiar People from the rest of Man-  
“ kind; not for their own Sakes, but for  
“ the Sake of all; by preserving them  
“ amidst their Enemies; by leading them  
“ forth into a distant Country; by establish-  
“ ing there the Worship of the *one* God, in  
“ Opposition to the Idolatries of surround-  
“ ing Nations: Till, when the Fulness of  
“ Time should come, and Mankind be ca-  
“ pable of receiving a more perfect Reve-  
“ lation, a Saviour JESUS CHRIST should be  
“ sent, to free Mankind from the Power of  
“ Ignorance and Sin; to bring Life and Im-  
“ mortality to Light, and communicate to



“ all Men the most perfect practical Know-  
 “ ledge of the true God, and every moral  
 “ Duty.” In this Dispensation is no less  
 eminently displayed the *divine WISDOM*.

BUT what less than Omnipotence itself  
 could secure the perfect Execution of a Plan  
 so *mighty* and *extensive*? Which reaching  
 through the Compass of many, and distant  
 Ages, must combat the *Power*, controul  
 the *Prejudices*, and work its Way thro’ the  
*discordant Manners* and *Opinions* of all the  
 Kingdoms of the Earth. On this Account  
 the immediate Exertion of divine Power  
 was necessary for its *Proof*, *Support*, and  
*Completion*. Accordingly, we find its om-  
 nipotent Author, carrying on the Scheme of  
*Wisdom* and *Goodness*, with a *mighty Hand*,  
 and an *out-stretched Arm*. “ He sent a  
 “ Man before his People, even JOSEPH,  
 “ who was sold to be a Bond-Servant: He  
 “ increased his People exceedingly, and  
 “ made them stronger than their Enemies.  
 “ He sent MOSES his Servant, and AARON :  
 “ And these shewed his *Tokens* among them;  
 “ and *Wonders* in the Land of *Ham*. He  
 “ sent Darknefs, and it was dark; and turned  
 “ their Waters into Blood. Their Land  
 “ brought forth Frogs, yea, even in their

“ King’s Chambers. He gave them Hail-  
 “ stones for Rain, and Flames of Fire in  
 “ their Land. He spake the Word, and  
 “ the Locusts came innumerable, and de-  
 “ voured the Fruit of their Ground. He  
 “ smote all the First-born in their Land,  
 “ even the chief of all their Strength. He  
 “ brought forth his People from among  
 “ them : He spread out a Cloud to be a  
 “ Covering, and Fire to give them Light in  
 “ the Night-Season. He rebuked the *Red-*  
 “ *Sea* also, and it was dried up ; so he led  
 “ them thro’ the Deep as thro’ a Wilder-  
 “ ness. At their Desire he brought Quails  
 “ and filled them with the Bread of Heaven.  
 “ He opened the Rock of Stone, so that  
 “ Rivers ran in dry Places.—Yet within a  
 “ while they forgot his Works, and tempt-  
 “ ed God in the Desert : Then the Earth  
 “ opened, and swallowed up *Dathan*, and  
 “ covered the Congregation of *Abiram*.  
 “ They joined themselves unto *Baal-Peor*,  
 “ and provoked him with their own Inven-  
 “ tions ; so the Plague was great amongst  
 “ them : Then, being chastised, they turn-  
 “ ed to their God. He led them over *Jor-*  
 “ *dan* ; the Waters divided to let them pass.  
 “ He discomfited their Enemies : At his

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“ Word the Sun abode in the Midst of  
 “ Heaven; and the Moon stood still, and  
 “ hasted not to go down for a whole Day.  
 “ So he gave the Kingdoms of *Canaan* to  
 “ be an Heritage unto his People; that  
 “ all the Nations of the World might  
 “ know that the Hand of the Lord is  
 “ mighty, and that they might fear the  
 “ Lord continually.”

HERE then we see, that this mighty Series of miraculous Acts recorded in the Old Testament, being the very Means of preserving and separating the ISRAELITES from the rest of Mankind, and at the same time designed to impress them with a lasting Idea of the uncontrollable and immediate Power of God; were generally awakening Instances of Omnipotence, often of Justice and Terror, in the Punishment of cruel EGYPTIANS, rebellious JEWS, and idolatrous Nations.

IN pursuing this vast Concatenation of divine Power through the Series of Miracles recorded in the New Testament, and wrought for the same End, the Completion of *Christianity*, we shall find them of a very different Nature and Complexion: Yet still, admirably suited to accomplish the same designed Ends of Providence. For now the *Fulness*  
 of

*of Time* was come, in which the Wisdom of the Deity ordained the immediate Establishment of a Religion of perfect Purity and boundless Love. Accordingly, the Series of miraculous Acts wrought for this great End, were such as must naturally engage Mankind to a favourable Reception of *Christianity*; were the very Image and Transcript, expressed the very Genius of that most amiable Religion they were brought to support and establish; in a word, were continued Instances of Omnipotence, joined with *unbounded Charity*, divine *Compassion*, and *Benevolence*.

THE Birth of JESUS was proclaimed by a glorious Apparition of superior Beings, who declared the End of his coming in that divine Song of Triumph, “Glory to God  
“in the highest, and on Earth Peace, Good-  
“Will towards Men!” His Life was one continued Scene of divine Power, Wisdom, and Beneficence. He gave Eyes to the Blind; Ears to the Deaf; and Feet to the Lame: He raised the Dead to Life, rebuked the raging Elements, and made the Winds and Seas obey him. When to fulfill the Decrees of Heaven, and complete the great Work of Man’s Redemption, he submitted to an ignominious Death, the  
Veil



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Veil of the Temple was rent in twain : A general Darkneſs involved, and an Earthquake ſhook, the City. The ſame Omnipotence by which he wrought his Miracles, raiſed him from the Grave ; and after a ſhort Stay on Earth, during which he ſtrengthened and confirmed his deſponding Followers, translated him to Heaven. And now, a new and *unexpected* Scene of divine and miraculous Power opened on Mankind, for the full Eſtabliſhment of *Chriſtianity*. The Spirit of God came down, and dwelt with the Apoſtles ; they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and ſpake with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance. They were inveſted with ſupernatural Power to heal Diſeaſes ; were impowered to ſtrike dead the deceitful ANANIAS and SAPPHIRA ; and when imprifoned were delivered by the immediate Hand of GOD. By theſe Means, Chriſtianity gained a numerous Train of Proſelytes among the JEWS ; but the great Work of converting the Gentiles was not yet begun. To this End the Apoſtle PAUL was deſtined ; and converted to Chriſtianity by an amazing Act of ſupernatural and divine Power. In this important Miniſtry he was frequently preſerved  
by

by the miraculous Care of Providence; did himself perform stupendous Acts of Power and Beneficence; by these Means converting Multitudes among the Gentiles, and planting Christianity in the most knowing and polished Nations of the Earth.

To this irresistible Chain of Evidence, arising from the miraculous Exertion of divine Power, we may add another *collateral* Proof, arising from the *miraculous* Emanations of divine *Fore-knowledge*, recorded in the Bible, and delivered in PROPHECY through a Series of Ages, all centering in the same Point, the foretelling the *Completion* of this immense Plan of *Wisdom* and *Goodness*. These *Predictions* were fulfilled in the Advent, Life, Death, and Resurrection of Our *Saviour*; who himself foretold the Success of his Apostles among the Gentiles, and the final Dissolution of the Jewish Polity. This came to pass in the Destruction of the *Temple*: And when a bitter Enemy to Christianity attempted to make void the Decrees of Heaven in rebuilding this *Temple*, (the only Circumstance of Union that could ever make the JEWS *once more a People*) the very Foundations were rent in Pieces by an Earthquake,

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Earthquake, and the mad Assailants against *Omnipotence* buried in the Ruins.

FROM this mighty Union, therefore, ariseth a Proof fimilar to that which we obtain from the Works of Nature. For as in *these* we see the Happiness of the Creation *intended, planned, and produced*, and from hence discover the Agency of the Deity; so in the Progress and Completion of *Christianity* we find a parallel Display of the divine Attributes: We see the Advancement of Man's Happiness *determined* by divine GOODNESS, *planned* by divine WISDOM, *foretold* by divine KNOWLEDGE, *accomplished* by divine POWER: And hence, as in *Nature*, obtain a full *Manifestation, Proof, or Revelation* of the DEITY.

As this seems to be the true Light, in which the Evidence arising from the Scripture-Miracles ought to be placed, it may be proper now to add a few Observations on what hath been offered on this Subject, both by the *Defenders* and the *Adversaries* of *Christianity*.

I. As to the Degree of Proof or Evidence arising from a *single Miracle* in Support of any *particular Doctrine*; whatever Force it may carry; 'tis a Point, which we

are by no means at present concerned to determine: Because, as we have seen, in the Progress of the Christian Dispensation, there is a vast *Series* or *Chain*, all *uniting* in one common End. It might be considered, in the same Manner, by those who write in Proof of the Being of a God, “ What Evidence of his Being would arise from a “ single *Vegetable* or *Animal*, unconnected “ with the rest of the Creation.” But however satisfying a single Fact of this Kind may be to impartial Minds, it were surely weak to argue on this Foundation *only*, while we can appeal to that mighty *Union of Design* which appears in the Works of Nature. It should therefore seem, that the Defenders of Christianity have generally set this Evidence in too *detached* and *particular* a Light: For tho’ the Proof arising from a single Miracle, in Support of a particular Doctrine, may be of sufficient Force to convince an equitable Mind; yet sure, ’tis infinitely stronger and more satisfactory, if we *view at once* the whole *Chain* of Miracles by which the great Scheme of *Christianity* was propagated, as *one* vast *Object*: Because in this View, we discover innumerable Circumstances of *mutual Relation* and *Agreement*,



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*Agreement*, similar to those which are Proofs of *final Causes* in the natural World: In a Word, we discover that *Union of Design*, that Concurrence of infinite *Goodness, Wisdom, and Power*, which is the sure Indication of the *Divinity*.

II. IF in a Dispensation thus proved to be from God by all these concurring Signatures of Divinity, any *incidental Circumstances* should be found, which are *unaccountable* to human Reason; 'tis the Part of human Reason to *acquiesce* in this mysterious and unknown Part, from what is clear and known. Because in a System or Dispensation planned by infinite Wisdom, there must of necessity be something which finite Wisdom cannot comprehend. This the noble Writer allows with regard to the Works of Nature. “ If, saith he, in this “ *mighty Union*, there be such Relations of “ Parts one to another as are not easily discovered; if on this Account, the *End* and “ *Use* of Things does not every where appear, there is *no Wonder*; since 'tis indeed no more than what *must happen* of “ *necessity*. Nor could supreme Wisdom “ have otherwise ordered it. For in an Infinity of Things thus relative, a *Mind* “ *which*

“ which sees not infinitely, can see nothing  
“ fully<sup>e</sup>.”

III. HENCE therefore may be evinced the Vanity of this Cavil, “ that nothing can  
“ be proved to be a divine Revelation which  
“ is not discoverable by human Reason ;  
“ since whatever is reasonable needs no Mi-  
“ racle to confirm it, and whatever is be-  
“ yond the Reach of Reason cannot be made  
“ to appear reasonable by any Miracle what-  
“ soever<sup>f</sup>.” Hence, I say, the Vanity of this Cavil is evident. Because, as in Nature, so in Revelation, the full Evidence of Divinity is founded, not on single detached Circumstances, but on a mighty Union or Concatenation of Facts, implying the most perfect *Wisdom, Power, and Goodness*. This Foundation being once laid, if any thing incidental in either Case appears unaccountable as to its *End* or *Use*, it is naturally and properly involved, or taken in as a *Part* of this *immense Design*, which, through its vast Extent, must needs be *incomprehensible* to *human Reason*.

IV. As to the Objection, “ that Miracles may be wrought by inferior or sub-

<sup>e</sup> *Moralists*, P. ii. § 4.      <sup>f</sup> An Objection urged by *Tindal, Morgan, and others*.

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“ altern Beings :” This vanishes at once with regard to the *Christian* Dispensation, on the Evidence as here stated. For as the miraculous Acts of Power recorded in the Bible were wrought for the Support and Accomplishment of a Dispensation full of Goodness and Wisdom, we have the same Proof that they were the Work of the *Supreme God*, as we have, *that Nature is so.* ’Tis true, that in either Case, for ought we know, inferior or subaltern Beings may have been commissioned by the Supreme, as immediate Agents. But this Possibility, in either Case, can be a Matter of no Consequence to us, while it is manifest that the delegated Beings, whatever they might be, acted in full *Subserviency* to the *Goodness, Wisdom, and Omnipotence* of the one *eternal GOD.*

V. To the noble Writer’s Objection, “ that, while we labour to unhinge Nature, “ we bring Confusion on the World, and “ destroy that Order from whence the one “ infinite and perfect Principle is known<sup>s</sup> ;” —the Reply is easy and convincing. For while the supernatural Power is directed to advance the Happiness of Mankind, ’tis so

<sup>s</sup> *Moral.* P. ii. § 5.

far from destroying any Principle from whence the one perfect Being is known; that, on the contrary, it gives us still clearer and more satisfying Notices of the divine Providence. 'Tis allowed on all Hands, that there are Imperfections in the Creation: And tho' there may be, and doubtless are, good Reasons unknown to us, why these should not in every Instance be removed by a particular Exertion of supernatural Power; yet when the divine Wisdom sees fit thus to interpose, for the further Advancement of his Creatures Happiness, can any thing be more irrational than to say, that "this is bringing Confusion on the World?" The only Question is, Whether Happiness shall be destroyed for the Sake of a pre-established Law; or a pre-established Law be suspended for the Sake of Happiness?" In other Words, Whether Power shall be subservient to Goodness, or Goodness yield to Power? A Question which no sound Theist can be left at a Loss to answer. As therefore the Exertion of divine Power, in Nature, is for the Production of Happiness; the miraculous Exertion of Power, for the further Advancement of Man's Happiness, is so far from "bring-



“ing Confusion on the World, either the  
 “ Chaos and Atoms of the *Atheists*, or the  
 “ Magick and Dæmons of the *POLYTHE-*  
 “ *ISTS*,” that it is even the clearest *Proof*,  
 or *Revelation* of the *DIVINITY*.

VI. WITHOUT this apparent Subservi-  
 ency to the Designs of Wisdom and Good-  
 ness, all Accounts of miraculous Facts must  
 be highly improbable. Because we have  
 no Reason to believe that the Deity will  
 ever counteract the established Laws of  
 Nature; unless for the Sake of advancing  
 the Happiness of his Creatures.

VII. ON this Account, most of the pre-  
 tended Miracles recorded in the *Heathen*  
 Story, are highly *improbable*. For it doth  
 not appear, they were ever said to have  
 been wrought in any *Series of Chain*; they  
 never were *directed* to the Accomplishment  
 of any *one End*, through *different Periods* of  
 Time: Were frequently far from being  
*beneficent*: Seldom accommodated even to  
 any *rational Purpose*; but generally, mere  
 pretended Acts of *arbitrary* and *unmeaning*  
*Power*. Thus they are essentially distin-  
 guished from the Scripture Miracles; and  
 are utterly destitute of that *INTERNAL*  
*Evidence*

*Evidence* which ariseth from an *Union* of *Design*.

VIII. HENCE we may clearly discover the Reason, why the wiser Heathens ridiculed the *Jews*, even to a *Proverb*, for their extravagant Regard to *Miracles*. They knew their own to be *absurd* and *irrational*; this at once prevented them from enquiring into the real Nature of the *Jewish* *Miracles*; and at the same time, led them to *deride* and *reject* these boasted *Wonders*, as being no better than their own.

IX. BUT on the Evidence as here stated, the Scripture *Miracles* become even *probable*, from the Circumstances under which they are recorded. As they are beneficent: As they were wrought through *different Periods* of Time in *Support* of one Dispensation full of *Wisdom* and *Goodness*: As it is highly improbable that this Dispensation could have been *completed* in all its immense *Variety* of *Circumstances* without such an immediate *Interposition* of divine *Power*.

X. AND now we shall plainly see the Reason why we reject the Accounts of *Miracles* given by Heathen Writers, while we believe the other Parts of their Story; and yet cannot reject the *Jewish* and *Chris-*

*tian* Miracles, without rejecting at the same time the whole History in which they are contained. For in the first Case, as the Miracles are *useless, unmeaning, and unconnected* with the rest of the Facts, it appears, they are merely political. But the *Jewish* and *Christian* Miracles make an essential Part of the several Events related; they are strongly connected with this great HISTORY of PROVIDENCE, and are indeed *the very Means* by which Providence completed its gracious Purpose, “the Establishment of Christianity.” We cannot therefore reject these *miraculous* Accounts without rejecting all the *natural* Events with which they are thus intimately *interwoven*: And this we cannot do, without destroying every received Principle of Assent, and shaking the Faith of all ancient History.

I cannot conclude this Argument without transcribing a noble Passage from the Book of *Wisdom*, where several of these Truths are finely illustrated: And which may convince us, how just an Idea the JEWS entertained of *miraculous Interposition*, beyond what their Enemies have industriously represented. The Writer, after recounting the stupendous Chain of Miracles wrought



wrought for the Deliverance of the chosen People, concludes thus, “ In all Things, “ O Lord, thou hast magnified and glorified thy People, and hast not despised to “ assist them in every Time and Place,— “ for every Creature in its Kind was fashioned a-new, and served in their own “ *Offices enjoined them*, that thy Children “ might be kept without Hurt.—For the “ Things of the Earth were changed into “ Things of the Water, and the Thing that “ did swim went upon the Ground. The “ Fire had Power in the Water, contrary “ to his own Virtue ; and the Water forgot “ his own Kind to quench.—Thus the “ Elements were *changed* among themselves “ by a *Kind of Harmony*, as when one *Tune* “ is *changed* upon an *Instrument of Music*, “ and the *Melody still remaineth*.”

Thus he nobly expresseth the *Subserviency* of the *Elements* to the *divine Will*: and under the Image of a musical Instrument, which the skilful Master *tunes, changes,* and *directs* to the *one Purpose of Harmony*, he aptly and beautifully represents the *whole Creation* as an *Instrument* in the Hands of GOD, which he *orders, varies,* and *con-*



trouls, to the one unvary'd End of HAPPINESS.

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HAVING vindicated the Scripture *Miracles* from the noble Writer's Objections; and shewn that they are so far from being *useless* or *absurd*, that the grand Scheme of Providence could neither have been *evidenced* nor *accomplished* without them; we have destroyed the chief Foundation on which his Lordship hath attempted to fix his Cavils against Christianity on another Subject; I mean that of *Enthusiasm*; which naturally offers itself next to our Consideration. As this is the noble Writer's favourite Topic, we may reasonably expect to see him shine in it: And in one Respect indeed he does. He never touches on the Subject, but he riseth above himself: His Imagination kindles; he catches the Fire he describes; and his Page glows with all the Ardors of this high Passion.

IT will, I presume, be unnecessary to make any Remarks on the large and eminent List of *Enthusiasts*, Poets, Orators, Heroes, Legislators, Musicians, and Philosophers,

sophers, which his Lordship cites from PLATO. He may call them *Enthusiasts*, if it seem good to him; and may justly rank himself in the Number too, if by that Name be understood no more, than a Man of uncommon Strength or Warmth of Imagination; for this indeed is the requisite Foundation of Excellence, in any of the Characters here enumerated.

THE only Circumstance we are concerned *calmly* to examine, is that of *religious Enthusiasm*: Chiefly, to point out the essential Qualities and Characteristics which distinguish *this* from *divine Inspiration*: Hence to prove, that our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* were not *religious Enthusiasts*, as the noble Writer hath suggested.

'Tis indeed, as his Lordship observes, "a great Work to judge of Spirits, whether they be of God." We shall willingly join him in this Principle too, "that in order to this End we must antecedently judge our own Spirit, whether it be of Reason or sound Sense, free of every byassing Passion, every giddy Vapour, or melancholy Fume. This is the first Knowledge, and previous Judgment; to understand ourselves, and know what

U 4

" Spirit

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“ Spirit we are of. Afterwards we may  
 “ judge the Spirit in others, consider what  
 “ their personal Merit is, and prove the  
 “ Validity of their Testimony by the Soli-  
 “ dity of their Brain.” On this Principle  
 then let the Cause be determined.

IN examining this Subject, therefore, we shall find, First, that in *some* Respects, *Enthusiasm* must, from it's Nature, always resemble *divine Inspiration*. Secondly, that in others it hath generally attempted a further Resemblance, but hath always betrayed itself. Thirdly, that in other Circumstances it is diametrically opposite to divine Inspiration, and void even of all seeming Resemblance.

FIRST, *Enthusiasm* must, from it's very Nature, in some Respects, always resemble *divine Inspiration*. They both have the *Deity* for their Object; and consequently must both be attended with a devout Turn of Mind. They must both be subject to strong and unusual Impressions; the one *supernatural*; the other *præternatural*, that is, beyond the ordinary Efforts of Nature, tho' really produced by Nature: *These*, thro' their uncommon Force, will often resemble, and not easily be distinguished from, *those*  
 which

which are the real Effect of *supernatural* Power. This Circumstance deserves a particular Attention : For these two Qualities, which are common to both, have induced many to reject the very Notion of divine Inspiration, as mere Enthusiasm. Whereas we see, that, supposing such a Thing as divine Inspiration, it cannot but resemble Enthusiasm in these two Characters.

BUT tho' it were strange, if *Counterfeits* did not hit off some Features of their genuine *Originals*; yet it were more strange, if they should be able to adopt them all, by such a perfect Imitation as to prevent their being detected.

THERE are, therefore, secondly, other Circumstances in which *Enthusiasm* hath generally attempted a further Resemblance of divine *Inspiration*, but in these hath always betrayed itself *spurious*.

THE first of this Kind is, "A Pretence to, and Persuasion of the Power of working *Miracles*." This Persuasion must needs be natural to the Enthusiast; because he imagines himself in all Things highly favoured of Heaven: The Notion of a Communication of *divine Power* will therefore be among the chief of his *Deliriums*.

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In this the Enthusiast hath been detected, *sometimes* by the *Absurdity* of the Miracle attempted, *always* by his *Inability* to perform what he proposed. There is scarce an *Absurdity* so great, but what hath some Time or other been aimed at by Enthusiasts, in the Way of miraculous Power. Their Attempts have ever been void of all *rational Intention*, void of *Benevolence*, void of *common Discernment*: And hence manifestly the Effects of a heated Imagination. That they have always failed in their Attempts is no less known. But these are Truths so willingly allowed by the Enemies of Religion, that we need not enlarge on them. On the contrary, we have seen, the Miracles of the Gospel are *rational, beneficent, united* in one great *End*; performed before *Numbers*, before *Enemies*; recorded by *Eye-Witnesses*. His Lordship indeed objects or insinuates, that the Testimony even of Eye-Witnesses cannot in this Case be a Foundation for Assent, unless we know them to have been “ free both from any “ particular Enthusiasm, and a general Turn “ to Melancholy.” But with regard to the Miracles of the Gospel, we know that many were converted by them from their former Prejudices;

Prejudices; and therefore could not possibly be under the Influence of the *Christian* Enthusiasm, supposing it such. And as to their being free from *Melancholy*; for this we may safely appeal to the rational and consistent Accounts given by the sacred Penmen. Melancholy and Enthusiasm must ever produce inconsistent Visions. For a Proof that the Scripture Miracles are not of this Nature, we appeal to what hath been already said on this Subject in the preceding Section.

BUT there is *one* miraculous Gift, *the Gift of Tongues*, which hath more generally been supposed the peculiar Effect of Inspiration. We have an Account of this Kind recorded in holy Writ<sup>1</sup>. And this Account the noble Writer hath thought it expedient to turn to Ridicule; by representing this supposed miraculous Gift, as the mere Effect of strong *Melancholy*, and natural *Inebriation*. To this Purpose, having observed from Dr. MORE, that “the Vapours and  
“ Fumes of Melancholy partake of the Na-  
“ ture of Wine;” he adds, “One might  
“ conjecture from hence, that the malicious  
“ Opposers of early Christianity were not un-

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii.

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“ versed in this Philosophy ; when they so-  
 “ phistically objected against the apparent  
 “ Force of the divine Spirit speaking in di-  
 “ vers Languages, and attributed it *to the*  
 “ *Power of new Wine*<sup>k</sup>.” Agreeably to this  
 insinuated Charge, he tells us of “ A Gen-  
 “ tleman who has writ lately in Defence of  
 “ revived Prophecy, and has since fallen  
 “ himself into the prophetic Ecstasies.”  
 The noble Writer adds, “ I saw him lately  
 “ under an *Agitation* (as they call it) *ut-*  
 “ *tering Prophecy* in a pompous *Latin Style*,  
 “ of which, out of his Ecstasy, it seems,  
 “ *he is wholly incapable*<sup>l</sup>.”

HERE we may see, how ready some  
 People are to strain at a *Gnat*, and yet swal-  
 low a *Camel*. The noble Writer ridicules  
 the Gift of Tongues from *divine Inspira-*  
*tion*, as absurd and impossible : Yet he be-  
 lieves, you see, or *affects* to believe, that  
 this Man could speak *Latin* by the sole Force  
 of *Imagination* and *Enthusiasm*. A com-  
 pendious Method this, of learning Lan-  
 guages ! I have somewhere met with a very  
 rational Remark, That whereas it was charg-  
 ed by FESTUS upon St. PAUL, “ that  
 “ *Learning* had made him *mad*,” this No-

<sup>k</sup> Misc. ii. § 2.      <sup>l</sup> Lett. on Enthuf. § 6.

tion inverts the Charge; for thus, "*Madness* may make a Man *learned*."

BUT leaving his Lordship's Admirers to determine which is the greater Miracle, a *Gift of Tongues* from *God*, or a *Gift of Tongues* from *Melancholy*; 'tis our Part to shew the essential Characters of Distinction between the *Reality* of *one*, and the *Pretences* of the *other*. Now this will appear most evident, if we compare them, both in their *Manner* and their *End*. As to the *Manner* of this *new prophecying Sect*, the noble Writer himself tells us, it was that of *Ecstasy* and *Convulsion*; and that he saw this Gentleman under an Agitation when he had the *Gift of Tongues*. As to the *End* pretended in this miraculous *Gift*; It appears there was really *none*: For the *pompous Latin Style* was uttered among a People, who, in general, understood the *English Language only*: It could therefore serve to no *rational Purpose*. On the contrary, it appears that the miraculous *Gift of Tongues* conferred on the Apostles, was *rational* both in its *Manner* and its *End*. There is not the least Hint of its having been attended with *Ecstasies* or *Convulsions*; nay, it appears from the



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the Account, that it could not have been so attended: And from the *Occasion* it appears how proper it was, with regard to its *End*. The Recital is noble and rational: Let it answer for itself. “ And there were  
 “ dwelling at *Jerusalem*, *Jews*, devout  
 “ Men out of *every Nation* under Heaven.—  
 “ And they were all amazed, and marvelled,  
 “ saying one to another, Behold, are not  
 “ all these which speak, *Galileans*? And  
 “ how hear we *every Man* in our own *Tongue*,  
 “ wherein we were born? *Parthians*, and  
 “ *Medes*, and *Elamites*, the *Dwellers* in *Me-*  
 “ *sopotomia*, and in *Judea*, and *Cappadocia*,  
 “ in *Pontus* and *Asia*, *Phrygia* and *Pam-*  
 “ *phylia*, in *Egypt*, and in the *Parts* of *Libya*  
 “ about *Cyrene*: And *Strangers* of *Rome*;  
 “ *Jews* and *Profelytes*, *Cretes* and *Arabians*;  
 “ we do hear them speak in our *Tongues*  
 “ *the wonderful Words* of *God*!” How just  
 an Effort of divine Power! which should  
 at once give *Instruction* to those who most  
 wanted it; and be the *natural Means* of  
 conveying and dispersing the glad Tidings of  
 the *Gospel* to *every Nation* under *Heaven*!—  
 It should seem probable, therefore, that the  
 Men who “ mocked and said, These Men are  
 “ full of new Wine,” were the *Natives* of  
*Judea*.

*Judea*. For PETER, we find, immediately arose, and addressed himself to these in particular. “Ye Men of *Judea*,” &c. And it was natural for them to entertain this Suspicion; because they neither understood what the Apostles uttered, nor could imagine how they should obtain a Knowledge of so many various Tongues. They must, therefore, naturally suspect, that the Apostles were uttering *unmeaning Sounds*: And this they regarded as the Effect of *Wine*.

ANOTHER remarkable Circumstance, in which Enthusiasts have often pretended to resemble the divinely inspired, is, “the Gift of Prophecy.” Which, indeed, is no more than another Kind of Miracle. In this too, Enthusiasm hath always betrayed itself. First, and principally, with regard to the Event. The frequent Attempts of this Kind, and their perpetual *Failure*, need not here be enumerated: They are known sufficiently. This cannot be charged on the *Apostles* with the least Appearance of Reason: For it is a Gift they hardly ever pretended to. Our *Saviour* indeed foretold many and great Events—the Defection of PETER; his own Sufferings, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension; the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Persecution

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Persecution of his Disciples, the Propagation of his Religion among the Gentiles, the approaching Miseries and final Destruction of *Jerusalem*. Now all these Events were clearly accomplished: So far, therefore, are they from proving him an *Entusiast*, that they demonstrate him possessed of *divine Fore-Knowledge*.

BUT besides the *Event*, there is a notable Circumstance in the *Manner*, which hath ever distinguished *real* from *pretended*, *true* from *false* Prophecy: And which the noble Writer's groundless Affirmations have made it necessary to insist on.

HE says, "I find by present Experience, as well as by all Histories sacred and profane, that the Operation of this Spirit is every where the *same* as to the *bodily Organ*." In Confirmation of this he cites a Passage from the Gentleman who was subject to the prophetic Ecstasies, which informs us, "that the ancient Prophets had the Spirit of God upon them under Ecstasy, with divers strange Gestures of Body denominating them Madmen (or Entusts) as appears evidently, says he, in the Instances of *Balaam, Saul, David,*

<sup>m</sup> *Lett. on Enth.* § 6.

"*Ezekiel*



“*Ezekiel, Daniel*,” &c. And he adds, the Gentleman “proceeds to justify this by “the Practice of the apostolic Times, and “by the Regulation which the Apostle “himself applies to these seemingly irregular Gifts.” In this Instance it is not unpleasant to observe the different Views of his Lordship, and the Gentleman he refers to, in their Endeavours to establish this pretended Fact. The *one* was zealous to fix a Resemblance between the *old* and the *new* prophetic Manner, in order to strengthen the Credit of the *revived* Prophecy: The *other's* Intention plainly was, by that very Resemblance, which he was willing should pass for *real*, to destroy the Credit of the *Scripture* Prophecies, well knowing that the other deserved none.

BUT so it happens, that the noble Writer's Friend proves as bad an *Historian*, as he was a *Prophet*: And fails as miserably in relating *past* Events, as in foretelling *future*. The Truth is, that both his Lordship and the Gentleman seem to have been in a *Fit of Enthusiasm*, and have therefore been induced to mingle a little *pious Fraud*, through a Zeal for their respective *Theories*.

a Ib.

° Ib.



For in Reality, this pretended Resemblance is utterly fictitious. There is not the least Hint in Scripture, that any of the Persons mentioned as true Prophets, were ever subject to these *ecstatic, convulsive* Motions, which the enthusiastic Gentleman and his Tribe were always seized with. As to the Regulation made by the Apostle PAUL; whoever consults the Place<sup>p</sup> will find, there is no Mention made of *Ecstasies, Convulsions*, or extraordinary *bodily Motions*. And 'tis clear, that Our Saviour always delivered his Prophecies on every *incidental* Occasion, under all the *common Circumstances* of human Life; *calm, serene*, and with *unaffected Deliberation*. So that the whole Charge is a bold, continued Falsehood, void of Truth, and even the Appearance of it.

INDEED, from the Instances which the noble Writer cites from VIRGIL and LIVY, 'tis evident, that the old *beathen Pretenders* to Prophecy were affected in the same *convulsive* Manner, as the *modern Christian* Enthusiasts. His Lordship might have cited twenty more from ancient Writers. And what can be rationally inferred from them? What but this — “ That this *convulsive*

<sup>p</sup> 1 *Corinth.* ch. xiv.

“ *Agitation*

“ *Agitation* of the bodily Organs is a Circumstance that effectually *betrays* *Enthusiasm*; and distinguisheth it from the real *Inspirations* recorded in *holy Writ*.”

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THESE are the Circumstances in which Enthusiasm will generally seem to resemble real Inspiration: Tho' on a nearer Scrutiny, these very Circumstances will always detect it. We come now to enumerate those other Qualities peculiar to Enthusiasm, in which it bears no Resemblance to divine Inspiration, and in which they are, at first View, clearly distinguished from each other. And here it is remarkable, that, as the noble Writer dwells on the former, so he scarce ever touches on these following Characters of *clear Distinction*. This peculiar Conduct can hardly be judged *accidental*: For a Man of Wit can easily improve a *partial* Resemblance into a *complete* one: But to have added other *Features*, of absolute *Dissimilarity*, would have weakened the *Likeness*, and consequently have disgraced the *intended Representation*.

THE chief Qualities, which clearly and at first View distinguish *Enthusiasm* from divine *Inspiration*, I find enumerated by the

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fine Writer of the *Letter on St. Paul's Conversion*. These are, “*Heat of Temper, Me-lancholy, Credulity, Self-Conceit, and Ignorance.*” So far as these relate to St. PAUL, the Reader is referred to the excellent Work here cited. 'Tis our Part to consider them as they may affect our Saviour, and the rest of his Apostles. And a brief Consideration may suffice: For all (except the last) are so repugnant to their Character, that the very Mention of them refutes the Imputation.

WITH REGARD to the first of these Qualities, “*uncommon Heat of Temper,*” 'tis of all others most abhorrent from our *Saviour's* Character. He is every where sedate, cool, and unmoved, even under the most bitter Circumstances of Provocation<sup>a</sup>: He every where appears a perfect Model of Benevolence, Meekness, and mild Majesty. The same Temper generally prevails among his Apostles: More particularly we may observe of the *Evangelists*, who are the *immediate Evidences*, that in their Writings they discover the most perfect *Coolness*. Had they been of a fiery Disposition, they had

<sup>a</sup> See Dr. *Law's* *Life of Christ*: Where his Character is described at large.

not failed to load the Enemies of their crucified Lord, with the bitterest *Sarcasms*.

WITH as little Reason can *Melancholy* be charged on the Founders of Christianity. Our *Saviour* came, "eating and drinking:" So entirely *open, unreserved, and social*, that he was branded by his Enemies, as a *Friend of Publicans and Sinners*. Another Circumstance, besides the Passion for *Solitude*, hath ever distinguished *Melancholy*: That is, "an *Over-fondness* and *Desire* to suffer "in the apprehended Cause of Truth, beyond the just and rational *Ends of Suffering*." Now this is diametrically opposite to the Character of Our Saviour and his Apostles: For even JESUS himself was in an *Agony* at the Apprehension of his approaching Sufferings. So far were his Disciples from being tainted with this *Melancholy*, that they discovered *unmanly Fear*; for *they all forsook him and fled*. 'Tis true, they afterwards endured the severest Trials with unshaken Constancy; yet still, with the *resigned Spirit of Martyrs*; not the *Eagerness* and *fanatic Vaunts* of all known *Enthusiasts* †.

† For a remarkable Instance of this, see a Story relating to SAVANOROLA, *Charact. Misc.* ii, c, 1. in the Notes.



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THE Charge of *Credulity* hath no better Foundation. To Our Saviour himself it is in it's very Nature utterly *inapplicable*. His Disciples have been often charged with *Credulity*. But on impartial Examination it will appear, that the Charge is groundless. For this is an unvarying Circumstance in the Credulity of an Enthusiast, "that it never admits a Doubt." But it is evident, from the united Accounts of the Gospel-History, that they often, nay always, *doubted* of our Saviour's *Death*, tho' himself foretold it. 'Tis equally evident, they not only doubted of, but almost disbelieved, his Resurrection, till overcome by irresistible Evidence. These Circumstances afford another collateral Proof, that the Apostles were not Enthusiasts; Because it is essentially of the Nature of Enthusiasm, "to run on headlong in the open Chanel of the *First conceived Opinion*." Now 'tis evident, they *changed* their *first Opinion* concerning the *temporal Dominion* of CHRIST, into the firm Belief of his *Death, Resurrection, and spiritual Kingdom*: We cannot therefore justly charge them with that *Credulity*, which is the Characteristic of *Enthusiasm*<sup>s</sup>.

<sup>s</sup> See this Point treated with great Particularity of

THE next Circumstance, *Self-Conceit*, which hath ever been one of the most distinguishing Qualities of Enthusiasm, is so distant from the Character of JESUS and his *Apostles*, that it hath never, I believe, been laid to their Charge. The Enthusiast is perpetually boasting of immediate *Converse* and *Communication* with the *Deity*; and overflows with a Contempt of all, who are not of his own System. In our Saviour we discover the most unfeigned *Humility* and *Compassion* towards all Men. When urged to shew his Pretensions to a divine Mission, so far is he from resolving them into *inward Feelings, Impulses, or Notices* from God (the constant Practice of every Enthusiast) that, on the contrary, he calmly appeals to his Works and Doctrines<sup>v</sup>; adding, in a Strain the *Reverse* of all *Enthusiasm*, that, “in what we bear Witness only to ourselves, our Witness cannot be established as a Truth<sup>v</sup>.” The same Turn of Mind appears in the Apostles. They affect no Superiority themselves, nor express or

Proof, in a Pamphlet intitled, “*A Discourse, proving that the Apostles were no Enthusiasts.*” By A. Campbell, S. T. P.

<sup>v</sup> *Matth. vii. 16.*      <sup>v</sup> *John v. 31.*

discover any Contempt or spiritual Pride with Regard to others.

The last Quality common to Enthusiasts, is that of *Ignorance*. This hath been sometimes charged on our Saviour himself: Often on his Apostles with an Air of Triumph. But so it is, that seeming Objections against Truth become often the strongest Evidence in Support of it. This will eminently appear in the present Case, if we consider “ that Ignorance or Want of Letters, when “ joined with Enthusiasm, must always “ produce the most inconsistent Visions, “ whimsical Conduct, and pernicious Doc- “ trines.” These Effects, *Ignorance* and *Enthusiasm* have wrought, wherever they appeared, in every Age and Nation. Nor can it indeed be otherwise: For a *lettered* Enthusiast may be supposed to have an *internal Balance*, which must in some Degree *counteract* and *regulate* his Visions; while the *unlettered* is subject to no Controul, but must become the Sport and Prey to the *delirious* Flights of an *unreined Imagination*.

Now, that the Apostles and Evangelists were *unlearned*, must needs be granted: And tho’ the noble Writer hath taken upon him to deride them on this Account; yet  
this

this very Circumstance, compared with their Conduct and Writings, clears them at once from the Charge of Enthusiasm. So far were they from the *Ravings* of this Passion, common to all *ignorant* Enthusiasts, that we may defy the Enemies of *Christianity* to produce any Instance, either of Speech or Practice, that hath the smallest Tincture of *Extravagance*. Their Conduct was regular and exemplary; their Words were *the Words of Truth and Soberness*.

As to the Charge of Ignorance against our Saviour, the Enemies of Christianity have been more *cautious*: Yet it hath been insinuated. And indeed, that he had not the Common Aids of *human Learning*, is not only *acknowledged*, but *insisted* on. Could *ignorant* and *blind Enthusiasm* then have produced the sublime *religious Doctrines* and *moral Precepts* which the Evangelists have recorded from his Mouth? With as much Truth it might be affirmed, that the *Creation* is the Produce of *Chance*. With Reason then may we ask the noble Writer this Question, “Whence then had this Man  
“ *such Wisdom*, seeing he spake as never Man  
“ spake?” And the Answer sure is *one* only,  
“ That as it was not from *Man*, it must  
have



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“ have been from GOD.” Foreven the Enemies of Christianity have born Witness to its Excellence, even when they intended to disgrace it: While with fruitless Labour they have attempted to prove, “ that the  
 “ most exalted *Truths* and *Precepts* of the  
 “ *Gospel* may be found *scattered* among the  
 “ *Writings* of the *heathen Sages*.”

FROM these concurrent Circumstances, therefore, we obtain a full *internal Proof*, that the *Founders of Christianity* were not *Enthusiasts*, as the noble Writer hath, by the most laboured and repeated *Insinuations*, attempted to represent them.

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SINCE therefore we have appealed to the *religious* and *moral Doctrines* of *Christianity*, as a concurrent *Proof* of its *divine Original*; it will be necessary now to examine what the noble Writer hath alledged or suggested against this most *essential Part* of our Religion,

AND first, it appears from the general Turn of the *Characteristics*, that the noble Author regards *religious Establishments* as being quite at a Distance from *Philosophy*

and *Truth*, with which, he tells us, in ancient Times, they never interfered: He therefore derides every Attempt, to make them *coalesce*. Thus he tells us, “ Not only *Visionaries* and *Enthusiasts* of all Kinds were “ tolerated by the Ancients; but, on the “ other Side, Philosophy had as free a “ Course, and was permitted as a Balance “ against Superstition.--Thus Matters were “ happily balanced; Reason had fair Play; “ Learning and Science flourished. Wonderful was the Harmony and Temper “ which arose from all these *Contrarities*.” Such therefore being his Lordship’s Idea of a *Public Religion*, which he ever opposes to *private Opinion* and Philosophy; ’tis no Wonder he should insinuate the Folly of Christianity, which promiseth to all its Profelytes, “ that they shall know the *Truth*, “ and the *Truth* shall make them *free*.”

BUT notwithstanding the noble Writer’s Partiality to the System of ancient Paganism, which he had deeply imbibed from his familiar Converse with ancient Writers; no unprejudiced Mind can hesitate a Moment, in determining the superior Excellence of the *Christian Religion*, compared with these

\* *Lett. on Enthuf.*

*well-meant, but defective Schemes of heathen Policy.* For, as gross Error, and Misapprehension of the divine Nature and Attributes, was deeply interwoven with ancient Paganism; so, 'tis well known, that in Fact the most horrid Enormities were committed upon Principle, under the Authority and Example of their pretended Gods. Lord SHAFTESBURY himself owns, what indeed it were Folly to deny, that the *Imitation of the Deity* is a *powerful Principle of Action*\*. If so, it follows, that to communicate a just Idea of the divine Perfections to all Mankind, must tend to *secure their Virtue, and promote their Happiness.* 'Tis therefore equally *ungenerous and impolitic,* to suffer Mankind to live in Ignorance and Idolatry. Hence 'tis evident, that *Reformations* in Religion are not the ridiculous Things his Lordship would represent them; and that *Christianity,* if indeed it *reveals the Truth,* is a Religion in it's Tendency much more *beneficial* to Mankind than ancient *Paganism.*

'Tis no difficult Task to assign the original Cause of this so different and even *opposite* Genius of the *Pagan* Systems from that

\* *Enq. on Virtue.*



of *Christianity*. In early and ignorant Ages, the Necessity of religious Belief and religious Establishments was seen by the Leaders of Mankind: On this Account they instituted the most *salutary* Forms and Doctrines, which their unexperienced Reason could suggest. As Nations grew wiser and more polished; they saw the Weakness and Absurdity of these established Systems; but thro' a Regard, and perhaps a *mistaken* one, to the *public Good*, were unwilling to discover these Defects and Absurdities to the People. Hence probably the Rise of *exoteric* and *esoteric* Doctrines. For the furthest that human Policy dared to go, was to reveal the Truth to a *few Initiated*: While the Bulk of Mankind, even in the *wisest* and *politest* Ages, continued the *Dupes* to the *Prejudices* and *Superstitions* of the most ignorant ones. On the contrary, it was a main Design of the Christian Dispensation, to dispel this Cloud of Ignorance, which excluded Mankind from all Participation of *divine Truth*; to reveal those just and sublime Ideas of the *Divinity*, which are the noblest, as they are the surest Foundation, not only of *Piety*, but of *Morals*: And which, so far as they can affect either

*Piety*



*Piety* or *Morals* (such is the Triumph of *Christianity* over the laboured Researches of *false Wisdom*) are no less *intelligible* to the *Peasant* than the *Philosopher*. On this Account, *Christianity* was perfect (*relatively* perfect) in it's first Delineation: All Attempts to change or add to its Doctrines, have but discovered their own Absurdity: And Experience every Day more and more convinceth us, that the only Method of obtaining a pure and uncorrupt System of Practical Religion and moral Precepts, is to search for them in the uncommented Pages of the Gospel.

THUS, what was the Effect of *Necessity* among the *Heathens*, the noble Writer very partially attributes to *Choice*: He mistakes a *Defect* for an *Excellence*: And blindly prefers the Weakness of *Man* to the Wisdom of *God*.

ANOTHER Cavil frequently urged or insinuated by his Lordship against *Christianity* seems to have been the natural Consequence of the last-mentioned. He much admires the *Pagan Religions*, as having been *sociable*, and mutually *incorporated* into each other: And often represents *Christianity*, as of an *unsociable*, *surly*, and *solitary* Complexion, tending

tending to *destroy* every other but itself. The Consequence of this, he tells us, hath been  
 “ a new Sort of Policy, which extends it-  
 “ self to another World, and hath made us  
 “ leap the Bounds of natural Humanity;  
 “ and out of a *supernatural Charity*, has  
 “ taught us the Way of plaguing one an-  
 “ other most devoutly.” Now with regard  
 to this pretended *unsociable* Temper of  
*Christianity*; it must be owned indeed, that  
 our Religion tends to swallow up and de-  
 stroy every other, in the same Manner as  
*Truth* in every Subject tends to destroy  
*Falsehood*: That is, by *rational Conviction*.  
 The same Objection might be urged against  
 the *Newtonian Philosophy*, which destroyed  
 the *Cartesian Fables*: Or against the *Coper-  
 nican System*, because the clumsy *Visions* of  
*Ptolomy* and *Tycho-Brabe* vanished before it.  
 The same may be urged against the Use-  
 fulness of the great *Source of Day*, because  
 it *dims* and *extinguishes* every inferior Lustre:  
 For the glimmering Lamps of human Know-  
 ledge, lighted up by the Philosophers,  
 served indeed to conduct them as *a Light  
 shining in a dark Place*; but these must  
 naturally be sunk in a superior Lustre, when

† Lett. on Enthus.

*the Sun of Righteousness should arise.* The Gospel therefore is so far *unsociable*, as to discredit *Error*; and is incompatible with *this*, as *Light* with *Darkness*: But not so *unsociable*, as to *compel* the Erroneous. As to the religious Debates, then, which Christianity hath occasioned, and the Wars and Massacres consequent upon them, which the noble Writer so justly detests; Christianity stands clear of the Charge, till it can be shewn that it countenanceth the inhuman Principle of Intolerance: And this, its bitterest Enemies can never do. 'Tis true, that if we be so irrational as to take our Idea of Christianity from the Representations of Enthusiasts and Bigots, nothing can appear more absurd and mischievous: As, in like Manner, if we consider the *Heavens* under the perplexed Revolutions and malignant Aspects of the old Astronomers and Astrologers, nothing can be more unworthy either of divine Wisdom or Goodness. But how can these false *Images* affect the noble *Simplicity* and *Benignity* of the *Gospel*, or the *Solar System*? To the *Works* and the *Word* of God, we must repair, for a true Idea of their undisguised Perfection: And there we shall read their divine Author, in the



the brightest Characters of Wisdom and Goodness. So far therefore is Christianity from encouraging Wars and Massacres, on account of a Difference in Opinion, that its divine Founder hath expressly warned his Followers against the Suggestions of this horrid Temper<sup>z</sup>: Nor can these fatal Consequences ever arise among *Christians*, till they have divested themselves of *Christian Charity*, and <sup>a</sup> mistaken the very Principles of their Profession.

But the noble Writer proceeds to still more bitter Invectives, if possible, against *Christianity*. For he often insinuates, that the Prospect of Happiness and Misery in another Life, revealed in the Gospel, tends to the Destruction of all *true Virtue*<sup>b</sup>. Indeed we cannot much wonder that his Lordship should treat Christianity in this Manner, when we consider what he hath thrown out against Religion in general, in this Respect. These Cavils have already been considered at large: Whatever therefore he hath insinuated against our Religion in *particular*, will naturally be referr'd to, and effectually be refuted by, these more *general Observations*<sup>c</sup>. However, there are

<sup>z</sup> Luke ix.<sup>a</sup> *Ib.*<sup>b</sup> *Wit and Hum.* P. ii. § 3.<sup>c</sup> See above, *Ess.* ii. § 9.



ESSAY  
III.

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two or three Passages on this Subject so remarkable, that they may seem to deserve a separate Consideration.

AFTER having ridiculed and branded Christianity, as destroying the *disinterested* Part of Virtue, he tells us, “The *Jews* as well as *Heathens* were left to their Philosophy to be instructed in the sublime Part of Virtue, and induced by Reason to that which was never enjoined them by Command. No Premium or Penalty being enforced in these Cases, the disinterested Part subsisted, the Virtue was a free Choice, and the Magnanimity of the Act was left entire<sup>d</sup>.”

HERE again the noble Writer hath got to his *Peculiarities*. What other Title this Passage may deserve, we shall soon discover. For, first, supposing his Assertion true, what he notes in the *Jewish* and *Heathen* Religions as an *Excellence*, had certainly been a *Defect*. For are not *Hottentots*, wild *Indians*, and *Arabs*, “left to their Philosophy, to be induced by Reason to that which was never enjoined them by Command? No Premium or Penalty

<sup>d</sup> *Wit and Hum.* P. ii. § 3.

“being

“ being inforced in these Cafes, the difin-  
 “ terested Part fubfifts, the Virtue is a free  
 “ Choice, and the Magnanimity of the Act  
 “ is left entire.” Thus the noble Writer  
 would again debase us into Savages<sup>e</sup>; and,  
 rather than not disgrace Christianity, would  
 put the State of *Palæftine*, *Greece*, and *Rome*,  
 on a Level with that of the *Cape of Good*  
*Hope*: *Blindly* (or fhall we fay, *knowingly*?)  
 difparaging, what he elfewhere fo juftly ap-  
 plauds, “ Laws, Conftitutions, civil and  
 “ RELIGIOUS Rites, whatever *civilizes* or  
 “ *polifhes* rude Mankind<sup>f</sup>.”

BUT in FACT, neither the JEWS nor  
*civilized Heathens* were ever tainted with  
 this *Phrenzy*. They faw the Neceffity of  
 religious Belief; and as they faw its Ne-  
 ceffity, fo they inforced it. With regard  
 to the JEWS, the noble Writer contradicts  
 himfelf within the Compafs of ten Lines:  
 For there he fays, “ their Religion taught  
 “ no future State, nor exhibited any Rewards  
 “ or Punifhments, *befides fuch as were tem-*  
 “ *poral*.” This is the very Truth. Here  
 then he owns a *temporal Sanction* of Pre-  
 mium and Penalty, *Reward* and *Punifh-*  
*ment*: Yet in the Passage above cited, and

<sup>e</sup> See above, *Eff.* ii. § 10.<sup>f</sup> *Moralift*, Part i. § 3.

which stands close by the other in the Original, he says, “there was no Premium or Penalty enforced, no Reward or Punishment!” His Lordship deals as *fairly* and *consistently* by the civilized Heathens: For, could he indeed have forgot the distinguished Rank, which, in the *Elysian Fields*, was assigned to those who *fell* to save *their Country*?

*Hic Manus ob PATRIAM pugnando vulnera passi—  
Omnibus his nivea cinguntur tempore vittæ*.\*

AND now let the Impartial determine, whether the noble Writer’s Observation hath more of *Sagacity* or of *Truth* in it.

BUT the Christian Doctrines relating to an *Hereafter*, are to undergo a yet severer *Inquisition* from the noble Writer: They are to be tortured and *mangled* on the *Rack*, of *Wit* shall I say, or of *Buffoonry*? “The  
“ Misfortune is, we are seldom taught to  
“ comprehend this SELF, by placing it in  
“ a distinct View from its Representative  
“ or *Counterfeit*. In our *holy* Religion,  
“ which, for the greatest part, is adapted to  
“ the very meanest Capacities, ’tis not to  
“ be expected, that a Speculation of this

\* *Eneid.* lib. vi.

“ Kind should be openly advanced. ’Tis  
 “ enough that we have Hints given us of a  
 “ nobler SELF, than that which is commonly  
 “ supposed the Basis and Foundation of our  
 “ Actions. *Self-Interest* is there taken as it  
 “ is vulgarly conceived—In the same Man-  
 “ ner as the celestial Phænomena are in the  
 “ sacred Volumes generally treated accord-  
 “ ing to common Imagination, and the then  
 “ current System of Astronomy and natu-  
 “ ral Science; so the moral Appearances  
 “ are in many Places preserved without  
 “ Alteration, according to *Vulgar Preju-  
 “ dice*.—Our real and genuine *Self* is some-  
 “ times supposed that *ambitious* one, which  
 “ is fond of Power and Glory; sometimes  
 “ that *childish* one, which is taken with  
 “ *vain Shew*, and is to be invited to Obedi-  
 “ ence by Promise of *finer Habitations, pre-  
 “ cious Stones, and Metals, shining Gar-  
 “ ments, Crowns, and other such dazzling  
 “ Beauties*, by which another Earth, or  
 “ material City is represented<sup>b</sup>.”

THIS Passage contains two insinuated  
 Charges of a very different Nature. The  
 one is *true*, but no *Objection*: The other  
 would indeed be an *Objection*, but that it is

<sup>b</sup> *Solil.* Part iii. § 1.



absolutely *groundless*. 'Tis true, "that our  
 " Religion is, for the greatest part, adapted  
 " to the very meanest Capacities; and that  
 " the celestial Phænomena are in the sacred  
 " Volumes generally treated according to  
 " *common Imagination,*" &c. And would  
 the noble Writer indeed have had it other-  
 wise? Would he indeed have had them  
 spoken of, according to the philosophical  
 Construction of the Universe, rather than  
 the received Notions of Mankind? With  
 how little Reason, we may soon be con-  
 vinced, if we consider, First, that the *End*  
*of Revelation* was not to make Mankind  
 Proficients in Philosophy, since the Situa-  
 tion of the Generality can never admit it:  
 And had the Scriptures supposed this, (as  
 indeed such a Conduct would have supposed  
 it) this very Circumstance had been an  
 Argument of their Falseness. Secondly,  
 even Philosophers themselves, tho' inti-  
 mately acquainted with the Construction of  
 the Universe, do still *descend* to the *Level*  
*of Mankind*, when they speak of the Phæ-  
 nomena of Nature: The *Sun sets* and *rises*,  
 as it did three thousand Years ago: The  
*Moon changes, waxes, is new, and old:*  
 The *Stars are in the Firmament, the Sun*  
 still

still *rules the Day*, and the *Moon the Night*. The Reason is evident: Because *astronomical Discoveries* have not the least Influence on the *Practice of Mankind*: Because, altho' the *natural Appearances* of Things are merely *relative* to the *Imagination only*, yet they are, for that very Reason, necessary to be referred to, as the *Imagination* is the great *universal Instrument* of *Life* and human *Action*.

AN Objection therefore to the Scriptures on this Account, betrays either a gross *Misapprehension* of human Nature, or the most unpardonable *Insincerity*; yet we find Objections of this kind frequently urged; as if, because the sacred Penmen were empowered by God to reveal to us a certain Measure of *religious* and *moral* Truth, suited to our present State, they must therefore be endued with *Omniscience*; in order to make all Men not only *good Subjects*, but good *Astronomers* too!

BUT tho' it were *Folly* to object against the *sacred Penmen*, because they appear not to have been *omniscient*; yet I cannot conclude this Argument, without producing a remarkable Instance, wherein their very *Ignorance* of these *speculative* and *unnecessary*

*Truths* becomes a convincing Proof of their VERACITY: A Circumstance which much more nearly concerns us. We read in the Book of *Joshua*, “ And he said in the Sight “ of *Israel*, SUN, stay thou in *Gibeon*, and “ *thou*, MOON, in the Valley of *Ajalon*: “ And the *Sun* abode, and THE MOON “ STOOD STILL, — and hasted not to go “ down for a whole Day<sup>1</sup>.” Here, the *standing still* of these Luminaries is related in such a Manner as concurs with the common Appearances of Things; and yet conflicts with the best Discoveries in Astronomy tho’ unknown to the Writer. For we are now assured, that, if *the Sun stood still*, it must have been by suspending the diurnal Rotation of the Earth: The *standing still of the Moon* was therefore the *necessary Consequence*. This the Writer appears not to have known: Yet he relates the *Fact*, tho’ it was of no Importance with regard to that Event for which the Miracle was wrought. It is therefore of singular Force in proving the *Veracity of the Writer*, because, had it not been true in Fact, it is a *Circumstance which could never have occur’d to him*.

THE noble Writer’s other Charge relating to the *moral Representations* of the

<sup>1</sup> *Joshua*, x.

Scriptures, would indeed be of Weight, if it were founded in Truth: But so far from this, that he hath utterly *reversed* the Fact. For in Reality, these *sensible* Representations of *visible* Beauty and Glory, are only *occasionally* or *accidentally* hinted; while the whole *Weight* and *Energy* of the *Gospel* is employed in inforcing the Idea of *moral Perfection*, of our *nobler SELF*, of Self-Interest in the *higher* Sense, of the Necessity of extirpating every meaner Passion, and cherishing the great one of *unbounded Love*, as the necessary and only Discipline that can qualify us for future Happiness. 'Tis evident that the noble Writer lays the principal Stress of his Charge, on the *Apocalypse*; a Work in it's whole Turn *strictly Allegorical*, and therefore necessarily conversant in *Imagery* and *visible Representation*. To this he hath most perversely added a figurative Expression of St. PAUL, who, writing to a People among whom the *Prize-Races* prevailed, represents the Christian *Progress* as a *Contest* of this Kind; and shews it's Superiority over the Former, "because, saith he, they labour to obtain a *corruptible*, but we an *incorruptible Crown*." In the mean  
Time



Time he hath omitted the many *Discourses, Parables, Maxims*, of our Saviour, in which he perpetually exhorts his Disciples to endeavour after unfeigned Virtue and universal Benevolence, as the only Means that can bring them to future Perfection. He hath forgot too the repeated Exhortations of St. PAUL, who sets CHARITY so high above every other Gift or Possession, and adds, the Reason of it's Preheminence, "because  
 " it shall never fail." 'Tis true, indeed, as the noble Writer observes (with what Intention, 'tis no difficult Matter to determine)  
 " that our holy Religion is for the greatest  
 " part adapted to the very meanest Capacities:" We may add, " and to the very  
 " worst of Dispositions too." And 'tis one of it's chief Glories, that it is so. Therefore we find it inforcing every Motive that can work on every Mind: Which must surely be acknowledged as the Character of the Religion that should come from him *who knew what was in Man*. But if the noble Writer would further insinuate, that the Idea of future Happiness ought to be confined to that of virtuous Enjoyment, whereas the *Christian* Religion doth not so confine it: We have already seen, that, from  
 the

the Nature of Things, this Refinement is *visionary* and *groundless*<sup>k</sup>.

WE now come to the Examination of a Passage more *extraordinary* and *original* than any yet produced. The noble Writer tells us, “ I could be almost tempted to think, “ that the true Reason why some of the most “ *heroic Virtues* have so little Notice taken “ of them in our *holy Religion*, is, because “ there would have been no Room left for “ *Disinterestedness*, had they been intitled “ to a Share of that infinite Reward, which “ Providence has *by Revelation* assigned to “ other Duties. *Private Friendship*, and “ *Zeal* for the *Public* and *our Country*, are “ Virtues purely *voluntary* in a *Christian*. “ They are no essential Parts of his *Charity*. “ He is not so tied to the Affairs of this “ Life ; nor is he obliged to enter into such “ Engagements with this *lower World*, as “ are of *no Help* to him in acquiring a *better*. “ His *Conversation* is in *Heaven*. Nor has “ he Occasion for such *supernumerary Cares* “ and Embarrassments here on Earth, as “ may *obstruct his Way* thither, or retard “ him in the careful Task of working out “ his own Salvation<sup>l</sup>.”

<sup>k</sup> See above, *Ess.* ii. § 9.    <sup>l</sup> *Wit and H.* Part ii. § 3.

We have already seen, that the real Nature of Virtue consists “in procuring or “promoting the greatest public Happiness:” And that this Truth is often, *occasionally*, acknowledged by Lord *Shaftesbury* himself. Consequently, the *highest* or most *heroic* *Virtue*, is that which tends to *accomplish* this great *End*: Nor can any *pretended* *Virtue* be either *great* or *heroic* that tends to *obstruct* or *destroy* it.

ON this plain Principle, self-evident to unbiassed *Reason*, let us examine the Passage now before us. And first, as to *private Friendship*, which, the noble Writer says, “is a *Virtue* purely voluntary in a *Christian*.” — Let us consider how far it may be regarded as a *Virtue at all*. — Now, on strict Inquiry we shall find, that the extreme Degree of *Friendship* recommended and applauded by the *Ancients*, and here patronized by the noble Author, is essentially *repugnant* to *true Virtue*: In *Friendship* they placed the *chief Happiness*: — And if this consists in the supreme Love of *one*, it must needs *diminish*, if not *extinguish*, the Love of *all*; because our chief or whole *Attention* must be *employed*, our every *View* and *Design* centered in giving Pleasure or *procuring* *Happiness*

*Happiness* to one *Individual*. And this is the very fairest Light it can be view'd in.

FOR we shall further see, how little it generally partakes of the Nature of true Virtue, if we consider whence it hath it's Rise. This is universally allowed to be "a Similarity of *Disposition, Will, and Manners.*" This Circumstance demonstrates, that in general it must be contrary to Virtue: For hence the general Good must be often sacrificed to gratify the Will of *one*. Of this dreadful Effect, Instances might be produced almost innumerable. Let one suffice. "Between TIBERIUS GRACCHUS and C. BLOSIUS, a *dear and perfect Friendship* subsisted: The latter being seized for aiding the former in his Conspiracy, was brought before the *Consuls*. He pleaded his Friendship to GRACCHUS in excuse for his Crime." He was then asked, "What, suppose he had bid you *fire the Capitol*, would you have done it?" To this he boldly replied, "He never would have laid me under such a Necessity; but, if he had, *I would have obeyed him*<sup>m</sup>." A *thorough Friend* sure: But a *Vile Citizen*; notwithstanding the

<sup>m</sup> Cic. *Lalini*.



artful Glos of an ingenious Modern, who hath attempted to make out the Innocence of his Intentions<sup>n</sup>.

'TIS true the Advocates for this *Attachment* sometimes assert, that it cannot consist but with *Virtue*. That it *ought not*, is certain: That it *cannot*, or *doth not*, is a groundless Conceit; unless they chuse to make this Circumstance a Part of the Definition, which were idle Sophistry. But if by Friendship be meant, what indeed is always meant, “ a violent Love and Attachment to another “ on account of a Similarity of Manners;” this, 'tis certain, hath often, nay most commonly, subsisted without *Virtue*: Among *Savages, Robbers, Heroes, and Banditti*. In LUCIAN'S Tract on Friendship we find, that out of Twelve notable Instances alledged, near half the Number were supported at the Expence of *Justice* or *Humanity*; either by the Commission of Rapine, Adultery, or Murder, or by aiding the Escape of those who ought to have suffered for these enormous Crimes. Will any one alledge the Emperor TIBERIUS, or his Favourite SEJANUS, as Patterns of *Virtue*? Yet their Friendship was so remarkable,

<sup>n</sup> See Montaigne's *Essay* on this Subject.

that,

that, in Honour of it, Altars were dedicated to *Friendship* by a *senatorial Decree*. Nay, some of the applauded Instances appealed to, by the noble Author, in his Comment on this Passage, are even notorious in this Respect. Such were THESEUS and PIRITHOUS, equally remarkable for *Friendship*, *Rapes*, and *Plunder*. And such Instances may still be found in every *savage* Country; where the strongest Friendships are commonly formed: Where Men thus *leagued* go upon bold Adventures; and hazard Life for each other without Reluctance, while they *ravish* their Neighbours *Wives*, and *carry off* their *Cattle*.

WITH as little Reason can it be urged, that Friendships in general are disinterested, so as to aspire to the Name of *Merit*. For *Merit*, if it exists, can only arise from *Virtue*: And *Virtue*, we have seen, doth not essentially belong to *Friendship*. Nay, in LUCIAN'S Tract, 'tis warmly debated between the contending Parties, whether *Affection* or *private Advantage* hath a more considerable Share in this applauded *Union*. Indeed the *civilized* and haughty *Greek* stands upon the Punctilio of *Honour*, and piques himself on the Notion of *Disinterest*:  
But

But the *undisguised Scythian* insists, that mutual *Advantage and Support* are the ruling *Motives*. However, in Conclusion they fairly agree, in comparing a Set of fast Friends to GERYON with *three Heads and six Hands*, enabled, thro' this Increase of Strength, to overturn all Opposition°. But suppose *Affection* the ruling Principle, as unquestionably it often is; where is the *Merit*, while *confined to one Person*? Nay, it must rather lean toward *Demerit*, because it appears, 'tis rather *dangerous* than *favourable* to *public Affection* and *Virtue*. 'Tis evident then, that the *friendly Affection* is no more *meritorious* than the *conjugal, paternal, or filial Affection*; which, being of a contracted Nature, are often consistent with great Baseness of Mind, and destructive of a more enlarged Benevolence<sup>p</sup>. And

° *Luciani Toxaris.*

<sup>p</sup> Thus a Writer of distinguished Abilities: “ Many Instances occur in History and daily Experience, of Men, not ashamed to commit base and selfish Enormities, who have retained a Tenderness for their Posterity by the strong and generous Instinct of Nature. The Story of *Licinius Macer*, who was Father to *Calvus* the great Orator, is very remarkable, as related by a Roman Annalist. Having gone thro' the Office of Prætor, and governed a Province, he was accused, upon returning home, of Extortion

what Degree of *Merit* or *Disinterest* there is in Regards of this Nature, when separate from more extensive ones, we may learn from the noble Writer himself, who says, “ there is a Selfishness in the Love that  
 “ is paid to a *Wife*, and in the Attendance  
 “ on a *Family*, and all the little Affairs of  
 “ it, which, had I my full Scope of Action  
 “ in the Public, I should hardly have sub-  
 “ mitted to.”

Sofar then is clear, “ That *Friendship*, or  
 “ a violent Affection founded on a Simila-  
 “ rity of Disposition and Manners,” is more likely to produce *Vice* than *Virtue*; as it tends to fix such Habits of Mind as must lessen our Concern for the *general Good*. And in Fact, every one’s Experience will point out to him Numbers of Men, naturally benevolent *to all*, but so strongly by-  
 affed and *drawn in* by *particular* Attach-

“ and Abuses of his Power. The very Morning of  
 “ his Trial he strangled himself, after having sent  
 “ Word to *Cicero*, who was preparing to plead against  
 “ him, that, being determined to put an End to his  
 “ Life before Sentence, (tho’ the Penalty did not extend  
 “ to taking it away) the Prosecution could not go on,  
 “ and his Fortune would be saved to the Benefit of his  
 “ Son.”--- *Considerations on the Law of Forfeiture*,  
 p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> Ld. S.’s *Lett. to Mr. Molesworth*, Lett. ix.



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ments, that their *Regards* and *Beneficence* are centered wholly on a *select Few*; while the rest of Mankind pass unheeded and unassisted, and have no Share in their Benevolence, further than what *Self-Deceit* throws out, in *unmeaning Wishes* for their Welfare.

'TIS no less evident, that, thro' the natural Advantages of this partial Alliance, Mankind must ever be prone to embrace it, in Exclusion of more extensive Affections, where no such Advantages can follow. It would therefore have been a *Defect* in the *Christian Religion*, to have enjoined or even recommended it in this Extreme. Accordingly we find, in the Gospel, every Attachment of this Kind, however natural and alluring it may be, set very little above the *lowest Selfishness*, and justly represented as entirely consistent with it. "If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? Do not the Publicans even the same?"

BESIDES; there is something so extraordinary in the noble Writer's Scheme of "enjoining Friendship," as sufficiently exposeth its own Weakness. Friendship, his

' *Matth. v.*

Lordship

Lordship allows, can only arise “from a  
“Consent and Harmony of Minds.” How  
then could Christianity have enjoined us the  
Practice of this *supposed* Virtue? What must  
it have enjoined us? Why, to go in quest of  
a *Mind* resembling our own. It might  
with equal Propriety have enjoined us to go  
in quest of a *Face* resembling our own: And  
with as much Reason, for all the Purposes  
of *true Virtue*.

BUT if by *Friendship* be meant, what  
indeed is *not* generally meant, “A parti-  
“cular Love and esteem for the virtuous  
“or worthy,” in which Sense alone it can  
have any Tendency to produce true Virtue;  
then we may justly affirm, that it is recom-  
mended in the Gospel, both by *Example* and  
by *Precept*. It is naturally involved in that  
all-comprehensive Command of *universal*  
*Charity*: For tho’ many have been zealous  
in their Friendships, while they were in-  
sensible to public Affection; yet, such is  
the Temperament of human Nature, that  
no Instance was ever known, of a Man  
zealous for the Happiness of *all*, yet remiss  
in or incapable of a *true Friendship* for the  
*Worthy*. It is recommended by St. PAUL,

\* In the Note.

who says, that “peradventure for a good  
“*Man*, one would even *dare to die*.” It is  
recommended by our Saviour’s Example,  
who selected a beloved Disciple as his bosom  
*Friend*, whose Writings are the Overflow-  
ings of a Heart filled with the purest and  
most unbounded Love<sup>t</sup>.” Above all, it is  
recommended by our Saviour in that noble  
and divine Passage; “Who is my Mother  
“or my Brethren? Even *he that doth the*  
“*Will of my Father* which is in Heaven, he  
“is my *Brother, and Sister, and Mother*.”

So much for the spurious Virtue of *private Friendship*: Let us next consider the  
noble Writer’s Charge against *Christianity*,  
on account of its not enjoining “a Zeal  
“for the *Public* and our Country:” For  
this too, it seems, “is a Virtue purely *vo-*  
“*luntary in a Christian*.” Now all the Ab-  
surdities which load his Charge with Re-  
gard to *Friendship*, fall with equal Weight  
on this groundless Imputation. For if by  
“Zeal for the Public and our Country,”  
be meant, a Zeal that is inconsistent with  
the Rights and common Welfare of Man-  
kind, ’tis so far from being a *Virtue*, that,  
as in the Case of *Friendship*, it is really a

<sup>t</sup> St. John.<sup>v</sup> Matth. xii.

*Crime*, because it tends to produce the most fatal Consequences. And an Army of victorious Warriors returning triumphant on this vile Principle, however graced with the flattering Title of *Heroes*, and Ensigns of *Glory*, are in Truth no better than a Band of *public Robbers*: or, as our *great Poet*, a Christian and a Lover of Mankind, finely expresseth it,

An impious Crew  
Of Men conspiring to uphold their State,  
By worse than hostile Deeds; violating the Ends  
For which our Country is a Name so dear \*.

Now 'tis evident beyond a Doubt, that at the Time when our Saviour appeared, this destructive *Partiality*, this avowed Conspiracy against the common Rights of Mankind, was universally prevalent among the most civilized Nations. The Jews were not exempted from this common Excess. "*Inter ipsos Fides obstinata, adversus alios hostile Odium,*" was their Character among the Heathens. The *Greeks* and *Romans* committed and boasted of the most cruel Enormities, conquered and enslaved innocent Nations, plundered Cities, and laid

\* *Samson Agonistes.*



waste Kingdoms, thro' this absurd and *impious Love* of their *Country*; a Principle no better in many of its Consequences, than the most horrid and accursed *Bigotry*. It had therefore been an essential Defect, nay rather a mischievous Absurdity, in the Christian Religion, to have enjoined, encouraged, or countenanced a Partiality unjust in itself; to which, from Views of private Advantage, Mankind must ever be prone; and which, at the Time when Christianity began to spread, was indeed the reigning and predominant Error.

BUT if by "Zeal for the Public, and "Love of our Country" be meant, such a Regard to its Welfare as shall induce us to sacrifice every View of private Interest for its Accomplishment, yet still *in Subordination* to the *greater Law* of *universal Justice*, this is naturally, nay necessarily involved in the Law of *universal Charity*. The noble Writer indeed affirms, "it is no essential Part of the Christian's Charity." On the contrary, it is a *chief Part* of the Christian's Charity. It comes nobly recommended by the Examples of JESUS and ST. PAUL: The one wept over the approaching Desolation of his Country: The other declared  
his

his Willingness to be cut off from the Christian Community, if by this Means he might save his Countrymen. And that it necessarily ariseth from the Principle of universal Love will be evident, if we consider the *Nature and Situation of Man*. His *Nature* is such, that he inevitably contracts the *strongest* Affection for those with whom he converseth most *intimately*; and whose *Manners and Relations, civil and religious*, are most nearly connected with *his own*. His *Situation* is such, that he seldom hath an Opportunity of doing good Offices to any Society of Men, save only those of his *own Country*; all others being naturally removed beyond the narrow Sphere of private Beneficence. Hence the great Precept of universal Charity doth essentially involve “a Zeal for the “Public, and Love of our Country:” At once it curbs the *Exorbitance* of this natural Partiality, and carries it to its full *Perfection*.

THE Necessity of this great *regulating* Principle will further appear, if we consider, that, with regard to the Conduct of separate States and Kingdoms towards each other, no Sanctions of human Law can ever take place. In this respect all Nations must ever be in a State of Nature. There was

therefore a more particular Necessity, on this Account, of regulating their Conduct towards each other, by the great Law of *universal Charity*.

IT may seem strange, that the noble Writer should be ignorant of these Truths. But after the Imputations he hath here thrown on *Christianity*, it will surely appear *more strange*, that he was *not ignorant* of them: And that these bitter Sarcasms were thrown out against the clear Convictions of his own Mind. Yet nothing is more evident, as will now appear. That he understood the Nature of *Christian Charity*, is indisputable: He defines it, and properly, in the Note annexed to the Passage here refer'd to. In another Place, he calls it “the Principle of *Love*, the greatest Principle of our Religion<sup>x</sup>.” In a following Paragraph he calls it “that divine Love which our Religion teaches<sup>y</sup>.” But what is of all *most remarkable*; he sets it under the new and whimsical Denominations of *Good-Nature* and *Friendship to Mankind*, far above *private Friendship* and *Love of our Country*. Take the Passages as they lie in the noble Writer. “Can any *Friendship* be so *heroic*

<sup>x</sup> *Melmoth*, Part ii. § 3.

<sup>y</sup> *Ib.*

“ as that towards *Mankind?* or *particular*  
 “ Friendship well subsist, without such an  
 “ enlarged Affection?” Again: “ *Theocles*  
 “ had almost convinced me, that to be a  
 “ Friend to any one in particular, ’twas  
 “ necessary first to be a Friend to Man-  
 “ kind<sup>a</sup>.” Lastly, and above all: “ And  
 “ can your *Country*, and, what is *more*, your  
 “ KIND, require less Kindness from you,  
 “ or deserve less to be consider’d, than even  
 “ one of these *Chance-Creatures?*—O *Pbi-*  
 “ *locles*, how little do you know the Extent  
 “ and Power of *Good-Nature*, and to what  
 “ an *heroic Pitch* a Soul may rise, which  
 “ knows the thorow Force of it; and *distributing*  
 “ *it rightly*, frames in itself an *equal*,  
 “ *just*, and *universal Friendship*<sup>b</sup>?” Here  
 then we see the former Paragraph utterly  
 reversed. For “ *universal Love* is now the  
 “ only *heroic Principle* :” And “ *private*  
 “ *Friendship* and the Love of *our Country*  
 “ are only commendable, as they make  
 “ *subordinate Parts* of it.”

To this astonishing and wilful Perver-  
 sion of the moral Principles of *Christianity*,  
 we may add the subsequent Part of the  
 same invenomed Paragraph. For he pro-

<sup>a</sup> Ib. § 1.<sup>a</sup> Ib. § 2.<sup>b</sup> Ib. § 1.



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ceeds to insinuate, as if Christian Charity were no active Principle; but such as leads its Profelytes to a State of mere Contemplation and Inaction, without Regard to social Life, and the Affairs of this lower World. We may defy the noble Writer's most zealous Admirers to find any other rational Construction for the following Passage. "The Christian, he says, is not obliged to enter into such *Egagements* with this *lower World*, as are of no help to him in acquiring a *better*. *His Conversation* is in *Heaven*. Nor has he occasion for such *supernumerary Cares* and *Embarassments* here on Earth, as may *obstruct his Way* thither, or *retard him* in the *careful Task* of working out *his own Salvation*." Unexampled Prevarication! thrown out against that Religion which enjoins an *active* Virtue, a *Regard* to the *present* Happiness of Man in *every possible Relation*, as the only Way to obtain Felicity hereafter; Against that Religion, whose *Founder* did not *idly barangue* in a Closet upon *Beauty*, *Virtue*, and *Decorum*, amidst the *Indolence* and *Pride* of Life; but *practised* the divine *Truths* he taught; and "went about doing Good," amongst

mongst the meanest and most despised of his Fellow-Citizens.

To be unmoved on this Occasion were *Stupidity*; not to confess it, *Cowardice*. *Error* should be exposed with *Calmness*; but *Dishonesty* merits our Abhorrence.

YET from these Cavils tho' groundless, and Misrepresentations tho' *Voluntary*, we may draw an Observation which highly recommends Christianity. We may hence see the superior Excellence and Dignity of its moral Precepts, above the most applauded among the Heathen: And how nobly, by one great Principle, it rectifies every little Partiality to which the human Heart is subject. For this is clear, that in one Age or Nation, *Friendship* hath been *idolized* as the supreme Virtue; in another, *Hospitality*; in a Third, the Love of our *Country*;

Indeed the noble Writer pursuing the same kind Intention to Christianity, pretends that the Law of *Hospitality*, or *Regard to Strangers*, among the *ancient Heathens*, was *equivalent* (nay he gives a very distinguishing Suggestion, as if it was far *superior*), to *Christian Charity*. "Such, says he, was ancient *Heathen Charity*, and pious Duty towards the whole of Mankind; both those of different Nations and *different Worships*." (*Misc. iii. c. 1. in the Notes.*) For Instances of this he is forced to go back as far as *Homer*, who indeed has given us some fine Pictures of ancient Manners of this kind, in his *Odyssey*. The

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in a Fourth, enthusiastic *Contemplation*; in a Fifth, the *Austerities* of the Hermit; in a Sixth, the *external Practice* of Religion; in a Seventh, which is the *fashionable Peculiarity* of *our own Times*, *occasional Acts* of Humanity and Compassion, while the more *extensive* and *public* Views of Beneficence are *neglected* or even *derided*. How different, how superior, is the great Christian Principle of *universal Love*! Which rising gradually, by a Progress thro' all the

noble Writer might have found others, in no Respect inferior, in the Old Testament, recorded long before *universal Charity* was ever thought of, in the Stories of *Abraham* and *Lot*. The Truth is, the *Guest* or *Stranger* was held *sacred*, because he was under the *Protection* of his *Host*: It was therefore deemed *criminal*, to violate a *Trust* thus *reposed*. But it happens unfortunately for his Lordship's Argument, that in these Old Times *Rapine* and *Plunder* were as much in *Vogue* as either *Friendship* or *Hospitality*, and equally creditable. These *phantom* Appearances of *Virtue* are still to be seen in the *Arabian Deserts* as frequently as ever. If a Traveller comes to the Door of a wild *Arab's Tent* at Night, he is received with so boundless an *Hospitality*, that the *Host* would expose himself, his *Wife*, and *Children*, to certain Destruction, to save the *Life* of his *Guest*. Had this *hospitable Savage* met the Traveller in the *Deserts* at Noon, he would have *Strip'd* him to the *Skin*, and, on the least Resistance, laid him *dead at his Feet*, And this was the true Extent of the noble Writer's boasted *Heathen Charity*.

less enlarged Affections towards Parents, Children, Friends, Country, and spreading till it embraceth all Mankind, and every Creature that hath Life, forms that *perfect Virtue* in which human Weakness is most prone to be *defective*, and which implies and includes every moral Perfection. *Christianity* alone hath *kindled* in the Heart of Man this *vital* Principle; which *beaming* there as from a Center, like the great *Fountain of Light and Life* that sustains and cheers the attendant Planets, renders its Profelytes indeed “*burning and shining Lights,*” shedding their *kindly Influence* on all around them, in that just *Proportion*, which their *respective Distances* may demand.

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## SECTION VII.

THE preceding Remarks may sufficiently obviate every Cavil of the noble Writer against the *essential* Parts of *Christianity*. But as his Lordship hath casually interspersed several Random-Insinuations, we must be content to receive them as they happen to appear, since they are of that disjointed Kind as to be incapable of Connection.

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IN a marginal Note, he gives an Account of the Migration of the *Israelites* from *Egypt*, under the Conduct of *MOSES*. He thinks proper to reject the clear Account which the *Jewish* Legislator himself gives; “That they departed, in order to worship “the true God;” and preposterously prefers what *TACITUS* and *JUSTIN* have said on that Subject; who affirm indeed, but without Proof, “that the *Jews* were driven “out of *Egypt* on account of their *Leprosy*.” This Partiality might of itself appear *mysterious* enough, when we consider the particular and consistent Account given us by the very Leader of the Expedition: For, what should we think of the Man, who should prefer the random Conjectures of an ignorant Modern to *XENOPHON*’s *Retreat*, or *CÆSAR*’s *Commentaries*? But the noble Writer’s Partiality will appear still more unaccountable, if we consider the following Passage of *STRABO*; a Writer as much beyond *TACITUS* in Candour, as beyond *JUSTIN* (if indeed *JUSTIN* and not *TROGUS POMPEIUS*, be answerable for this Slander) in true Judgment. This Author, *STRABO*, second to none in Antiquity,

<sup>d</sup> *Misc.*-ii. 1. Notes.

speaks thus: “ MOSES, an *Egyptian Priest*,  
 “ retreated along with a Number of *religious*  
 “ *Followers*. For he affirmed and taught,  
 “ that the *Egyptians* were mistaken, who  
 “ imaged the Deity under the Forms of the  
 “ Brute-Creation; as likewise the *Libyans*  
 “ and *Greeks*, who represented the *Gods*  
 “ under the *human Shape*. He held that  
 “ alone to be *God*, which comprehends eve-  
 “ ry living Creature, the Earth, and Sea;  
 “ which is called *Heaven*, the *World*, or the  
 “ *universal Nature*; whose *Image*, who  
 “ that is in his right Mind, would dare to  
 “ *form* out of any *earthly Materials*? Re-  
 “ *jecting* therefore all Use of *Images*, he de-  
 “ termined to dedicate to him a Temple  
 “ worthy of his Nature, and worship him  
 “ without Images. — On this Principle he  
 “ persuaded and brought over many *well-*  
 “ *disposed Men*, and led them forth into  
 “ that Country *where now Jerusalem is*  
 “ *built*.” A noble Testimony, sure, from

• Μωσης γαρ τις των Αιγυπτίων κερων απηρην εκεισε·  
 Εφη γαρ εκεινος και ειδασκεν ως εκ ορθως φρονεσιν οι  
 Αιγυπτιοι θηριοις εικαζοντες και βοσκημασι το θειον· οδ’  
 οι Λιβυες. εκ ευ δε οδ’ οι Ελληνες ανθρωπομορφες τυπεν-  
 τες· ειη γαρ εν τωτο μονον θεος το περιεχον ημας απαυιας  
 και γην και θαλασσαν, ο καλυμεν κρανον και κοσμον, και  
 a Heathen

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a Heathen Writer: *Less* he could not say, if he was well informed; and, unless he had embraced the *Jewish* Religion, he could not have said *more*.

THERE is another Passage (*Misc. v. c. i.*) which discovers somewhat of unfair dealing in the noble Writer. In the Margin, he prettily enough criticizes the Preface to St. LUKE's Gospel. But in the Text he hath paraphrased the Evangelist's Expression, in a Manner so different from anything St. LUKE either wrote or *meant*, as must not a little astonish every candid Reader. St. LUKE says, "*It seemed good to him to write in Order the Things that he knew.*" To which the noble Writer adds, "As there were many, it seems, long afterwards, who did; and undertook accordingly, to write in Order, and *as seemed good to them, &c.* — What shall we say of the noble Writer on this Occasion? Why, this only; "That

την των ουτων φυσιν. Τῆς δὲ τις αὐ εἰκονα πλαττεῖν δια-  
ρῆσειεν ἐν ἔχων ὁμοίαν τινα των παρ' ἡμῖν; ἀλλ' εἰαν δεῖ  
πασαν ἕξαστοποιῖαν, τεμενος ἀφορισαντας καὶ ῥηκον ἀξιο-  
λογον τιμᾶν εἰδὲς χωρῖς. Ἐκεῖνος μὲν ἐν τοιαυτα λεγων  
ἐπεισεν ευγνωμονας ἀνδρας, ἐκ ὀλιγως, καὶ ἀπηγαῖεν ἐπι  
τον τοπον τῆτον, ὅπως νῦν ἐστὶ το ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολυμοῖς κλισμα.  
Strabo, l. xvi.

“ inasmuch as it *seemed good to him* to interpret this Preface of St. LUKE, he therefore thought himself at Liberty to interpret it *as it seemed good to him.*”

THERE are three more Subjects, which his Lordship hath thought fit to represent in the Manner which *seemed good to him*. These are; first, the divine Fore-knowledge communicated to JOSEPH in the Interpretation of PHARAOH'S Dreams: Secondly, the Rise of *Bigotry*; or religious *Intolerance* and *Persecution*: Thirdly, and principally, The Relation which the *Jewish* Institutions bear to the *Egyptian*<sup>f</sup>. In all these, the noble Writer hath employed every Art of *Insinuation* and *Address*, that he might throw an Odium on the *Mosaic* Dispensation. These Passages might well merit a particular Consideration, had I not been happily prevented by my most learned Friend; who hath fully exposed their Weakness in that inestimable Treasure of all true Knowledge, *The divine Legation of MOSES*. Thither the Reader is refer'd; where he will find these Questions treated with that Reach and Mastery

<sup>f</sup> See *Misc.* ii. c. 1.



so peculiar to the Author of that great Work<sup>s</sup>.

IT may now be necessary to examine the third Chapter of the noble Writer's second Miscellany; where he makes it his Pretence "to prove the Force of *Humour* in Religion." Of which it may be said, that it is the truest Piece of *Random-Work*, the most genuine *Farce*, that is perhaps to be met with in any Writer of whatever Age or Nation. He *divides* it (as every *Farce* ought to be *divided*) into three *Acts*. In its Progress we are carried into a very *Fairy-Land* of *Thought*, if not more properly a *confused Chaos*. For first, he sets about, with great Solemnity, to prove, "that *Wit and Humour* are corroborative of Religion, and promotive of "true Faith:" To prove this, a Story is told, by which it appears, that *not Wit and Humour*, but *good Humour* or *Easiness of Temper* is thus *corroborative* and *promotive*: Then, in Conclusion, *Wit and Humour* come in again, to overturn all that hath been done, and shew that *good Humour* hath suffered itself to be ridiculously *imposed upon*.

<sup>s</sup> With relation to the first of these Points, see the *Div. Leg.* vol. ii. p. 164. For the second, see *Ib.* Book ii. §. 6. For the third, see Book iv. § 6. *passim*.

'THO' it doth not appear that our modern Advocates for *Wit and Humour* are so nearly interested in their Fate as they seem to think themselves; yet it must be owned their Generosity is so much the more to be applauded, in thus pleading the Cause of *Clients* who never employed them. However, taking for granted what seems to be the real Foundation of their Writings on this Subject; "that *talking* in Praise of *Wit and Humour* is a Proof of their being "possessed of them, and that consequently "they are *Parties in the Cause*;" I shall not envy the noble Writer any Man's Admiration who may think proper to esteem him a *Wit*, on account of the *grotesque* Appearances he assumes throughout this present *Miscellany*. 'Tis my Intention only to convince the plain Reader, that this *supposed Wit* is by no means *philosophical*.

THE first *Head*, therefore, he tells us, is "to make it appear, that *Wit and Humour* "are corroborative of Religion and promotional of true Faith." To this Purpose he tires us with a Story, not the most elegantly plann'd, in my Apprehension, of a "Club of "merry Gentlemen, who in a travelling Expedition meeting with sorry Roads and

“ worse Fare, laugh’d themselves into a  
 “ Belief, that both Roads, Accommodations,  
 “ and Cookery, were perfectly good.” What  
 follows is the Moral or Application of this  
 curious Conceit. “ Had I to deal with a  
 “ malicious Reader, he might perhaps pre-  
 “ tend to infer from this Story of my tra-  
 “ velling Friends, that I intended to repre-  
 “ sent it as an easy Matter for People to per-  
 “ suade themselves into what Opinion or  
 “ Belief they pleased.”

Now without troubling ourselves to en-  
 quire, how far this Story is a Proof of the  
 noble Writer’s fundamental Maxim, “ That  
 “ Ridicule is a Test of Truth,” let us pro-  
 ceed to the intended *Moral*; which seems  
 evidently calculated to throw a false Light  
 on *religious Belief*; by representing it as the  
 mere Effect of *Prejudice, Self-Imposition,*  
 and *Deceit*. To rescue it, therefore, from  
 this insinuated Calumny, we need not *deny,*  
 but *insist,* that the Passions, false Interests,  
 and Prejudices of Mankind, must indeed for  
 ever hang as a Byass upon their Opinions.  
 But it must be further observed too, that  
 these Passions and false Interests will at least  
 as often prejudice them against Religion, as  
 in its Favour. ’Tis true, there are Preju-  
 dices

dices in Favour of Religion, arising from *Education*; but there are Prejudices against it too, arising from *vicious Passions*. Some are *sanguine* in their *Hopes*, and hence, while their Conduct is virtuous, *wish*, and therefore *believe* Religion to be *true*: Others are *sanguine* in their *Hopes*, but *abandoned* in their Conduct, and therefore *live* themselves into a Belief that Religion is *false*. Some, thro' a Dread of Annihilation, persuade themselves beyond the Strength of Evidence: Others, thro' the Prevalence of a suspicious Cast of Mind, reject even what is probable. Thus Passions and Prejudices work powerfully indeed; but they work both *for* and *against* Religion. It should seem, then, that the noble Writer's Moral, which he aims at *Religion*, may with equal Force be apply'd to *Infidelity*: For it is but supposing a Man given up to *Vanity* or *Vice*, and we shall soon "see him enter into such a Plot as this against his own Under- standing, and endeavour by all possible Means to persuade both himself and others of what he thinks *convenient* and *useful* to DISBELIEVE." 'Tis idle, therefore, to insist on the Prejudices either *for* or *against* Religion: They will both naturally



arise; and it is the Part of Reason to controul them. But we may safely leave it to any one's Determination, which Temper of Mind is the most *amiable*, that which entertains Prejudices *in favour of Religion*, or *against it*.

THE noble Writer proceeds to his second Head; but seems at the same time conscious how little it was to any good Purpose. However, in Failure of *Truth* and *Method*, he again hath recourse to what he seems to think *Wit and Humour*; and which, for aught I know, may pass for such among his Admirers. "However, says he, lest I should  
 " be charged for being worse than my  
 " Word, I shall endeavour to satisfy my  
 " Reader, by pursuing my Method propos-  
 " ed; if peradventure he can call to Mind  
 " what that Method was, Or if he cannot,  
 " the Matter is not so very important, but  
 " that he may safely pursue his Reading  
 " without further Trouble."

BUT tho' it was prudently done in the noble Writer, to throw the Subject of his *second Head* into *Shades*; yet, for the Sake of Truth, we must drag it into *Light*. It was therefore to prove, "That *Wit and Hu-*  
 " *mour* are used as the proper Means of pro-  
 " moting

“moting true Faith, by the holy Found-  
 “ers of Religion.” But when we come  
 to the Point, for *Wit and Humour*, by vir-  
 tue of a certain Dexterity of Hand, the  
 Reader is again unexpectedly presented  
 with *good Humour* in their Stead. This, it  
 will be said, is nimble dealing; but what  
 of that, so long as it may tend to disgrace  
*Christianity* and its *Founder*! The noble  
 Writer’s Application, therefore, is still more  
 extraordinary. “The Affection and Love  
 “which procures a true Adherence to the  
 “new religious Foundation, must depend  
 “either on a real or *counterfeit Goodness* in  
 “the *religious Founder*: Whatever *ambitious*  
 “*Spirit* may *inspire him*; whatever *savage*  
 “*Zeal* or *persecuting Principle* may lie in  
 “*reserve*, ready to disclose itself when Au-  
 “thority and Power is once obtained; the  
 “*first Scene of Doctrine*, however, fails not  
 “to present us with the agreeable Views  
 “of *Joy, Love, Meekness, Gentleness*, and  
 “*Moderation*.”—To speak my inmost Sen-  
 timents of this Passage, it is of too black a  
 Nature to deserve a Reply. There are  
 certain Degrees of *Calumny* so *flagrant*, as  
 injured Truth disdains to answer; and this  
 is of the Kind. On this Occasion, there-

fore, we shall leave the noble Writer to the Reflexions of every *honest Man*; in Conformity to the Example of that blessed Person, “*who when he was reviled, reviled not again*<sup>h</sup>.”

THE next Circumstance in holy Writ, that falls under his Lordship's Animadversion, is what he calls “The famous *Entry* “or *high Dance* performed by DAVID in “the Procession of the sacred Coffer.” In which he hath again represented Things *as it seemed good to him*. Here, by confounding *ancient* with *modern Manners* (in such a Way as is quite unworthy of his Character, and suited only to the Genius of a *Coffee-house* Freethinker) he hath endeavoured to bring down the *solemn Procession* of a grand *religious Festival*, to a Level with the Merriments of an *Apish Dancing Master*. This Representation may very probably pass current among many of his Admirers; so that it had been necessary to set the Matter in its true Light; but that here too, I am happily prevented by a judicious Writer, who hath done all imaginable Justice to the Argument; and effectually ex-

<sup>h</sup> See above, § 3. of this *Essay*, p. 269.

posed the noble Writer's Weakness and Insincerity<sup>1</sup>.

HIS Lordship now proceeds to the Story of the Prophet JONAH, which he hath burlesqued and turned to Farce with that Delicacy, so peculiar to himself. The Story itself is indeed authenticated by our SAVIOUR'S Mention of it, as emblematical of his own Death and Resurrection. Its Moral is excellent; being an illustrious Display of the divine Mercy to penitent and returning Sinners, exemplified in God's remitting the Punishment denounced, and sparing a devoted City on its sincere Repentance; as also of the Frailty and Imperfection of the best of Men, set forth in the Prophet's Behaviour on the Occasion. To this we may add "the Propriety of the Miracle recorded," which was itself an extraordinary and most awakening "Instance of Punishment inflicted on Disobedience, and remitted on Repentance;" and therefore bearing a strong Relation to the Event for which it was wrought; being peculiarly adapted, when made known to the Ninevites, to induce them to hearken to the Prophet's Preaching, to believe what

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Leland's *Answer to the Moral Philosopher*, p. 291, &c.



he denounced and promised, and rouse them at once into a *Fear of God's Justice*, and a *Reliance on his Mercy*<sup>k</sup>.

SUCH then being the real Nature of the Fact; the Secret of the noble Writer's polite Representation lies in his burlesquing the Circumstances of the *supposed Dialogue* between God and the Prophet; an easy Task for any one who is disingenuous or ignorant enough to represent as strictly *literal*, what is evidently *parabolical*; according to the frequent and known Manner of *Composition* in the earliest Ages<sup>l</sup>. This his Lordship seems to have been aware of: "Whatsoever of this Kind may be *allegorically* understood, or in the Way of *Parable* or *Fable*, &c." Now had he treated the Scripture-Story with the same Candour which he affords to other ancient Writers, he would not have abused this Passage in so unworthy a Manner. A Writer of no Abilities, if provided only with a sufficient Quantity of Spleen and false Con-

<sup>k</sup> In the xith Chapter of St. *Luke*, our Saviour says, that "Jonas was a SIGN unto the Ninevites." This evidently implies, that he considered this Miracle, and the Fate of *Jonas*, as an *Example of Warning* to that People; in the Manner here represented.

<sup>l</sup> See the *Div. Leg.* vol. ii. where a full Account is given of the Origin and Progress of this kind of Writing.

ceit, might easily ridicule his favourite Piece, “The Judgement of HERCULES:” And to a raw Imagination, disgrace that instructive Fable, by burlesquing the supposed Conference between the *Goddesses* and the *Heroe*. VIRGIL hath in Fact been so served. And if works of mere Invention, and of the heroic Kind, studiously contrived to avoid every thing low, obscure, or equivocal, are subject to this Abuse; can we wonder, if the succinct History of an ancient Fact, recording the Dispensations of Providence, a Matter very obscure in itself, and relative to ancient Manners so distant from our own, should be liable to the false and dishonest Lights of Buffoonry? We may further observe, that the noble Writer’s Ridicule sometimes falls on divine Providence itself: “His *Tutor had good Eyes, and a long Reach*; “he overtook the Renegade at Sea, &c.— Could an *Epicurean* have used more indecent Language?

His Lordship goes on, to ridicule “the *Descriptions, Narrations, Expressions, and Phrases*” of holy Scripture: But these we shall pass over at present, as they will deserve a separate Consideration. He touches once more on the Patriarch ABRAHAM; and

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and they who are curious enough to look for the Objection, may find a full Answer to it in the Place here referred to<sup>m</sup>.

THE next, and only remaining Circumstance worthy of Notice in this Miscellany, is a *pretended Translation* from PLUTARCH: In which the noble Writer deals as honourably by that Author, as before by GORGIAS or ARISTOTLE<sup>n</sup>. But here too, I am prevented by the learned PHILELEUTHERUS LIPSIENSIS: However, as his Lordship's Conduct is remarkable on this Occasion, it may not be improper to exhibit a View of it in the great Critic's Words; who, it must be owned, hath chastised the noble Writer somewhat *roughly*, and *Aristarchus-like*.

“ HE (Mr. COLLINS) quotes the Place  
 “ as it is translated forsooth in the *Charac-*  
 “ *teristics*, a Book writ by an Anonymous,  
 “ but whoever he is, a very whimsical  
 “ and conceited Author. O *wretched*  
 “ Grecians (*so that Author renders PLU-*  
 “ TARCH) *who bring into Religion that*  
 “ *frightful Mien of sordid and vilifying*  
 “ *Devotion, ill-favoured Humiliation and*

<sup>m</sup> *Div. Leg.* vol. ii. p. 620.  
 § ix.

<sup>n</sup> See above, *Essay i.*

“ *Contrition, abject Looks and Countenances,*  
 “ *Consternations, Prostrations, Disfigurations,*  
 “ *and, in the Act of Worship, Distortions,*  
 “ *constrained and painful Postures of the*  
 “ *Body, wry Faces, beggarly Tones, Mump-*  
 “ *ings, Grimaces, Cringings, and the rest of*  
 “ *this Kind. — Thus far that nameless*  
 “ *Opiniatre: and our worthy Writer (Mr.*  
 “ *COLLINS) introduces it with a grave*  
 “ *Air, that PLUTARCH thus satirizes the*  
 “ *public Forms of Devotion; which yet are*  
 “ *such, as, in almost all Countries, pass for*  
 “ *the true Worship of God. — This would*  
 “ *partly be true, if those were really the*  
 “ *Words of PLUTARCH: But as not one*  
 “ *Syllable of them is found there, what*  
 “ *must we think of this Couple of Corrupt-*  
 “ *ers and Forgers? There is nothing in all*  
 “ *this, but their own Disfigurations and*  
 “ *Distortions of the Original; their own*  
 “ *Mumpings, and beggarly Tones, while*  
 “ *they pretend to speak in PLUTARCH’S*  
 “ *Voice. — PLUTARCH having observed,*  
 “ *that Superstition alone allows no Ease*  
 “ *nor Intermision, even in Sleep; their*  
 “ *Dreams, adds he, do as much torment*  
 “ *them then, as their waking Thoughts did*  
 “ *before; they seek for Expiations of those*  
 “ *Visions*



“ *Visions nocturnal; Charms, Sulfurations,*  
 “ *Dippings in the Sea, Sittings all Day on*  
 “ *the Ground.*

“ O Greeks, *Inventors of Barbarian Ills,*  
 “ *whose Superstition has devised Rowlings*  
 “ *in the Mire and in the Kennels, Dippings*  
 “ *in the Sea, Grovelings and Throwings*  
 “ *upon the Face, deformed Sittings on the*  
 “ *Earth, absurd and uncouth Adorations.*  
 “ This is a verbal Interpretation of that  
 “ Place — and now I dare ask the Reader,  
 “ if he has seen a more flagrant Instance  
 “ of *Unfaithfulness and Forgery*, than this of  
 “ our two Writers? *Humiliation and Con-*  
 “ *trition*, known Words in your *English*  
 “ *Liturgy*, are to be traduced here under  
 “ PLUTARCH’S Name. Where do those  
 “ and their other Phrases appear in the Ori-  
 “ ginal? or where do the Rites, he really  
 “ speaks of, appear in your Form of Worship?  
 “ Who among you *rowl themselves in Mire,*  
 “ *or wallow in Kennels?* a Ceremony fit  
 “ only to be enjoined to such crackbrained  
 “ scandalous Writers°.”

THE remaining Part of this random  
 Essay, is so completely vague and unintel-  
 ligible, that, although it be evidently de-

° *Phil. Lipsiens.* p. 210, &c.

signed, as a continued Sneer at Christianity, 'tis impossible to pick so much as an Objection, or even an Idea out of it. 'Tis therefore below Criticism. To conclude; when I see the noble Writer debase himself in this strange Manner, exercising at once the lowest Derision, and inflicting the deadliest Wounds on Religion and Christianity; I must own, the Appearance he makes, calls up to my Imagination a Remark of his own, "That there cannot be a Sight more shocking and contemptible, than that of a Man acting at once the Part of a *Merry Andrew*, and an *Executioner* <sup>9</sup>."

IT may be necessary, finally, to obviate his Lordship's perpetual Sneer at the *Mysteries* of our Religion. These, when particular Topics fail him, are the standing Objects of his Raillery. To cite particular Passages of this Kind, were needless, because they are innumerable. The plain Implication of all his gross Banter, is, "That because, in the *Christian* Dispensation, there are some things, which surpass human Comprehension, *Christianity* is therefore *absurd* and *ridiculous*."

WITH REGARD to this Cavil, therefore,

<sup>9</sup> *Wit and H.* Part i. § iii.

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'tis not my Intention to insist on proving the  
 “ Difference between Things being *above*  
 “ Reason and Things being *contrary* to  
 “ Reason; or that Propositions may be true,  
 “ though they are *above* our Reason, so  
 “ long as they are not *contrary* to it.” Full  
 enough has been said on this Subject, and  
 by no body better than by the excellent  
 Mr. *Boyle*. 'Tis a Question of more Impor-  
 tance to decide, “ Why any thing *mysteri-*  
 “ *ous* should be admitted into a Religion, *re-*  
 “ *vealed* for the Use of Man?” And in An-  
 swer to this we need only observe, that Re-  
 vealed Religion being designed for Man's Use,  
 its *essential* Doctrines are plain, *intelligible*  
 to all, *accommodated* to the Nature and  
 Faculties of the *human* Kind. But as this  
 System not only reveals to us our *Duty*, but  
 all *Motives* too which may induce us to  
 practise it; so, in order to *inforce these*, and  
*convince* us of the *Truth* of their divine Ori-  
 ginal, it was necessary that a *History of Pro-*  
*vidence*, or GOD's *Dispensation*, should be  
 revealed along with them. Hence some-  
 thing *mysterious* must needs arise; unless you  
 suppose Man *infinite* in Knowledge. For as  
 this System reveals to us several Particulars  
 (so far as they stand connected with *Piety*  
 and

and *Morals*) which relate to the Nature of GOD, the State of other, and superior Beings, the original Condition of Man, the Interposition of Providence for his Redemption, the Change of his Nature and Faculties, through the future Periods of his Existence; in all which Circumstances, his present Reach of Thought could give him no Information; 'tis evident, that in these Accounts, many Subjects must be *touched upon*, and *other Systems of Being* occasionally *glanced at*, the full Knowledge of which must be far beyond his present Comprehension. Now so far as these Truths and Facts, though *imperfectly revealed*, have any Tendency to enlighten his Mind, as to the general *Plan of Providence*, or stand connected in any other Manner with *Religion* and *Virtue*, so as to encourage and promote them, they must surely be admitted as Circumstances of great *Propriety* and *Use*. Or even supposing some of them to be of *none*, yet if they stand so essentially *connected* with others *which are*, so that the one cannot be destroyed without the other; this very Circumstance of *essential Union*, effectually destroys every Objection against their being of divine Original.



THERE may be, likewise, and undoubtedly are, some few Mysteries of another Kind in the *Mosaic* Dispensation: Such, I mean, as may seem, to some Apprehensions, not so easily reconcileable to the *moral* Attributes of God: Of which Kind there are some too, in the Constitution of the natural World. Now here in *Revelation*, as in *Nature*, 'tis the Part of human Reason to acquiesce in this mysterious and unknown Part, from what is *clear* and *known*<sup>q</sup>. Of this Kind, perhaps, is the Expulsion of the *Canaanites* under *Joshua*, which the noble Writer hath taken such Pains to vilify<sup>r</sup>. He might with as much Reason insult the Creator, for the Admission of *Storm*, *Famine*, or *Pestilence*. For as in *Nature*, so in *revealed* Religion, we are not to judge of the *whole* Constitution or Dispensation of Things, from *small* and *seeming* Exceptions: On the contrary, 'tis the Part of Wisdom to determine concerning these *seeming* Exceptions from a full View of the *whole* Dispensation. If this evidently tend to Good, the unprejudiced Inquirer into *Nature* and *Revelation* attributes the Doubt and Dark-

<sup>q</sup> See above, § iv. of this *Essay*.      <sup>r</sup> *Advice*, P. iii.  
§ 3.

ness, which may involve any particular Part, to his own *Incapacity* and *Ignorance*. And justly; for as the noble Writer hath told us on this very Occasion, “ In an *In-*  
“ *finit*y of Things thus *relative*, a Mind,  
“ which sees not *infinitely*, can see nothing  
“ *fully*.”

LET us therefore, while as yet we see but *as through a Glass and darkly*, contemplate the Works of God with Reverence and Submission. Let us wait the happier Hour, when *we shall know even as we are known*: when we shall be raised to a more enlarged Comprehension of our Creator’s immense Designs; and the whole intelligent Creation shall join, in confessing and adoring the unerring Rectitude of all his Dispensations.

## SECTION VIII.

HITHERTO we have seen the noble Writer buffooning and disgracing *Christianity*, from a false Representation of its *material* Part: We shall now consider what he hath thrown out against the *Com-*  
*position*, *Style*, and *Manner* of the sacred

\* *Mor.* Part ii. § 4.

Scriptures ; for on this too, he has thought it expedient to *point* his *Raillery*.

HE tells us, in the *ironical Tone*, “ that  
 “ the scriptural Descriptions, Narrations,  
 “ Expreffions, and Phrases, are in them-  
 “ selves many Times exceedingly pleasant,  
 “ entertaining, and facetious. — That our  
 “ Saviour’s Style, — his Parables, Simi-  
 “ les, Comparifons, — his Exhortations to  
 “ his Disciples, the Images under which  
 “ he often couches his Morals and pruden-  
 “ tial Rules — carry with them a certain  
 “ *Festivity, Alacrity*, and good Humour  
 “ fo remarkable, that I should look upon  
 “ it as impossible not to be mov’d in a *plea-*  
 “ *sant Manner* at their Recital.” To  
 these general Cavils he hath added a *Simile*  
 in another Miscellany, which, as is usual  
 with all fanciful Writers, is to stand for an  
 Argument. He says, “ ’Tis no otherwise  
 “ in the grammatical Art of Characters, and  
 “ *painted Speech*, than in the Art of *Paint-*  
 “ *ing* itself. I have seen, in certain Chris-  
 “ tian Churches, an antient Piece or two,  
 “ affirm’d, on the solemn Faith of priestly  
 “ Tradition, to have been angelically and  
 “ divinely wrought, by a supernatural

“ Hand and sacred Pencil, Had the Piece  
 “ happen’d to be of a Hand-like RAPHA-  
 “ EL’s, I could have found nothing *cer-*  
 “ *tain* to oppose to this Tradition. But  
 “ having observed the whole *Style* and  
 “ *Manner* of the pretended heavenly Work-  
 “ manship to be so indifferent, as to vary  
 “ in many Particulars from the Truth of  
 “ Art, I presum’d within myself to beg  
 “ Pardon of the Tradition, and assert con-  
 “ fidently, that, if the Pencil had been  
 “ *Heaven-guided*, it never could have been  
 “ so *lame* in its Performance.” This in-  
 genious Conceit, in the subsequent Para-  
 graph, he very *clearly*, tho’ *slyly*, applies to  
 the holy Scriptures.

’TIS the Province of *Wit* to form *Com-*  
*parisons*; of *Philosophy* to *detect* their *Weak-*  
*ness*, when they are obtruded on us as a  
*Test* of Truth. On Examination therefore  
 I will venture to say, the noble Writer’s  
*Parallel* will be found highly irregular and  
 defective.

FOR there is an *essential* Difference be-  
 tween *Paintings* and *Writing*, both in their  
*End* and *Execution*. Paintings, with Re-  
 gard to their End, are Things of mere *A-*

∇ *Misc.* v. c. 1.



*musement and Taste*: Consequently all their Value lies in the *Exquisiteness* of the *Art*, and the *fine Hand* of the Master. 'Tis likewise a Species of Art, that lies chiefly among the *Few*: The Bulk of Mankind (or, in the noble Writer's more elegant Phrase, *the mere Vulgar*) being *incapable*, thro' a Want of *Leisure*, of gaining any Proficiency in this *Taste*; or of acquiring that curious Discernment in *Ordonnance*, *Drawing*, and *Colouring*, which is at once the Pride and Pleasure of the *Virtuoso-Tribe*.

BUT with respect to Language, the Affair is otherwise: It's *Ends* are *various*. From the four different Kinds of literary Composition, as explained above\*, there must arise a correspondent Variety of Style, the *Poetical*, the *Oratorical*, the *Historical*, and *Didactic*. The First of these Kinds alone partakes of the Nature of *Picture*, and therefore can alone be properly compared with it; as they are both refer'd to the *Imagination*, for the End of *Pleasure*: The other three Species of Composition, tending chiefly to *Utility* by the Means of *Persuasion* or *Instruction*, draw their prime Value from *Plainness*, *Clearness*, and *Pre-*

\* See *Essay* i. § 3.

*cision*: From being adapted, not to the *Taste* of the *fastidious Critic*, but to the *Capacities* of those who are the intended *Objects* of *Persuasion* or *Instruction*. Here then the noble *Writer's Parallel* is essentially defective: Since it was the *Intention* of *Providence*, in the sacred *Scriptures*, to condescend to what his *Lordship's Quality* and refined *Wisdom* intitle him to disdain, even to *instruct the more Vulgar*: Whereas the *End* of *Painting*, is only *the Amusement of the Few*.

IN regard to the *Execution*, we shall find as wide a *Difference*. There is, in philosophical *Strictness*, but one *unvary'd Language* or *Style* in *Painting*; which is “such a *Modification* of *Light* or *Colours* as “may imitate whatever *Objects* we find in “*Nature*.” This consists not in the *Application* of *arbitrary Signs*; but hath it's *Foundation* in the *Senses* and *Reason* of *Mankind*; and is therefore the same in every *Age* and *Nation*. But in the literary *Style* or *Language*, the *Matter* is far otherwise. For *Language* being the voluntary *Application* of *arbitrary Signs*, according to the *Consent* of different *Men* and *Nations*, there is no *single uniform Model* of *Nature* to be

followed. Hence *Gracefulness* or *Strength* of Style, *Harmony* or *Softness*, *copious* Expression, *terse* Brevity, or *contrasted* Periods, have by turns gained the Approbation of particular Countries. Now all these *supposed* Beauties of Speech are *relative*, *local*, and *capricious*; and consequently unworthy the Imitation of a divine Artist; who, to fit the Speech he *ordains*, to the great Work of *universal* Instruction, would, we may reasonably suppose, strip it of every *local*, *peculiar*, and *grotesque* Ornament; and convey it unaccompany'd by all, but the more *universal* Qualities common to every Tongue.

THE noble Writer, then, might with some Shew of Reason have objected to the *Style* of Scripture, had the Writers boasted it's *Elegance*, as MAHOMET did that of his *Koran*, and defy'd all his Opposers to write any thing approaching it in this Respect. But the sacred Writers discover no *Design* or *Desire* of excelling as *fine* Writers: On the contrary, St. PAUL says, "they came "not with the power of human Speech," and gives a Reason for it which does Honour to his Mission.

THO' this Scrutiny alone might be sufficient to detect and discredit the Wantonness of the noble Writer's Comparison; yet it will further lead us to a full Disclosure of the Truth; by shewing *that* to be the peculiar Characteristic of the Scripture *Composition*, which hath ever held the first Rank among the Qualities of human Writings; I mean, that of *unadorned* SIMPLICITY.

As much hath been said by many Writers on the Subject of *Simplicity*, with very little Precision; and particularly by the noble Writer, who seems to separate the *simple* Manner from the *sublime*, as if they were *incompatible*<sup>y</sup>; and indeed in his own Compositions preposterously deserts the *one*, whenever he attempts the *other*<sup>z</sup>: It may be necessary here to fix the Idea of a *just* SIMPLICITY. This may be said to consist “in *Truth* and *Weight* of SENTIMENT, “cloathed in such IMAGES and STYLE, as “may most effectually *convey* it to the Reader's Mind.” If any of these Circumstances be wanting; if the SENTIMENT be *false* or *trifling*, if the IMAGES or STYLE be such as tend rather to *fix the Attention on*

<sup>y</sup> *Advice*, Part ii. § 2. *passim*.

<sup>z</sup> See the *Moralists*,



*themselves*, than on the *Sentiment* they are employed to convey, the *just Simplicity* is destroyed. This, as might be proved by a large Induction of Particulars, is the Circumstance in which the best Critics of Antiquity placed the supreme Excellence of Writing. And, in this Use of the Term, it appears, that not only the *familiar*, the *narrative*, the *didactic*, but the *pathetic*, and *sublime* Manner too, are so far from being inconsistent with *Simplicity*, that they are then only in their Perfection, when *founded on it*.

'Tis true indeed, that the sacred Records are, as the noble Writer calls them, "*multifarious*, and of different Characters, "varying according to the Situation, Intention, and natural Capacity of the Writers<sup>a</sup>." Yet amidst all this Variety of Manner, the reigning Quality of *Simplicity* is so *uniform* and *conspicuous*, that the boldest Enemy of *Christianity* will not be forward to hazard the Credit of his *Taste*, by calling it in Question.

If we examine them in this Light, we shall find, that, according to the Division made above<sup>b</sup>, they consist of Four different Kinds, the *poetic*, *oratorical*, *historical*,

<sup>a</sup> *Misc.* v. 1.<sup>b</sup> *Essay* i. § 3.

and *didactic* Forms. The poetic lies chiefly in the Book of *Psalms*, of *Job*, and several detached Passages in the *Prophets*, particularly of *Isaiab*. They contain many noble Efforts of *unmixed Poetry* or *pure Imitation*; yet *these*, being all centered in *one Intention*, that of *extolling* the Works, and celebrating the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of the *Deity*, do generally partake of the Character of *Eloquence*, being chiefly of the *lyric Kind*. In all these, the great Character of *Simplicity* is so strongly predominant, that every Attempt to *embellish* them, by adding the supernumerary Decorations of *Style* in *Translation*, hath ever been found to *weaken* and *debase* them.

As to the *oratorical* or *pathetic* Parts, innumerable might be produced, equal if not superior to any recorded by prophane Antiquity. In these, the leading Character of *Simplicity* is no less remarkable. Our SAVIOUR'S *Parables* and Exhortations are generally admirable in this Quality: Filled with unfeigned Compassion for the Weakness and Miseries of Man, they breathe nothing but the purest Benevolence. St. PAUL'S last Conversation with his Friends

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at *Ephesus*, on his Departure for *Jerusalem*<sup>d</sup>; his discourse on the *Resurrection* and on *Charity*; his Reproofs, his Commendations, his Apologies, especially that before *AGRIPPA*<sup>e</sup>, are wrote in the noblest Strain of Simplicity. And as a perfect Model of this Kind, we may give the Story of *JOSEPH and his Brethren*, which for Tenderness, true *Pathos*, and unmixed Simplicity, is beyond Compare superior to any thing that appears in ancient Story.

But as the most important Part of Scripture lies in the *historical* and *preceptive* Part; especially in the *New Testament*, whence chiefly our Idea of *Duty* must be drawn; so we find this uniform and *simple* Manner, eminently prevailing throughout, in every *Precept* and *Narration*. The History is conveyed in that artless Strain which alone could *adapt* it to the *Capacities* of all *Mankind*; the Precepts delivered by our SAVIOUR are drawn from the Principles of *common Sense*, improved by the most exalted Love of GOD and *Man*; and either expressed in clear and direct Terms, or couched under such *Images* and *Allusions*, as are every where to be found in *Nature*, such as *are*, and *must*

<sup>d</sup> *Acts*, c. xx.

<sup>e</sup> *Ib.*: c. xxvi.



ever be universally known, and familiar to all Mankind<sup>f</sup>; in which we may further observe, his Manner of teaching was greatly superior even to the noble Writer's justly applauded SOCRATES, who for the most part drew his *Images* and Allusions from the *less known* ARTS and MANNERS of the *City*s. Through all this Variety of striking Allusion and moral Precept, the Style ever continues the same, *unadorned, simple*, and, even by the noble Writer's own Confession, "*vehement and majestic*<sup>h</sup>;" yet never drawing the Reader's Attention on itself, but on the divine *Sentiments* it conveys.

To this we may further add, that these several Kinds of Composition are mixed and united with such Propriety and Force, as is scarce to be equalled in any other Writings. The poetical Parts are heightened by the great Strokes of *Eloquence* and *Precept*; the *pathetic*, by the noblest *Imagery*, and justest *Morals*; and the *preceptive* is strengthen-

<sup>f</sup> See Newton on *Daniel*;—Mr. Jortin's *Discourses*; —Dr. Law's *Life of CHRIST*.

<sup>g</sup> Not indeed without Reason; since his Design was *less extensive*, as he aimed not at the Instruction of all Mankind, but of the more literate Part of his Fellow-Citizens.

<sup>h</sup> *Misc.* ii. c. 3.



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ed and enforced by all the Aids of *Poetry*, *Eloquence*, and *Parable*; calculated at once to engage the *Imagination*, to touch the *Passions*, and command the *Reason* of Mankind.

'TIS true, this unadorned *Simplicity* so conspicuous in the Scripture Composition; hath often given Offence to puerile Critics. The noble Writer hath but revived the Objection; it was weakly urged by CELSUS in the Infancy of the Christian Religion<sup>i</sup>. At the Period when *Letters* revived in *Europe*, the *florid* Taste was so prevalent in *Italy*, under the Pontificate of LEO the Tenth, that the Composition of the Scriptures was on this Account held in general Contempt; and one of the fine Gentlemen in Literature<sup>k</sup>, of those Days, is known to have declared, “ that he dared not to read the “ *Bible*, lest it should *endanger his Style*.” We may easily form a Judgment of the Taste of that Age from this one Circumstance, “ that their most elaborate and celebrated Compositions were all wrote in a “ *dead Language* :” For thus they became mere *Imitators*, even to a Degree of *Servility*.

<sup>i</sup> Origen *contra Cels.* l. vii.  
TRO BEMBO.

<sup>k</sup> Cardinal PIERO BEMBO.

And 'tis sufficient for the Defenders of the Bible to observe, that along with *it*, every other great Model of ancient Writing fell into the same Disgrace at the above-mentioned Period; while the general Taste and Attention was turned from Weight of *Sentiment*, and Strength of *Image* and *Expression*, to the *local* and *capricious* Decorations of *Style* and *Language*. But the Reign of this false Taste was of short Duration; so that for a long Time past, the comparative Merit of ancient Writers hath been *weighed* in a juster *Scale*.

Now if we examine the Writers whose Composition hath stood the Test of Ages, and obtained that highest Honour, "the concurrent Approbation of distant Times and Nations," we shall find that the Character of *Simplicity* is the *unvarying* Circumstance which alone hath been able to gain this universal Homage from Mankind. Among the *Greeks*, whose Writers in general are of the *simple* Kind, the divinest Poet<sup>1</sup>, the most commanding *Orator*<sup>m</sup>, the finest *Historian*<sup>n</sup>, and deepest *Philosopher*<sup>o</sup>, are above the rest, conspicuously eminent in this great Quality. The *Roman* Writers

<sup>1</sup> Homer. <sup>m</sup> Demosthenes. <sup>n</sup> Xenophon. <sup>o</sup> Aristotle.  
rise

rise towards Perfection according to that Measure of true *Simplicity* which they mingle in their Works. Indeed they are all inferior to the *Greek* Models. But who will deny, that LUCRETIUS, HORACE, VIRGIL, LIVY, TERENCE, TULLY, are at once the *simplest* and *best* of *Roman* Writers? Unless we add the noble *Annalist* <sup>p</sup>, who appeared in After-times; who, notwithstanding the *political Turn* of his Genius, which sometimes interferes, is admirable in this great Quality; and by it, far superior to his Contemporaries. 'Tis this one Circumstance that hath raised the venerable DANTE, the Father of modern Poetry, above the succeeding Poets of his Country, who could never long maintain the *local* and *temporary* Honours bestowed upon them; but have fallen under that just Neglect, which *Time* will ever decree to those who desert a *just Simplicity* for the *florid* Colourings of Style, contrasted Phases, affected Conceits, the mere *Trappings* of Composition, and *Gothic* MINUTIÆ <sup>q</sup>.

<sup>p</sup> Tacitus.

<sup>q</sup> Even their most applauded Poet, the famed TORQUATO TASSO, runs so often into this *little Manner*, that nothing but the reigning false Taste of the Age in which he lived, if indeed even *that*, can plead his

'Tis this hath given to BOILEAU the most lasting Wreath in *France*; to SHAKESPEAR and MILTON in *England*; especially to the last, whose Writings are more *unmixed* in this Respect; and who had formed himself entirely on the *simple* Model of the best *Greek* Writers, and the *sacred* Scriptures †.

Excuse. The great *Portuguese* Genius, CAMOENS, to whose *Lustade* TASSO hath been much obliged, was much less faulty in this Particular, tho' he and the *Italian* were nearly Contemporaries.

Mr. DRYDEN somewhere observes, " that MILTON " never sinks so far below himself, as when he falls on " *some Track of Scripture.*" 'Tis equally true, that he never rises so far above himself, as when he falls on some *Track of Scripture.* 'Tis easy to guess what was the Drift of Mr. DRYDEN's Remark. But the Observations made above (*Essay* i. § 3.) will easily reconcile these seeming Contradictions. When MILTON adopts the *poetical* Parts of Scripture, he rises above himself: But by an *injudicious Application* of the *historical* or *didactic* Parts, he often falls indeed.

THIS naturally leads us to an Observation on Mr. HUME's *Essay on Simplicity and Refinement in Writing.* He hath attempted to fix a certain *Union* of these two Qualities, which, he says, constitutes the most perfect Form of Composition. It were to be wished he had given us some better *Reasons* in support of this *Opinion*, which itself seems to be a mere *Refinement.* The Progress of his Argument is remarkable. — He draws all his Instances from *Poets*; and having given some Examples of *Poets*, who are both *simple* and *unpoetical* in the Extreme, he arbitrarily throws the Censure on the too great Degree of *Simplicity*, instead of fixing it where he ought, *viz.* on the too great Mixture of the *histori-*



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As it appears from these Instances, that *Simplicity* is the only universal Characteristic of just Writing; so the superior Eminence of the sacred Scriptures in this prime Quality hath been generally acknowledged. One of the greatest Critics in Antiquity, himself conspicuous in the *sublime* and *simple* Manner, hath born this Testimony to the Writings of MOSES and St. PAUL<sup>s</sup>. And by Parity of Reason we must conclude, that, had he been conversant with the other sacred Writers, his *Taste* and *Candour* would have allowed them the same Encomium.

*cal, oratorical, or argumentative* Species. In Proof of this, we need only alledge the Examples of HOMER, PINDAR, and CALLIMACHUS, where *Simplicity*, and at the same time *Sublimity* and the *true poetic Forms*, are in their last *Perfection*. Thus all he proves is, “that a *Poet* ought not to be *unpoetical*.”—Next he puts VIRGIL and RACINE on a *Level*, as having attained the nearest to this *imagined Union* of *Simplicity* and *Refinement*. Here he obligeth us again to call his *Taste* in Question: For every Page of RACINE is full of *Turns* both of *Phrase* and *Sentiment*: Whereas we scarce meet with three Instances of this Kind in all VIRGIL’s Writings.—He then gives us his Idea of *Simplicity*: “Those Compositions which have the Recommendation of *Simplicity*, have *nothing surprizing* in the Thought, “when divested of that *Elegance of Expression*, and *Harmony of Numbers*, with which it is clothed.”—From these extraordinary *Premises*, we are naturally prepared to expect his *Conclusion*, “that CATULLUS and PAR-

<sup>s</sup> Longinus.

BUT we need not have Recourse to Authorities, for the Proof of the superior Weight and Dignity of the sacred Scriptures, in this great Quality. 'Tis evident to Demonstration from the following Circumstance. It hath been often observed, even by Writers of no mean Rank, that “the Scriptures suffer in their Credit by the *Disadvantage* of a *literal Version*, while other ancient Writers enjoy the *Advantage* of a *free and embellished Trans-*”  
 “*lation.*” But in Reality these Gentlemen’s Concern is ill placed and groundless. For the Truth is, “That most other Writings are indeed *impaired* by a *literal Trans-*”  
 “*lation*; whereas, giving only a due Regard to the *Idioms* of different Languages, the sacred Writings, when *literally trans-*”  
 “*lated*, are then in their full Perfection.” Now this is an *internal* Proof, that in all other Writings there is a Mixture of *local, relative, exterior* Ornament; which is often lost in the Transfusion from one Language to another. But the *internal* Beauties which depend not on the *particular* Construction of *Tongues*, no *Change* of *Tongue* can destroy. Hence the *Bible-Composition* preserves it’s native Beauty and Strength,

alike in every Language, by the sole Energy of unadorned Phrase, natural Images, Weight of Sentiment, and *great Simplicity*.

'Tis in this Respect like a rich Vein of Gold, which, under the severest Trials of Heat, Cold, and Moisture, retains its original *Weight* and *Splendor*, without either Loss or Alloy; while baser Metals are corrupted by Earth, Air, Water, Fire, and assimilated to the various Elements thro' which they pass.

THIS Circumstance then may be justly regarded as sufficient to vindicate the Composition of the sacred Scriptures; as it is at once their chief *Excellence*, and greatest *Security*. 'Tis their *Excellence*, as it renders them *intelligible* and *useful to all*; 'tis their *Security*, as it prevents their being disguised by the *false* and *capricious* Ornaments of *vain* or *weak Translators*.

WE may safely appeal to Experience and Fact for the Confirmation of these Remarks on the superior Simplicity, Utility, and Excellence of the Style of holy Scripture. Is there any Book in the World, so perfectly adapted to all Capacities? that contains such *sublime* and *exalting* Precepts, convey'd

in such an *artless* and *intelligible* Strain? that can be read with such Pleasure and Advantage, by the lettered *Sage* and the unlettered *Peasant*? To whom then would the noble Writer send Mankind for religious and moral Instruction? To the divine PLATO, it may be supposed; or, more probably, to the *inraptured* Strains of PHILOCLE and THEOCLES. And sure, Mankind must reap much Instruction and Advantage from the *puffed Epitaphs* and *justian Style* of a *philosophical Romance*. We may reasonably hope indeed, soon to see (nay, do we not already see?) the happy Effects of this high Discipline. For in Fact, the noble Writer's *Characteristics* are now the standing *Oracle* in the *Office*, the *Shop*, nay, as I am informed, sometimes even in the *Cobler's Stall*. We need not wonder therefore, that in these new Habitations of *Taste*, *sublimed Phrase*, and *abstruse Philosophy*, the *simple* Strains of the Gospel are *damned* and *discarded*.

To return then to the noble Writer's Comparison, (if indeed we have departed from it) these united Observations may convince us, that the only Circumstance in Painting, which can with any Propriety be compared to literary *Style*, is that of



*Colouring.* And on this Principle we may further confirm all that hath been said on the superior Excellence of the *simple* Manner. For 'tis well known, and the noble Writer knew it, that, while the Masters in this fine Art confined the Pencil to the genuine Forms of *Grace* and *Greatness*, and only superadded to these the temperate Embellishments of a *chastised* and *modest* Colouring, the Art grew towards its *Perfection*: But no sooner was their Attention turned from *Truth*, *Simplicity*, and *Design*, to the gaudy Decorations of a rich and luscious *Colouring*, than their Credit declined with their Art: And the experienced Eye, which contemplates the *old* Pictures with *Admiration*, surveys the *modern* with Indifference or *Contempt*.

To conclude. We see there are two Kinds of *Composition*, essentially opposed to each other. The *one* turns the Attention on *itself*; the *other* on *the Truths it conveys*. The first may be justly compared to a *Sun-Beam* playing on the *Surface* of the Water, which *attracts* and *dazzles* the Beholder's Eye by its own *useless Splendor*. The last is like a *Sun-Beam* darting to the Bottom; which, while itself is *unseen* or *unobserved*,

*unobserved, communicates its Brightness, and illumines every Object on which it falls.*

How far the *first* of these may belong to the noble Writer, let others determine. 'Tis sufficient to have proved, that the *last* is the *unvaried* Style and Manner of the *sacred Scriptures*.

## SECTION IX.

IT would have been strange, had his Lordship emptied so much of his Gall on *Christianity*, without bestowing a Share on its *Ministers*. It may therefore be expected, that something should be said on his Treatment of the *English Clergy*.

So far as his Spirit of Satire may have been provoked by the persecuting and intolerant Principles of some of the *Clergy* in his Time, 'tis highly commendable. It matters not in what Rank, Order, or Profession, the Enemies of *Freedom* may appear. What Shape or Pretence soever they may assume, 'tis a Work of true Charity to stigmatize and disgrace them, as the Enemies of Mankind.

BUT it appears too evidently, that the noble Writer's *Spleen* arose from another Foundation. For his Satire is not so often

pointed against them, as being the *Enemies of Freedom*, as the *Friends of Christianity*. With a View of disgracing them in this Regard, he hath ridiculed and abused their *Writings*, their *Preaching*, and even their *Persons*. It will only be necessary to select a few Instances of this Kind, from an infinite Number; in all which, the *Delicacy* of the *Raillery* is so *conspicuous*, as to need *no Illustration*.

IN his *Soliloquy*, he hath paid his Compliments to the *Writings* of the *Clergy*, under the Title of “Candidates for Authorship of the sanctify’d Kind.” “These, he says, may be termed a sort of *Pseudo-Ascetics*, who can have no real Converse either with themselves or with Heaven.” — “And although the Books of this sort, by a common Idiom, are called *good Books*, the Authors for certain are a *sorry Race*.” — “*A Saint-Author, of all Men least values Politeness*. — He is above the Consideration of that, which, in a narrow Sense, we call *Manners*: Nor is he apt to examine any other Faults, than those which he calls *Sins*.”

THUS he deals with the Clergy, when they are *dull* enough to write *seriously* on the most *interesting Subjects*. But if any of the Order happens to fall into a gayer Turn of Composition, the Charge is renewed under another Form. Then, “the  
“ *burlesque Divinity* grows mightily in  
“ vogue; and the cry’d up Answers to He-  
“ terodox Discourses are generally such as  
“ are written in Drollery—*Joy* to the Re-  
“ verend Authors, who can afford to be  
“ thus gay, and condescend to correct us in  
“ this *Lay-Wit*.”

THEIR *Preaching* is another standing Subject of Derision: And ridiculed they must be, whether they *divide* their Discourse, or *divide it not*. If the first, then the following Stroke of Raillery is prepar’d for them:  
“ Come we now (as our *authentic Rhetori-*  
“ *cians* express themselves) to our *second*  
“ *Head*.” If the latter, then “our religi-  
“ ous *Pastors* have changed their Manner  
“ of distributing to us their *Spiritual Food*  
“ — they have run into the more savory  
“ way of *learned Ragout* and *Medley*. The  
“ elegant Court-Divine exhorts in *Miscel-*

† *Misc.* v. c. 2.

‡ *Misc.* ii. c. 3.

“ *lany,*



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“ *lany*, and is ashamed to bring his *Two's*  
“ and *Three's* before a fashionable Assem-  
“ bly.”

The *Defenders* of *Christianity* are baited  
in their Turn. “ For Example, let a  
“ *zealous Divine* and *flaming Champion* of  
“ our *Faith*, when inclined to shew him-  
“ self in Print, make choice of some *tre-*  
“ *mendous Mystery* of Religion, opposed  
“ heretofore by some *damnable Heresiarch*.”  
— “ A Ring is made, and Readers gather  
“ in Abundance. Every one takes Party,  
“ and encourages his own Side.” “ *This*  
“ *shall be my Champion!* — *This Man for my*  
“ *Money!* — *Well hit on our Side!* — *Again,*  
“ *a good Stroke!* — *There he was even with*  
“ *him!* — *Have at him next Bout!* — *Excel-*  
“ *lent Sport!*”

The same *familiar Elegance* of Compo-  
sition, joined with a surprising Effort in  
the noble Writer's own *Sublime*, runs  
through the following Paragraph; where  
he compares a Controversy in *Divinity*, to  
a Match at *Foot-Ball*. “ So have I known  
“ a *crafty Glazier*, in time of Frost, pro-  
“ cure a FOOT-BALL, to draw into the  
“ Street the *emulous Chiefs* of the *robust*

? *Misc.* ii. c. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Misc.* i. c. 2.

“ *Youth.*

“ Youth. The *tumid Bladder* bounds at  
 “ every KICK, *bursts the withstanding*  
 “ CASEMENTS, the *Chassys, Lanterns,* and  
 “ all the *brittle vitreous WARE.* The  
 “ *Noise of Blows and Out-cries* fills the  
 “ WHOLE NEIGHBOURHOOD; and the  
 “ Ruins of *Glass cover the stony Pavements:*  
 “ till the *bloated battering Engine, subdued*  
 “ by Force of FOOT and FIST, and *yield-*  
 “ *ing up its Breath* at many a *fatal CRAN-*  
 “ NY, becomes lank and harmless, sinks  
 “ in its Flight, and can no longer uphold  
 “ the Spirit of the contending Parties<sup>a</sup>.”

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NOT content with these *severe Strokes* of Raillery, the noble Writer prepares a more deadly Blow at the Clergy; even no less than ruining their Fortunes among the *Fair-Sex.* And here the discerning Reader will readily guess, that his Ridicule must be needs levelled at their *Persons.* He introduces, or drags in, the Story of OTHELLO and DESDEMONA; represents the one as a *miraculous* Story-teller, the other as a *credulous* Hearer. He then adds,  
 “ But why the Poet, amongst his *Greek*  
 “ Names, should have chosen one which  
 “ denoted the Lady *superstitious,* I can't

<sup>a</sup> *Misc.* i. c. 2.

“ imagine ; unless, as Poets are sometimes  
 “ Prophets too, he should figuratively, un-  
 “ der this dark Type, have represented to  
 “ us, that, about a hundred Years after his  
 “ Time, the Fair-Sex of this Island should,  
 “ by *other monstrous Tales*, be so seduced, as  
 “ to turn their Favour chiefly on the *Tale-*  
 “ *tellers* ; and change their natural Inclie-  
 “ nation for fair, *candid*, and *courteous*  
 “ *Knights*, into a Passion for a *mysterious*  
 “ *Race of black Inchanters*<sup>b</sup>.”

I CANNOT think this *elegant* Passage de-  
 serves a particular Reply. 'Tis supposed,  
 the noble Writer designed it only as a Proof  
 “ That the *Saint-Author* of all Men least  
 “ *values Politeness* ;” as a Proof how *inca-*  
*pable* he was of *violating his own Rule*, or  
 exercising any Degree of “ that *gross* sort of  
 “ *Raillery*, which is so *offensive in good Com-*  
 “ *pany*<sup>c</sup>.”

Indeed all the *delicate* Paragraphs here  
 cited are much of the same Nature ; and  
 afford an undeniable Proof, how great a  
 Master his Lordship was, in the true *re-*  
*fin'd* Manner of *Attic* Wit. I shall only  
 add, that if, according to the noble Wri-  
 ter's projected Scheme of Confutation, the

<sup>b</sup> *Solil.* Part ii. § 3.      <sup>c</sup> *Wit and H.* Part i. § 2.

*English Clergy* should ever be baited in the way of *Puppet-show* at *Bart'l'mew-Fair*; I would recommend the above Passages, with many parallel ones in the *Characteristics*, to the Managers of the *Drama*; as being admirably suited to the *Genius* of their wooden DROLE, whether he should chuse to *swagger* in the *Sock*, or *strut* in the *Buskin*.

WERE the Clergy disposed to return these Compliments *in Kind*, it may be questioned whether his Lordship's Admirers would acquit them of *coarse Manners*. But however some of that Body may *blindly hate*, and others as *blindly admire*, the Author of the *Characteristics*; yet the best and wisest of the Profession, so far as I have been able to learn from their Conversation, would probably rather chuse to return his Salutations in the following Manner:

‘ Notwithstanding the superior Airs of  
 ‘ *Contempt*, which on all Occasions your  
 ‘ Lordship is pleased to assume, we cannot  
 ‘ think you of such Ability, as you seem to  
 ‘ appear in your own Eyes: Neither can we  
 ‘ think this overweening Opinion of your  
 ‘ self, this Disdain of all who adopt not  
 ‘ your peculiar Tenets; is any Proof of real  
 ‘ Wisdom, since yourself hath taught us  
 ‘ to



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‘ to believe, “ *that as we grow wiser, we*  
 ‘ *shall prove less conceited.*” Though we  
 ‘ scorn to *revile* you, yet we judge our-  
 ‘ selves well *intitl’d* to tell you the *Truth*  
 ‘ on every Subject. We regard, therefore,  
 ‘ fine *Imagination*, an extensive *Knowledge*,  
 ‘ and a commanding *Judgment*, as three  
 ‘ Qualities independent on each other. In  
 ‘ the first, we think you *eminent*; in the  
 ‘ second, *considerable*; in the last, we must  
 ‘ be excus’d, if we think you *neither emi-*  
 ‘ *nent nor considerable*: And on this Account  
 ‘ we can allot you *no high Rank*, in the Scale  
 ‘ of *true Genius*. Suitable to this, your  
 ‘ *Taste* in *Arts* is much superior to your  
 ‘ *Talents* for *Philosophy*. The only *Chain*  
 ‘ of *Reasoning* you have exhibited, is found  
 ‘ in your *Enquiry concerning Virtue*: Nor  
 ‘ is even this fasten’d to the *Throne of Truth*,  
 ‘ but hangs trembling from a *shadowy* and  
 ‘ *aerial* Fabric, blown up by a sportive *Ima-*  
 ‘ *gination*. You have indeed obtained the  
 ‘ Character of an *original Writer* in *Philoso-*  
 ‘ *phy*: how little you deserve this must needs  
 ‘ be known to all who are vers’d in the  
 ‘ *Greek Schools*; for thence the *rational Part*  
 ‘ of your System is chiefly drawn. What  
 ‘ you borrow, you often *em’elish*, sometimes  
*disguise,*

‘ *disguise*, never *strengthen*: but when you  
 ‘ attempt to become *original*, you only con-  
 ‘ vince us how ill qualified you are for such  
 ‘ a Task. Accordingly, we find in the ge-  
 ‘ neral Turn of your Writings, *meagre Sen-*  
 ‘ *timents* studiously adorned by a *Glare* of  
 ‘ *Words*, and a *Waste* of *Imagery*: with these  
 ‘ you amuse the common Reader; like the  
 ‘ unqualified Painter, who, unable to reach  
 ‘ the Beauties of a just and *vigorous Expres-*  
 ‘ *sion*, covers a lifeless Figure with *gaudy*  
 ‘ *Draperies*. And we cannot but think,  
 ‘ that, had you studied the Writings of that  
 ‘ great and excellent Man whom you so  
 ‘ weakly deride<sup>d</sup>, your Volumes, whatever  
 ‘ they had lost in *Bulk*, would have gained  
 ‘ in *Weight* and *Splendor*.

‘ WITH regard to the Buffoonries, which  
 ‘ you have occasionally exercised on Chris-  
 ‘ tianity, in what you call “*your Random*  
 ‘ *Essays*;” they are so much below the Cha-  
 ‘ racter of *the Philosopher*, that it is matter  
 ‘ of Surprize to us, that you could think  
 ‘ they can become the *Man of Wit*. It is  
 ‘ true, among those whom you most des-  
 ‘ pise, the *mere Vulgar*, they have gained  
 ‘ you the Character of an *inimitable* Author;

<sup>d</sup> Mr. Locke. See Advice, &c. Part iii. § 1.

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‘ among Readers of that Rank “ *who are*  
 “ *ready to swallow any low Drollery or*  
 “ *Jest;*” among those whom you have else-  
 ‘ where described, “ *who, while they pre-*  
 “ *tend to such a Scrutiny of other Evidences,*  
 “ *are the readiest to take the Evidence of the*  
 “ *greatest Deceivers in the World, their*  
 “ *own Passions<sup>e</sup>.*” But whatever these  
 ‘ Passages may be in their Consequences, we  
 ‘ cannot but think them, in their own Na-  
 ‘ ture, even contemptible. For, to use your  
 ‘ own Attic Phrase, “ *to twitch, snap, snub*  
 “ *up, or banter, to torture Sentences and*  
 “ *Phrases, and turn a few Expressions into*  
 “ *Ridicule, is not sufficient to constitute*  
 “ *what is properly esteemed a Writer<sup>f</sup>.*”  
 ‘ On this Account we look upon these  
 ‘ boasted Passages in your Book, to be of  
 ‘ that Kind which are calculated only “ *to*  
 “ *create Diversion to those who look no fur-*  
 “ *ther<sup>g</sup>;*” and in which, as you elsewhere  
 “ observe, “ *the most confused Head, if*  
 “ *fraught with a little Invention, and provid-*  
 “ *ed with Common-Place-Book Learning,*  
 “ *may exert itself to as much Advantage,*  
 “ *as the most orderly and well-settled Judg-*  
 “ *ment<sup>h</sup>.*” We cannot therefore express any

<sup>e</sup> Mor. P. ii. § 1. <sup>f</sup> Misc. v. c. 2. <sup>g</sup> Misc. i. c. 1. <sup>h</sup> Ib.

‘ Esteem either for the *Scurrilities* of the  
 ‘ *coarse* JESTER, or the *trim* *Delicacy* and  
 ‘ *Self-Admiration* of the *literary* NARCIS-  
 ‘ SUS.

‘ BUT, *my Lord*, there lies a heavier  
 ‘ Charge against you, than that of *bad* *Writ-*  
 ‘ *ing*. We mean the *Indecency* and *Immo-*  
 ‘ *rality* of your *Conduct*, in your *Manner* of  
 ‘ attacking *Christianity*. You would be  
 ‘ thought a *Lover* of your *Country*; yet  
 ‘ you pour *Contempt* upon its *Laws* and *In-*  
 ‘ *stitutions*. You allow the *Propriety* of a  
 ‘ *religious Establishment*; yet you take every  
 ‘ Occasion to *deride* it. You contend for a  
 ‘ *public Leading* in Religion; yet you per-  
 ‘ petually insinuate, that Mankind are *led* by  
 ‘ *the Nose*. You say, “*The Public ought*  
 ‘ *not to be* insulted to its *Face*,” yet your  
 ‘ Writings are one *continued Insult* upon its  
 ‘ *Opinions*. Our excellent and unrivaled  
 ‘ Constitution allows a perfect *Freedom* of  
 ‘ *Inquiry*; had you then argued *ingenuously*  
 ‘ and *fairly* against *Christianity*, without  
 ‘ attempting *Ridicule*; whatever Opinion  
 ‘ we might have entertained of your *Head*,  
 ‘ we might at least have thought favourably  
 ‘ of your *Heart*. But in direct Opposition  
 ‘ to this Rule, you always *ridicule*, scarce



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‘ ever *argue*; you endeavour to instil *illegal*  
 ‘ *Opinions*, without bringing any Evidence  
 ‘ to support either their *Usefulness* or *Truth*:  
 ‘ You give these *crude Buffoonries* to the  
 ‘ World in *Print*; and is not this *insulting*  
 ‘ *the Public to its Face*?—In this Instance,  
 ‘ we must think you *a bad Citizen*; and to  
 ‘ be ranked among those, whom a Writer,  
 ‘ by no means prejudiced in Favour of Re-  
 ‘ ligion, thus justly stigmatizes: “*Who I*  
 ‘ *hardly know for what End, have written*  
 ‘ *against the Religion of their Country, and*  
 ‘ *without pretending to substitute any thing*  
 ‘ *better, or more practicable, in its Place,*  
 ‘ *would deprive us of our happy Establish-*  
 ‘ *ment, merely, as it should seem, for the*  
 ‘ *Pleasure of pulling down and doing Mis-*  
 ‘ *chief*.” Besides this, *my Lord*, we must  
 ‘ take the Liberty to say, that you betray  
 ‘ such frequent Marks of *Insincerity* and de-  
 ‘ signed *Misrepresentation* in your Treatment  
 ‘ of *Christianity*, as but ill consists with that  
 ‘ *Reverence* which you owe to *Truth* and to  
 ‘ *yourself*; such as becomes not *a MAN*,  
 ‘ much less a *Man* whom the Public Con-  
 ‘ sent hath distinguished with the Title of  
 ‘ RIGHT HONOURABLE.

<sup>i</sup> *Enquiry into Homer's Life and Writings*, § 6.

‘ What

‘ What your particular Motives may have  
 ‘ been to this Treatment of *Christianity*, you  
 ‘ best know. The most *excusable Tempta-*  
 ‘ *tion* to this strange Conduct, that we can  
 ‘ assign, must have been the *natural Preva-*  
 ‘ *lence of Spleen*. For, as you observe, “ *all*  
 ‘ *splenetic People have a necessary Propen-*  
 ‘ *sity to Criticism and Satire.*” — “ *The*  
 ‘ *Spirit of Satire rises with the ill Mood ;*  
 ‘ *and the chief Passion of Men thus diseased*  
 ‘ *and thrown out of good Humour is to find*  
 ‘ *Fault, censure, unravel, confound, and*  
 ‘ *leave nothing without Exception and Con-*  
 ‘ *troversy* <sup>k</sup>.”

‘ FAR be it from us to derogate from  
 ‘ your *private Virtues*; tho’ we cannot but  
 ‘ wish, that in your Treatment of *Christia-*  
 ‘ *nity*, you had given better Proofs of that  
 ‘ *universal Charity*, which you so *warmly*  
 ‘ *profess*; even while you are reviling *that*  
 ‘ *Religion* where alone it is to be found. —  
 ‘ There is another Circumstance, that sure  
 ‘ the more humane Part of your Admirers  
 ‘ would hesitate upon; we mean, that *ex-*  
 ‘ *treme Contempt* you express for those you  
 ‘ call the *mere Vulgar*. Your Regard seems  
 ‘ solely centered in establishing your *peculiar*

<sup>k</sup> *Misc.* ii. c. 3.

‘ *System* among those you call “ Men of  
 ‘ *Fashion and Breeding;*” while you give up  
 ‘ *the Vulgar,* that is (to speak with due Re-  
 ‘ verence of the Works of GOD) the Bulk of  
 ‘ your *Fellow-Creatures,* as a proper Prey to  
 ‘ the supposed Delusions and Tyranny of  
 ‘ those, whom you brand as the Enemies  
 ‘ of Mankind. How this *Contempt* for the  
 ‘ greatest Part of your *Species* can consist  
 ‘ with true *Virtue* or *Charity,* we are at a  
 ‘ Loss to comprehend. ’Tis certain, *Chri-*  
 ‘ *stianity* would have taught you otherwise.  
 ‘ Nay, *my Lord,* a great *Roman,* as much  
 ‘ your Superior in *Station,* as in *Genius* and  
 ‘ *active Virtue,* would have told you, “ that  
 ‘ true Goodness extends itself to the *Mul-*  
 ‘ *titude;* that *Virtue* is not disdainful or  
 ‘ proud; but regards all Ranks of Men,  
 ‘ and consults their Welfare; which it  
 ‘ could not do, if it *despised the Vulgar*<sup>1</sup>.”  
 ‘ *Christianity* hath nobly heightened this  
 ‘ Principle; and recommends the *Weak,* the  
 ‘ *Poor,* the *Ignorant,* as the proper Objects  
 ‘ not only of our *Charity,* but *Instruction.*  
 ‘ And however mortifying it may be to  
 ‘ proud Minds, we must say, that we fre-  
 ‘ quently meet with Men in the lower Ranks

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, *Lael.*

‘ of Life, sometimes even in *Cities*, often  
 ‘ in *Cottages*, who when *instructed* in the  
 ‘ Principles of true *Christianity*, are superior  
 ‘ in *Knowledge*, *Worth*, and *Happiness*, to  
 ‘ those who hold them in Contempt.

‘ WITH regard to your Treatment of  
 ‘ *ourselves*: It gives us no Concern. For  
 ‘ in one Word, Calumnies thrown on whole  
 ‘ Bodies of Men, are *unmeaning* and *self-*  
 ‘ *confuted*. “ You may therefore proceed  
 ‘ in your *Invectives*; bestowing as free  
 ‘ Language of that Kind, as your *Charity*  
 ‘ and superior *Breeding* will permit. You  
 ‘ may liberally deal your *courtly Compli-*  
 ‘ *ments* and *Salutations* in what Dialect you  
 ‘ think fit: since for our own Part, neither  
 ‘ the Names of *Bigots*, *Impostors*, *Pedants*,  
 ‘ *Formalists*, *Gladiatorian Penmen*, *Flaming*  
 ‘ *Champions of the Faith*, *Black Tribe*, or  
 ‘ *Black Inchanters*<sup>m</sup>, will in the least scan-  
 ‘ dalize us, while the Sentence comes only  
 ‘ from *the Enemies of our Master*. On the  
 ‘ contrary, we rather strive with ourselves  
 ‘ to suppress whatever Vanity might natu-  
 ‘ rally arise in us, from such Favour be-  
 ‘ stowed. For whatever may, in the Bot-  
 ‘ tom, be intended us, by such a Treatment

<sup>m</sup> Names bestowed on the English Clergy throughout  
 the *Characteristics*.



“ ’tis impossible for us to term it other than  
 “ *Favour*, since there are certain *Enmities*,  
 “ which it will be ever esteemed a real  
 “ Honour to have merited<sup>n</sup>.”

‘ You have indeed wisely and artfully  
 ‘ endeavoured to *intimidate* us from expos-  
 ‘ ing the Folly of your *Insults* on Religion,  
 ‘ and *Christianity*; by representing such an  
 ‘ Attempt as being in itself *Contemptible*.  
 ‘ For thus you are pleased to speak: “ It  
 “ *must be owned, that when a Writer of any*  
 “ *Kind is so considerable as to deserve the*  
 “ *Labour and Pains of some shrewd Heads*  
 “ *to refute him in Public, he may, in the*  
 “ *Quality of an Author, be justly congratu-*  
 “ *lated on that Occasion. ’Tis supposed ne-*  
 “ *cessarily, that he must have writ with some*  
 “ *kind of Ability or Wit*°.”

‘ To obviate this Remark, is the only fur-  
 ‘ ther Trouble we shall give your Lordship  
 ‘ on the present Occasion. And here, with-  
 ‘ out any particular Application to yourself,  
 ‘ we must beg Leave to offer the plain Rea-  
 ‘ son why we think your Observation, how-  
 ‘ ever plausible and commonly received, is  
 ‘ yet entirely groundless. Indeed, with re-  
 ‘ gard to Writings of mere *Speculation* or

<sup>n</sup> Misc. v. c. 3.

° Misc. i. c. 2.

‘ *Criticism*, which affect not the Happiness  
 ‘ of Mankind, “ if Authors write ill, they  
 ‘ are despised” and forgotten. At least, as  
 ‘ the *Satirist* observes, they ought to be so:  
 ‘ And on this Account, many Parts of the  
 ‘ *Characteristics* will, probably, pass for  
 ‘ ever *uncensured* by us.

– ‘ BUT there are other Kinds of bad  
 ‘ Writing, which will ever bid fair to *live*  
 ‘ and be *admired*. We mean such as *mini-*  
 ‘ *ster* to the *low Passions* and *Vices* of Man-  
 ‘ kind; among which, RIDICULE on RE-  
 ‘ LIGION is of all others the most favourite  
 ‘ Topic. And even where these affections  
 ‘ do not prevail, the Generality of Men, thro’  
 ‘ the Weakness of Nature, are easily misled  
 ‘ in Matters even of the nearest Concern-  
 ‘ ment, by *Sophistry* or *Buffoonry*; by a  
 ‘ *Hint*, a *Sarcasm*, or an *Allusion*. Now in  
 ‘ this Case, ’tis surely a proper and *rational*,  
 ‘ tho’ perhaps no *easy* Task, to *deteët Misre-*  
 ‘ *presentation*, and lead Mankind back again  
 ‘ to the Paths of *Truth* and *Happiness*. For  
 ‘ the Effects of *Ridicule* on the *Mind*, re-

2 *Quel Démon vous irrite, & vous porte à medire ?*

*Un Livre vous deplait : Qui vous force à le lire ?*

*Laissez mourir un Fat dans son Obscurité.*

- *Un Auteur ne peut il pourrir en Sureté ?*

Boileau, Sat. ix.

‘ *semble*

ESSAY  
III.

‘semble those of *Venom* on the *Body*; which,  
 ‘tho’ struck into the *Blood* by a *puny Rep-*  
 ‘*tile*, may yet demand, nay even baffle, the  
 ‘Power of the *strongest Medicines*. How  
 ‘then can you affirm, that an Effect of this  
 ‘Kind “*implies either Ability or Wit,*” if  
 ‘*Buffoonry* and *Sophistry* can do the Busi-  
 ‘ness? And that they may, we have your  
 ‘Lordship’s *full Acknowledgment*; for, to  
 ‘adopt and conclude with your own Ex-  
 ‘pression, “*In the same Manner as a MA-*  
 ‘*LICIOUS CENSURE, craftily worded and*  
 ‘*pronounced with ASSURANCE, is apt to*  
 ‘*pass with Mankind for SHREWD WIT;*  
 ‘*so a VIRULENT (or a VISIONARY) MAX-*  
 ‘*IM, in bold Expressions, tho’ without any*  
 ‘*JUSTNESS of Thought, is readily received*  
 ‘*for TRUE PHILOSOPHY<sup>a</sup>.*”

<sup>a</sup> *Mor.* Part ii. § 1.

F I N I S.









