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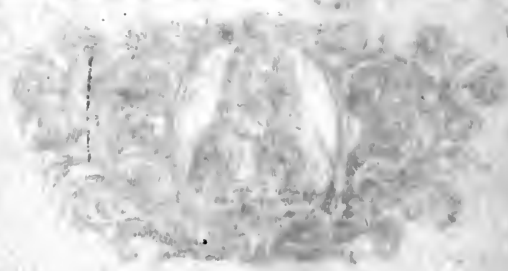
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THE  
MORALITY

A PICTURE IN ALPHABET TO THE FUTURE  
OF THE NATION  
AND THE WORLD  
AS IT IS  
AND AS IT SHOULD BE  
BY  
THE  
REV. FATHER  
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A G E N E R A L  
T R E A T I S E  
O F  
M O R A L I T Y,

Form'd upon the PRINCIPLES OF

*Natural Reason only.*

*Judith* W I T H *Weston*

A Preface in Answer to two Essays  
lately published in the *Fable of the Bees*.  
And some incidental REMARKS upon an  
*Inquiry concerning Virtue*, by the Right  
Honourable *Anthony* Earl of *Shaftsbury*.

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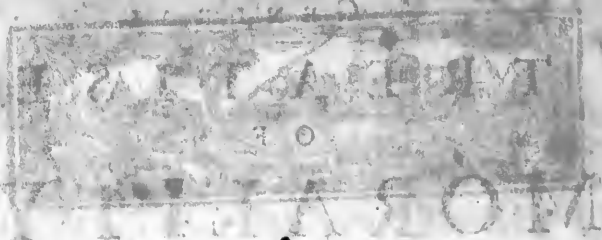
By RICHARD FIDDES, D. D.  
Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of Oxford and  
Earl Mortimer.

---



L O N D O N:

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TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE  
Earl of *Pembroke, &c.*  
Knight of the most noble  
Order of the GARTER, &c.

My LORD,



IN the Address,  
wherewith I  
have the Ho-  
nour to come  
before your  
Lordship, I shall not observe  
A 2 the

## DEDICATION.

the usual Forms on the like Occasions ; but confine myself to the subject Matter of the following Treatise. All the Topicks, indeed, which are proper to exhibit the *Idea* of a great Man, have been already employed by the finest Pens of the Age, in this Method of doing Homage to your Lordship, as the known Patron of Learning in general : And I shall not pretend to copy after so many of the best Masters, native and foreign. I was principally induced to Request, with all Humility,  
your



## DEDICATION.

your Lordship's Patronage of this Work, from the Nature and Design of it. For no Principles, or Rules of any Kind, ever operate with so great Force, as when we confirm, and illustrate them by living Examples, especially, from very high, and conspicuous Stations; or where most, if not all, the great Offices in civil Life have been successively sustained with a just, but easy, Dignity. For such Instances shew, in the best Light, that the Maxims of Morality, which are so reasonable,  
and

## DEDICATION.

and beautiful in the *Theory*, are also, in Fact, truly adapted to the present State, and Condition of human Nature. Nothing, under such mighty Advantages, can contribute, to render the Influence of moral Virtue, more powerful and diffusive; unless here we see the Authority, the Wisdom, and Experience of Age, consistent, so far as they can be conceived to consist, with all the Vivacity, the Goodness, and Complacency of Youth.

My

# DEDICATION.

My LORD,

I shall add Nothing more, concerning the Motives to this Address; but that I was ambitious of acknowledging, on so proper an Occasion, a late Instance of your Lordship's Generosity, in preventing my Application, for one of the greatest, and most desirable Favours, for which I could have been inclined to apply.

DEDICATION.

I am, with all possible Re-  
gard,

My LORD,

*Your Lordship's*

*most humble,*

*and most dutiful*

*Servant,*

RICH. FIDDES.

THE



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OF THE

## PREFACE.

--**T**HE Author's Design in the following Treatise. --- The Motives to it. ----- The Defects in *Tully's Book of Offices*, and in certain Christian Writers; with a Character of M. *Malebranch* and his Works. ---- How far metaphysical Arguments employed by the Author. ---- His Method, and particular Design in the Preface. ---- Two Treatises which the Author proposes to examine: *An Inquiry into the Origin of moral Virtue,*

C O N T E N T S, &c.

*Virtue, and a Search into the Nature of Society.* ---- Answer to the former. ----- Vindication of the Principles asserted by the Author of the *Characteristicks*, in his *Inquiry* concerning Virtue, with a Confutation of the Arguments proposed by the Author of the *Search* against him, and against the real Distinction of moral Good and Evil. ---- concerning Polygamy and Incest. ---- A Recapitulation. ---- Concerning publick Affection, and publick Good, as opposed to private Interest. ---- A Difficulty proposed and obviated. ---- An Attempt towards a Vindication of Dr. *Radcliffe*, from the Aspersions cast upon him in the *Fable*. ---- Remarks on two Presentments by the *Grand Jury* of *Middlesex*. ---- The Conclusion.

THE



THE  
P R E F A C E.

I.



*My Design, in the following Treatise, is to establish the great Truths of Morality upon their proper and natural Principles. I have therefore considered them, without drawing any Proofs in the Pro-*  
a *secution*

*secution of my Subject, from divine Revelation. For tho' several Passages are occasionally cited by me from the Holy Scriptures; yet they are not proposed, as having the Sanction of divine Authority, but only, as conveying to the Mind certain natural Truths, relating to Morality, in a better Light, and expressing them with a peculiar, and more irresistible Force.*

2. *I was principally induced to undertake this Work, upon the two following Motives: A Desire of obviating such ill Effects, as might arise from the dangerous Tendency, if not the formed Design of several Pieces, that have been lately published towards subverting the very Principles of natural Religion: And a Prospect, at the same*



*same time, of supplying, in some measure, what has been reckoned among the things, that are wanting, a general Treatise of Morality in the English Tongue.*

*For tho' we abound with great Variety of practical Discourses, and many of them very excellent as to particular moral Subjects; yet I do not know one English Writer, who has undertaken to state the Principles of Morality in one entire System from natural Reason only, or to resolve them into their distinct and proper Grounds.*

3. *None of the ancient Moralists have treated this Subject in it's due extent, or after a manner, wherein there is nothing defective. Cicero, in his admirable Book of*  
*Offices,*  
 a 2

*Offices, has gone farther than most, if not than any of them, towards establishing moral Duties, upon the natural Aptitude, Beauty, and Decency of them. He was a Lover of moral Truth, and had devoted himself much to her Service; but he did not follow her to the Place of her Habitation. He sought her every where upon Earth, in solitary Life, in private Families, and in the publick Administration of Affairs; but she is only to be found in Heaven; and by contemplating, there, the moral Perfections of the divine Nature, the Rule and Model of Perfection to all other intelligent Beings.*

4. *I cannot say, that Christian Writers themselves have generally improved this Method of Reasoning*

soning so far, as might have been expected from the Lights, which revealed Religion has afforded to them. But some of them have sufficiently demonstrated, to what excellent Use it may be employed, towards serving the Cause of Morality; and, in particular, the celebrated Author of the Search after Truth; who has proposed this Argument, to all the Advantage, that human Wit, animated with the most lively Sentiments of Piety, could be supposed capable of giving to it. That admirable Writer, in all his Works, has established this Argument upon such clear and strong Foundations, suited to the beautiful and magnificent Structure he hath raised, as if he designed to build for Eternity.

His

*His Books for the Advancement of useful Knowledge have been rendered in English: But whether it be, that the English Soil is not of itself sufficiently adapted, or as yet generally prepared for the Culture of so refined a Philosophy, it has not yet taken Root, or spread itself, in proportion to those fruitful and generous Principles, wherewith it is every where replete: Even his excellent Treatise of Morality is but in few Hands, and among those, the Value of it is sometimes much better known by the Name of the Author, than by a proper Use of the Book. There is, indeed, something in it, so far out of the common Way of Thinking, and his Method of ascertaining the Truths of Morality is so different from that in*  
use

P R E F A C E. vii

*use among our best Writers upon moral or theological Subjects, that, it has not been without Opposition, his Works have found here that favourable Reception, they are now thought to deserve. So great is the Force of Prejudice, even with pious, learned, and good Men, against a different way of philosophising, tho' upon the most solid Principles, from that, to which they have been accustomed, that I remember a great Prelate, eminent in all these Characters, who made it an Objection against one of the greatest metaphysical Wits, this Nation produced in the late Age, that he affected to imitate Monsieur Malebranch. This which was spoken by way of Reproach to Mr. Norris, himself thought his greatest Glory. But all the Discoveries he made*  
*in*

*in the Ideal World, whether respecting speculative Truths, or such as are more influential on the Duties of moral Life, did not meet either with the Reception, or the Reward, that was due to his Merit.*

6. Tho' possibly there may be, among other abstract Sciences, a more general Disposition for Metaphysics at present, than formerly discovered itself, yet they are not so far encouraged or introduced, as to give a Writer, who shall form his Reasonings wholly upon them, any great Hopes of Success: I have therefore endeavoured in the following Treatise, so much as possible, to avoid them, and the Use of all nice and intricate Distinctions; tho' a Work of this Nature must  
be

*be very imperfect, or rather wholly deficient, as to the principal Design of it, wherein no metaphysical Arguments are employed. But to adapt myself more to the common Taste and Capacity, and to prevent the strong Impressions which are not easily resisted, or suddainly effaced, by those, who read the Treatise of Morality above referred to, with any Degree of Attention, I have declined in prosecuting my present Subject, to look into it; not that I should be ashamed of copying after so very great a Master; but because there is so much Beauty, as well as Strength and Energy in every thing he has written, that it is extremely difficult to consult him, even where he is most abstract and metaphysical, without transcribing from him.*

*I have, therefore, wholly depended on my Memory, so far as I am, on any account, indebted to a Book, which, if all other human Compositions, in the World, upon the Subject of Morality, were lost, is full of such rich Treasures of Learning and Knowledge, upon that Subject, as might afford an ample Supply towards repairing the Loss of them.*

7. *In reference to such Objections, which incidentally occurred to my Thoughts, in prosecuting any of the following Arguments, I have endeavoured to answer them, as succinctly, as the Nature of them would admit, without entering into personal Controversy, where that could be avoided, especially, with any modern Writers. But a Book having been*  
lateley



lately published, wherein the Author directly attacks the moral Distinction of Good and Evil, sometimes in a humorous, then in a more grave argumentative way, and often with an Air of Triumph; And that Book, having, it is said, had a pretty brisk Circulation; which is not improbable, from the loose Principles disseminated in it, and the free, easy, and lively Manner of the Author; I thought myself concerned to examine his Reasonings (for I meddle not with his Decorations) particularly, and apart, from the Body of my Book, where the Discussion of them would not have suited so well with the proper Design and Plan of it. I proposed therefore to do it by way of Preface, and especially to the End, that the Prejudices which

b 2

might

might have been imbibed from that Performance against a Work, upon the following Subject being removed, the Reader, if inclined to go along with me, might find the Way more open and easy.

8. I shall only beg Leave occasionally to make a previous Reflection concerning the insecure Grounds, upon which not only professed Atheists, but even they, who believe the Existence of a God, would totally destroy, if they were able, the common Principles of Morality.

1. In respect to Atheists. The Arguments whereby we prove the Being of a God are so obvious and cogent, that few Persons are able to suppress or resist the Force of them. There are, indeed, Men  
who

*who say in their Hearts, there is no God, that is, whose Impieties cause them secretly to wish, there may be no God; but, perhaps, no Man would ever totally, and at all times, extirpate this fundamental Article of Religion out of his Mind? Tho' it may be questioned, upon the Principles of Atheism itself, and on Supposition, God really should not exist, whether therefore wicked Men could be secure, there is no future State. For since the Operations of the Mind cannot be conceived to arise from the Construction of the grosser Parts of the Body, it will be impossible for the Atheist to shew that the Mind cannot operate, when in a separate State from the Body. If Thought be only a Result, according to the atheistical Hypothesis of the more  
pure,*

*pure, subtle, and active Parts of Matter, why may not the Soul subsist and act in some proper Vehicle, when the grosser Parts and Mechanism of the Body, to which it is now united, shall be dissolved? It is much more probable, that a collection of blind and insensate Atoms once formed into a thinking System, should be able to continue or maintain itself in that state, than that it should at first have fallen regularly into it. And if the thinking System in an Atheist, shall subsist after the Death of the Body, and he can never know, upon his own Principles, that it shall not; then, instead of appearing in Judgment hereafter before a righteous and good God, he could have no assurance, that he should not be exposed to the implacable Rage, Malice,*

*Malice, and Cruelty of other Spirits more wicked, and powerful than himself. For why should this World, we now inhabit, which bears very little Proportion to the whole Mass of Matter every where extended, beyond what the Eye, or even Imagination can reach, yet be thought the only Scene of Action for Beings endowed with Intelligence? Why should not a fortuitous Concourſe of Atoms, if Intelligence muſt be aſcribed to ſo chimerical a Cauſe, have produced in an infinite Succeſſion of Ages, and an infinite Variety of Worlds, other Intelligences, beſides thoſe, which inhabit this teraqueous Globe?*

*Wicked Men, therefore, if they will argue conſiſtently from their*  
*own*

*own Scheme, that all Thought proceeds from a certain accidental Combination of the Parts of Matter, can take no Refuge in Atheism, against the Apprehensions of future Existence or Misery.*

2. Others, therefore, have endeavoured to find that security in gratifying their Inclinations and Passions, which they were sensible could not be found in Atheism, by persuading themselves, that there is no real Distinction between Virtue and Vice, and that these are only different Names, which Mankind have arbitrarily agreed to give to Things.

3. This being an Opinion, equally pernicious, if not more so, to the Cause of Morality than Atheism,

*Atbeism (supposing Men in a mere State of Nature) I think it incumbent on me, to examine some of the most specious Arguments, whereby it has been supported; and particularly by the modern Author referred to above, in two distinct Treatises, one intituled, An Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Vertue; the other, A Search into the Nature of Society.*

*In the former, he asserts that Lawgivers have found it adviseable to recommend Self-denial and Publick-spiritedness to Men, as necessary to the Ends of Civil Society. But because this was a Sacrifice, which would not easily be made, without some Equivalent; and they observed the predominant Passion of Man was a*

c

De-

*Desire of Praise, they thought such Arguments were likely to operate with the greatest Force upon him, as tended to flatter his Vanity. With this View,*  
 “ they began to instruct him in  
 “ the Notions of Honour and  
 “ Shame, representing the one as  
 “ the worst of all Evils, and the  
 “ other as the highest Good to  
 “ which Mortals could aspire.” \*

*This is what the Author illustrates with a great and agreeable Variety of Expression. But the Force of his Arguments, which I am only obliged to consider, lies in a narrow Compass, and they may all be reduced to this single Proposition,*  
 “ That moral Virtues are the  
 “ political Off-spring, which Flat-  
 “ tery begot upon Pride.” †

\* Pag. 29.

† Pag. 37.



*We do not deny, Man is cast in such a Mould, as easily to yield to the Impressions of Vanity; and that Pride is very often the secret Motive, to which his best Actions, materially considered, are owing. But it will, by no means, therefore follow, that a Man may not do good Actions, upon truly good and generous Motives. If he cannot, his Incapacity must either proceed from want of Knowledge, or of Power. To say Man cannot know the best Motives, upon which he ought to act, is to deny the Use of Reason and Prudence, in the chief Instance, wherein they can be of Use to him; to say that he cannot act upon such Motives, which he knows to be the best, is to suppose his Knowledge was given*

c 2

*him,*

*him, not to direct, but only to reproach and condemn him; to shew him his Misery, and his Defects.*

*Now where several Motives may be reasonably assigned for any Action, it is more human, more just, and equitable, to ascribe it to the best Motives; at least it is highly injurious to human Nature, and against all the Rules of common Ingenuity, wholly to exclude the best Motives.*

*And therefore all this Gentleman has said, concerning the Power of Flattery, may be allowed to him, without any Consequence to his Argument. It not being the Question, Whether some of the most celebrated Actions of Men, have not been owing to Vanity;*

*nity; but whether Men may not be excited to do great and truly good Actions from a pure Motive of Virtue, or such a laudable Desire of Fame, which may very well consist with a Virtuous Principle?*

*Neither is it denied, that Politicians, may, by a wise Management, make Use of the very Errors and Defects of human Nature to serve the Ends, in many Cases, of Civil Government; but because a good Use may be accidentally made by an artful Application of ill Instruments, will it therefore follow, that no proper Instruments could be found or employed to the same Use?*

*The Author, in this Case, ought to have distinguished between the natural Tendency, and the occasional*

*sional Application of Things : A Desire of doing good and generous Actions, is of itself a proper and reasonable Motive to such Actions; neither does it lessen the Merit of them that they are attended both with an inward Complacency of Mind, and a certain Degree of external Reputation; because these Motives are in the Nature of them proper to Influence a reasonable Agent : tho' it may accidentally happen, vitious and indirect Motives from Pride or Flattery, may also excite other Persons to do the like Actions. It is therefore an Instance by no means conclusive, which is made use of, from a Saying of Alexander, the Macedonian Madman, if so harsh an Expression can be allowed in one who appears so well to understand the Rules of polite Writings,*

*Writing, that Praise is the only End of human Actions: If it were so to Alexander, there may yet be heroick Minds, who form and execute great Designs upon true Motives of publick Good; tho' it is not necessary those of a laudable Ambition should be excluded. Yet the Definition he makes of Glory from this single Instance, according to the Generality of the Terms whereby He expresseth it, is irrespective and absolute. " To  
 " define then the Reward of Glory  
 " in the amplest Manner, the  
 " most that can be said of it is,  
 " that it consists in the superlative  
 " Felicity which a Man, who is  
 " conscious of having performed  
 " a noble Action, enjoys in Self-  
 " love, while he is thinking on  
 " the Applause he expects from  
 " others. \**

\* Pag. 41.

*It is contrary to all the Rules of just Reasoning to infer general Propositions, or Rules, from particular Instances; but were this really allowable, the Author was very unhappy in chusing, to use his own Dialect, a Madman for his Instance. As we ought not to flatter human Nature, neither are we obliged to villify and disgrace it. And if Examples may be applied, to shew, what the human Qualities are, they should rather be borrowed from the most perfect and improved, than from the irregular or depraved State of Mankind.*

*And to do the Author justice, indeed, he confesseth afterwards,  
 “ That among the Heathens there  
 “ have been Men, who when  
 “ they*

“ they did good to others, were  
 “ so far from seeking Thanks  
 “ and Applause, that they took  
 “ all imaginable Care to be for  
 “ ever concealed from those on  
 “ whom they bestowed their Be-  
 “ nefits; and consequently it may  
 “ be argued, that Pride has no  
 “ hand in spurring Man on to the  
 “ highest Pitch of Self-denial.”

But even in such extraordi-  
 nary Cases, which are confessed  
 to be very rare He is of Opinion  
 no small Instances of Pride may  
 be discovered, from the sensible  
 Pleasure that proceeds from vir-  
 tuous Actions; “ which Pleasure,  
 “ together with the Occasion of  
 “ it, are as certain Signs of  
 “ Pride, as looking pale and trem-  
 “ bling at any imminent Danger,  
 “ are the Symptoms of Fear.”

d Pride,

Pride, as used by him in this Place, is an equivocal Term. If we understand by it, a natural Consciousness of Worth in a Man, arising from a Sense of his having acted according to the Order and Perfection of his Nature, there is nothing criminal or irregular in such a Principle. It is, in this Sense, so far from being an Objection against the natural and intrinsick Reasons, upon which we found moral Virtue; that it is a direct Proof of moral Virtue; as supposing it to operate naturally in us, if we might not say mechanically, like the common Passions of Fear or Shame.

But if by Pride be meant an unjust or flattering Opinion, which a Man has, above what he ought  
to



*to have, of his own Abilities or Actions, this we grant to be highly irregular ; but assert, at the same time, there is no Necessity why a wise or a good Man should be subject to this Irregularity; and consequently, why Pride, except as commonly understood, and as it seems to be taken by this Author, in the worst Sense, should be an inseparable Motive to human Actions,*

Montaign, *who perhaps understood the weak and corrupt Side of human Nature, as well as the Author before me; yet had Thoughts, in general, much less derogatory to the Dignity and Honour of it. He supposes tho' Men often act from indirect, yet they may act, upon generous and good Principles. I have observed, faith*

he, *speaking concerning the History of Guiciardine*, among so many Events and Counsels, about which he gives his Judgment, he never ascribes any to Virtue, Religion, or Conscience; as if those Things were wholly banished out of the World: And he imputes all Actions, tho' never so fine, to a vicious Principle of Self-interest. It is *impious* to believe, that among such a vast Number of Actions, none should have been produced by a reasonable Motive: Men will never be so generally corrupt, but some will avoid the Contagion; which giveth me a Suspicion, that *Guiciardine* had a vicious Taste, and that he judged of others by *himself*.

*This Writer's Apology, lest his Notions, concerning the Origin*

*gin of moral Virtue, should be thought offensive to Christianity, is not very intelligible and is with-  
all imperfect. The Offence, which Christians may take at his No-  
tions, is not to be considered mere-  
ly in Respect to them as Christi-  
ans; but, as the Religion they  
profess, supposes the Truth of na-  
tural Religion, a Law written on  
the Hearts of Men, accusing, or  
else excusing them, according to  
the good or ill Use they make of  
their Liberty. The positive Laws,  
in the Gospel, the Laws peculiar  
to Christianity, are few in Com-  
parison. But if there be no  
real Distinction of moral Virtue,  
Christianity is as much the Law  
of Ordinances, as that given by  
Moses to the Jews; and the Ex-  
cellency, therefore of it will not  
lie in this, that it has abolished  
the*

*the ceremonial Law, but that it has instituted a Religion consisting of fewer Ceremonies: For all Laws, that depend upon the mutable Nature of Things, are of equal Excellency, and only oblige by Virtue of their being commanded. His Apology therefore had been more full and adequate to the Offence taken, if he had endeavoured to shew, that no Prejudice could be done or designed, from any thing he had said, to the Cause of natural Religion.*

*+ Moral Virtue, and Christianity considered as a Rule of Life, are the same Thing. We may therefore suppose Morality truly designed by God as a Means of much physical Good, without interesting Christianity in the Question.*

II. This

*+ What other kind of virtue is*

II. *This Author, in his Search into the Nature of Society, sets himself directly to oppugn and overthrow a contrary Opinion of a noble Writer, much read as he observes, by Men of Sense. According to that Opinion, Men without any great Trouble or Violence to themselves, may be really virtuous; Virtue and Vice are permanent Realities, that must ever be the same in all Countries, and in all Ages; and a Man of sound Understanding may not only find out the Beautiful and the Honest, both in Morality and the Works of Nature and Art, but likewise govern himself, by his Reason, with as much Ease and Readiness, as a good Rider manages a well taught Horse by the Bridle.*

*In*

*In Answer to this the Author of the Search proposes to discuss, Whether there be a real Worth and Excellency in Things, a Preheminence of one Thing above another, which every Body will always agree to, that well understands them? The Negative is what he proposes to maintain. But before I proceed to examine his Arguments, it may not be improper to cite the Author of the Characteristicks upon the Subject of Moral Virtue, in his own Words; not only, as he hath asserted the immutable Distinction of Moral Good and Evil, in the strongest Terms, but hath also in his Inquiry concerning Virtue, employed some very pertinent and beautiful Illustrations in Proof of it. The Case is the same, saith he,*

*His language changed.*

*he, speaking concerning the Objects of human Affection, in the mental or moral Subjects, as in the ordinary Bodies, or the common Subjects of Sense; the Shapes, Motions, Colour, and Proportions of these latter, being presented to our Eye, there necessarily results a Beauty or Deformity, according to the different Measure, Arrangement, and Disposition of their several Parts; so in Behaviour and Actions, when presented to the Understanding, there must be found, of Necessity, an apparent Difference, according to the Regularity, or Irregularity of the Subjects. The Roman Orator, as I have cited him in the following Treatise, hath made Use of this very Argument, with some Difference in the Expression; but there is no Necessity of supposing*

e this

*this noble Author had borrowed from him: An Invention less fertile, than that of the late Earl of Shaftsbury, might easily have embellished an Argument, with the same Images, which would naturally arise to an attentive Mind, on the same Subject.*

*But, in what follows, we may say this noble Writer has improved his Illustration of moral Virtue from sensible Objects, beyond the Roman Orator himself. I shall only take the Liberty of transcribing from him the following Paragraph; tho' it is followed by others, which will be no less acceptable to those, who will consult the Original.*

“ The Mind, which is Spec-  
 “ tator, or Auditor, of other  
 “ Minds,



“ *Minds, cannot be without its*  
 “ *Eye and Ear, so as to discern*  
 “ *Proportion, distinguish Sound,*  
 “ *and scan each Sentiment, or*  
 “ *Thought, which comes before*  
 “ *it. It can let nothing escape its*  
 “ *Censure; it feels the soft, and*  
 “ *harsh, the agreeable, or dis-*  
 “ *agreeable, in the Affections;*  
 “ *and finds a foul and fair, a*  
 “ *harmonious and a dissonant, as*  
 “ *really and truly here, as in*  
 “ *any musical Numbers, or in the*  
 “ *outward Forms and Represen-*  
 “ *tations of sensible Things: Nor*  
 “ *can it withhold its Admirations,*  
 “ *or Extasy, its Aversion and*  
 “ *Scorn, any more in what re-*  
 “ *lates to one, than to the other*  
 “ *of these Subjects. So that to*  
 “ *deny the common and natural*  
 “ *Sense of the sublime and beau-*  
 “ *tiful in Things, will appear an*

“ *Affectation meerly to any one,*  
 “ *who considers duly of this Af-*  
 “ *fair.*” *And, \* in another Place,*  
*he speaks of the eternal Measures,*  
*and immutable independent Na-*  
*ture of Worth and Virtue.*

*I shall not be thought, by doing*  
*this Justice to a free Writer,*  
*upon a Subject where he has*  
*said many fine and just Things,*  
*to approve, in general, all the*  
*Essays of his Wit and Humour;*  
*wherein there are some Things*  
*not to be examined too nicely by*  
*the Rules either of strict Reaso-*  
*ning, or Piety. But this ought*  
*not to detract from the Praises*  
*due to him upon a Subject, where*  
*his Principles, that are good and*  
*well supported, have been unjustly*  
*attacked. Some Allowances may*

\* Pag. 36.

*be made to his Errors, on Account of his Age, and more perhaps of the early Impressions owing to his Birth, or Education: Impressions of which Kind are not easily effaced by those, who yet have naturally the best Dispositions, and the strongest Minds. These Circumstances considered, with the Temptations in a great Fortune to Ease, Luxury, and Pleasure, and the Reluctancy that is found in every State of Life to speculative Inquiries, and the Labour of the Mind; to which may be added the loose Morality, which has been of late industriously propagated by Persons of some Distinction in the World: it is more surprising, that a young Nobleman should have published so many Tracts, so generally read by Men of Sense, than that there should be so few Errors*

*Errors found in them, and those of much less dangerous Consequence, than have been so often published in our weekly Papers, without any publick Censure. The Author of the Search may think, that Disquisitions of this Kind are an Argument of an unactive Wit; yet, with others, to see a Person, in the Flower and Strength of Life, despise the common Entertainments, Pleasures and gay Follies of that Age, in an ample Fortune, to attend the Culture and Improvement of his Understanding, and to serve the Cause of Virtue, by Study and Contemplation, is rather an Argument of a prudent Choice, and a great Mind, than of an indolent Temper. Not that a Man of Honour, or Spirit, ought to decline serving his Country,*

*try, when he is qualified and called to the Service of it: but upon a general Consideration, an ingenious Improvement of a young Nobleman in Retirement and Contemplation, is certainly much preferable to an active and boisterous Stupidity, in the highest Stations of publick Life.*

*But to examine the Arguments, employed by the Author of the Search to destroy the Notions in the Characteristicks, which yet he owns are generous and refined; I shall summarily endeavour to propose them in the best Light, and with all the Force I can, and, where I am not obliged to contract them, in his own Words. “ There are, saith he, “ different Faults, as well as “ Beauties, that, as Modes and “ Fashions*

“ *Fashions alter, and Men vary*  
“ *in their Tasts and Humours,*  
“ *will be differently admired or*  
“ *disapproved.*”

*All the Consequence, which can be drawn from this Argument, is, that in Things of their own Nature arbitrary, or indifferent, such as those, which relate to Modes or Fashions, the Reasons of our Approbation or Dislike, of our using or discontinuing the Use of them, are mutable, according to the different Time, Place, or Disposition, wherein we may be. To urge this, therefore, as an Argument against such Things, as are said by us to be founded on natural and immutable Reasons, is to beg the Question, and to argue against that, which has not been asserted or denied.*

*And*

*And therefore the following Instance from the different Judgment of Painters, as to the Works of eminent Masters, is equally improper: This, according to his own Account, not depending so much on their intrinsic Worth, as their Antiquity, or some relative Character, (by Reason of which Use has given a current Value to them) can be no just Illustration of his Argument; but rather, indeed, proves the intrinsic Difference of Virtue and Vice: For, he owns, Judges will never disagree in Opinion, when a fine Picture is compared to the Dawbing of a Novice. But why not disagree in this Case, as well as in the other? But only, because the Difference lies here, as it does between Virtue and Vice, in*

*a real Dissimilitude or Inequality. In the other Case, the Difference may be only accidental and imaginary; the several Pieces being done, perhaps, by Hands equally masterly, and according to the same Rules of Art. And this Author himself is obliged to confess, that this Difference among the Pieces, done by great Masters, is from Considerations altogether foreign to their Art; their different Names, the Time of their Age, the Scarcity of their Works, and sometimes the Quality of Persons, in whose Possession they are. A more improper Instance could not have been employed to overthrow a Distinction of Things, which does not depend on temporary, but on certain stated Reasons; and where, in his own Words, there*  
is



*is a Standard to go by, that is always the same; if Reason, which I have proved in another Place to be the Rule of moral Virtue, is always the same; and if it be not, there is no certain Way of Reasoning upon this, or upon any other Subject.*

*From the Works of Art, this Writer proceeds, with an equal Air of Assurance in his Argument, to those of Nature; and observes, what is beautiful in one Country, is not so in another. If by Beauty be meant a just Contexture and Proportion of Parts, Beauty is certainly, in the Nature of it, something real, independent of common Opinion; and therefore not a proper Instance in the present Case; but tending rather to prove the independent Notion of moral Virtue*

or Order. If, on the other Hand, by Beauty be understood any Irregularity or Defect, any Affectation, or Artifice, which may be taken for real Beauty, this is all the Work of Imagination; and is of no more Force to destroy the real Distinction of Virtue, than it would be a Proof that there are no stated or just Rules of good Painting, because an ignorant Person may compare the Dawbing of a Novice to a fine Picture. What he adds concerning the different Choice of Florists is not more pertinent, or conclusive: so far, as a Flower is larger in its Kind, of a more strong, bright, or diversified Colour, so far it has real Beauty, and is naturally more apt to please and delight the Eye. If a Flower much inferior in Colour or Shape is sometimes more esteemed;

*esteemed; this is not because Men consider it as more beautiful or valuable in itself, but on Account of its Rarity, or because, perhaps, it is the Product of Art, or some useful Experiment: So that even in this respect, there is a real Foundation for the Esteem had for it, on Account of some relative Character, if not possibly also of some peculiar Use.*

*There is no greater Difficulty, in accounting for the different Customs of Men, as to shaving or wearing a long Beard, and other Circumstances relating to their different Dress. These are Modes purely arbitrary, except where they are respectively attended with some good Use, or Inconvenience; in regard to which Reason directs, all Modes what-  
ever*

*ever should be regulated; and so far they have a real and intrinsic, and not meerly an imaginary Utility in them. It may be arbitrary to apply his own familiar Instance, in more temperate Countries, to use a narrow brim'd Hat; but the other Extream would certainly be less convenient, if ever it could obtain as the Fashion, under the Torrid Zone. Neither is the Question moved by him, which is the handsomest Mode in being, to wear great Buttons, or small ones, of any more Significancy, in the present Argument; there being no Standard in Nature, or by civil Appointment, to regulate the Proportion of them, as there is in all Things founded upon Reasons of real Convenience and Order. And such we say, and have proved,*

*ved, are the Rules of moral Virtue. And if the Question is to be examined by this Rule, it will not be so very difficult, but a mortal Man may be able to decide it. For however arbitrary the Mode in general may be, as to the Size of the Button, yet if it be greater or less than is adapted to the particular Use, for which it is designed, it is certainly an irregular, and, therefore, unreasonable Fashion.*

*The like Answer may be given to his Instance of laying out a Garden, which might be designed in great Variety of Plats; and every Proprietor of the Ground, is at Liberty to make his Choice of them; provided, Regard be had to the Quantity, Situation, and Boundaries of it; for otherwise*

*a*

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*a Round may neither be so commodious, nor so pleasing to the Eye, as a Square. And when a Garden is actually laid out, in any Form, a Rule of Proportion and Correspondency between the several Parts of it, like that, by Way of Analogy, in moral Subjects, ought necessarily to be observed; otherwise it is not to be computed, according to his own Calculation, among the almost innumerable Ways of laying out a Garden judiciously. The two remaining Exemplifications, which he uses, are not more to his Purpose. The Building of Christian Churches, in Form of a Cross, is founded upon a religious Regard for that Sign, for Reasons known to the Author, and which need not here be repeated: It is therefore no Argument, this Form*  
*ought*

ought not to be kept to by a Christian Architect, in building a Church for the Use of Christians, if he would not commit a great Fault; tho' Turks, who are not concerned in those Reasons, or do not apprehend themselves affected by them, build their Mosques after another Fashion. The last of his Instances concerning Things of a more indifferent Nature, is from the Act for Burying in Woollen, to which People at the first were not easily reconciled, but, by Degrees, the Custom of Burying in Woollen was introduced as a Matter of Decency. This shews, indeed, that our liking or disliking any Thing, for which we have not a real Standard, very much depends on Mode or Custom, but is as far from proving, as the rest of his Instances, that virtuous Ac-

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tions,

# 1 P R E F A C E.

*tions, which are founded upon immutable Reasons of Order and Perfection, have therefore no other Foundation but Mode and Custom.*

*Now, tho' it might have served as a general Answer to all these Instances, that if they relate to Objects of meer Humour or Fancy, they are of no Force; and if to real Beauty or Proportion, they conclude not against the Distinction of moral Virtue, but for it: Yet I was willing to descend to a specifick Answer to the several Parts of this Author's Induction, lest some of them might be thought to have more Weight, or to be proposed in a better Light, and to more Advantage than the rest; according to the different Taste or Imagination*  
of



*of the Reader: To which I will not dissemble, he is sometimes happy enough in addressing himself.*

*But I am so far from designing to weaken his Arguments in any respect, that in order to a more clear Discovery of the Point in Question, I shall endeavour to give them an additional Force, by making the following Concession.*

*That a Custom, for Instance, may be introduced, and publickly approved, not only concerning such Cases, as are proposed by him, confessedly in their own Nature arbitrary and indifferent; but concerning Things, that must be acknowledged to have some real Inconvenience and Irregularity in them.*

*I shall suppose, that in a certain Nation, or in a Tract of Land, not very remote, consisting of several Nations, hard drinking, so as to disturb the Powers, and Use of Reason, is thought no Crime. This comes much nearer to a Proof, that the Nature of moral Actions depends on Mode or Opinion, than the different Fashion of shaving or wearing a long Beard, of a broad or narrow brimmed Hat; because upon the Principles of those, who contend for the innate Excellency or Turpitude of certain human Actions; That is excellent, which tends to the greater Perfection of human Nature, to the Improvement of Reason, and towards the promoting of Order. That, on the contrary, is morally unfit or evil,*  
*which*

*which tends to debase human Nature, and to confound, as Drunkenness does in particular, all Reason and Order. Shall we infer, then, from the Practice or Opinion, however general, of these Nations, that there is no real Disorder or Immorality in Drunkenness? No; the only Consequence we can draw from such an Instance, is, that Men, thro' Ignorance, Stupidity, natural Temper, the Air they breathe, or other accidental Occasions of Error, may believe there is no Crime in certain Things, of themselves really criminal. It might, as justly, be argued, that because the Generality of the World have been Polytheists and Idolaters, therefore, in the Reason of the Thing, there is no certain Proof of the Unity of God. When we speak of the*  
un-

*unalterable Measures of moral Virtue, we suppose Men, indeed, reasonable Beings; but we do not suppose them all equally reasonable, either with respect to the Powers, or the Exercise of Reason.*

*It is sufficient to establish the Truth of Morality, that Men, in all Ages, have agreed in the general Notion of it. If they have been at any time divided in their Opinion concerning it, when they applied their general Notions of it to particular Subjects, so as to transfer the Name of Virtue to Vice, or of Vice to Virtue; this very Misapplication supposes Virtue and Vice to be two Things really subsisting and distinguished; for what is not cannot be misapplied. As Idolatry therefore proceeded from some erroneous Belief of the*  
*one*

*one true God, and, when traced up to its original, rather supposed his Existence, than a Plurality of Beings, that were by Nature no Gods; so the appropriating the Name of Virtue to certain Vices, does by no means tend to prove, that there is no such thing in reality as Virtue; but only that Men are capable of mistaking the Nature of Things, and of drawing false Consequences from true Principles. This may be done through Ignorance; but, in moral Life, is very often the Effect of some irregular Inclination: For we more easily assent to those Things without Scruple or Examination, the Truth of which we are willing to believe; to which may be added as one Reason, why immoral Practices are sometimes openly introduced; that tho' Men  
really*

*really know, and confess them to be so, yet they look upon them as Sins in their Kind more venial; to which frail Nature is more subject; or which a merciful God, on Account, in their Opinion, of some particular alleviating Circumstances that attend them, will not be extreme in punishing.*

12. *His Consequence, therefore, that in Morals there is no greater Certainty, than in these Instances, which are of a very different Consideration from the Subjects of Morality, is, by no means, just or well deduced; Neither will what he urges further to confirm this Proposition, from the Cases of Polygamy and Incest, be of any Use to corroborate it. All that can be inferred from those Cases is, that the Prejudices imbibed in*  
In-

*Infancy, the Force of Custom or Example, or, perhaps, some complexional Disposition, may hinder Men from examining moral Subjects, in certain Instances, with that Attention and Impartiality, which are requisite to the Discovery of Truth. How true a Foundation soever any moral Duty has, in the Reason of Things, it does not, therefore, follow, that all Men shall see those Reasons, in the same Light, or argue upon them after the same Manner; because there are many accidental Occasions, as hath been already confessed, of Ignorance or Error, it is very unbecoming a Philosopher to conclude, there is nothing therefore, in the Nature of it, concerning which, we can have any true or certain Knowledge.*

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But

*But besides this general Answer to the Cases of Poligamy, and Incest; which I propose to treat of distinctly, in another Place, it may here be cursorily observed, that the Subjects of Morality may be considered, as being either of primary, or, according as they have been distinguished by some learned Men, of secondary Obligation: those, under the first Distinction, arise from the immutable Reason and Order of Things, and do not depend even upon the Will of the supreme Legislator, but are founded in those eternal and essential Perfections of his Nature, whereby his Will itself is regulated; and which, in the natural Order of our Ideas, are therefore antecedent to his Will; such Things*  
as



*as are not meerly good by Virtue of his Command, or of any Circumstances, wherein Man may accidentally be placed; but such, as are commanded, because they are absolutely good, and, under all Circumstances, in their own Nature. Thus it can never be a Virtue; in Man, who is a reasonable Being, to be proud, as Pride imports an Opinion of himself, above what he ought to think; because it is contrary to Reason; contrary, therefore, to the Nature of Man, as a reasonable Being, that he should be, on any Account, obliged to make a wrong Judgment: Neither can it be lawful for a Man, under any Circumstances, not to love God; to cast off his Dependancy on God; to blaspheme or oppose his Will; because the Reasons of loving God, of Dependance*

*on him, of Honour and Obedience to him, being eternal, and flowing from the essential Perfections of the divine Nature, are immutable, as the divine Nature.*

*But there are Duties, and such particularly as have relation to Man, considered as a social Creature, which are to be regulated by the good and proper Ends of Society. The intrinsic Excellency therefore, or Turpitude, of which Things is always to be considered, as they are more subservient, or prejudicial to those Ends. Thus, supposing it necessary to the Propagation of Mankind, that Persons should marry, in the first Degrees of Consanguinity, there would not appear to be any moral Turpitude, in such Marriages; because they would be agreeable to God's Design of multiplying human Race,*

*Race, and of his endowing Man with natural Powers and proper Dispositions, to that End. But, supposing the World considerably multiplied, and very great Inconveniencies to arise in Society, from a Toleration of such Marriages, on Account of the indecent Commerce and Familiarities, which would be introduced among the nearest Relations, if permitted to make Love, and indiscriminately to marry; it is requisite, in this Case, that proper Restraints should be laid upon a Liberty, where the original Reasons of permitting it no longer subsist; and the Abuses whereof, it would be very difficult, if not morally impossible, to prevent. To which may be added other Reasons of Convenience, relating to Society, from a visible Means*  
of

*of strengthening the Interest, enlarging the Correspondence, and cementing the Friendship of Families; and, especially, of preserving that regular, and due Subordination in the same Family; which would be altogether confounded, if Intermarriages were promiscuously allowed in them.*

*It is not denied, these are Inconveniencies, with which the Supreme Legislator, by Virtue of his Sovereign Power over the Rights and Laws of Society, may dispense; but, it does not therefore follow, they may be dispensed with by any human Constitution; or, that they are in their own Nature of arbitrary Use, in any Nation; whether the Laws allow, or prohibit them: Such Laws as do allow them, are of themselves*  
void,

void, and of no effect. For God, who founded human Society, may model it as he pleases; yet no human Authority can assume a Power over any particular Society against that Order, which God has, in general, established, for the Government of Mankind; except, possibly, where some great Convenience, by a Breach of such Order, will more than over-balance the Conveniences, which would arise from observing it. As supposing all the Inhabitants of the Earth reduced to one Family, I will not aver, but it might then be lawful to take the same Method towards the Preservation or Increase of Mankind, without any express Revelation, that was taken originally, by the Children of Adam.

*As*

*As to the Case of Polygamy, the same Answer may indifferently serve; only it does not appear, there were ever the same Reasons for it, in order to the Multiplication of Mankind. Had more Women been originally created than Men, the like Necessity might have been alledged for the Practice of it, as being subservient to the End of God, in creating Mankind to replenish the Earth; and, in that Case, perhaps, the Inconveniencies to Society in allowing Poligamy, for some-time, would not have been in equal Proportion to the Benefits, which might have arisen from it: But when Mankind might otherwise be multiplied, in a Method most proper to promote the Happiness of private Families,*  
*and*

*and consequently of larger Societies, by the Marriage of one Man to one Woman; when this was found most agreeable to all the proper Ends of the conjugal State the mutual Comfort and Satisfaction of the married Parties; the Care, Subsistence and Education of Children; the Peace and good Order of Families; the Restraint of a violent Passion; and the Prevention of those Disorders, which are apt to arise from too great an Indulgence of it; and, when no Advantages from Polygamy could ballance all these Inconveniencies from a Toleration of it, then the Law against Plurality of Wives became a Law, if not in the primary Sense unalterable by the supreme Legislator, yet such, as no human Authority could dispense with, or re-*

*peal; except in such Cases, which probably never happened, or will happen, when it might be more convenient, in respect to the general Good of Society, in all these Respects, or in most of them, that Polygamy should be permitted, than that it should be restrained.*

*Besides these Arguments to shew, that Polygamy is a Breach of the moral Law, another may be taken from the Intention of God, so far as we can make a Judgment of it, from a very signal Instance of his Providence. For if we can be under a moral Obligation on any Account, we are indisputably obliged to conform, so far as we are capable, to the Order and Design of God, when, by any Means, or proper Indication of his Will, he may think fit to discover them to us.      Now*



Now Experience shews, that there is, commonly, an equal Proportion in Number, between the two Sexes; and that, if there be any Disparity, it is so inconsiderable, as not to make a sensible Alteration in the Case; or to give the least occasion of contending for a Plurality of Wives. If we consider this admirable Effect of Providence, it appears to be a plain Direction to us, that as there are not visibly more Women than Men, and that Marriage is the proper Means of preserving the Succession of Human Race, so one Man ought only to contract Marriage with one Woman; otherwise, a great Part of Mankind might be excluded, against their Consent, from the Means of contributing towards

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the

*the Support or Encrease of it ; and, consequently, of answering one considerable End of their Creation. Plurality of Wives, therefore, is inconsistent with that Order of Nature, which Providence has mark'd out to us, and from which we cannot depart, without opening a Door to that unbridled Licentiousness, and those abominable Crimes, which are practis'd without Shame or Remorse, wherever Polygamy is tolerated.*

*And now I appeal to the Judgment of the Reader, whether the Author had good Reasons for the following Passage; or whether he has not given too just and great Occasion of Offence by it ?*

“ In

“ *In Morals there is no greater*  
 “ *Certainty. Plurality of Wives*  
 “ *is odious among Christians; and*  
 “ *all the Wit and Learning of a*  
 “ *great-Genius, in Defence of it,*  
 “ *has been rejected with Con-*  
 “ *tempt. But Polygamy is not*  
 “ *shocking to a Mahometan. What*  
 “ *Men have learned from their*  
 “ *Infancy enslaves them, and the*  
 “ *Force of Custom warps Na-*  
 “ *ture; and, at the same time,*  
 “ *imitates her in such a Manner,*  
 “ *that it is often difficult to know*  
 “ *by which of the two we are*  
 “ *influenced. In the East, for-*  
 “ *merly, Sisters married Bro-*  
 “ *thers, and it was meritorious*  
 “ *for a Man to marry his Mo-*  
 “ *ther: Such Alliances are abo-*  
 “ *minable; but it is certain, that*  
 “ *whatever Horror we conceive*  
 “ *at*

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“ at the Thoughts of them, there  
 “ is nothing in Nature repugnant  
 “ against them, but what is built  
 “ upon Mode and Custom.

Convenience, with respect to many Good and Salutary Ends of Society, and a Conformity to the Will and Design of God, in the Order he has appointed towards attaining those Ends, certainly import, if Words have not quite lost their ordinary Signification, something more than the Effects of mere Mode and Custom. So that should there really be no moral Turpitude in such Marriages; yet it ought not, in respect of those Reasons, to be said, “ That there is nothing  
 “ in Nature repugnant to them,  
 “ but what is built upon Mode  
 “ and Custom.

13. *The Sum of what I have said, is, that the Laws of Communication between Men considered as Members of Society, being established by God, he has a Right, as Sovereign Legislator, and in whom all Power and Propriety is vested, to alter those Laws, or to dispense with them at Pleasure; provided he do nothing which may render the Condition of Men, upon the whole Matter, more miserable, than if they had never been; thus, by a special Command, God may authorize a Father to Sacrifice his Son, or one Nation to destroy or spoil another, without any previous Cause or Declaration of War: But it is contrary to moral Obligation, because contrary to the good and beneficial Ends God had*  
*in*

*in establishing Society, that any human Government should assume such an arbitrary Power. And therefore Actions of this Nature, tho' not Immoral, under such Circumstances, where the Authority of God does interpose; yet, where it does not, are a notorious Breach and Violation of the moral Law, whatever Mode or Custom might be pleaded in Excuse or Defence of them.*

14. *From what has been said, a very good Argument may be formed, in Proof of publick Affection, as a reasonable and moral Virtue, tho' it may sometimes interfere with private Interest. I lay it down, as an acknowledged Truth, that God designed Man for a sociable Creature, and that, consequently,*  
Society

*Society is agreeable to the Will and Institution of God. It is an evident Proof of it's being so, that Nature, which does nothing in vain, has given to Man, not only proper Capacities for several Offices in social Life, but proper Dispositions for the Discharge of them : To which may be added, that Society is necessary to prevent, or remove, many Evils, to which Man, in a solitary State, would be exposed; and to procure a Supply of many Wants; which, at the same time, would be unavoidable, and render Life less beneficial and desirable to him.*

*On Supposition, then, that Man was formed for Society, and is become a Member of it; we are to consider him, as acting in a*

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very

*very different Capacity from that, which was the Rule of his Action in private Life: We shall discover him to be under a great many Engagements, arising from this new Relation, and the Means it affords of promoting his Welfare and Happiness; Means so obvious and salutary, that a very little Reflection will serve to shew, it was not good for Man to be alone.*

*Now the Question is, Whether, admitting Society does contribute visibly to the Benefit and Happiness of human Life, a Man is under a moral Obligation, as a social Creature, any farther, perhaps, than he finds his own Account in performing certain beneficent Offices, tho' separate from those of publick Good?*



*Good? So that if any Advantage accruing to him from a private Act of what we call Injustice, will more than over-balance the Loss, or Inconvenience he sustains thereby, in the Publick, Whether he is not then at Liberty to prefer his personal Interest to that of the Publick?*

*They, who argue from the Defects and corrupt State of human Nature, affirm, that Man never acts but from a Motive of Vanity or Self-love; that what we term publick Spiritedness, where Men pretend to sacrifice their private Affections to the Good of the Community, is nothing more than a refined and well-disguised Hypocrisy; and that, if we could see the*

*secret Springs, which move them, we should make a very different Judgment of their Conduct: This is the Principle every where asserted by the Author of the\* Deceitfulness of human Virtues; of the Moral Reflections; and of the Essay upon Comets; whose principal Arguments I have examined, and refuted, in another place, and shall not here repeat.*

*They, on the other Hand, who argue, which is the only certain way of arguing upon moral Subjects, from the natural Capacities, Dispositions and Powers of Man, and the End of God in endowing him with them, do affirm that certain Obligations,*

\* Body of Divinity, Vol. 2.

*or Rules of Action to Man, do as evidently arise from them, in respect to social, as to solitary Life. For, otherwise, which ought not to be admitted, the Design of God in creating Man with those Capacities, Dispositions, and Powers, might, by an arbitrary Act of Man's Choice, be frustrated; and, consequently, God would appear to have no End, no End worthy of his Wisdom or Goodness in such a Design.*

*Under these two different Distinctions, of those, who argue from the Defects, and of others, who argue from the proper Faculties of human Nature, and the End of God in them, the Authors of the Search into the Nature of Society, and of the Inquiry concerning Virtue, have*  
*divided*

*divided, and taken a separate Part. And it is acknowledged by the Author of the Search, "That*  
*" two Systems cannot be more op-*  
*" posite; that the Notions of that*  
*" noble Writer, which he endea-*  
*" vours to confute, are, at the*  
*" same time, more generous and*  
*" refined; that they are a high*  
*" Compliment to human Kind, and*  
*" capable, by the help of a little*  
*" Enthusiasm, of inspiring us with*  
*" most noble Sentiments concerning*  
*" the Dignity of human Nature.*  
*He adds, "What Pity it is they*  
*" should not be true! I would*  
*" not advance this much, if I*  
*" had not already demonstrated,*  
*" in almost every Page of this*  
*" Treatise, that the Solidity of*  
*" them is inconsistent with our*  
*" daily Experience.*

Demon-

*Demonstration carries a Force and Evidence with it, where the Terms of it are understood, in which respect I should be unjust to complain of this Author, as deficient, that cannot easily be resisted by an attentive and impartial Inquirer after Truth : But a Demonstration, especially in almost every Page of a Book, which consists of a great Number of Pages, one would think should invincibly Silence the Dispute, and for ever cause all Opposition to fall before it : And, yet, after the strictest Research into his Performance, I have not been able, nor, I believe, any other Person, to discover one convincing Proof that a Man never acts from a true Motive of publick Good, when such Good comes.*

*comes in Competition with private Interest, or Affection.*

*This Author has demonstrated, indeed, that human Nature is very corrupt, and that he is no Stranger to the corrupt State of it; that Pride, and Vanity, and Self-love, abstracting from all foreign Regards, are the great and general Springs of human Action: In short, that some of the brightest, and, in common Opinion, the most generous and gallant Actions of Men, performed in the publick Service, and, to all appearance, for the publick Good of their Country, are often owing to these indirect and vicious Motives.*

*This we readily grant may, with a high Degree of probability,*

*bility, be deduced from daily Experience. But we deny the Consequence, that no Man can, or ever has, acted upon a pure disinterested Affection for the publick Good; and from a just Sense of those Obligations, which he is under, in relation to it, either from the general Order of Providence, or by Vertue of express and voluntary Compact.*

*I shall add nothing more upon the former Distinction, than, that supposing Men, in a pure State of Nature, under no Form of Government, or any legal Restraints, to which, by common Consent, they have agreed to submit; yet, even in this Case, on Occasion of their meeting and conversing together, they have not an arbitrary Power of injuring*

*or destroying one another ; or of falsifying, supposing they had one common Language ; in their Words or Oaths ; which, yet they would have, and might exercise at Pleasure, if there were no real Distinction of moral Good and Evil, independent on Mode, Custom, or human Compact ; for those, upon the present Supposition, are not yet introduced.*

*But, that in a State of Nature, Man could have no such Power, appears evidently from hence, that the Exercise of it would be directly opposite to the Will and Design of God, in qualifying Man to become a Member of Society. Acts, for instance, of Violence and Cruelty, would be contrary to those Motions of Pity and Compassion, which are*  
*so*



*so deeply implanted in our very Frame and Make, that they are in our common Dialect, very properly expressed by Humanity, and, in several other Languages, by Terms of the like import; as if they were so essential to human Nature, that it could not be divested of them, without being absolutely destroyed. If Man had an unaccountable Power, a Race of Tyrants, or a single Tyrant, who could not be resisted, might, lawfully, destroy all the rest of Mankind, and so be capable, without a Crime, not only of opposing the Design, but of destroying the Work of God. It will be impossible, indeed, in this way of arguing, to prove, that Cain might not, without incurring any Guilt, have killed his Brother, upon the slightest Provocation, or without*

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*any for if the Nature of all Crimes depends on positive Laws, where there was no positive Law, there could be no Crime. These are the unavoidable Consequences, which will follow upon the Assertion, that the Distinction of Virtue and Vice wholly depends on Custom or Compact; and here, I take it, we have a strict Demonstration from the Order of Nature and Providence, that this Distinction is, and must necessarily be acknowledged antecedent to Custom and Compact.*

*This appears no less from the following Instance; where I am to shew that Men, in a pure State of Nature, can have no arbitrary Power of falsifying in their Words or Oaths. Not in their Words, because that  
would*

*would be contrary to the Use of Speech, and the many beneficial Ends which would mutually arise to Men, from a free and ingenuous Communication of their Thoughts : Neither, in their Oaths, for this additional Reason, That an Oath being the most solemn Sanction that can be given to the Truth of what we say, in the Name, and as, in the special Presence of God, Perjury is the highest Instance of Contempt and Dishonour, that can be offered to his Divine Majesty ; and is, therefore, in the Nature of it, (and, without Regard to any subsequent Treaty, or express Stipulation among Men that an Oath shall oblige) intrinsically, which is, what we call, morally, Evil.*

*But*

*But where Society is once constituted, and Men have agreed to submit to the Articles and Conditions, upon which it was formed; several new Obligations arise, in relation to our Conduct towards other Men; as to which we had before a much greater, and, in some cases, perhaps, an intire Liberty of Discretion. Because, without a Restraint of such unbounded Liberty, or, supposing every Man had a lawful Right to any thing, to which, in his private State, he had a natural Right, Society could no longer subsist in Peace, or maintain itself in the free Enjoyment of those Things, which the several Members of it already possess. For where all Things are in common, as all*  
*Things*

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*Things are, or should be, to Man, in private Life, without which others may conveniently live or support themselves, Property will be reduced into a much narrower Compass. And, therefore, under all Forms of Government in the World, whether they be well or ill regulated, Men have expressly, or interpretatively consented to depart, in many cases, from their natural Rights, in consideration of certain Benefits, which they proposed to reap, and do generally reap from Society, as an equivalent, or more than an equivalent for them. And, if it was reasonable for Men to enter into such Engagements, it is equally reasonable, and, therefore, we say, Matter of moral Obligation, flowing from the Law of Nature, that they should afterwards*

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*afterwards stand to those Engagements. For, as Grotius well observes, the natural Law does not only oblige, in respect to such things as do not depend on human Will; but to such Appointments as have been made by the general Consent of Mankind: As Dominion, he supposes, was originally introduced by Compact; but being once introduced, it is contrary to natural Right to take away what another has in possession, against his Consent; even, tho' it may be of superfluous Use to the Proprietor, and very convenient to him who takes it. And it is under this Condition only, I have asserted above, that in a State of Nature, Property would be reduced into a much narrower Compass: For that no Man can justly take away, by*  
*Force,*

Force, what is actually in Possession of another, and equally convenient for him, appears to be repugnant to natural Equity, even abstracting from all positive Law. And it is in this Sense, I conceive, Paulus, the Lawyer, as cited by Grotius, affirms, That Theft is forbid by the Law of Nature; that Ulpan accounts it dishonest by Nature; and Euripides, hateful to God. But to say, it is contrary to the Law of Nature to deprive a Man of what he can, without Injury to himself, part with; and without which another Person cannot well subsist, here I take it, the Law of Nature is only to be understood, in a secondary, or consequential Sense, as flowing from a Principle of natural Reason, on Supposition of a

m

Man's

*Man's becoming an incorporated Member of a Common-wealth, and as having subjected himself to the Laws of it.*

*So that whether we consider Man in his more private, or in his social Capacity, there are very good Reasons why he should, on many Accounts; give up his personal Rights for the good of other private Persons; and, especially, for the publick Good. And if there are Reasons in the former Respect of Humanity, and Compassion; in the latter, of Justice and Honour, why a Man should do so; How can we account for the bold Assertion of those Men, who say, "Man never acts but from a Principle of vain Glory, or Self-Love? This is what the Author*



*thor of the Deceitfulness of human Virtues, formerly has advanced, and endeavoured to prove by a large Induction of Particulars, which are well chosen, and applyed with much Art. And I have presumed above, all the Sophisms and ill Principles of that Book are fully confuted by me in another Place. I have here undertaken the same Defence of moral Virtue, in answer to a modern Author, who, if he does not discover so much Reading, upon his Subject, is, perhaps, on some Accounts, no less qualified to impose upon his Reader, and to captivate weak Minds by his Assurance and Address. I have not, it is acknowledged, particularly examined all the Exemplifications of his Argument; but I have*

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*said*

*said enough, in general, to obviate any ill Influence they may have upon the main fundamental Articles of Morality; and what has been said upon the former Part of the Search, may be indifferently applyed to all the following Parts.*

*But there is one Argument, which I beg leave to add, as being a short, and, if I mistake not, a satisfactory Answer to every Thing; that either Mr. Esprit, or the Author of the Search, has advanced to shew, that a Man always acts from a Motive of Vanity, or Self-love; as Self-love is opposed to publick Affection. This Argument, in substance, was urged before, but it may not be altogether unuseful to propose it here, with some Variation,*

ation, as to the form. If Man do not act from a Motive of publick Affection, either by vertue of those natural Inclinations, which God has implanted in him; or of those express Engagements which he is entered into; it must be either for want of Knowledge, or Ability: Either his Reason is not sufficient to inform him, how he should act conformably to those Inclinations and Engagements; or if Reason be sufficient to this End, he has yet no Power to follow the Light, or Direction of it. To say God has placed us in a State of Life, wherein certain Duties are required of us, necessary to the End of it, which we neither know, nor are capable of knowing how to perform, can never be reconciled

*reconciled with the Idea we have of the divine Wisdom. And it is no less contrary to all the Ideas we have of the divine Goodness and Justice, to say, that God hath given Men a Light, which they have no Power to follow; and, therefore, serves not so much to conduct, as to reproach and condemn them. Nothing can be more derogatory to the Honour of God, or reproachful to human Nature, than to suppose Man cannot do, upon virtuous Motives, what God, or the State wherein he is placed by God, requires he should do; what he has with all proper Dispositions and Abilities for doing, and what he has obliged himself to do by express Compact. And yet these Consequences will unavoidably follow,*

*follow, if it be once admitted, that Man, in publick Life, never acts from a true Motive of publick Good.*

*The great Difficulty, which I shall not dissemble, relating to the Matter in question, has been thought to lie here. The End of Man, that for which God created him, and which he invincibly desires and pursues, is Happiness. Now it is said, the publick Good of Society often requires that Man should sacrifice his private Happiness to it. Here, therefore, seem to be two different Ends, both of them, by Confession, agreeable to divine appointment, and which yet directly interfere, and tend to destroy one another. In this case, we are asked, What Method*

*thod of Reconciliation can be proposed, that the Author of human Nature, and of human Government, may appear to have acted according to his essential Characters of Wisdom and Goodness, in these two different Constitutions? Since, according to these Attributes, he could not have so acted, if the respective Duties, or Interests of them should be found absolutely incompatible. I say absolutely incompatible, because it is confessed, some Competition between the Duties or Interests of private, and of social Life, may subsist, without their mutual Destruction, or any just and necessary Cause of their Separation. In this case, as in all other Disputes, which will sometimes unavoidably happen among the nearest Relations*  
and

*and the best of Friends ; Reason, upon an impartial State of the Case on both Sides, should determine, which Side ought to yield and submit.*

*Now, if we will examine impartially, what the different Duties, or Interests, of private and social Life may require of us? The Difficulty of the Question will not, I apprehend, be so great, but we may easily come to a Resolution upon it.*

*As the End of private Life is private Happiness; so that of publick Life, is publick Good. Yet, whereof private Happiness is the prime and original Foundation; and, in which, therefore, we must always*

n presume

*presume it to be included. So that no Man can be obliged to any Duties of Society, which will more than over-balance the Benefits, which he can propose to reap from Society. For this would be to propose an End, (which no wise, or reasonable Man will do) of less Value, than that which is expended or given up, in order to attain it. And, therefore, when a Man becomes a Member of Society, though he may make a voluntary Cession of a great many natural Rights, towards qualifying himself to share in the common and legal Rights of it: Yet there are certain fundamental Rights and Privileges, if they ought not rather to be called Properties belonging to human Nature, from  
which*



*which Men can never recede, or be obliged to recede, upon any Consideration whatever. It can never be lawful, for Instance, much less obligatory to a Man, to commit a Sin, though he might, thereby, save the Commonwealth. Not only because no subsequent Relation or Compact, in any Kind, can vacate the Obligation, all Men are under, of Obedience to the supreme Legislator; but because the Evil of Sin, and the dreadful Consequences, to which it exposes the Sinner, are greater, than any Good, which he can enjoy, as a Member of Society, or on Account of his doing any Service to it, will ever be able to compensate.*

*Some, indeed, have made it a Question, whether a Man can be obliged, for the Service of the Publick, to expose himself to certain and unavoidable Death? Because, by the Loss of Life, he loses all the Benefits, which he expected to reap from Society; and for the Sake of which he became a Member of it.*

*This Question is the more difficultly accounted for, by those who resolve the Obligation Mankind are under to the principal Duties of Society, into a certain original Contract, whereby Men agreed to regulate their Behaviour, before they signed the Act of their Incorporation. Now, if the Question had been antecedently*

*antecedently proposed, whether they would sacrifice their Lives for the Service of the State, if, immediately, upon their signing, they should be commanded to do so? It is not very natural to believe, that many of them would have articulated upon that Condition.*

*Whereas, if the Duties owing to Society, or what I here principally intend, to the supreme Authority in it, is founded on the paternal Right, or on any Power antecedently appointed by God, for the better Administration of civil Government; then there is less Dispute, whether such Power, for necessary Ends of Government, may not command a Subject to expose himself to certain and unavoidable*

*unavoidable Death; because, tho' the civil Magistrate can give a Man Nothing in Exchange for his Life; yet, an all-powerful God can, and a wise and just God will repair any Loss or Suffering, which his Creatures may sustain, by acting in Obedience to his own Institution, and towards attaining the proper Ends of it.*

*So that, here, we have a full Answer to all the Objections, that can be made against the Practicableness of social Duties, when they come in Competition with the Interests of private Life; and which shew, indeed, that the Obligations we are under in these two different Capacities, are, after all, very consistent.*

*For*

*For a Desire of Happiness, the invincible Motive to Action in private Life, does not only carry us towards present, but towards future Happiness. Now it is very compatible with such a Desire, that we should give up some Good, which we actually possess, to the certain Expectation of a distant, but far greater Good in Reversion.*

*This Argument, I am sensible, is of no Consequence to those, who do not believe a future State of Retribution to Men, according to their good or evil Actions in this Life. But the Author of the Search thinks too justly, to incur any Imputation of such a Character. And, therefore, I wish, in accounting  
for*

*for the Reason, upon which, he supposeth, Politicians have undertaken to civilize Mankind, he had omitted the following Remark.\**

*“ That they being unable to give  
 “ so many real Rewards, as would  
 “ satisfy all Persons for every  
 “ individual Action, they were  
 “ forced to contrive an imaginary  
 “ one ; that, as a general Equi-  
 “ valent for the Trouble of Self-  
 “ denial, should serve on all Oc-  
 “ casions ; and, without costing any  
 “ Thing either to themselves, or  
 “ others, be yet a most accepta-  
 “ ble Recompense to the Receivers.*

*This Recompense, as he proceeds to explain it, is Flattery. Concerning which, considered by him as the principal Spur to human Action, I shall not repeat, what*

*what has been said already. The only Reflection, I shall make upon the Passage here cited, is, that the Author wholly ascribes to a sinister and indirect Motive, what naturally might have been ascribed, I will add, what a Man who believes a future State, and attends to the proper Consequences of his Belief, would certainly have ascribed to the Influence of it, upon much better Grounds. He will never be able to shew, that the Persons, by whose Wisdom Societies were first erected and modelled, and who prescribed just and wholesome Laws for the Government of them, would not consider, how Obedience to those Laws might be most effectually enforced; and, particularly by such Sanctions, as would have the most powerful Effect upon their Hopes, and their*

o

*Fears ;*

*Fears; Passions, which never operate, or ought to operate, with so great Force and Energy, as when they are moved by Considerations, taken from a firm Belief concerning a future State.*

*And, indeed, it may of itself be urged as a very good Argument, in Proof of a future State, that the Duties which Men owe, or the Sacrifice, which, in certain Cases, they are obliged to make to Society, are greater, in Proportion, than the Benefits they receive from Society: At least, their Service, perhaps their most meritorious Actions, for the publick Good, do, sometimes, tend to their Ruin; and even, in vulgar Opinion, to their Disgrace. Now it is highly reasonable to believe, tho' such accidental Disorders, arising from the present*

*sent*



*sent State of Things, cannot be totally prevented, except God should interpose to prevent them, by a miraculous Power; yet he will, sometime, abundantly supply all Deficiencies of that Kind in civil Life; especially such, as happen to good Men, in consequence of their acting by Virtue of his own Appointment.*

*But there is no Occasion for me to instance in such extraordinary Cases; or to enter upon a nice Inquiry, concerning all the Measures of civil Obedience. What the Author has advanced against the Practicableness of civil Duties, from a truly virtuous Principle, is expressed in general Terms, and applicable to such Cases, as ordinarily occur in civil Life. His Arguments proceed, according to the common Idea Men*

Q 2

*have*

*have of Self-denial; without considering it as exercised on this or that particular, and very pressing Occasion; for which Reason his Notion, that Self-denial is never practised from a true Motive of Virtue, or publick Affection, is more indefensible; as his Endeavour to defend it is, at the same Time, more offensive and injurious to human Nature; which corrupt as it may appear in common Practice, or in the Writings of some Men, yet, blessed be God, is not wholly, nor universally, depraved in Principle.*

*I have done with the Principles of this Writer, upon the Subject of moral Virtue. And he can have no Reason to complain, that he has, on any Account, been treated after an unbecoming*

*becoming or injurious Manner. I shall, rather, perhaps, be thought blameable, for expressing my self with so much Tenderness, in a Cause, which might seem to require a greater Ardour and Severity of Expression. But the Author is still more obnoxious, when he reduces his pernicious speculative Opinions to Practice; and endeavours to corroborate what he had advanced upon false, at the best, upon very precarious Grounds, by a distinct and personal Application. However, I shall only take Notice, in particular, of the Injustice, which he hath done to the Memory of a late most eminent Physician; and of several Things, which he hath said, on that Occasion, highly reflecting upon the Honour of one of the most celebrated Seats of Learning*

*Learning in the World. The Relation, which, I have had the Honour of bearing both to the injured Party, and Place, would have justified the following Reflections, though the Nature of my Design, in this Preface, had not so directly opened a Way to them.*

*In an Essay upon Charity and Charity Schools, as a remarkable Instance of that Pride and Vanity, which this Gentleman makes the general Springs of human Action, he particularly mentions a prodigious Gift, (the Gift of Doctor Radcliffe to the University of Oxford) which had made a great Noise in the World. He proposeth to set this Matter in the Light it deserves; and begs Leave, for once, to please Pedants, to  
treat*

treat it somewhat rhetorically.

*I do not enquire, what Sort of Persons, or what Body of Men, he here compliments so respectfully with the Character of Pedants. I am willing to believe he did not design, what the Course of his rhetorical Effusions would naturally enough lead one to think he might design. I shall only observe concerning the Motives, to which he imputes the noble Benefaction of Doctor Radcliffe to the University, that he has scarce said any Thing, but upon such Suppositions, which if we may be allowed arbitrarily to make, there never was, or ever will be a generous and disinterested Benefaction in the World. It will be impossible to instance in any one pious, or charitable Foundation,*

*Foundation, where the Founder might not be conceived, if mere Surmises would authorize a sinister Judgment of their Intention, to have been acted, in one Respect or other, by some indirect View.*

*The greatest Appearance of Argument, whereby this Writer would support his Judgment concerning Doctor Radcliff's Bequest, is, that " He left a Trifle to his " Relations who stood in Need of " it, and an immense Treasure " to an University, that did not " want it.*

*The former Part of this Charge is not altogether groundless; and I would, by no Means, lessen the Motives of Tenderness and Compassion, naturally, implanted in  
Men*

*Men towards their nearest Relations. Yet there seems to be a greater discretionary Liberty left to those, who have raised an Estate, in the Disposition which they may think to make of it towards any pious or publick Uses. The Ties of Blood are so strong, that there is seldom Occasion to use any Arguments to enforce them. Men, when they hear the Voice of Nature calling upon them, are rather apt, in following it, to be righteous overmuch. The Fault, if it be really a Fault, to prefer the publick Good, in any Kind, to private Affection, doth not commonly lie that way. This, at least, may reasonably be presumed, that a Person who should postpone many private Considerations towards the Advancement of some publick Good, discovers both a much*

P greater

*greater Mind, and a better Disposition of Heart; than a Person, (which is the common Case of the World) who, in a vast Fortune, centers all his Desires in aggrandizing his private Family, without any Bowels of Compassion towards the rest of Mankind; or without exercising any Acts of Beneficence, in Proportion, to the Opportunities, which he hath of doing Good.*

*There is, after all, great Difficulty in fixing the precise Bounds, between private and publick Affection. And, in every Case, where the Measures of our Duty are less ascertained, the Rule, to all ingenuous Minds, is to follow the Judgment of Charity, not, with this Gentleman, to proceed wholly upon precarious, arbitrary, and un-*



*uncharitable Presumptions. Dr. Radcliffe seems, indeed, principally to have incurred the virulent Censures here passed upon him, not simply, because he made a most beneficent Bequest of his Estate by Will; but, because, he did not make a Disposition of it, exactly in this Writer's own Way: yet an Error in Judgment; if, upon a feigned Concession, the Doctor had been really chargeable with such Error, ought not to lessen, neither, with Persons of any Candour, will it lessen, the Merit of a good and laudable Intention.*

*When, it is said, the University did not want such a Benefaction; the Expression is equivocal. If it be intended, the Doctor's Bequest was not, absolutely, neces-*

*sary to support the Honour and Dignity of the University; this is readily granted; but several Conveniencies may be desirable, and, in a Sense, wanting, without which, Things may, notwithstanding, still subsist in a good State. And the Advantages towards the Improvement of Learning in Oxford, great as they are, in many Respects, are not yet so great, as to admit no future Augmentations.*

*But, whatever might be the Motives to Dr. Radcliffe's Beneficence; why should an Occasion be taken from it, to asperse and depretiate him in his Character, as a Physician? Why is he represented, to mention none of the other Calumnies, whereby this anonymous Writer would blacken  
his*

*his Memory, as “ having small  
 “ Skill in Physick, and scarce any  
 “ Learning; as one who insinu-  
 “ ated himself into Practice by  
 “ vile Arts; and who scorned to  
 “ consult with his Betters, on  
 “ any Emergency soever; looking  
 “ down with Contempt on the  
 “ most deserving of his Profes-  
 “ sion; and never conferring with  
 “ any other Physician; but what  
 “ would pay Homage to his supe-  
 “ rior Genius; creep to his Hu-  
 “ mour, and never approach him,  
 “ but with all the slavish Obs-  
 “ quiousness a Court. Flatterer  
 “ can treat a Prince with.”*

*These are Matters of high  
 Charge; and, in the last Article,  
 not only the Doctor, but other  
 eminent Physicians are concerned;  
 Two, especially, as great and  
 bright*

*bright Ornaments of their Profession, as have been seen in any Age; and whose Names will live, in future Ages, when those, who envy their Success and Reputation, may be no more remembered.*

*Yet, upon what Grounds after all, are these Calumnies raised, with several others, which the Respect due to the Memory of so considerable a Person, will not permit me to recite; and which are designed to transmit his Character to Posterity under black and odious Colours? It might, in such a Case, have been expected, that good Evidence would be brought to confirm the several Parts of the Charge against him: And yet, in Proof of his Demerits, we are only referred*  
to

*to a Train of Accusations, which, severally, want to be proved themselves; and which, were they really true, ought not to be believed upon the bare Assertion of a Person so visibly prepossessed: But some of them are contrary, directly contrary, to known Facts. He was so far from treating the most deserving of his Profession with Contempt, and refusing ever to confer with them, or with any of them, as the Words of this Writer import, that some of them might be named, had I a Permission to name them, allowed, without forming invidious Comparisons, to have, at least, equal Pretensions to that Character, with the most celebrated of the Faculty, who had a particular Share in his Confidence and Friendship; and with whom he frequently conferred:*

*red: Persons, so far from discovering any Thing of that mean and servile Obsequiousness, which is here made the Character of a Court Parasite, either in their Temper, or Behaviour: That, had I a Design of setting such a Character in a stronger Light, I could not succeed more happily, than by opposing to it, those very Instances of a just and generous Manner.*

*If the Doctor did really look down with Contempt upon any Persons, it was upon those, and upon those only, who had Recourse to vile and ignoble Methods, towards opening a Way to Practice. And this might be, and I have Reason to believe, was the true Cause, why he, sometimes, refused to confer with others of the same Faculty. Instances might  
be*

*be named where even they, who had been recommended by him to Business, which through Absence, or some special Avocations, he could not attend himself, made no Scruple of practising, on that very Occasion, certain little indirect Arts, which he could by no Means approve. He understood the Importance and Excellency of that Profession, at the Head of which, under the Direction of Providence, the publick Judgment, and his own Merits, had placed him; and the Abuses, which he observed, had crept into certain Branches of it, rendered him very cautious how he either consulted with those who connived at such Abuses, or employed any subordinate Instruments in promoting them. He was, therefore, particularly, careful in the Choice*

*q*

*of*

*of his Apothecaries, as well as of the Physicians, with whom, in Cases of Difficulty, he found it requisite to confer; and, on all such Occasions, what he had, principally, Regard to, was the Honour of his Profession, and the Good of his Patients: These were the Ends which he preferred to all partial, and foreign Considerations whatever. And he had always those Physicians in the greatest Esteem, who pursued these Ends; and upon whom, therefore, his Business has so justly devolved; Gentlemen, who despised those little Arts of Address, whether to the Apothecaries, or to the Populace, which are, sometimes, found necessary to give those Practitioners a current Value about the Town, who want, and are, perhaps, conscious to themselves they*



*they want an intrinsic Value.*

*Had Dr. Radcliffe really designed to encourage any mean Arts, either towards acquiring, or preserving the publick Esteem; He who knew the World so well, and, on all Occasions, how to make his Court, would have employed proper Agents and Emissaries to that End. And these he could not have wanted, especially, among such Number of irregular Pretenders to Physick, native and foreign, wherewith we abound, who yet know well enough to what Illusions the People are most subject, and how they may be soonest captivated. But as he had no Need of such Operators, so he scorned to make Use of them, and of those, who employed them.*

*Whatever, therefore, this Writer might have said to the Diminution of Dr. Radcliffe's Character in general; for he was not without his Defects; yet it was very wrong to lessen him in that Part of his Character, wherein the greatest Glory of it consisted: And that was, in a generous Contempt of every Thing, which he apprehended, would, on any Account, tend to deprectiate it. Neither was it, in the least, an Argument of the Doctor's Vanity, tho' I would not be thought to exempt him from a Frailty too common both to great and little Men in all Professions, that in the Methods he took towards preserving the Honour of his proper Faculty, he was, especially, careful to preserve his own.*

*Besides*

*Besides the Indecency of disturbing the Ashes of the Dead, and of treating those with Obloquy and Reproach, who are not capable of answering for themselves, this Writer makes but a very awkward Compliment to many, if I might not say to most of the Families of Quality in the Kingdom, in representing the Person employed by them for so many Years, and who was in so great Reputation with them for his Skill and Success in Physick; yet as having, in Truth, very few, or rather none, of the Qualifications proper to a Physician.*

*To which of our two Universities this Gentleman owes his Education, or whether to any, I do not know. I shall only observe*  
far-

*farther, that his Reflections concerning the Abuse of commemorative Praises in Honour of the Dead, are indifferently applicable to all Universities, and to all other Places, where Gratitude may oblige Men to pay them: Nay, if we may argue in general, from the Abuse of Things against the Reasonableness and Expediency of them, it will be equally criminal to make any publick honorary Acknowledgment to a living, and to a dead Benefactor. All his rhetorical Exaggerations, therefore, on this Head, might be dismissed, at once, as proving too much, if they be really intended to prove any Thing. Such are the bright and select Passages following. “ A rich Miser, who is tho-  
 “ roughly selfish, and would re-  
 “ ceive the Interest of his Money,  
 “ even*

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“ even after his Death, has No-  
 “ thing else to do, than to de-  
 “ fraud his Relations, and leave  
 “ his Estate to some famous Uni-  
 “ versity. They are the best  
 “ Markets to buy Immortality at  
 “ with little Merit.---- “ There,  
 “ extraordinary Bounties shall,  
 “ always, meet with an extraor-  
 “ dinary Recompence; and the  
 “ Measure of the Gift is ever  
 “ the Standard of their Praises;  
 “ whether the Donor be a Phy-  
 “ sician, or, as he decently ex-  
 “ presseth himself, a Tinker.”

*All these fine Strictures tend  
 only to shew, that good and laud-  
 able Designs may be perverted to  
 ill Ends. But there is no Necess-  
 sity, why Persons of ingenuous  
 Minds should suppose, they will  
 be so perverted, and always so  
 perverted. It should rather be  
 presumed,*

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*presumed, that Men of a liberal and learned Education, who have a Sense of moral Virtue, should correct former Errors, if they have really committed any, than that they should persist in repeating them; especially, after such a kind, tender, and amicable Admonition, from so extraordinary a moral Writer.*

*I cannot conclude this Preface, though it may be thought too much enlarged already, without observing, that what Attempts soever have been made by private Persons, or Confederacies of Men, to destroy all Principles of Religion and moral Virtue; yet we do not want civil Magistrates, who have thought it their Duty to obviate those wicked and execrable Schemes, which they found*  
*had*

*had been projected, to that End. I think it particularly incumbent on me, on this Occasion, to mention, in Honour of the worthy Gentlemen, at that Time, of the Grand Jury of Middlesex, two Presentments made by them, in July last: Both which will be preserved as perpetual standing Monuments, to shew, that how numerous soever the open Advocates of Irreligion and Vice, at present, are; or how considerable soever they may affect to be thought, on Account of their Friends and Adherents: Yet still we have Persons of Character and Merit, in Authority, who know, how to express a pious and just Resentment, at any open Dishonour done to God, to their Prince, and to their Country. For whatever Men of weak*

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*Minds,*

*Minds, or those, who have some wicked Cause to serve, may believe, or pretend, the true Interests of the State, and those of Religion and Morality, will always be found inseparable. What shall we then say, either concerning the publick Affection, or the political Notions of those Men? who endeavour to subvert the true Foundations, at once, of all civil and religious Obedience, after an audacious and undisguised Manner, never attempted before, I do not say, in any Christian Nation, but in any other Nation, under Heaven !*

*Both those Presentments, to which I refer, were so well and judiciously drawn up; with such a true Spirit of Piety, and founded upon such just and cogent Reasons,*



sons, respecting the Honour, Dignity, and Interest of the Sovereign, and the Good of the Community in general, as well as the Interests of Religion; that a Transcript of them might have been very acceptable to the Reader. But, I shall, only, take the Liberty to recite two Paragraphs, from the Latter of them; That having a more immediate Relation to the Book, I have undertaken to answer; And, as it gave the first Occasion of my Undertaking to answer it, will be the best Apology for that full, and copious Answer, I have made to it; which, otherways, it might not so well have appeared to deserve.

“ That a general Libertinism  
“ may the more effectually be  
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“ *established, the Universities*  
 “ *are decried, and all Instructi-*  
 “ *ons of Youth, in the Principles*  
 “ *of the Christian Religion, are*  
 “ *exploded, with the greatest*  
 “ *Malice and Falsity.*

“ *The more effectually to carry*  
 “ *on these Works of Darkness,*  
 “ *studied Artifices, and invented*  
 “ *Colours, have been made use of,*  
 “ *to run down Religion and Vir-*  
 “ *tue, as prejudicial to Society,*  
 “ *and detrimental to the State;*  
 “ *and to recommend Luxury,*  
 “ *Avarice, Pride, and all Kind*  
 “ *of Vices, as being necessary to*  
 “ *publick Welfare; and not tend-*  
 “ *ing to the Destruction of the*  
 “ *Constitution. Nay, the very*  
 “ *Stews themselves have had*  
 “ *strained Apologies, and forced*  
 “ *Encomiums made in their Fa-*  
 “ *vour,*

“ your, and produced in print;  
 “ with Design, we conceive, to  
 “ debauch the Nation.

*Such bold and flagitious Attempts, when publicly avowed, might very justly, indeed, provoke the Animadversion of the civil Magistrate. If it might not have become the Ardour of some of our very learned Fathers, upon an Occasion so highly provoking, to have exerted that primitive and apostolical Spirit, with which they are animated, and to have reproved, rebuked, and exhorted with all Authority. It might be wished, at least, that some Person of Distinction in the Church, whose Weight, and Influence, would have enforced the Argument, had undertaken to confute those wicked and detestable Princi-*

*Principles, against which, according to the Measure of my mean Abilities, I have here thought it my Duty to bear Testimony: Which yet, I hope, by the Blessing of God, may be rendered, in some Degree, subservient towards the intended Effect.*





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CHAP.



## C H A P. I.

*That there is a real Distinction  
between moral Good and  
Evil.*

- I. *Wherein this Distinction is  
founded.* II, III, IV, V. *Illu-  
strations of it from sensible Ob-  
jects.* VI, VII, VIII. *Yet the  
Idea of Order not taken from  
the just or beautiful Proportion  
between sensible Objects, but  
pre-supposed.* IX. *Confirmed  
by a Sentiment of Cicero.* X. *An  
Application of it.* XI, XII,  
XIII. *An Objection propo-  
sed,* XIV. *and more parti-  
cularly*  
A

*cularly solved from the Consideration of a strait, and of a crooked Line. XV, XVI. What Advantage may be made of it towards proving the real Distinction of moral Virtue.*

I.



Lay it down as the Foundation of my present Design, that the Distinction of moral Good and Evil depends on the Nature of Things, and the different Relations, wherein they stand towards each other; that this Distinction, therefore, is not owing to any meer positive Law or Appointment whatever, human or divine; nor to any Custom, general Consent of Mankind, or Opinion



nion of particular Persons ; but arifeth from a certain Agreement or Difagreement, Proportion or Difproportion, which natural Reason, when we duly attend to it, will not fail to difcover between the Things themfelves, about which it is converfant.

II. As when we therefore behold material Objects prefented to the Sight, and compare them together, fome of them are obferved to be greater or lefs than other, fome of a circular, fquare, or triangular Form ; from which their different Magnitude and Configuration we infer, there is a natural Incapacity in them towards producing, in concert, any regular or uniform Work : So upon Inquiry, whether fuch Actions, about which moral Agents may deliberate, ought to be done,

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if

if we observe any thing disagreeable or unbecoming in them, we conclude them naturally irregular and improper to be done. Thus when we consider Man as a *moral*, and when under the Notion of a *natural*, or *artificial* Agent, the Difference, in respect to the Symmetry or Disproportion of his Work, is equally visible.

III. Yet this Difference will still appear in a stronger Light, if we make a Judgment concerning moral Actions, not meerly on Account of their Beauty or Regularity, arising from the Relation, which the Things about which they are conversant, bear to one another ; but more directly, as they stand in Relation to us ; as they are subservient to our Use ; and tend to promote our Happiness, or our Perfection.

IV. A Man is pleas'd with seeing a beautiful and regular Building, tho' he has no Propriety in it; nor any other Advantage, than that of gratifying, by the Sight of it, the natural Love which he hath for Order and Proportion. But if he is personally interested in such a Building, and reflects that it was designed with all the Conveniences about it, for his more immediate Use and Service, this still contributes to heighten the Joy of his Prospect, and to make him more in Love with the Beauty of Order, by a sensible Application.

V. We form the like Sentiments in regard to moral Actions. When we see Man conducting himself according to the Order and Perfection of his Nature; or doing any thing that is truly great, or

noble, suited to the Dignity, the Wisdom or Goodness of a reasonable Agent, we take a secret Pleasure in reflecting upon his Conduct, tho' it is upon no other Account beneficial to us. But if we are in any respect personally affected by it, or it should have an immediate and direct Influence towards making us more happy, or more perfect, the Impressions, we should receive from it, would, for that reason, be so much more lively and forcible.

VI. I would not however infer from what has been said, that the proper Method, as some have pretended, of maintaining the real Distinction of moral Virtue, is to argue from the agreeable Sentiments, wherewith the Mind is naturally possessed, when we observe a just and beautiful Proportion

tion between the Works of Nature, or Art: For here, say they, we have nothing to do but to transfer the Idea of Order, from which those Sentiments arise in the Mind, to such Actions, which Mankind have agreed to call *moral*.

VII. If they only intend hereby, that the Method of letting Men into the Knowledge of intellectual Truths, by sensible Arguments and Allusions, is very proper; that naked Truth is too bright a Form, for the Generality of Mankind to contemplate; and that we must therefore endeavour to enlighten their Minds by speaking to their Senses and Imagination; it is readily granted, there is no Inconvenience in this way of arguing. But if it be intended, this Method is not designed so

much for an *Illustration* concerning the Certainty of moral Virtue, as a strict and direct Proof of the Thing, we aver it to be unjust, and altogether preposterous: We ought to conclude, that because the sensible Eye is delighted with external Beauty and Order, there is, therefore, such a thing as internal Beauty and Order, from which that Delight proceeds, as from its real and true *Source*.

VIII. For in the natural Order of our Ideas, concerning two Subjects, the nobler and more perfect is the Rule and Measure of the other, but should by no means either be regulated by it, or be considered as *prior* to it.

IX. And therefore, we may justly question, whether the sensible Eye is not delighted with the Order and Beauty of sensible Objects,

jects, *meerly* and *solely* for this Reason, that there is *antece-*  
*dently* in the Soul an Idea and Love of intellectual Order, from which that of sensible Order takes its Rise. *Cicero* is of Opinion, which appears to be grounded upon this Principle, \* That there is no other sublunary Creature but Man, sensible of the Beauty, Comeliness, and Order of Parts, in external Objects. The Difference therefore, which Man observes on these several Accounts, between such Objects, must naturally be supposed to arise from his transferring the Sentiments of the Mind, concerning intellectual Order, to them:

\* Itaq; eorum ipsorum, quæ aspectu sentiuntur, nullum aliud Animal, pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam Partium sentit.

For

For tho' he acknowledgeth, the Mind takes Occasion to apply the Idea of Order, arising from sensible Objects, towards the better Regulation of our moral Conduct, that \* Beauty, Comeliness, and Order, ought much more to be *preferred* by moral Agents; yet he mentions, and must necessarily do so in his way of arguing, this Idea of Order from sensible Objects, not as the *formal* or *efficient* Cause of the intellectual Order, but only as an *Image*, that may on occasion be usefully employed to illustrate it; and in this Sense we are to explain what he

\* Quam similitudinem natura, ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in consiliis factisque conservandum putat.

adds



adds upon the Argument. \* “From  
 “ hence arifeth moral Honesty,  
 “ the Subject of our present In-  
 “ quiry ; which tho’ it should  
 “ not always be esteemed, as it  
 “ ought to be, is, notwithstanding,  
 “ *moral Honesty*, and Praise-  
 “ worthy in itself, tho’ no Person  
 “ should *observe* or *applaud* it.”

X. If the different Judgments then, which we make concerning the Order and Proportion of Parts in respect to material Substances, is certainly founded in some Equality or Inequality between them, on Account of their respective Magnitude or Figure, and does not depend on any hu-

\* Quibus ex rebus conflatur & efficitur id quod querimus *Honestum*. Quod etiamfi nobilitatum non fit, tamen honestum fit, quodque vere dicimus, etiamfi a nullo laudatur, laudabile esse natura.

man Compact, or private Opinion ;  
 or, I will add, even on any positive Will or Command of the supreme Being ; Contradictions being impossible to the divine Power itself ; which therefore cannot effect, that a Part should be of equal Magnitude or Extent, so as to take up the same Space with the Whole ; that a circular should, at the same Time, be a triangular Figure ; or that two Bodies should be exactly uniform, and yet of a different Form. If there are, we say, such real and immutable Differences, independent on any foreign Power, or Cause whatever, in material Objects, there is still greater Reason to believe a real and immutable Difference with respect to moral or intellectual Objects : Since, according to the Principle, upon which

See p. 8  
 at top

which I have been arguing, after *Cicero*, it is from the *Understanding*, and not directly from any sensible Impressions, that we are pleased with the Beauty of external Order, and displeas'd with every thing repugnant to it.

XI. To this, perhaps, it may be said, that the Degrees of more and less, the Ideas of Figure, of Extension and Magnitude, are proper only to Bodies; and that we cannot therefore argue demonstratively from the Difference, in sensible Objects on these Accounts, to a Difference between Objects of a moral Consideration, which are not capable of the like Circumstances.

XII. I have already in Part obviated this Suggestion, by shewing, that the Argument we employ

ploy on Occasion of sensible Objects, to discover the Beauty of Order and Proportion, is not used as an antecedent Proof, but only as a consequential Illustration of moral Virtue. There is something in the Action of Man considered as a moral Agent, if not strictly the same with what we observe in material Operations, which, however, bears a visible Resemblance to them: Tho' his Action therefore, in that Capacity, does not fall under the Senses, or under the same Circumstances with *Quantity*, yet there is a certain Agreement or Disagreement, Conveniency or Inconveniency, in the Reason of it; from which, if he depart, we conclude his Action to be equally irregular, as a Building, between whose Parts there is no Manner of Proportion

portion or Correspondence ; or as a Line that is drawn a quite different way from the Point, towards which it ought to be carried.

XIII. And the latter of these Images being more abstracted from the Circumstances or Parts of Quantity, I shall, especially, confine myself to it, in order to a more plain and familiar Discovery of moral Virtue, from a Consideration of material Objects.

XIV. If you ask then, when I call a Line irregular, which is not carried towards its proper Point directly, but by oblique or crooked Strokes, how does it therefore follow, that any Action of Man, consider'd as a moral Agent, is also irregular ? I answer; because Reason, in both Cases,  
and

and in all other Cafes, doth require, that whatever End is propofed, it ought to be purfued by the moft fimple, the moft direct, and practicable Means. This is the Rule impreffed by the Author of Nature on all his Works; inanimate Beings follow it with all their Force and Activity: If a Paſſage ſhould be opened to the Center of the Earth, and a Stone were thrown into it, it would deſcend continually in a direct Line, provided nothing might happen to divert or alter the Courſe of its Motion. All Animals, I do not inquire whether they have any Senſation or Deſign in what they do, have the ſame natural Impulſe, and move towards the Place or Object, to which they are inclined, by the ſhorteſt and eaſieſt Way. An Eagle that deſcribes

scribes several circular Motions in the Air, in order to discover her Prey; yet when she has once marked it out with her Eye, and finds the way open for a Seizure, stoops with all her Force and Swiftneſs directly upon it. And ſhall we imagine, while all other Beings are directed in their Motions by ſome certain Rule, eſpecially by this common Rule of purſuing what appears deſirable to them, by the moſt eaſy and ſimple Means, *that* Man alone, who, among all terreſtrial Beings, is capable of knowing his Rule, of diſcovering the Reaſons upon which he ought to act, and of following them by a diſtinct Perception, ſhould yet be without any Rule for his Behaviour, conſidered properly *as* Man? Or is it agreeable to the Character

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of

of an infinitely wise and good God, to believe, he has created all other Things in *Number*, *Weight*, and *Measure*, and yet left Man, the noblest and most excellent of his visible Works, to act without any regard to *Order* or *Proportion*; and in particular to the Rule, I have now mentioned? A Rule, according to which all other Beings are not only observed to act; but whereby even the most perfect Being himself does inviolably conduct his own Action.

XV. Now I desire no more should be granted towards demonstrating the real Distinction of moral Virtue, than that Man, supposed a reasonable Agent, is obliged antecedently to any *positive* Institution, human or divine, to conduct himself by *this* Rule,  
that



that is, by pursuing what he proposes to attain *as* good or convenient for him, by the most easy, simple, and practicable Means: Upon this Concession, which no reasonable Person will scruple to make, it will unavoidably follow, that in the natural and necessary Reason of Things, the Distinction of moral *Good* may be established, and consequently of moral *Evil*, after the same Manner, whereby we discover a Line to be crooked, by comparing it with a streight Line.

XVI. I have then nothing more to do, in prosecuting this Argument, but to inquire, whether there are not certain Actions, which have a *direct* Tendency to promote the Good and Happiness of Man ; and by means of which he will much sooner,

and more easily attain his End, than he would do by a contrary or different Practice? In order to a Resolution of which Inquiry, it may be proper to consider, in the first Place, what the proper End of Man really is? for *that* being once discovered, we may better find the true and direct Way that leads to it.



## C H A P. II.

### *What the proper End of Man is?*

- I, II. *The End of Man considered in two Respects, and why.*  
 III. *A farther Reason of this Distinction.* IV. *The Use of it.*

*it. V, VI. A Difficulty proposed, and answered from the violent Impressions made upon us by Means of sensible Objects. VII. The Wisdom and Holiness of God vindicated, notwithstanding what was objected. VIII. The Objection farther considered, and refuted. IX. The particular Reason of considering it in respect to the Author's Method.*

I. **T**HE End of Man may be considered as having respect either to his Perfection, or to his Happiness.

II. I shall begin with the former Distinction; for these two Things, on Account of the present State of Mankind, admit of a very different Consideration. Tho' in a seperate State of the  
Soul

Soul from the Body, we cannot easily conceive any Grounds for such a Distinction; for certainly a pure Intelligence will be more happy in Proportion as it is perfect; and more perfect, in Proportion as it is happy. Whereas, in the present Union of Soul and Body, we often seek and find Happiness, such as it is, in Things, not which tend to the Perfection of human Nature, but to vitiate and debase it. *pleasure* Pleasure and Happiness are inseparable; whatever therefore has a Power of pleasing us, has, in the same Degree, a Power of making us happy: Now it being necessary to the Preservation of the sensible Life, that we should be affected with Pleasure, in the Use or Enjoyment of sensible Objects, we are often excited

cited to desire them, and unite ourselves to them, after an irregular Manner. Finding a present Satisfaction in them, we are diverted from attending to those nobler, but at present less affecting Operations of the Mind; wherein the Perfection of our nobler Part consists. This is the Reason, why Men, by Degrees, immerse themselves so deep in sensual Applications, that it is difficult to put a Thought or Desire into them worthy of reasonable Beings, of Beings created after the Image of God. They have no Notion of any thing but what they see, feel or tast, or which has some relation to gratify the Appetites of animal Life. If, at any time, we are able to impress a Sentiment upon them relating to

a future Life, and the Rewards of a *reasonable* Service ; the most effectual Way is, to obumbrate to them intellectual and divine Truths, by sensible Allusions ; as of those, for Instance, to a Feast, to a Kingdom, to a House with Variety of *Mansions*, and other like Objects of human Desire ; of which, indeed, the Scriptures themselves, in Condescension to the common Ideas and Understanding of Men, condescend to make use ; and so lead them to the Discovery of intellectual Truths, in a Way suited to their gross Imaginations ; as Children easier learn to read, when we put Books into their Hands, adorned on the outside or within, with painted emblematical Figures.

III. They are not only the Vulgar, whose Thoughts are taken  
up

up with sensible Objects and Appearances; but we scarce hear any thing, but the Language of the sensible World, from Men of a more refined Education. *Metaphysics*, the most probable Means, next to the Grace of God, of opening the Eye of human Understanding, of beautifying and enlarging its Prospect, are too generally neglected: The very Method of modern Study seems rather calculated to fit Men for a Commerce in Life, that regards the Decencies of external Behaviour, than to improve the Mind in the Knowledge of Things worthy of a rational Pursuit, and whereby the Strength of it may be augmented, or its native Liberty restored.

IV. This may serve to shew, how necessary it is at present to  
 distin-

distinguish between the Perfection, and the Happiness of Man. Since the latter includes in it not only the Pleasures proper to him simply as an intelligent, but also as an animal and sensitive Creature.

V. The Sensations, indeed, of Man in this latter Respect, are in some Cases so violent and affecting, that some have thought it difficult to reconcile them with the *Wisdom* and Holiness of Providence; as thinking them more than an Over-balance for the Power and Prerogative of Reason. But this Argument, upon due Inquiry, will appear to be grounded upon a false Judgment, and to owe its Rise, not to any invincible Defect, either of human Understanding or Will, but to a Neglect and Abuse of them. How forcible soever the Action of sensible



sible Objects may be upon us, if we will make a due Use of the Light of our Mind, or the Freedom of our Will, we are both sufficiently qualified to discover what way we ought to take, and enabled to proceed in it. Had sensible Objects, indeed, less Power to move us, it might be questioned, whether the End of God, in making Man Part of the sensible World, would be sufficiently attained. There are certain Actions proper to the animal Life, and necessary to preserve it, to which, were it not for the agreeable and strong Sensations that accompany them, notwithstanding the general Desire which Men have of Living, they would yet be much more reluctant, if not, by Degrees, altogether averse. Were Men to eat and drink, with

no other Intention, than meerly to support Life, and without any Manner of Taft or Relish, the Number of Persons chargeable with destroying themselves, if not, by a positive Choice, at least, by an irregular use of their Liberty, would be much augmented: Nay, it is not improbable, that when the great Business, because the great *Pleasure* of Life, eating and drinking, should no more subsist, some Men would even directly chuse to be removed out of a State, wherein, according to their gross Apprehensions, they could find nothing to gratify or affect them. There are, indeed, natural Actions, which, were it not for the pleasing Sensations, that attend them; or the painful, which Men feel when they are obstructed, they should be so far

far from an Inclination to perform, that they should not, without much Difficulty and Trouble, be, on any other Account, reconciled to them. It is no Argument then against the Wisdom and Holiness of God, that he has given us certain powerful Sensations, on occasion of material Objects acting upon us; since we have yet Strength sufficient to oppose and resist their Action, whenever it becomes irregular: but it is an Argument of the Wisdom of God, that those Sensations are of such Force, as to answer the End, which otherwise they could not do, of his placing Mankind in this sensible World. And to shew how conspicuous the divine Wisdom is in this Appointment, in proportion as the sensible Actions of Life are more  
necessary

necessary to the Preservation of our sensible Being, they are attended still with a more grateful and powerful Sensation; and this, indeed, is an evident Argument, they do not proceed from any fortuitous Construction of the Body; but from the Disposition of a wise and intelligent Cause.

VIII. I may farther observe, that were the Impressions of sensible Objects less strong, the Balance of Power between the intellectual and the sensible Part of us would be destroyed. Even in the present Dispute, about the Right or Bounds of Empire between 'em, we find there are many Persons so desirous of improving the intellectual Part, that they are even willing to retire, so far as they can, out of the sensible World, in order to give themselves up to Contemplation

templation and Prayer, towards the greater Perfection of their Mind. This proceeds from the Idea they have formed, and *justly* formed, of the superior Dignity and Excellency of the Soul. But could we see, in a simple and naked View, the Soul, with all the Powers and Capacities of it; and those, exerting themselves, or in a preparative State towards exerting themselves, with all their Force, upon Objects proportioned to them, the Business of this Life, about which we are now so solicitous, would scarce be thought to deserve the least Part of our Care or Regard. Our Conversation would be wholly *in Heaven*, or upon heavenly Objects; and many of the Ends, for which God has placed us in this middle State, would consequently be frustrated;

strated ; yet, for the Sake of which, tho' we know there is a Principle within us distinct from Matter, and superior to all the Powers and Capacities of Matter, God has not thought fit we should, at present, know, by a clear and distinct View, what that Principle is ; because (I shall make no Apology for repeating the Argument) could we see this bright and excellent *Form* exposed to the Understanding, as we discover sensible Beauties by the sensible Eye, we should be so much transported and overcome with the Vision, that it would be extremely difficult for us, without offering great Violence to ourselves, to turn our Thoughts upon so foreign, and, in Comparison, so ignoble and vile an Object as Matter, or any particular Part  
of

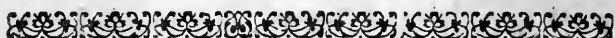
of it, whereof this visible World is composed. If a great Mind, by reflecting upon the Operations and Powers of the Soul, is now sometimes able under the strong Impressions of Sense, and all the splendid Appearances, which Men call worldly Glory, to withdraw itself into the intellectual System; How little, how contemptible, would all the Poms appear, which Art or Luxury can prepare, in the Eyes of one, who could see the Soul shine forth, like the Sun from under a dark Cloud, or rather after a total Eclipse, in its full Strength and Lustre?

IX. As this Consideration shews, there are wise Reasons, why we do not now know any thing more distinctly concerning the Nature of the Soul; so it discovers, that on Account of the Ballance of

C

Power

Power between the Soul and the Body, proportioned to our present State, it is requisite, the Happiness, and the Perfection of Man, in regard to his End, should be distinctly considered.



### C H A P. III.

*Of the End of Man considered more particularly in respect to his Perfection.*

- I. *That we naturally desire Perfection, from a Motive of Self-love.*
- II, III. *Certain Degrees of Perfection in Things without Life, in Plants, and Animals.*
- IV. *Yet the Degrees of Perfection in other Things more especially*



*especially estimated, as we are more interested in them. V. The Desire of Perfection, tho' it may be considered separately, yet is really inseparable from the invincible Desire of Happiness. VI. The Force and Extent of this Desire. VII. Wherein the Perfection of any Being properly consists. VIII, IX. In particular of Man. X. The Force of Contemplation in some Men. XI. Concerning human Will. XII. The main Question upon the Subject to be resolved in the next Chapter.*

**A**N obvious Reason may be assigned, why every Being ought to desire its own Perfection; for the great Principle, common to all Beings, is *Self-love*: That, which puts them in Motion, which

regulates all their Actions, and causes them to take greater Complacency both in what they are, and in what they do. When any Being, capable of Reflection, considers itself, as having in the Rank, wherein it is placed, all the Qualities proper to the Nature of it, and which capacitate it for acting after a suitable Manner ; the Pleasure, arising from such a Reflection, is not to be considered as proceeding from an irregular Motion of Pride, but from a generous and laudable Ambition of *Excelling*, founded in this essential Principle of Self-love. And if, from this *Motive*, it be lawful for intelligent Beings, on any Account, to take Complacency in themselves, it is certainly not only lawful, but highly requisite on Account of  
those

those superior Advantages, which really tend to give them a greater intrinſick Value; and, at the ſame time, if they are Parts or Members of Society, juſtly render them more valued, and eſteemed by others.

II. Even Things inanimate are preferred and admired, according as they are more perfect or beautiful in their different Kinds. A Diamond riſes in the Price proportionably as it has a greater Luſtre, a finer Water, or as no Cloud or Flaw is diſcoverable in it. And the Judgment, we make, concerning the Excellency or Beauty of ſuch a Stone, is not founded in human Compact, or common Opinion, but in the intrinſick Reaſon of the Thing. Men may, indeed, agree to ſet a greater or a leſs extrinſick Value,

lue, at different Times, or in different Places, upon a Diamond; but without regard to other Advantages which might be made of it, a Man, who should merely consider it as a curious radiant and beautiful Production of Nature, pleasing to the Eye, would truly judge it, on that very Account, preferable to a common Peble.

III. The same Observation may be extended both to the vegetable Kind, and to Animals, antecedently to all Custom, or any popular Opinion: We should judge a Flower, in its full Bloom, of a bright lively Colour, and a fragrant Smell, more perfect than another Flower, without these Qualities, or any of them. A Horse of a fine Shape, and good Spirit, is more excellent in  
his

his Kind ; whether we should propose to make any Use of him, or not.

IV. Such Judgments are all founded on the general Principle, that every thing is more valuable in Proportion, as it is in itself more perfect ; and suppose the Desire of Perfection a natural and necessary Consequence of that Love, which every Creature bears to itself ; for the Reason, whereby we are excited to Love, or take Complacency in Things, wherein we have no immediate Interest, according to their different Degrees of Perfection, must certainly operate much stronger when any thing directly and *personally* affects us.

V. Every intelligent Being in particular ought to desire its Perfection on this Account, that the

more perfect it is, it will in Proportion be more happy. Now it is only from a Desire of being happy, that a Substance capable of Reflection would desire to be at all. Happiness, therefore, tho' for the Reason before mentioned, I am to consider it distinctly from the Perfection of Man, yet is the Center to which he is carried by an invincible and uninterrupted Motion. When he placeth his Happiness, as he often doth, in Things highly pernicious and destructive to him, yet he even then *blindly* follows this Law, and cannot, indeed, do otherwise: His End is the same, tho' he mistakes his Way, and goes, perhaps, not so much *besides*, as directly contrary to it. A Traveller over-taken in his Journey by the Night, or encom-  
 passed

passed in some thick Fog, not knowing what Path to pursue, or having no Guide, sometimes fancieth he is going directly to the Place for which he designs, and where his fixed, and habitual Intention is to arrive, at the same Time, every Step he takes is a farther Remove from it.

The Desire of Happiness, therefore, does incessantly possess all intelligent Beings; tho' Man often mistaking Appearances for Reality, directly flies from his true Happiness, even while he imagines himself in full Pursuit of it; yet, tho' he is carried at different Times, and by different Motions, to his End, his Design of finding Happiness, in the Pursuit, is *necessarily* and always the same.

VI. Now for the same Reason, Man desires to be happy, and to be  
be

be *always* happy, he desires to be happy to the utmost *Extent* of his Capacities, and to attain all those Degrees of Happiness, for which the Order, wherein he is placed, may qualify or entitle him. If Happiness be a *Good*, a greater Happiness must necessarily be a greater Good, and is still more to be desired. This is so evident, it needs no Proof. I am only to observe here, what Use may be made of it, in respect to that End of Man, we are considering more particularly in this Place.

VII. The Perfection of every Being consists in having those Powers and Faculties, which are proper to it, rightly disposed or informed ; and then, in its acting pursuant to such a Disposition : And the nobler such Faculties  
are,



are, a Being endowed with them, is in the same Degree of a superior and more excellent Kind.

VIII. All that remains then, at present, to be done, is to consider, what in particular those Faculties of Man are, which are proper to him, especially which distinguish him from other Creatures; and wherein his Superiority, so far as he may really be, in certain Respects, superior to them, is supposed to consist?

IX. Now the two principal Faculties of Man, for these, without descending to any other, will be sufficient to answer the End of our present Enquiry, are *Understanding* and *Will*.

First, we find a Capacity in ourselves of discovering certain Objects, of comparing them together, of observing an Agreement

OF

or Difagreement, an Equality or Inequality between them, and then, of inferring certain Conclufions upon which we are able to difcover many Truths relating to them. And as all our natural Capacities, when exerted *on* their proper Objects, are rewarded with a certain Degree of Pleafure ; fo in the feveral Employments of our intellectual Faculties, efppecially in the Difcovery of Truth, we experience not only an eafy State of Mind, answering to that of natural Bodies, when they are in their proper Places, and at Reft : But a *real* Delight and Satisfaction, answering to that, which the fenfible Eye is apprehended to take, in feeing any beautiful Work of Nature or Art, in a good and proper Light.

X. Contemplative Men, indeed, are sometimes transported with the Discovery of Truth to such a Degree, especially some Truth of great Use and Importance to themselves or others, and which they have found after long Attention, and many deep Researches, that they are carried, as it were, above themselves, or rather like simple Intelligences *out* of themselves, in such a Manner, that for the time they can scarce tell whether they are *in the* Body, or *out of the* Body; a radiant Light diffuses itself upon their Minds, which cannot be expressed, and which gives them an exalted Pleasure, the World cannot give; a pure intellectual Pleasure, and by so much more affecting, as being more free from the confused  
Noise

Noise of the Senses, Imagination, and Passions.

11. Man finds in himself another Capacity of *willing* or *choosing*. As by the Light of his Understanding he discovers several Objects with their respective Properties and Relations, and thereupon judges, upon which of them he ought principally to employ his Meditations; so the Exercise and Use of his Will consists in the *Choice* of those Things which are most worthy to be chosen. According, therefore, as his *Will* is regulated by his Understanding, and employed about such Things, as are in their own Nature more *eligible* or deserving his Choice, he consequently arrives to a higher Degree of Perfection, in respect to this Faculty; and is, for the same Reason, more happy:

happy: For it is a most clear and obvious Truth, that every Being is in Proportion both more perfect and happy, as the proper Faculties of it are more conversant about such Things, which are agreeable to the Nature and Operations of them.

12. This is sufficient to shew wherein the Perfection of Man does principally consist; why he naturally desires Perfection; and, by necessary Inference, the Means which lead to his Perfection. But the main Question, indeed, lies here, What is the *Rule of Perfection* to Man in relation to both these Faculties? For it will be to little Purpose to discover, that Man desires his own Perfection, and is capable, in the proper Use of his natural Powers, of attaining it, except he  
be

be also directed in the Use of them, or have some Method prescribed to him, how he ought to pursue his End, and by what means his Perfection may be *actually* attained.



## C H A P: IV.

*What the Rule of Perfection to Man is ?*

- I. *He is to consult Truth in order to regulate his Judgment.*
- II, III. *And the moral Attributes of the most wise and perfect Agent, in order both to regulate his Action, IV. and to direct his Intention.*

I. The

**T**H E first Enquiry will be concerning the Rule of Perfection to Man, in respect to his End, considered as an *intelligent* Being; and under this Notion, as he finds, by an internal Conscioufness, that Truth is the proper Object of his Understanding; and that he is capable, in a certain Degree, of discovering it, and tastes a sensible Pleasure in the Discovery; the Consequence is, that he ought both to regulate and determine all his Judgments by such Discoveries; for, otherwise, he could have no End, no End tending to his Perfection, in making them.

2. But tho' Truth, abstractedly considered, has something in it, which tends to the Perfection of human Mind; yet as Man is

an intelligent Being formed for *Action*, and of an active Disposition, it principally concerns him to understand such Truths, whereby his Action, as an *intelligent* Being, ought to be regulated.

III. Here then lies the main Difficulty, by what *Rule* Man ought to conduct himself as an *intelligent* Agent? For the Resolution of which the true Rule certainly is, that he should consult the Idea of the most *perfect* of all intelligent Agents, and discover, if he can, by contemplating the Perfections of his Nature, what they severally are, and how they may be applied to serve him, as *Models* for the Regulation of his own Conduct. For what is most perfect, in its Kind, ought to be proposed as the Rule and Standard to all other Things  
of



of the like Kind; and the more they participate of the Nature or Qualities of such an Original, or bear the near Resemblance to it, they are, in the same Degree, necessarily more perfect.

Now if we consult the Idea of the most perfect intelligent Being, we shall find included in that Idea, that he always acts as Reason directs; and, that one of the prime Directions of Reason is, that every Action ought to be conducted, by a certain Order, to certain wise and good Ends: For otherwise, contrary to the present Supposition of an all-perfect Being, there might be manifest Tokens of Imperfection, in these several Respects. An Action, for Instance, which is not regularly conducted, cannot so soon attain its End, if it should

at length attain it, as an Action which tends directly, and without any deviation, or obstacle, to it. And for this Reason, the great Genius Mr. *Malibranck* has demonstrated, that God having once determined to create the material World, to put Matter in motion, and to constitute certain Laws whereby it should move, did establish this as the primary Law of Motion, that every Particle of Matter should have a Tendency to move in a direct Line ; for otherwise the supreme Being, who does nothing in vain, and never employs his Power, where there is no Occasion, would yet make Use of a greater Degree of Power than was needful, and consequently of a *superfluous* Action ; it being evident, that a less Force will carry any Body  
towards

towards its Center, or proper Place, in a direct, than in an oblique or crooked Line. And if there be so much Beauty and Reason in observing a certain Order in the Formation and Direction of Things inanimate; the Necessity of Order will appear much greater, in Proportion, as the Things wherein it is sought or required, is of a superior and more excellent Nature.

IV. We shall no less easily discover that, as the most perfect Being acts according to a certain Order; so his Action is always conducted to very wise and good Ends. And if Wisdom and Goodness are not Perfections, there is no arguing, in any Case, from the most clear, the most universal, and incontestable Notions, that Men can have of Things.



## C H A P. V.

*Whence an Obligation of conforming to this Rule ariseth.*

- I. *The Rule of Action to Man immutable.* II. *Confirmed by the Authority of Cicero and Aristotle.* III. *More particularly of Aristotle.* IV. *The Rule of Action to Man compared with that of other Creatures.* V. *A Difficulty which may arise.* VI. *Obviated.* VII. *Especially from a Prospect of future Rewards and Punishments.* VIII. *A future State of Rewards and Punishments demonstrated.* IX. *After a Manner*

*Manner that cannot be disputed by those, who believe the moral Perfections of the divine Nature. X. Another Objection proposed and, XI. answered. XII. The great Advantages to Men in following this Rule.*

I. **T**HE Rule, concerning which I am now speaking, is the Rule of Order. A Rule that directs us to compare Things together, to observe their several Relations, Powers and Properties; and from the Judgment we make of them, to employ the most proper Means towards attaining our End. So that the Law of *Order*, is only another Appellation for the Law of *Reason*; for supposing a reasonable Being to act, if we intend any thing by

Reason, or if Reason is of any Use to such a Being, the proper Office of it will consist in advising him to chuse the *nearest* and *best* way to his End. It is impossible, indeed, to conceive of what good use Reason can be to a Man, except by enabling him to judge when he lays Things together, and examines their different Qualities, whether he ought to prefer or reject them; whether they are really beneficial or injurious to him; otherwise his Understanding instead of being attended with those Privileges, with which the Author of Nature designed he should be distinguished, might rather prove the Occasion of his greater Error or Prejudice; as tending, in frequent Instances, to mislead and carry him still farther from his proper End.

II. And

II. And therefore *Cicero* defines the moral Law, or the Law of Nature, to be “right Reason, agree-  
 “able to the natural Constitution  
 “of Man, diffused as a common  
 “Principle, through all human  
 “Race, uniform, and of perpetual  
 “Force.” *Vera Ratio, naturæ Con-*  
*gruens, diffusa in omnes, Con-*  
*stans, perpetua.* De Republ. Con-  
 sonant to which Definition is that  
 of *Aristotle*, who calls the Law  
 of Nature immutable, and of the  
 same Operation and Effect every  
 where; like that of Fire, *saieth*  
*he*, speaking of his native Coun-  
 try, which burns here, and in  
*Persia.* Τὸ μὲ φύσει αἰώνιον, καὶ πανταχῶς  
 τὴν οὐσίαν ἔχει δύναμιν, ὡσπερ τὸ πῦρ, καὶ ἐν-  
 θάδε, καὶ ἐν περσῶν, καίαι. *Christ. Ethe.*

III. In the Judgment of this  
 Philosopher, as inanimate Beings  
 move and act in vertue of cer-  
 tain

tain Laws agreeable to their Nature; and, as they are in their proper and natural State, when such Laws are obeyed, which *they* constantly do obey, if not obstructed in their Operations by some foreign superior Force; so Man, if he were to follow the proper Bent and Tendency of human Nature, or to conduct himself, by the standing Law of it, the *Law* of Order and Reason, would always act, as all other Beings, both animate and inanimate are observed to do, in a regular, constant, and uniform Manner.

IV. What I intend is, that as the Rule of all natural Agents to move and act, according to the several Powers and Qualities impressed on them, by the Author of Nature: As the Rule to sensible



fible Beings is to pursue such Things, as tend to the Preservation and Support of the sensible Life : So the Rule to Man is to follow that Reason, which distinguisheth him \* from other Creatures ; and which he always would follow invincibly, as the *Direction* proper to him, were it not for a Power, he has of abusing his Liberty ; and which renders him, what no other Being upon Earth is, a proper Subject of Reward and Punishment.

5. If it be said, this shews, indeed, what a Man has a natural Tendency to do ; and what he *may* do ; but yet does not appear fully to prove what he *ought* to do, or is under a strict *Obligation* of performing. Reason may shew

\* Separat hæc nos a Grege Brutorum. *Juv. Sat. 15.*

us the Way, it may direct, persuade, and invite; but its Suggestions may want a binding and authoritative *Sanction*. It may perform the Office of a *Monitor*; But how does it therefore follow, that we are to obey it as a *Law-giver*?

VI. In this Case we are to regulate our Judgments from the Ends, which the supreme Being had, in making Man a reasonable Agent. For I here argue not against Atheists, but upon Supposition of such a Being. Now we shall never be able to discover how an all-perfect Being could have any other End in making Man a *reasonable* Agent; but that he should act according to Reason. We may as naturally suppose, God should impress a Tendency in Bodies towards their  
proper

proper Center without any Intention, that they should move according to such Impression; as that he should endow Man with Reason, without intending he should follow Reason. And if God had such an Intention, there can be no Dispute, but as he always proportions the Means to the Ends designed by him, so he has enforced the Law of Reason after such a Manner, as to render it *strictly* obligatory: For otherwise, we should be under a Necessity of supposing, that a Being of infinite Wisdom had proposed an End to himself, without taking competent Care, that such End might be attained. Since, according to the present State and Situation of Man, a Law to him, which is not enforced by proper Sanctions, either  
penal

penal or remunerative, will never be of sufficient Force to contain him within the Bounds of his Duty.

VII. It is not necessary Rewards or Punishments to Man should be distinctly, or expressly specified, or that, in this present Life, God should always immediately make *himself known by the Judgment which he executeth*; it is sufficient, if we know, that, in the Reason of the Thing, the Supreme Law-giver ought to be obeyed; and that the Ends of Government require, Disobedience to his Laws should be punished; and if he does not, therefore, immediately proceed to punish the Disobedient in this Life, it is because there is another State, wherein he will vindicate the Honour and Authority

thority of his Laws, from the Contempt which is now done to them.

I will add, that without supposing a future State of Retribution, it will be impossible to account for the Wisdom of God, in making Reason the Law to Mankind of their Actions. Since this would be evidently, to make a Law, without giving that obliging Force to it, which is necessary, *absolutely* necessary, to make it operate.

VIII. Seeing then, what I conceive will not be disputed, the Motives to obey the Law of Reason, or the Law of God, are not, in all Cases, if we confine our Views within the Compass of this Life, sufficient to enforce Obedience; it follows, undeniably, that there is another Life, wherein

wherein we are to account our transgressing that Law in this present Life: This, indeed, is a most necessary Consequence, on Supposition God governs the World as a *wise Legislator*; as a Legislator, who proposes his Laws should be obeyed.

IX. This is so clear and full a Demonstration, concerning a future State of Retribution to Mankind, that I should be much sooner inclined to question, Whether, at present, I am united to a Body, than whether, after this Life, I shall be judged for the Things now *done in the Body*? How far the Power of God may extend towards giving me Sensations of Things that are not, I cannot tell; neither is it of any Importance to Religion

ligion, or Morality, to determine this Point ; the Ends of both being equally answered on Supposition, either of a *material*, or simply of an *ideal* World ; if the latter Supposition do not rather render the Work of an Omnipotent Agent more stupendous and admirable. But, on the other Hand, if we may err in the clearest Deductions, we can make from a Consideration of the Wisdom, and other moral Attributes of God, there is an End of all our reasoning, at once, upon religious, and moral Subjects.

X. It seems to be a Question of much greater Difficulty, That, supposing the Law of Reason, an obligatory Law of human Actions, how does it appear to us, in all Cases,  
 E what

what Reason really is? Or by what Marks, or Characters of Distinction shall we know, when we are directed by Reason? Reason, *on* this Account, has been compared with Quick-silver running out of a Box, which is carried with an indetermined Motion, this way and that way, without fixing any where; or to the changeable Colours of a Dove's Neck, which appear different to those who are at a greater, or less Distance, or stand in a different Light. And to shew, farther, how imperfect our Reasonings are, we are told, what have been the different Opinions of Philosophers; different Customs of Nations; and even different Laws, as Circumstances have happened to vary, of the same Nation.

XI. This



XI. This is an Objection, which ought to be removed. The latter Branch of it will be considered afterwards: In respect to the Question, What Reason, or the Rule of our Conduct really is? I have already laid down a general Rule; that we should consult the original Reason, the Model of all reasonable Beings; whose Reason, as it is a Law to himself, and which he invincibly follows, ought, so far as we are able to discover it, to be a Rule of Action to us. Now the Light of Reason, when we consult it, will clearly discover to us, that whenever the All-perfect Being designs to act, he proposes to himself an End worthy of his Action; an End worthy to be attained by the most regular and simple

E 2                      Means;

Means; a good and a beneficial End; an End, either respecting his own, or what necessarily depends on him, the Happiness of his Creatures. Whenever, therefore, in Imitation of this All-perfect Being, we would regulate our Judgments concerning the reasonableness of what we propose to do, let us examine it, by the Order of his Conduct; let us consider what, and why, we work; let us observe in our Work an exact Measure and Proportion; let us inquire what is worthy of ourselves, and most beneficial to others: This is a Rule in the Application of which we cannot easily mistake.

XII. But should we happen to mistake, our Error, as proceeding from some Defect of Understanding, rather than of  
Will,

Will, would be more excusable ; however, we can never be in great Danger, if we only put the Question to ourselves, What Order, in any Case, requires to be done, of Erring, in any essential Point of Duty ; this is a Rule always at Hand ; and, *Simple* as it is, if we would constantly attend to it, as the Voice of Nature, the Oracle of God speaking continually to us, and within us, we should find it of infinite, and most excellent Use ; and, I will be bold to affirm, worth all other Casuists in the World besides, for the Direction of our Conscience.



## C H A P. VI.

*Whether the foregoing Rule  
is of sufficient Extent to re-  
gulate our moral Conduct ?*

- I. *The Grounds upon which this Question is proposed.* II. *In what Sense the divine Perfections are imitable by us ?* III. *The Reasons of our imitating them are not destroyed by the Distinction between a Dependent, and an Independent Being.* IV, V. *Neither is the Morality of such Actions hereby destroyed, that are properly Human ; and, which,*  
as

*as implying Imperfection, have not directly any exemplary Idea in the divine Nature!*

**I.** THE Reason of this Inquiry, whether the foregoing Rule be an *adequate* Rule to Man, as a moral Agent, arises from hence; that God, as the Sovereign, Almighty, and Independent Being, must necessarily conduct himself, by other Measures, than Man, liable to many Wants, and much Weakness; in a State of Subjection and Dependance, not only on the Sovereign Being, but, in many Respects, on his fellow Creatures, with whom he co-habits. These different Conditions, it may be supposed, will necessarily occasion, and require, a different Rule of Conduct.

II. This Difficulty will be easily removed, if we consider, that; when God is proposed as the *Exemplary* Object of Imitation to Man; he is proposed under that Consideration, not as a Being of absolute and despotick *Power*, or with respect to his incommunicable Attributes; but as a wise, good, just, and merciful Being; as a Being endowed with those moral Attributes, which are necessarily included in the Idea of a Being infinitely perfect; because the Want of them would necessarily imply some great Defect, and could only proceed from it. Even the divine Power itself, irresistible and unlimited as it is, absolutely considered, yet, whenever God proceeds to exert it, is always regulated in the Operations of it, by these Attributes

tributes; having no superior Law to direct or restrain his Action; God is a Law to himself; that is, the Perfections of his own Nature, are a Rule to him of his Conduct; from which he can no more depart than he can oppose his own Action, or *deny himself*; for he never worketh, merely because he *will* work, or antecedently to any *wise*, good, or reasonable End of his working, but according to the *Counsel of his Will*; that is, after such a Manner, or for such Ends, as infinite Wisdom, Goodness, Mercy, or other *moral* Considerations may direct.

III. Tho' a sensible Difference does therefore arise between the Duties of Man, as a dependent created Being, and the Conduct of the supreme God; the  
 Creator,

Creator, and the Fountain of all Power; yet the general Reason of our imitating him, in those Perfections of his Nature, which are, in any Degree imitable by us, does still hold good; and obligeth us, as we are Creatures, to conduct ourselves in that Relation, as Reason and Order require we should do; and according to which the uncreated Being himself constantly regulates his own Actions; for he always does what in respect to his own State, or the Relation, wherein he stands to his Creatures, does require, he should do.

IV. By following Reason and Order, we may be said then, in a Sense, to be *Imitators of God*, even while we are exercising certain Virtues, of which his Sovereignty and the absolute Perfection

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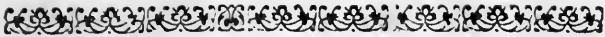


tion of his Nature render him incapable; and tho' an Obligation to them wholly arifeth from our present imperfect and *dependent* State.

V. So that as to those moral Virtues of *Sobriety*, *Chastity*, and *Humility*, arifing from the present Union of the Soul to the Body, and from our Dependance on other Men, or our Commerce with them, which are properly human, or social Duties, and cannot be ascribed to a Being of infinite Perfection; (for we cannot directly argue from the Idea of fuch a Being, that those Things are morally good, which are not included in his Idea :) The Answer is, tho' we cannot argue directly, in fuch a Way, yet to be sober, and chaste, and humble, is highly agreeable to our present  
State

State and Condition; and, therefore, tho' We do not find in the Idea of an all-perfect Being, and for that very Reason because he is all-perfect, any Attributes directly corresponding to these Duties; yet the general Reason for the Morality of them still holds good; we ought to render ourselves as perfect, and, for that Reason, to approach as near to God as possible: These Duties are proper Means of perfecting our Nature, and of bringing us nearer to God; therefore they must be supposed to have an intrinsic, which is what we understand by a *moral* Goodness in them.





## C H A P. VII.

### *Concerning the End of Man in respect to his Happiness.*

- I. *The Opposition between human Happiness and Perfection.* II. *The Reason of it.* III. *A Question arising from the Conflict between the Soul and the Body.* IV, V. *More easily answered, on Supposition of a future State.* VI. *What Reason directs upon that View.* VII. *The Error of the Stoicks concerning Pain.* VIII. *Of heroic Virtue.* IX. *The Error of the Epicureans concerning Pleasure.* X. *Yet the Argument,*

*ment, from the Conveniency of the moral Law, concludes with greater Force against the Stoicks.*

I HAVE already observed, that the Happiness of Man, on Account of his present State, may be considered as distinct from his *Perfection*; because we often find ourselves sensibly pleased, and, by consequence, really and actually happy,† even in the Enjoyment of those things which oppose our Perfection. For Pleasure and Happiness are so inseparable, that they necessarily infer one another, and cannot be supposed to subsist apart.

II. The Reason of this Opposition between our present Happiness, and our Perfection, arises from the Union of Soul and Body,  
and

*for the  
time  
being  
only;*

and the present Laws of Communication between them. We are placed in a kind of middle State between two Worlds, *Heaven* and *Earth*; the Body is of the Earth, *earthly*, and always tending to the Earth, as to its proper Center. The Soul being of nobler and spiritual Extraction, is, in the Nature of it, apt for the Contemplation and Enjoyment of spiritual Objects; but, as it receives, by reason of its Union with the Body, painful or pleasing Sensations, according to the good or ill State of the Body; so there is a Necessity it should do so, for the Preservation of that Part; for were it not for such pleasing or painful Sensations, the Body would be treated with great Neglect, if not with such an open Contempt, as would soon occasion its Death and

Dissolution

Diffolution. But the Soul feeling these Pains or Pleasures continually, does, by Degrees, suffer herself to be possessed by them, even to the Neglect of her own Perfection. The Reason, whereof, having been assigned before, I shall not repeat it. It is sufficient to my present Purpose to observe, that the corruptible Body does, in Fact, *press down the incorruptible Soul*: That this noble Principle, which ought to command and give Laws to the Senses, those corrupt Instruments of the Body, is often enslaved to them; that Reason quits the Throne to put these rebellious Subjects into it; and even sometimes debases herself so far, as not only to excuse, but to justify the Violence and Disorders, whereof they are guilty: In short, that there is a  
*Law*

*Law in the Members, warring against the Law in the Mind, and bringing Men into Captivity to the Law of Sin.*

III. The Question is, during this Conflict, or rather, as the Event ordinarily proves, under this superior Force of the Body, whether it is not better for the Soul, as more conducing to her Ease and Happiness, intirely to submit ; than to put herself continually to the Shame and Dishonour of being defeated, through a fruitless and impotent Resistance? And if, consequently, the Order of Nature being thus inverted, it would not be more adviseable to comply with what we cannot remedy, and wholly to lay ourselves out in the Enjoyment of sensible Pleasures, or towards procuring such Things as

F chiefly

chiefly tend to the Preservation of the sensible Life? For tho' our Perfection, supposing the Balance of Power, which the Soul ought to hold, could be in any competent Measure preserved, might deserve, at least, an equal Regard; yet since she has suffered herself to be so much debased and debilitated by the Weight of Concupiscence, that her Empire cannot be re-established, except Men will resolve to relinquish their Ease, and their Interest, and those Things wherein they principally place their Happiness and Security; it deserves to be considered, whether, in this Case, Reason will not rather direct them to sacrifice their Perfection to their Happiness, than their Happiness to their Perfection?

IV. Were this Question to be determined, without any Regard  
to



to a future State, it would be more difficult to establish the Distinction of moral Virtue, on account of the Tendency, which it has to promote our Happiness. Because it might frequently happen, that the Virtues of good Men, instead of rendering them happy, would here expose them, (for such Instances are not uncommon) to much Trouble and Misery; and, perhaps, even render them so unhappy, that, upon a due Estimate, the Benefits of Life would not be an equivalent Compensation for the Evils which they have suffered.

V. In this Case, as the Desire of Happiness is invincible; as a Man would even sooner desire not to be, than not to be happy: It would be difficult to demonstrate, that any Man could be obliged to prac-

tise the Duties of a strict Morality: For that would suppose him obliged to do a Thing contrary to the prime and essential Inclination of human Nature ; and, consequently, to do an Action altogether unnatural. When we, therefore, resolve the Obligation to moral Virtue into this Motive, that the Practice of it tends to the Happiness, as well as to the Perfection of human Nature, and is a Law of present Conveniency ; we proceed upon one, or both of these Suppositions ; either that the Practice of moral Virtue, is, upon a general Consideration, more conducing to Man's present Happiness ; tho' some extraordinary Cases may occur to the contrary ; or else, when such extraordinary Cases do occur, that which is deficient towards

wards

wards attaining the great End of Man, <sup>ref.</sup> *Happineß* in this Life, shall be supplied in a future State. *this term is used in too loose a*

VI. Upon this View, the Law of Morality is the Law of Reason ; because Reason will ever direct, that we should postpone a present, to a future, certain, and much greater Convenience ; or, that we should chuse to suffer a present Pain, to avoid a future, certain, and much greater Evil. I would not hereby insinuate, as if, even with respect to this Life, the Advantages of *sense* *Happineß* and Prosperity are not, generally speaking, to be found on the side of moral Virtue ; but I argue, admitting they should not, we have yet a Demonstration from the Wisdom and Goodness of God, that, in

another Life, that Happiness, which we here seek for in the Practice of a strict Morality, will be found. Because, otherwise, God would fail of his End in creating Man to be happy. As a *wise* God, therefore, *will* propose such Means which are proper to attain his End; and as a *good* God can only propose a good End; it necessarily follows, that the End proposed by God, not being, on the present Supposition, attainable in this Life; there is another State, wherein it will *certainly* be attained.

VII. There is no Necessity, therefore, of asserting with the Stoicks, that bodily Pain is not an Evil, nor bodily Pleasure a Good; for whatever tends to make us uneasy or miserable, is naturally evil; as whatever tends to make

us happy, is, for that Reason, naturally good. The *Stoicks* were forced upon these Paradoxes, wherein they were confuted, both by Experience, and the Reason of the Thing; because they held moral Virtue would necessarily render Men happy; and that the proper Distinction of it was founded in this Consideration; whereas their wise and virtuous Man was often exposed to external Evils. Their Principle was just in the main; but it does not follow, that, because moral Virtue tends, in the Nature of it, to make us happy, that we should, therefore, be always *actually* happy: 'Tis sufficient, if the future Happiness, to which moral Virtue entitles us, will more than over balance the present Evils, as it certainly

will do, to which it accidentally may expose us.

VIII. Men, indeed, of great and generous Minds may despise the Pleasures of Sense, or take Complacency in the Exercise of an heroick Virtue, tho' attended with Pain, and without Prospect of Reward ; because Joy and Exultation of Mind are naturally consequent to virtuous Actions. A Soul, conscious of its innate Dignity, will have Strength sufficient to surmount many Obstacles ; the *Spirit* of a *Man* will *sustain his Infirmary* ; but it will not always have Force enough to resist Pleasure, or *totally* to overcome Pain. It was a secret Pride, and an Affectation of Independency, that kept the Stoicks, many of which had yet refined Notions of Morality, in Countenance ; for when

no Body was present, all their boasted Wisdom and Strength vanished ; just as Kings of the Stage, when the Curtain is drawn, cease to act, and lose all their Bravery and Grandeur in a Moment. It is not so with Believers, whose *Hopes are full of Immortality*, and who are as perfectly assured, that all the accidental Deficiencies in this Life will be made up to them in a future Life, as that there is a *wise, a just, and a good* God.

IX. The Error of the Epicureans consisted, on the other Hand, in their making present *Pleasure* the Measure of human Happiness. And because Man is sometimes sensible of Pleasure, no less in vicious and irregular, than in virtuous Actions ; if he is not, in certain Instances, more violently affected

affected with the former, therefore it has been commonly thought, that this Sect, by the very Principles of their Philosophy, let loose the Reins to all manner of Licentiousness and Disorder. Yet it must be acknowledged they argued upon reasonable Grounds, in saying, that Pleasure was good for them ; as they were really convinced by an internal Sensation, that it contributed to make them happy. But they ought to have considered, that transient Pleasures could not make them *always*, or solidly happy ; and that the Pleasures of the Mind were not only more lasting, but, in the Nature of them, more noble and generous, than those of the Body ; so that, even upon the Epicurean Hypothesis, with those, who argued regularly and  
soberly



soberly from it, the true Happiness of Man, without any future Prospect, was granted to consist in the Practice of moral Virtue. But, in respect to the Stoicks, the moral Law was still, by a more evident Argument, the Law of Conveniency to Man; and, consequently, the Law which right Reason would have prescribed to him, had he been under no *positive* or express Obligation to practise it.



C H A P.



## C H A P. VIII.

*The present and future Rewards of moral Virtue, considered more distinctly.*

- I. *God intended the moral Law should oblige.* II. *The Power of Conscience.* III, IV. *Answer to what is objected against it from Prejudice and Custom.* V, VI, VII. *The Reasonableness of supposing such a Principle, from the Wisdom and Goodness of a wise Legislator.* VIII. *The Force of it in very wicked Men.* IX. *Obduracy of Heart, a judicial Effect of Gods Displeasure.*  
X.

X. *A flagrant Absurdity would follow, admitting there were no certain Principle of Conscience.* XI. *Of Shame, and* XII. *Of Impudence.* XIII. XIV. *Puffendorf's Opinion, concerning Shame, considered.* XV. XVI. *Two Ends of it assigned.* XVII, XVIII, XIX. *The moral Law considered, as a Law of Conveniency.* XX. *Very wicked Men, in their private Judgment, profess and esteem Virtue.* XXI. *Of Honour and Esteem, mentioned as the Rewards of Virtue.* XXII. *But not adequate.* XXIII. *Not necessary to know, distinctly, the Nature of future Rewards to Man.* XXIV. *Yet, in general, they will consist in being adapted to the Faculties of the Mind.* XXV. *Whether*

*ther the Resurrection of the Body may be proved from natural Principles. XXVI. Concerning future Punishments to wicked Men. XXVII. XXVIII. On what Accounts difficult to be conceived. XXIX. This no Objection against the Truth of them. XXX. A Passage cited from the Art of Thinking, concerning Sensations, answering to those which are felt by occasion of material Fire.*

**T**H E Law of Reason is the Law of human Nature; and it is sufficient to shew the obligatory Force of this Law, that it was intended to be obligatory by the Author of our Being. We ought to follow his Order in Making us, and in the Faculties

ties he hath given us, tho' he had annexed no consequent Reward to our Obedience, nor threatned to punish our Disorders. But as such metaphysical Considerations, how reasonable soever in themselves, would not have been forcible enough to restrain the Appetites, or Passions, of Men, arising from the Impression of sensible Objects ; God has enforced this Law, not only, as hath been above demonstrated, by giving us the Assurance of a future State of Happiness, or Misery, according to our good and evil Actions in this Life, but even by the Sanction of present Rewards and Punishments ; in both respects, as a Law-giver, *able to save and to destroy* ; since his Authority would, otherways, be precarious. And these Rewards and Punishments

ments may be considered, as affecting us either *internally*, or *externally*.

II. The Sanction to Man of internal Rewards or Punishments is from the Power and Judgment of Conscience. For as we experience in ourselves, when we follow Reason, and conform to Order, a secret Joy and Complacency of Mind, testifying an Approbation of what we have done; so, upon the Commission of Sin, especially, in any notorious Breach of our Duty, we naturally find the Mind full of Pain and Anguish; and cannot, therefore, but *condemn* ourselves *in what we allow*. It is possible, indeed, Men, by a long Habit of sinning, may stupify their Conscience to such a Degree, as to find no Remorse for the most atrocious

atrocious Crimes ; as some People  
 by taking repeated *Opiates* are  
 not sensible, for the Time, of their  
 ordinary and dangerous Effects.  
 But we are to not judge, concern-  
 ing the Nature, or proper Operati-  
 on of Things, from what happens  
 in particular Cases, for which  
 Reasons, from an habitual Use of  
 such Things, may be assigned ;  
 but from such Effects, as are most  
 common, and natural ; and where-  
 with, supposing the Subject in  
 a proper Disposition, they will,  
 most probably be attended. Now,  
 to judge whether a Person be in  
 a right State, so as to be affec-  
 ted with the Force of Conscience ;  
 we are not to consider him as  
 under the Power of any invete-  
 rate sinful Habit, or Habits ; but  
 as acting, after a Manner, with  
 such Dispositions, and upon such  
 G Principles

Principles as *are common to Men.*

III. I am sensible, some Persons have endeavoured to account for the Force of Conscience, upon other Principles than those who represent it as a *Judge*, appointed by God to give Sentence in his Name; since he doth not interpose in the Government of Mankind by a visible Authority. Whenever his Laws, which are written on the Tables of our Hearts in so legible a Character, that they need no express Promulgation, are, at any time, disobey'd, this Minister of God has a Power of calling Men to an Account, and is armed with Terror: On the other Hand, by virtue of the same Authority, He not only absolves the Innocent, but dispenses proper Rewards for  
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the Encouragement and *Praise* of *those that do well*. There are Persons, I say, who make Conscience, instead of ascribing it to so high and authoritative a Constitution, nothing but the Effect of those early Prejudices, which Men imbibe in their Infancy; and wherein they are, afterwards, gradually confirmed by Custom and Conversation.

IV. The Force of Prejudice and Custom is, confessedly, very great. But we are not to conclude, that every Thing we have learned in our Infancy, or wherein we have afterwards conformed to common Opinion, is, therefore, wholly owing to Prejudice, or common Opinion. Children are early taught to believe there is a God; and they are confirmed

in this Belief, by the publick Profession made of it, and the Worship daily paid to God: Does it, therefore follow, there is no God; or that the Belief of a God has no true or real Foundation? Is it not more natural to suppose Men do generally agree in this Belief, because they have Reasons for it, than that they mutually agree to deceive, and to be deceived, or only believe his Existence, upon the mere score of Custom, against Reason? May we not argue after the same Manner, and upon the same Grounds, in respect to Conscience; that Men are sensible of the Force of it, not because it is generally said and believed, there is such a Thing; but Men generally believe

lieve the Truth of the Thing, because it really subsists.

V. Supposing, indeed, a God, who made, and who governs Mankind, it is very reasonable to conclude, that in the present Administration of his Government, he would not leave himself *without a Witness* or internal Monitor to Man; by attending to which, tho' he should not hear God speaking to him with an audible Voice; yet he would become bound to obey him, by attending to the Light of his own Mind, and the Responses of inward Truth: The Authority of enacting such a Law being the same, in the Nature and Reason of it, as if God had divulged it immediately by a Voice from Heaven.

VI. There is then a reasonable Supposition from the Ends of God's Government, why He should implant, in the Minds of Men, those lively and tender Sentiments of Good and Evil, concerning which we are speaking; so that where there should be no positive or written Law, Men might be a Law to themselves, *their own Consciences bearing Witness, and their Thoughts, in the mean while, accusing, or else excusing, one another.* Now where natural, probable, and very useful Reasons may be assigned for the Existence of Things, it is very unreasonable to ascribe such Things to Causes foreign to the Nature of them, and without which they may, therefore, be naturally supposed to exist.

VIII. Besides

VIII. Besides, if the Force of Conscience were wholly owing to the Prejudices of Education, or popular Opinion, What is the Reason why Men of the greatest Freedom of Thought, yet find themselves so incapable of being disabused, as to this Article? Why do they find it so difficult to stifle the Reproaches of Conscience, as they can easily do other frightful Accounts of Spectres and Apparitions, which they learned in the Nursery, or by reading romantique Stories, when, afterward, they come to reason, and reflect upon them. And yet it may be questioned, if, the most abandoned Wretch, in any Age, even, whether he believed a God, or not, could ever wholly, and at all times o-

vercome the Reluctance, or stifle the Remorse of Conscience.

IX. Persons who are most obdurate, and insensible to all Impressions of Religion, have, commonly, their Intervals of Reflection ; wherein God is represented to them with a Rod of Vengeance in his Hand ; yet, supposing them really capable of extinguishing all Fear of his Wrath, such a State of Insensibility ought not to be considered, merely, as a natural Effect of their sinful Habits ; but, as a judicial Punishment inflicted by God upon them : Who, as they did not like to retain him, or this visible Character of his Power and Godhead, in their Knowledge, gave them up to a *reprobate* Mind.

X. Again,

X. Again, were the Power of Conscience founded only on Prejudice, or popular Opinion ; then, whenever a general Corruption of Principles or Manners is introduced, and Vice does become popular, Men would take the same inward Complacency in vicious Actions, as they now do in Actions, to which the Idea of Virtue is affixed. A Man, for Instance, who should betray his Friend, his Trust, or his Country, would, on this Supposition, than which Nothing can be more irrational or shocking, experience the like Satisfaction and Complacency of Mind in reflecting on his Infidelity, as good Men, now really experience, in doing beneficent, and generous Actions. Nay, the Performance of such Actions, to a  
Person

Person, who is supposed wholly to regulate his Judgment by the Practice and Sentiments of other People, ought to give him a sensible Pain and Uneasiness; supposing their Judgment so corrupted that they call Evil Good, and Good Evil.

XI. The Judgment which we make of our own Actions, a Judgment that cannot be easily bribed or eluded, has not only been urged as an Argument to enforce the Law of Nature, but even, antecedently, to any Consideration of such a Law, it is said, a *conscious* Shame arises, which discovers itself in the mechanical Disposition of the Body; as presaging that some Evil, at which Conscience takes the Alarm, is approaching towards us. So careful has the wise Legislator



tor been to secure our Innocence and Duty, by guarding the very Outworks, wherewith we are to defend them; and by giving us Notice of the Enemy's Approach, before we come to engage directly with him. So that when we happen to be surprized, which, after all our Caution, is sometimes unavoidable, before Reason has sufficient Time to collect her whole Strength; this inward Shame, or Modesty, often supplieth the Place, and doth the Duty of it; and even, sometimes, when we are violently tempted, or inclined to betray the *Succours which Reason offers*, Shame lays *Restraints* upon ingenuous Minds, which they cannot overcome without much Confusion, and a very sensible Reluctance.

XII. So

XII. So powerful, indeed, is this Principle, (and for which Reason, we suppose it designedly implanted by the Author of Nature to enforce the Law of Nature) that one of the vilest Characters, of a Person abandoned to all Manner of Vice and Dishonour, is *Impudence*; and, accordingly, the Prophet, whom I here cite, not under that Character, but, as speaking agreeably to the common Sentiments of Mankind, mentions it as a Sign of the most corrupt and incorrigible State of a *wicked* People, that *they are not ashamed, neither do they blush.*

XIII. *Puffendorf* was so sensible, an Argument might be formed contrary to his Opinion, from this Principle of Shame, to prove the Distinction of moral  
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Good and Evil ; that he hath particularly endeavoured to obviate the Consequence we would draw from it : The Sum of what he says is, that a Sense of Shame, discovering itself in the Air of the Face, or some other exterior Appearance, is only a mere physical Effect, proceeding, solely, from a physical Cause, and not from a *moral* ; which he thinks it would be inconvenient to suppose. But where lies the Inconveniency in saying, that God may cause a different Movement or Fermentation of the Blood, upon the least Apprehension of Danger to the Soul ? Seeing the Body and the Soul reciprocally act upon one another, for their mutual Support, and Advantage. As the Soul takes so much Care of the Body, and of every Thing relating

relating to its Safety, Preservation, and Ease ; it is but reasonable that the Body, in Return, in some few Instances at least, should be the *Occasion*, since it cannot be a proper *Cause* of certain Sentiments in the Soul, necessary to prevent any Injury, or Disorder, which may happen to her.

XIV. And, therefore, this Author himself, confesseth, how consistently I do not here examine, that the all-wise Creator hath implanted this Affection of Shame in the Mind of Man, to be the Guard of his Virtue ; and a Restraint upon him from all sinful or irregular Appetites. Nay, he adds, it is probable, if it had not been the Intention of God, that Man should conform his Actions to the divine Law,  
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God would not have rendered him subject to this Passion of Shame ; since without such an Intention, no proper Use of Shame could be discovered.

XV. Neither is it of any Force to overthrow the moral Sense of Shame, that it does not only arise from the Apprehension of a shameful or sinful Action ; but, frequently, on occasion of other things, which have, confessedly, no moral Turpitude in them, yet whereby we may, on some Account, suffer in our Reputation. As we observe People, for Instance, frequently to blush, when any Thing happens to remind them of any natural Defect of Body, or of Mind ; of their Poverty ; their mean Appearance, or Extraction. Whence some have concluded, that  
Shame

Shame, is nothing, but a secret Motion of Self-love and *Pride*, the predominant Passion of human Nature, which makes him extremely apprehensive, and puts the Body in a State proper to fortify his Apprehension under any injurious Treatment; or any Appearance of Disrespect, that may tend to impair his Esteem in the World; for which Reason, it is further observed, that Persons are principally affected with Shame, and discover the most sensible Marks of it, when conscious to themselves, they are chargeable by others with such Things, as principally regard their Reputation; or which represent them acting in civil Life, out of their proper Character, or the Rules of common Decency.

Decency, or below the Dignity  
 of their Station.

XVI. This only proves that an all-wise Architect, in forming Man, might so order the Construction of his Work, as to serve two different Ends by the same Movements in it. As Shame proceeds from Self-love, or a natural Desire of Esteem, without any Regard to the Morality of our Actions, we may consider it is a mere *physical* Effect ; but as it is designed a *Monitor* to us, that we should do Nothing really dishonourable or unworthy in itself, tho' no human Eye should see us, nor any Consequence relating to our Commerce in the World, might affect us ; it may be considered as having the Force of a moral Law to us, and to which God hereby

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plainly signifies his Intention, that we should conform.

XVII. Besides this Enforcement of Morality from Conscience and Shame: God has farther encouraged us to the Practice of moral Duties, by the natural Tendency they have to promote our present Happiness; so that if all Men would agree to regulate their Behaviour by the moral Laws, nothing could be so instrumental, either to our private, or the publick Happiness, tho' we should consider it, merely, as a Law of Convenience.

XVIII. It is true, by Means of the Corruption which is in the World, through Lust; the natural Course and Tendency of moral Virtue is much obstructed, and often fails of its proper End.

But



But this is by accident, and not according to the primitive Will and Design of God in Making us reasonable Beings, capable of rendering ourselves, by a due Use of our Liberty, happy, at present, and hereafter.

XIX. This shews, that the Law of Nature, considered in itself, and in its proper Tendency, is the Law of Conveniency, and might generally be enforced, even here, from that Consideration; because all wise and reasonable Persons will conduct themselves according to those Measures, which *commonly*, and more directly, tend to their Happiness, rather than by those, which only succeed in particular Cases, and by *accident*. However, tho' it is allowed such Cases, may happen, we still affirm no Ar-

gument can be drawn from them, against the Truth of moral Virtue, as a Law of Conveniency; because it is, upon an evident Reason, convenient, that a less Interest should be sacrificed to a greater; and whatever Inequalities there are in the Condition of wicked and good Men, in particular Cases, at present, they shall be perfectly adjusted at a proper Time: and the Proof, that they shall be so adjusted, is as clear and evident as any Conclusions that can, in a strict Way of Arguing, be drawn from the Wisdom and Goodness of God. And if we may mistake in our Reasonings upon these divine Attributes, and when our Reasons are founded upon the most clear and distinct Ideas, which the Mind of Man is able to conceive of them: Should God condescend

scend to make a particular Declaration of any moral Duty to us ; I do not see how we could, in this Case, certainly prove the Truth of such a Declaration. For, were it not for these Attributes of Wisdom and Goodness in God, we could have no Assurance, either concerning the Truth of our Faculties, or our Obligation to obey his Commands. All our Reasonings, indeed, on the Subjects of Morality, whether relating to the natural Law, or to divine Institution, depend on our having right Notions concerning these divine Perfections; and if we argue, justly, from them, we shall find no Difficulties, respecting the promiscuous Distributions of Providence in this Life to wicked and good Men ; but what may

easily be accounted for, without destroying the Notion of moral *Virtue*, as a Law of *Convenience*, tending to promote our Happiness.

XX. Another Argument, to prove the Truth of this Law, may be taken from the very Judgment of those wicked Men themselves, who, for the Sake of some present Advantage, are yet tempted to transgress it. *Virtue*, in its greatest Distress, is still amiable, and shines through all the Clouds which encompass it, with a beautiful and surprising Lustre. She commands, Respect, and Veneration from those who yet do not engage in her Service, or appear in her Retinue. There is no Man, how vicious soever, but, in his own Judgment, must esteem a Person  
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of Honour and Probity, of Humanity and Piety, above one of a different Character, to whom he may, notwithstanding, give more sensible Proofs of an external Regard, as being more necessary to his Designs and Interests ; but notwithstanding the external and fallacious Homage, which Men do pay to very wicked Persons, who are capable of serving them, they commonly, in their Hearts, secretly detest and despise them, and are only restrained from shewing their Contempt by Considerations merely respecting themselves.

XXI. *Honour*, therefore, and *Esteem*, may be considered as farther Rewards, designed, by Providence, to enforce moral Virtue in this Life. *Rewards*, indeed, more general, more last-

ing, and, equally dispensed, than those which respect Man's temporal Prosperity, or Peace ; tho' it may too, sometimes, happen in a very corrupt Age, that Men shall be raised to the highest Dignities and Honours, by the most dishonourable and unworthy Means, and, even, carested and applauded by great Numbers of mercenary Dependents, according to the Extent of their Power and Interests. But these accidental Deviations from the common Measure of what is truly great and honourable, being the Effect of a false Judgment, are only of a very short and transient Duration. When the partial Reasons, and sinister Motives, upon which they were formed, cease to operate, the World usually judges, concerning  
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ing the Character of fuch Perfons, by other Rules, and fees their Actions in a very different Light from that wherein Flattery or Intereft before reprefented them. Now, as a vicious Character is ufually followed with Obloquy and Reproach ; fo Juftice, one Time or other, is commonly done, (corrupt as the Judgments of the World fometimes are) to the Memory of injured and diftrefsed Virtue.

XXII. Still we fay thefe Rewards, ordinarily annexed to the Obfervance, and thefe Punifhments to the Breach of the natural Law, are not, univerfally, of Force fufficient to bind Men to their Duty ; and, as it is requifite, that all Laws fhould be enforced by Rewards and Punifhments, the Hope, or Fear, of  
which,

which, respectively, may be strong enough to secure Obedience to them : So that the future Evil shall be greater than the present Benefit of transgressing them, and the future Good greater than the present Inconveniency in Obeying ; and, upon this Consideration, in order to give the natural Law all the Force, which it ought to have, it is necessary we should cast our Eyes forward, upon the Rewards and Punishments of another Life.

XXII. It is not so necessary that we should distinctly know the Kind, or Degree, of that Reward, or Happiness, to which the Practice of pure Morality will entitle us ; it is sufficient that we know, by consulting the Ideas of Wisdom and Goodness,  
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in the Legislator, that the Reward will be such, as it is proper for him to give, or for us to receive; a Reward worthy of the Pains and Labour, of all the Sufferings and Self-denial, we can exercise in Pursuit of it. *He that cometh unto God, must, by his very Access, believe both that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them who diligently seek him.* This is a Truth which I cite, not because it is confirmed by a divine Authority, but because it is evident from the clear and incontestable Reason of it. And if God hath interposed to reward Man, as his Action always bears the Character of his Attributes, it will assuredly be a God-like, a great, and a glorious Reward, which he will confer; a Reward proportioned to the Faculties and  
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all those reasonable Desires, which are proper to Man.

XXIV. Now, the two Faculties of Man being Understanding and Will, his Reward, the Reward proper to him as Man, will consist in their Improvement and Perfection; in Man's knowing what is worthy to be known, and in his chusing and enjoying such Objects as are most worthy to be chosen and enjoyed. Whether the Soul will have the same Sensations in a separate State as at present, by means of its Union with the Body, and the Commerce it maintains with sensible Objects, is not evident from any natural Principle: But it is evident, if it should be the Pleasure of God, whether in the Body or out of the Body, the like Sensations may be continued in a separate State. For  
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as the Body is only the *Occasion*, and not the efficient Cause of conveying such Sensations to the Mind; God may imprint them upon the Mind, when no longer united to the Body, and appoint what other occasional Cause he pleases for that End. It is more probable, indeed, that the Soul, when released from the Body, and acting in its separate and pure State, will receive new Sensations, and those augmented to a great Number, rather than lose any of those which she has already: provided, They will really tend to her Perfection. We can no more argue that an Occasion of such new Sensations, or any indefinite Number of them, is impossible; than a blind Man now can argue against the Possibility of Colours, because he can form

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no Manner of Conception concerning them.

XXV. Whether it may be proved from any Principles of natural Reason, that the Body will, any Time after Death, be reunited to the Soul, does not so evidently appear: Because the Power of God is sufficient to compensate Man for all the good Actions done in the Body, without such an Union; and indeed to capacitate the Soul for such a Happiness, as will infinitely out-balance the Merit of them, according to the qualified Sense wherein I understand Merit. There is no Necessity then, from the bare Consideration of a future Reward, of supposing a future Union of two Substances, so wholly distinct in the Nature and Properties of them. The Belief  
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of that Article must, therefore, depend upon other Considerations, and especially upon the Authority of divine Revelation, where God hath interposed, or may at any Time hereafter, think fit to interpose, by that means. Some pious Men, indeed, have argued, that as the Body bears a Part in the Service, by Abstinence, Maceration, and Self-denial, or other Exercises proper to it; it ought to share in the Reward: But we are not always to consider the common Dialect, not even that of learned Men, as strictly true and philosophical. The Body, except in a metaphorical Way of speaking, is not capable of *Reward*, as having, considered simply in it self, no Sensation of its Reward, nor any Possibility, according to the clearest Notions  
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we can form concerning the Body of having any. So that whatever other Reasons God may have for reuniting Soul and Body, there do not appear any Reasons from the Consideration of such a Union, in order to the Reward of our present moral Obedience.

XXVI. As to the future Punishments of wicked Men, for the Breach of those immutable Laws of Reason and Order, which are prescribed for the Rule of their Conduct; they too will be such as are proportioned to their Nature and their Faculties. And whereof they may form some Notions, by that Pain, Disorder and Anguish of Mind, which Sinners do even now frequently feel, when they reflect upon their Sins and Impieties against an almighty and avenging God. Only there  
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is this Reason to presume, that when the Soul sees her Deformity in a naked View; and is sensible of her Loss and Shame, and the Power of God in the Punishment inflicted by him; her Reflections will be, proportionably, more stinging and grievous; and these Scourges, which she so ordinarily feels at present, when awakened into a Sense of her Guilt, to a Degree not easily supportable, will then be turned into so many devouring Scorpions. How long these Punishments may be continued; or whether they will be perpetuated; natural Reason, I conceive, does not evidently determine: For the Resolution of this Article, we must have Recourse to the revealed Will of God. Only thus much, I think, may be sufficiently deduced from natural

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Principles, that the future Punishments, to be inflicted after this Life, are such, as may deter wicked Men from offending against the Law of God ; and that they ought to believe such Punishments will be so great as may have sufficient Force, when duly considered, to out-balance all the Evils, they could have suffered in this Life, in the Discharge of their Duty. Otherwise a sufficient Sanction to the moral Law, of which I have prov'd the Necessity, and which I all along suppose, would not have been given towards attaining the proper End of it, Obedience. And if, for this Reason, wicked Men ought to believe, and must expect, that God will inflict future Punishments upon them ; there is great Reason, if not an absolute Necessity of believing,  
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he *will* inflict those Punishments: Otherwise, he has put Men under an Obligation, in order to the Attainment of his End, of making a false Judgment.

XXVII. What has rendred it so difficult for Men to conceive, how the Soul, in a separate State, should be capable of Punishment, especially of any other Punishment, than that of reflecting upon her own Vileness, Loss, and Disorder, has proceeded from hence, that they look upon the Death of the Body, as a Kind of *Annihilation*; for, having here scarce any pleasing or painful Notices, wherewith they are moved, except by Means of the Senses, and external Objects, they imagine, when the Soul goes into those invisible Regions, where the Spirits of Men departed are

supposed to reside ; she can no longer be capable of the Pains and Pleasures, which she now feels ; and wherewith her Capacity is, in a Manner, at present, wholly taken up ; so that, if they do not believe her to be utterly extinct, as ignorant and unthinking Persons are apt to do ; their Imagination, represents her, as retiring into such a State of Indolence, or Insensibility, as is but the next Remove to an utter Extinction.

XXVIII. This Error proceeds from a vulgar Notion, that the painful or pleasing Sensations of Men are not primarily in the Soul, but in the Senses ; and that the Senses are necessary and efficient Causes of exciting them in the Soul : Whereas they, who consider the Properties of Matter attentively, will never be able to discover

discover, however, it be modified, or whatever Situation it is in, how it can produce the least Effay towards Thought, or Perception: And, therefore, the Soul, when in the Body, or when out of the Body, it may have the very same Sensations, tho', probably, much more lively, strong, and operative, out of the Body. To convince us of which, we need only consider the Power of Imagination in delirious or dreaming Persons; who see, feel, and taste Things, which have merely an imaginary Subsistence, after as affecting a Manner, as they could have done, had such Things been the real and actual Objects of Sense.

XXIX. So that, in respect to the pleasing or painful Sensations of Men, it is indifferent, by what Occasion they are excited; whether by Means of circumam-

bient Bodies, or any new Modifications of the Soul; provided, we do but feel them. In order to which, it is not necessary, for Instance, there should be a *material* Fire, to give us all those painful Sensations, which we now feel when we burn a Finger, or when any other Part of the Body is exposed so near to the Flames, that the rapid Particles of Fire, that fly from it, penetrate the Pores of the Body like so many pointed Needles, and lacerate the Parts exposed to them; the Pain, that we then feel, not being in the Body, or effected by the Body, but wholly produced in the Soul. We must, therefore, look up for some higher Cause of our Sensations, than Matter, which has no Tendency of itself to produce them; which Cause can be

no

no other, than the Power and Will of God ; with whom it is equal to work with Means, or without Means ; and who can effect whatever he will, only by *willing* it.

XXX. The Author of *the Art of Thinking* argued therefore philosophically, in saying, “ It is  
 “ possible for a Soul separated  
 “ from the Body to be tormented  
 “ by the Fire, either of Hell, or  
 “ of Purgatory, and to feel the  
 “ same Smart which one feels  
 “ when burnt ; since even while  
 “ the Soul was in the Body, the  
 “ Smart of Burning was, in itself,  
 “ not in the Body ; and was no  
 “ other, than a Thought of Sor-  
 “ row, which she had, upon Oc-  
 “ casion of what passed in the  
 “ Body, to which God had united  
 “ her.” So that there is not

Reason to suppose it necessary \*, in order to give the Soul those Sensations, whether of Pain or Pleasure, which she now has by Occasion of the Body, that she should be afterward united to the same Body, or to any material Vehicle whatever: Some other Being altogether immaterial, or the Soul, by some internal Modification of herself, might produce the same Effect. If, now, in her Union with the Body, the Pain or Pleasure, which we feel, is ordinarily referred to some particular Part of the Body; this proceeds from the positive Will of God, and to the End greater Care may be taken towards preserving the several Parts of the Machine: But were it not for

\* See Mr. *Bayle* under the Article *Epicurus*.

this

this Cause, there could be no Reason, why the Soul should refer her Sensations to any particular Part of the Body, or, in any Respect out of herself. But she might be sensible of Pain and Pleasure, of Heat and Cold, by her own proper Act, without any foreign Cause; or if such a Cause might be necessary, there could, however, be no Grounds to suppose, why it should be a bodily or *material* Cause. And from hence I argue (tho' it is not my present Business to enquire concerning the Nature of future Punishments to wicked Men, and whether, possibly, those Punishments may consist in their having certain Sensations, which will answer to the Pain we now feel by Occasion of material Fire) that there is no Necessity, why the Soul, in order to become  
capable

capable of such Punishments, should be restored again to the same Body, or be united to any other Body.



## C H A P. IX.

*The Grounds of Error concerning moral Truth, with the Means of removing them.*

- I. *A Difficulty moved.* II. *The Consequence drawn from it denied; and what may be justly inferred.* 3. *Reasons of Ignorance in Men concerning moral Truths.* IV, V. *The two main Sources of Error, and the Tendency of them.* VI, VII. *Concerning Weakness of Mind,*



*Mind, and the Effects of it.*  
 VIII. *A culpable Diffidence in Men.* IX. *Why the Principles of Morality are not known without a competent Application.*  
 X. *Concerning Liberty of Mind.*  
 XI. *Man not always governed by the Light of his Mind.*  
 XII. *The Reason.* XIII, XIV.  
 XV. *Why Men of the greatest Capacity are frequently observed to be more eminently virtuous or wicked.* XVI. *A Consideration respecting Mankind in general.* XVII. *The Levity of the Heart, how occasioned.* XVIII. *Why Men of Parts sometimes very ignorant in respect to the Principles of Morality.* XIX, XX. *We are most affected with Things present, and which actually please.*  
 XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV. *The Method*

*Method, whereby the Causes of Error may be removed.*

**I**F the Laws of moral Virtue have that Force to oblige Men to Obedience, and to oblige under those Sanctions we have ascribed to them, they ought, you will say, to be written in such fair and legible Characters, that all Men, on every Occasion, may consult and apply them. For a Law, the Sense or Design whereof is not clear and intelligible, is, in Effect no Law. Men cannot follow a Light, which they do not see; or practise an unknown Duty: And yet it may be said, that Morality changes, in respect to Times and Places; that is *Morality*, under the Notion, it is frequently understood and explained, as a received Rule for the Conduct of human Life ;

Life; From whence some have concluded, there is no fixed or certain Standard of Morality; but that the Rules of it are different and mutable, according to the different Tempers, Opinions, or Circumstances of Men. So that what is reputed decent, praiseworthy, and of good Report (all Characters of moral Virtue) at one Time, or in one Place; at another Time, and in another Place, may be thought unbecoming, dishonourable and infamous; the proper Characters, on the other Hand, of moral Evil.

II. The Truth of this Observation is not denied; but we deny the Consequence, that Men would draw from it. It might, with equal Pretence be alledged, that there are no standing Laws to  
Men,

Men, for the Government of civil Society, for the Direction of their Conduct in it; or the Decision of those Differences, which may arise among them; because the Sense of those Laws is sometimes perverted, and misapplied, contrary to the real Intention, and sometimes to the very Letter of them. All, therefore, we can infer from that Variety, which is observable among different Persons and different Nations, with respect to their moral Conduct, is, that they do not attend, as they ought, to the Rule of it; or that they will not see the Reasons, according to which it ought to be explained; those Reasons being opposite to some prevailing Passion, Habit, or Interest wherewith they are affected. And how far such Prepossessions are of Force to blind the Eyes; to corrupt

rupt the Judgment, or to wrest the Construction of any Law, contrary to its true, original and proper Sense, it is unnecessary to prove by an Induction of Particulars. And if these Things be done, some times, in the Face of a standing and visible Legislature; which hath a Power of asserting and vindicating the Authority of the Laws, and may interpose to that End by a visible Authority; we are not to be surprized, that Men, under the Power of some violent Passion, are diverted from attending to the Design of a Law, the Misapplication whereof, they do not apprehend, will be attended with any *present* Consequences injurious to them.

III. Other Persons may, possibly, misapply the Laws of Nature, or be ignorant of them.

Not

Not because they are unwilling to undergo the Labour of Attention towards procuring better Light; but on account of some natural Incapacity or Defect of Mind, which renders them incapable of pursuing their Inquiries, till they are perfectly able to comprehend the Subject Matter of them. For Things, how true or intelligible soever in themselves, are not equally clear or intelligible to all Men. Some Persons, either for Want of natural Abilities; of Instruction, or Education; being of such very slow Apprehensions, and having the Eye of their Understanding so darkened; that they are not able to discover; in a distinct View, the Relation between moral Subjects; especially, in the more remote and consequential Deductions to be made from them.

IV. Here, then, we have found the two main Sources of Error, in the Mind of Man; Want of *Strength*, and Want of *Liberty*.

V. I shall consider, more particularly, how both these Defects tend to deceive and mislead Men in their Inquiries concerning moral Truth.

VI. And Ist, Where Men labour under any natural Weakness of Mind, and do not discover the Truth, which they seek after, without much Difficulty, they soon grow weary, dull, and discouraged; and secretly desire to give over the Work, as being very painful, and, at the same Time, without any *certain* Prospect of Reward: As People of an infirm or slender Constitution of Body, when they are put upon attempting any Thing, to

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which

which they apprehend themselves unequal, are soon intimidated with the Apprehension of their attempting a Thing above their Strength. And tho' they might, perhaps, by Degrees and repeated Application, proceed in the Work, with more Facility, and through frequent Exercise, acquire a stronger Habit of Body ; yet they have not Resolution sufficient to overcome the Resistance, which renders their first Endeavours so painful and discouraging to them.

VII. Thus it is, with respect to the Operation of weak Minds, in the Search after Truth ; and, what I now, particularly, consider, of *moral* Truth. The great Lines of our Duty are visible to every Eye ; but, when Men are to draw Inferences or Conclusions from them, tho' they proceed  
upon



upon true and certain Principles, yet the Connection, in their Way of inferring one Thing from another, being less perceivable, and their Views short and narrow, the Mind grows impatient in the Pursuit, and, instead of Truth, what she cannot discover without Pain, takes up with any Thing, true or false, that may procure her *Repose*, and free her from her present uneasy State: And tho', notwithstanding her Complaints, she might, by reiterated Attempts, gather more Strength; for the Powers of the Mind, as of the Body, are augmented by Labour and Exercise, still the Desire of present Ease proves, upon the Competition, more prevalent, than the Desire of a future, distant, and as she apprehends very *precarious* Reward,

not to be acquired, after all, without doing great Violence to herself.

VIII. These are the lazy Pretences, which Men offer in Excuse of themselves, for neglecting the Culture and Improvement of their Minds: And they are not only the Pretences of Persons, more naturally weak and *saturnine*; but sometimes of those, to whom Nature has been more liberal of her Talents. There have been a great Number of Men, capable of distinguishing themselves in their several Professions; who yet, out of a weak Distrust of succeeding in their Endeavours, occasioned by their Idleness, and contrary to the natural Motions of Pride in most other Cases, have neglected the Pursuit, to which they were happily formed, and where-  
in,

in, with a proper Application and Industry, they might certainly have succeeded ; and so have lived and died undistinguished ; but not unaccountable, for neglecting to improve the Talents committed to them : If, perhaps, instead of the generous and beneficent Uses to which they should have employed them, they have not applied them in a Way of Commerce, rather tending to pervert, than to answer their proper End and Use ; by turning them wholly upon the Affairs or Business of the sensible Life ; and, instead of employing them to augment the Strength, making them directly instrumental to corrupt and debase the Mind ; as the richest Soul, if not well cultivated, serves only to produce the ranker, and more noxious Weeds.           K 3           IX. Nei-

IX. Neither is it any Cause of Objection, against the Clearness or Evidence of the natural Law, that the Knowledge of it is not to be attained, without competent Application. God hath given us Faculties with a Design they should be employed. And it is sufficient to justify the Reasons of his Procedure herein, that we can, in a sober and regular Use of those Faculties, attain the End, which he proposed to himself in giving them. It would rather have argued a Defect in the divine Wisdom, especially, in a probationary State of Man, where he is to give Tryal of his Abilities, had God rendred the Knowledge of his Duty, in all Cases, so very easy and obvious, as wholly to supersede his Endeavours in order to the Discovery of it. The Difficulty,

culty, therefore, which is pretended in the Search of Man, concerning the Rule of his Duty, to shew the Uncertainty of it, is so far from being an Objection against moral Truth, that the very Frame and Constitution of human Nature, under our present Circumstances, seem to require that *she should only be found of those, who diligently seek her.*

X. Another Source of Error in the human Mind, concerning moral Truth, proceeds from her Want of *Liberty*. We have always sufficient Means or Capacities to discover the necessary Rules of our Conduct. Where such Means, or Capacities are wanting, Men cannot, indeed, be, strictly considered, as moral Agents, obliged by a Law, and under *Pain* of transgressing it. For as it is not

consistent with Wisdom, that a Man should be required to practise what he doth not know; neither is it consistent with Justice, that he should be punished for what he could not remedy. So that Man, considered as a moral Agent, must always, in the necessary Reason of the Thing, have the Means or Capacity of knowing what is requisite to *denominate* him a moral Agent; and to give him a Right of being treated *as* such. And it is sufficient to my present Purpose, that every Person, who is accountable for his Actions, must have a competent Degree of Knowledge, for the moral Conduct of them; tho' a different Degree, of Knowledge, in Morality, may be communicated to different Persons, in a different Degree; according as *God has dealt*

*dealt to every One the Measure of his Abilities.*

XI. But, tho' every Man has, if he attend to it, a sufficient Measure of Light, to direct his moral Conduct; it does not therefore follow, that every Man *will* attend to this Light: For there are other Motives of Action, in Man, besides that of pure and simple Understanding. Nothing is more evident than that we do not always govern ourselves, according to the Principles of our Belief; even of those Principles, which are most uncontested; whose Truths we acknowledge; and to the Conduct to which we profess ourselves obliged to submit.

XII. This Contrariety between the Persuasion, and the Practice of Men, proceeds from hence, that we are differently affected  
with

with what we *feel*, and with what we only *see*: I do not mean with the sensible Eye; for the Impressions of Objects, which enter there, are often so strong, that it had been happy for us, if we could not have opened it: But I mean what we see only by a naked View, or Speculation of the Mind. In the former Case, we often, indeed, find ourselves carried away by a violent Impulse, which proves too strong for a fine and beautiful Thought either to divert, or resist.

XIII. The Liberty, therefore, of human Mind may be considered, upon reasonable Grounds, as distinct from the Strength of it. If it do not frequently happen, that Men of the greatest Capacities, and strongest Minds, have yet the least *Liberty*: As  
with



with the greater Force a Torrent is carried, and the higher it rises, the more difficult it is to keep it in the proper Channel. And, therefore, it has been a common Observation, for which I shall presently assign a natural Reason, that Men of extraordinary Talents are commonly, and more eminently distinguished, either for their Virtues, or their Vices; according to the different *Course*, which they are inclined, from Constitution, or some prevailing Habit, or Interest, to pursue.

XIV. The Reason of a transcendent and superior Virtue in such Persons is, that when they apply their Minds to the Discovery of Truth; *when they search for her as Silver; and seek for her as for hid Treasure;* they do not only find her of less difficult Access,

cess, and their Pains rewarded, at once, by a more easy and more full Discovery but they see those great, beautiful and sublime Truths, that are proper to satisfy their enlarged Desires of Knowledge; which lie more concealed from less penetrating Minds, and are less proportioned to the Capacities of them. And, if all Pleasure ariseth from the Agreement of the Object with the Faculty, by the same Reason, in Proportion as the Faculty is of greater Extent, a greater Measure of Pleasure must necessarily arise from the Contemplation and Enjoyment of it. So that, as it is Pleasure which renders Man happy; when Knowledge thus becomes pleasant to the Soul, at once, by facilitating her Application, and by satisfying her Desires ;

fires; How can a human Mind, reflecting upon its own Dignity, be so worthily employed, or, with equal Force and Activity, towards its proper End *Happiness*, than in an intimate Contemplation of Truth? And I do not doubt, but there are good Men of exalted Minds, who, in such Contemplations of Truth, are so transported with the Light and Beauty of it, that they enjoy, for the Time, a greater Pleasure, than the World, or any sensible Delights in it, can give; a Pleasure so great and refined, especially, when accompanied with a conformable Practice, that *neither Life, nor Death, nor Things present, nor Things to come, will be able to separate them from the Love of Truth.* For tho' we do not always follow the Light of  
our

our own Minds, yet the more strong, distinct and irradiating that Light is, we shall follow it still with so much greater Freedom and Complacency.

XV. It is no less easy to account, why Men of extraordinary Capacities, when their Minds take a wrong and different Turn, are the most luxuriant in Vice, and give themselves up to the greatest and most extravagant Disorders. Besides the natural Force of Thought in such Persons, which hurries them away, and renders them impatient of the Means necessary to rectify the wrong Bent they have taken, and so precipitates them into the very Excess, to which Humour or Inclination may prompt them; they being Persons of a fine, strong and copious *Imagination*, easily find,

or

or pretend to find some plausible Reason, even for their greatest Crimes; or where that cannot be found, so as to satisfy themselves, or others, they yet paint those Crimes in such lively and deceitful Colours, as to give them an Air and Force which hides their natural Deformity; or, at least, diverts them, in such a Manner, from giving a just Attention to it, that *seeing they see, and will not perceive.*

XVI. But the general Reason why all Persons, indifferently, are apt to be moved more by sensible, than by intellectual Objects, is, what I observed before; that the Impressions of Sense are stronger and more affecting, than those of naked Truth: Even the Minds of those, who are capable of a more steady Contemplation of Truth,

Truth, and who take the greatest Delight in contemplating it, cannot always dwell or feed upon abstract Speculations. When, therefore, the Mind finds herself weary, or her Strength is much impaired, we naturally turn our Thoughts for Relief and Diversion, upon Objects of another Kind; and meeting in the Way something grateful and pleasing in sensible Objects, our Desire towards them is inflamed anew. As we may observe of Persons, who, upon reading a good Book, have been so moved with some spiritual Truth inculcated to them, that they have thought, for the Time, Nothing could be able to withstand the Force of it; but soon finding other Objects, or Affairs of the World, by Occasion of which the Mind tastes a present  
and

and sensible Pleasure, the former Ideas, which appeared so lively and strong, do not only give Way to them, but, by Degrees, are wholly obliterated.

XVII. This *Levity* of the Heart is occasioned by the Commerce, we are obliged to maintain, with the sensible World, for the Preservation of the Body, and other Ends of the sensible Life; which, I have observed before, could not be answered, if the Impressions of corporeal Objects, and the *Pleasure*, they occasion to us, were less strong, than, in Fact, they really are. However, this Necessity, we are under, of conversing with material Beings, and the continual Avocation of the Mind on that Account, from the nobler Subjects, and proper Exercise of it, very

L much

much tends to weaken its natural Force; and to render us less capable of considering any Thing, with an *intense* Application; especially, if the Subject of our Meditations be intricate and perplexed, and, by Consequence, painful.

XVIII. If we duly considered this, we should less admire at the Darknes, Ignorance and Confusion of Thought, even in Persons, who do not want good natural Capacities. For Application is to the Mind, what the Direction of the Sight, to any Object before us, is to the Eye; if we would see and examine it distinctly, discover its true Proportion, and several Parts, and the Relation wherein it stands to other Bodies, we must take a particular and close Survey of it. And thus it is, if we would  
fix



fix the Mind upon any intellectual Object, we must consider it with Attention, we must silence the Senses, Imagination and Passions; and observe, if we would have a clear Idea of it, what it really is in itself, and how it differs from other Objects.

XIX. The Mind is not only fatigued with a continual Attention to abstract Truths, and obliged, both for its Relief, and other Reasons above mentioned, to divert the Thoughts upon other Subjects; but we see such Truths, at a Distance, or, as having, at present, no immediate or necessary Relation to us or to our Interests: Whereas, corporeal Objects are continually at hand, offering themselves to us, and promising *actual* Delight and Satisfaction. Besides, when the

Mind of Man would really apply itself, with Ardour, to discover any Truth and is agreeably employed in its Inquiry, the least Thing in the World has Force sufficient to break in upon him, and to interrupt his Cogitations. Sometimes, an accidental Thought, whereof he cannot trace the Origin, which gives him some pleasing or painful Sentiment, quite disturbs the Order of his Ideas; and carries him off, from his former Speculations, into a Region altogether different; and perhaps into some new and *strange* World of his own forming.

XX. The Truths of Morality are, certainly, discoverable by the Mind, and agreeable to it; but they are not always discovered without Attention and Pain. And since the Soul naturally loves Plea-

Pleasure, and always tastes actual Pleasure, when the Senses are gratified; 'tis not without Violence and Difficulty, that she can disengage herself in such a Manner from them, as to dwell long, much less, continually, in the Contemplation of moral Truth.

XXI. Having observed the two principal Causes of Error, concerning moral Truth, the Method of Cure may more easily be prescribed.

XXII. In order to cure Weakness of Mind and to give it a greater Force and Extent, we should habituate the Soul to Labour and Exercise; and not be discouraged, tho' we cannot, always, readily find what we seek, in the Search after Truth: Repeated Attempts may at last bring us to the Place, where she inhabits,

tho' at first she is more difficult of Access. It would, in particular, be proper to accustom ourselves to an Acquaintance with the more abstract Studies, Logick, Mathematicks, and Metaphysicks. The Use of these Studies, were they of no other Use, being excellent to open, to strengthen and enlarge the Mind; the Habits of which are to be acquired and confirmed, as the bodily Habits are, by repeated Labour and Exercise.

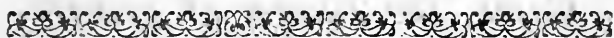
XXIII. Metaphysicks, especially, which are only another Expression for natural Theology do not only require the greatest Abstraction and Intenfeness of Mind, and, thereby, visibly tend to enlarge, to fortify, and exalt it; but have, for their Object, the most important and glorious *Truths*, which  
can

can fall under human Consideration. And indeed it is, principally, the Knowledge of them, whereby we are enabled to ascertain the Truths of Morality, and resolve them into their true, proper and distinct Grounds. So that it may be affirmed, no Man can be, or ever was a good Moralift upon natural Principles, but one endowed with a competent Share of metaphysical Knowledge. This Science, therefore, or as some term it, *Sapience*, however neglected, is not merely to be considered, as a Help or instrumental Means towards strengthening the Mind; but in respect to Morality, *essential*, in order to enlighten and direct it.

XXIV. Towards encreasing the Liberty of the Mind, seeing Men of greater Capacities are so apt to

be diverted in their Pursuits of moral Truth, and that Diversion is occasioned by the Commerce they have with sensible Objects, and the sensible Pleasure they occasion to them, we should endeavour to draw the Mind, as much as possible, from such Objects, and so far as is consistent with the Necessities of the present State. So that the Soul, conscious of her innate Dignity, should aspire to employ herself, in the most worthy Manner, and on the noblest Objects; endeavouring, by that Means, not only to avoid the Occasions of Error, but to attain the Things that are *more excellent*, and go on to *Perfection*; acquainting herself, more and more, with the Beauty of Truth; and taking such Delight in her Conversation, as may out-balance any of the low and mean

mean Pleasures she can taste in foreign, especially, in sinful Gratifications; but should rather, indeed, towards lessening the Weight so apt to sink her down, and carry her towards sensible Goods, often withdraw from them and restrain herself, in many Cases, even from the Use of Things, in their own Nature, lawful and innocent.



C H A P. X.

*Concerning the Use and Regulation of the Senses, the Imagination, and Passions, particularly in this Chapter of the Senses.*

I, II. *The Reasons of this Inquiry,*  
and III, IV. *Of the Inconsistency  
between*

*between the Principles and Actions of Men. V. Reason ought to assert her Sovereignty, and VI. Against what Enemies. VII. VIII. A particular Application of what has been said to the Senses. IX. The proper Use of them maintained against the mystical Writers. X. Especially of the Sight. XI. The Reasonableness and, in certain Cases, the Danger of gratifying this Sense. XII. How to avoid such Danger.*

I. **I**T will be, to little Effect, that we have discovered the Grounds of moral Virtue, the Obligation to practise it, and the Means of avoiding Error, in our Search after moral Truth; except Men, by some proper Means, may also



also be inform'd, how the Practice, the habitual Practice of it, may be attained.

II. To this End, it will be natural, in the first Place, to enquire, what those Things are, whereby, Man is, principally, obstructed when he endeavours to act according to the Light of his own Mind; which Light, it was the primary and direct Intention of Nature, that he should follow.

III. Now the very same Causes, which we have shewed, are apt to mislead and pervert the Judgment, have the greatest Force, even when the Judgment is not perverted, to influence the Will. This is the Reason of the Inconsistency, for which it is thought so difficult to account, between the Belief and Actions; the Principles and Practice of Men; so  
*that*

*that what we do, we allow not, and what we would do, what Reason does not only allow, but approve, that we do not.* Notwithstanding, therefore, we *con-*  
*sent* to the natural *Law*, that it is *holy*, and *just*, and *good*; yet this inward Approbation and Testimony of our Minds, concerning it, is not of Force sufficient to restrain us from an unholy, unjust and evil Choice, when we determine to act. But *the Good that we would*, when we simply consult the Light of Reason, *we do not*; and *the Evil, which we would not*, or which, when we consult the Light of our Minds, we have some transient Desires, at least, to avoid, *that we do*.

IV. How it comes to pass, that Man is so inconsistent with himself, as not to govern his Conduct  
by

by the Principles of his Belief, is a Question beside my present Purpose. I am now only to observe, that, in Fact, there are other Principles, whereby Man is governed, besides those of Light and Knowledge; and that every Man experiences in himself, whether he may be able, or not, to give a philosophical Account of the Effect, and to answer all Difficulties on so very nice a Subject, that *there is a Law in his Members warring against the Law of his Mind, and bringing him into Captivity to the Law of Sin which is in his Members.*

V. The first Thing, therefore, we have to do, if we would assert the Authority of Reason, and re-establish her in the Throne; if we would give her that sovereign Command which she ought to have,

have, and which she is design-  
 ed by God to have over the  
 whole Machine, and all the  
 Springs of Action in it, is to con-  
 sider where the main Strength of  
 our Enemy doth lie? What the  
 Order and Number of their Forces  
 are, and where they will most  
 probably attack us? To the End,  
 we may not only be better pre-  
 pared to defend ourselves, but to  
 chastise their rebellious Attempts;  
 and to make them sensible, it  
 does not become Subjects to give,  
 but to receive Laws.

VI. Now, the most dangerous  
 Enemies to Reason, the most apt  
 to excite rebellious Motions a-  
 gainst her Orders and Authority,  
 deriving their chief Force, either  
 from the Senses, the Imagina-  
 tion, or Passions, what it princi-  
 pally concerns us to do is, to pre-  
 vent

vent their Action ſo much as poſſibly we can; but, when that cannot be done, to reſiſt it with all our Might, and thereby to weaken their Force, till, by Degrees, we reduce them to Obedience.

VII. I ſhall apply this Rule ſeverally to the Senſes, Imagination and Paſſions, according to the Order wherein they are here ſpecified.

VIII. In reſpect to the *Senſes*, the Uſe of them is abſolutely neceſſary to the Preſervation of the ſenſible Life; to which End, indeed, as they are admirably formed, they appear to be *ſolely* given. So that it is not only reaſonable, if we would follow the Order of Nature, that we ſhould uſe them; but we may, lawfully, in ſome convenient Meaſure, gratify and indulge them. IX.

IX. The Design, therefore, of those, who would lay down the Rules of a just and practicable Morality, is not, with the mystical Writers, to prescribe such *Denudations*, and abstract Flights of the Soul out of the Body, as if, for the Time, the Laws of Union, between these two Substances, were of no more Use or Occasion to the Soul, than if she really subsisted in a separate State: Leaving these sublime Mysteries to those, who are able to explicate them intelligibly, or to regulate the Motions of the Soul, and destroy the natural Effects of those in the Body, by them: I shall readily allow, that Man, while he is in the Body, and stands in his present Relation to other Bodies, ought, so far as the necessary Ends of such his present State may require,

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Bodies, ought, so far as the necessary Ends of such his present State may require, to maintain a Commerce in the sensible World agreeable to it, and to support himself in that State so long as he can: Which yet he has no other Way of doing, but by using his Senses, and by following, but still under the Direction and Restraint of Reason, the Motions of them; and using them no further, than in pursuing the true Ends for which they were given.

X. But, because it would carry me too far beyond the Bounds I have prescribed myself, to apply this Rule to every Sense in particular; I shall confine my present Reflections to that of Sight, this being the most capacious and extended of all the Senses, and whereby, indeed, those other

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Objects of Sense, which have the greatest Power to move and corrupt us, are commonly first taken in : Or, if such Objects previously occur to any other Sense, it is yet the Light of the Eye, that shews them to greater Advantage, and the Lust of it, which represents them more pleasant and desirable.

XI. But shall we, therefore, shut our Eyes to avoid the Danger which may arise to us from the Impression of visible Objects? Shall we not look *upon the Wine when it is red, when it giveth its Colour in the Glass, when it moveth itself aright*, because we may be tempted to taste more liberally of what appears so agreeable to the Sight; or, because this is, moreover, a Sense of so quick and nice Discernment, that  
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it, very rarely, or never, deceives us, in the Report it makes concerning the Goodness or Agreeableness of its Object: Except where we are not in a true Situation to judge of it, or some great Artifice is used to impose upon us? Or shall we, for the same Reasons, make a *Covenant with our Eyes*, not to see any rich, curious, and beautiful Production of Nature, or Art, lest certain Desires should be excited in us of Avarice, Envy, or criminal Love? Such a Rule as this, were it really practicable, yet, if reduced to Practice, would put an End to some of the most agreeable, and, considered, in themselves, very innocent Pleasures of human Life, from which, it is not the Business of Morality to restrain Men, absolutely, but only

to regulate their Use. Tho', in some Cafes, indeed, where the Danger of gratifying the Eye is more hazardous, or has been more frequently experienced, and attended with ill Consequences; it is better to lose the Benefit of it, and even, by a voluntary Sacrifice, in the Cause of Honour and Innocence, to pluck it out, and cast it from us.

XII. But, ordinarily, if the Government of the Eye be well regulated, there is no Necessity for such *Violences*. If an indiscreet, or irregular Look has been occasioned by certain Objects, it is in our Power to turn away the Eye from them; but, if that cannot always be done, it is still in our Power to prevent their Action, by meditating upon some other Object, by calling the Mind off  
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from a Train of Thought, which, ſhe is inwardly conſcious, ought not to be purſued ; and which, if purſued, muſt end in Guilt, Shame, and Diſorder. Whatever Power we grant to ſenſible Objects, even to thoſe Objects of Sight, which are apt to excite in the Soul the moſt ſtrong and violent Agitations ; yet ſtill we leave her in Poſſeſſion of the Throne ; and it is her Fault, if ſhe ſuffer it, on any Occaſion, or by any other Power whatever, to be uſurped.





C H A P. XI.

*Of the Imagination.*

- I, II. *The different Effects of the Senses, and the Imagination.*  
III. *The Force and Extent of it.* IV. *A Means of regulating it.* V. *That Men of Wit are sometimes most vicious, and VI. most imprudent; with a philosophical Conjecture, why they are so.* VII. *And how there happens so great a Difference in the Imaginations of Men.* VIII. *And why Vivacity is rather the Character of the Female Sex, than Strength of Mind.* IX, X. *How the*  
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*Imagination may be usefully employed. XI. What was said exemplified. XII. Concerning the Imagination of Homer. XIII, XIV. Of Seneca, superior as a moral Writer. XV. Of Ifaiah. And, XVI. of Job. XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX. The Reason of mentioning these great Names, and the Use to be made of them, both for Encouragement and Reproof. XXI. Moral Virtue has, in all Ages, been asserted by the greatest Wits.*

I. **T**H E Senses are acted by such Objects, which, being present, cause an immediate Impression upon the Organs of the Body; so that the Objects of them, as such, properly subsist no longer, than we are conversant

with them; or have an actual Perception of their Force. But the Imagination is of much greater Extent; it recalls Things past to Remembrance; it represents Things that are not, as if they were; it puts future Cases, not only upon probable Grounds, and improbable Conjectures; but often upon impossible, and sometimes very chimerical Suppositions; it quite alters the natural State and Order of Things; flying to the remotest Part of the World, and back again in a Moment; and assuming a Kind of creative Power, whereby it makes new Worlds, new Empires, Kings, and other Potentates; and annihilates them again, at Pleasure, in a Moment. All this the Imagination of Man has a Power of producing, by painting, in his Mind, Resemblances of Things, that exist,

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exist ; and supposing a thousand Things, that have no Existence. Upon both which Accounts, the more strong, lively and copious, the Imagination of any Person is, the more he will be exposed to the Danger, if it be not kept under a due Regulation, of having his Heart corrupted, and of being precipitated into innumerable Follies, and Disorders.

II. If the only Power, which sensible Objects have to affect the Soul, so as to be the Occasion either of Error, or of Sin, depended upon their present and immediate Action, by the Rules before laid down, we might more easily avoid the ill Consequences, wherewith our Commerce in this World is too frequently attended ; we might find Means, under the Apprehension of any dangerous Assault,  
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to retire; or if we have been so unhappy, at any Time, thro' Surprize or Importunity, to be too familiar with them, we might break off the Correspondence, by a final Separation: But the Imagination will not suffer us to part with them so. It is the same Thing, in a Manner, as to the ill Effects relating to Morality, when the Imagination is much heated, whether we *actually* see and feel the Object of it, or not. Nay, in certain more violent Commotions of the Brain, the Fibres of it are moved with as great a Force, as they would have been from an actual Impression, by Means of external Objects; from whence some Philosophers have concluded, that the Senses, and the Imagination, differ only in the Degrees of more, and less.

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III. The Imagination acting with so great Force, and being capable of spreading itself so wide over the whole created *World*, in a Manner, at once, and even beyond it, into the extramundane Spaces; particular Care should be taken to lay it under some wholesome and convenient Restraints; if we would not suffer ourselves to be carried away with it, with a blind Impulse, besides the Rule of our Conduct, and beyond all Bounds.

IV. It concerns us, in the first Place, to avoid all Reflections on such Things, or Objects, by which the Imagination is most apt to be misled, or corrupted; especially, where, by natural Temper, by Custom, or former Application of our Thoughts the same Way, we are inclined to pursue, or desire  
such

such Things, or Objects, after an irregular Manner. There have been but few Persons, who were not naturally formed with particular Dispositions to certain Vices. And, as the Imagination of such Persons is more strong and lively, so much greater Difficulty they find in denying themselves the Pleasure of indulging it, if the Object, which it paints, not only be, in itself, agreeable, but set off, with such adventitious Ornaments and Colourings, which are apt to give it still a greater Force and Advantage.

V. Here we may discover the Reason, why Men of Wit, according to the popular Notion concerning that Quality, are not always Men of the strictest Virtue; or rather, that they sometimes run into the most extravagant  
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Excesses of Vice ; and are the most flagrant Instances of a loose Morality. The lively and beautiful Images, which they form in their Minds, so pleasing to themselves, and wherewith they observe others, perhaps, both pleased and surprized, diverts them from attending to the *Dictates* of Reason, which they look upon as dry, empty, and tasteless Considerations, when compared to those gay, sprightly Scenes, that a luxuriant Fancy prepares for them ; and which, at the same Time, visibly tends to gratify a secret Pride, they take, in being caressed and admired.

VI. So pernicious is this Quality, that, however Men affect the Reputation of it, it often proves the greatest Occasion of betraying them, not only into the  
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most scandalous Disorders, but the most extravagant Follies. Whether it be that the Spirits of such Persons are carried towards the Brain, the supposed Seat of the Imagination, with a more impetuous Force; where, like a Torrent, they bear down all before them; or, that the Substance of the Brain, in such Persons, is capable of receiving more large and deep Impresses; or whether, on both these Accounts, from the stronger Action of the Spirits on any supposed Part of the Brain, and because the Temper of it is more ductile and susceptible of them, the Images, impressed on it, are more clear, large, and distinct; as the Strokes, made by a graving Instrument, are deeper, in Proportion to the more hard or soft Contexture of the Plate; and the  
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Force, wherewith such Instrument is applied.

VII. From whence some Account may be given not only of that Variety of Imaginations, and of the different Degrees of Strength and Weakness, of Vivacity and Dullness of Fancy, observable in Men; but, probably, by the Researches of learned and able Physicians into the more occult interior Parts of the Machine; and by their discovering the secret Springs, whereby her Movements are performed; an Art, which, in other Respects, has been so happily improved to rectify certain natural Indispositions, might be applied, in order both to invigorate the Imagination, and to give it a greater Extent.

VIII. We

VIII. We may also form another very probable Conjecture, why the Character of the other Sex is rather Vivacity of Imagination than Strength of Mind. They fometimes, indeed, excel in the latter, but generally in the former of these Advantages. And the Reason of their Superiority, herein, is naturally deducible from what has been said, towards illustrating the present Subject. Women, being, in their natural Frame and Constitution, of a more tender, soft, and delicate Contexture, their Spirits find less Resistance, in their Passage to the Brain; and the Fibres of it being more flexible, and easily shaken, and its Substance, in general, more passive and yielding, the Images, which present themselves in it, are not only formed with greater  
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Celerity; but are, at the same Time, more clear, lively, and distinct.

IX. But I return, from these incidental Reflections, to shew, how the Imagination, which, if not well regulated, is more dangerous to our Innocence, in Proportion, as it is more quick, lively, and copious; how, I say, this Faculty may not only be secured from Danger, but rendered highly subservient to the Ends of moral Virtue.

X. To secure it from Danger, since we cannot, many times wholly avoid the Action of those Objects, which are most apt to excite and inflame it; for then we must retire out of the World; and even in Solitude, in our Closets, or in our Beds, in Cells, or Desarts, where such Objects could not fol-

low us, the Images of them, tho' involuntary, would, perhaps, too often arise; if it may not be questioned, whether the Imagination is not, sometimes, struck with the most violent Emotions, in solitary Life. Since this Method of Cure is impracticable, we ought, however, and that is always in our Power, whether, in publick, or private, when any wicked or irregular Imagination does arise, so soon as we perceive the Motion and Tendency of it, to check and repress it; to turn our Thoughts upon some other Object; by that Means, to give the Spirits another Course, whose Diverfion is naturally followed with a different Train of Thought. And, if we are particularly happy in the Talents of Imagination, there are not wanting a vast Variety of Objects,



jects, which may give it, not only a pleasing and innocent, but a very useful Entertainment, even in respect to the Subjects of Religion, or Morality.

XI. I might observe, to excite a generous Emulation, how happily several, of the greatest Wits in the World, have employed the Imagination to these most noble and excellent Ends. But I shall instance only in four of them, *Homer*, *Seneca*, *Isaiab* the Son of *Amos*, and *Job*. And tho' I shall observe a sensible Difference in the Imagination of these four great Characters; yet they all concurred, after a different Manner, in advancing the same Design.

XII. The Imagination of *Homer* was vast, lively, and comprehensive. The Greatness and Dignity of it is discoverable, in

the Choice he makes of such Things to furnish out his Work with proper Materials; such, as are of the greatest Importance in Nature to excite our Admiration. With this View, he ransacks Heaven and Earth, and seems to survey the whole Creation, at one Look, to find Something, which he may select, worthy to illustrate and embellish his Design. But this great Genius, whatever his private Opinion was, conformed to the Religion established by the Laws; and did not think it proper to engage the civil Magistrate in a theological Dispute. His principal Images are taken from the Characters or Manners of the Gods; which being, in many Respects, opposite to the common Principles of Morality, the Moral of his Poem is, upon that Account, and contrary to his Design,

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of much less Force, either to instruct, or persuade. The Vivacity of his Imagination appears, from his describing Things, after a Manner, as if they were really present Objects of Sense; and the Extent of it, from his taking in, and regularly sorting that Variety of Things and Circumstances, of Causes, Actions, and Events, which are the Materials of his Poem; a Work so happily conducted, with so much Ease and Regularity, that he seems, in the first Plan of it, to have seen every Particular, from the Beginning to the End, according to the Order, wherein he proceeded to compose it.

XIII. The Imagination of *Seneca* is less regular and strong; but fine, sprightly, and and adventurous; his Figures are beautiful;

well coloured and bold, but sometimes, too glaring ; and his Discourses are rather framed to take the Reader by Surprize, and pompous Appearances, than by Force of strict Argument ; though it is certain, he has laid down many excellent Precepts, founded on cogent Reasons. But what confirms my Observation is, that his Reasons are generally most forcible, when they are deliver'd in a plain, simple and natural Manner, without the Embellishments of Art, which he has not always the Art to conceal. His Imagination, therefore, may be compar'd to *Homer's*, as a neat beautiful rural Seat, to a Castle which overlooks all the Country, and at once fills the Eye with Pleasure and Astonishment.

XIV. But, whatever Advantage *Homer* had, on Account of  
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the Force, or Extent of his Genius ; it must be allowed, *Seneca*, in the Character of a moral Writer, employed his Imagination more happily : As resolving Morality into better Principles, and enforcing the Precepts of it, not by mere, loose occasional Sentences, but by a Train of Arguments, in formed methodical Discourses.

XV. *Isaiab*, whom I do not consider here as a Person inspired, but as following the natural Bent of his Genius, was superior to both these celebrated Writers in the Talents of Imagination : Wherein he had not only Strength and Beauty, Extent and Vivacity ; but a Degree of Fire and Rapidity peculiar to himself ; wherewith he is, sometimes, so transported, that if we

do not keep our Eye very steady, we are in Danger to lose Sight of him, or scarce able, if we have not a strong Eye, to bear the Force and Lustre of his Images. Especially, when he raises our Thoughts up to a Contemplation of the *eternal Power and Godhead*; when he describes the Works of Creation or Providence; or any Glory, in particular, of the visible or invisible World. And, indeed, that his Images, on these Subjects, are so sublime, lively and just, is not, merely, owing to a great or fine natural Capacity, but to his having more true, adequate, and distinct Apprehensions, concerning the divine Nature and Attributes; which, at once, tend to regulate, to enlarge, and refine the Imagination: So that,  
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there have been few Persons, if any, in the World, more happy either in a strong, lively and copious Imagination, or who improved it more by an acquired Knowledge; to which, there is no Doubt, but his Conversation, at Court, very much contributed.

XVI. And, in that Respect, indeed; he had the Advantage of another Person I. propos'd to name, which is *Job*; or whoever is the Author of the Book, that goes under this Name. Tho' as to the Boldness, the Fire, and surprizing Force of the Images in that Book, he does not appear inferior to the Son of *Amos* himself. Nay he seems, upon one Account, to rise higher in his Images; at least, to raise our Devotions by them, still to a higher Pitch; and that is, by his  
great

great Skill in natural Knowledge; which he, every where, so happily applies, in order to enoble and embellish his moral Instructions; and, thereby, more effectually to persuade: For the Mind is never sooner captivated, than by such Images, which are taken from the admirable and surprizing Works of God, in the external Effects of his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness. Particularly, when he speaks concerning the original Formation of Things, he describes the divine Action, and the stupendous Effects of it, in so lively, strong and moving a Manner, as if he had actually seen God Almighty *laying the Foundations of the Earth*; or had heard all *the Sons of God*, upon the Construction of his glorious Work, *shouting for Joy.*



*Joy*. I do not hereby intend, as if the evangelical Prophet, as he is called, had neglected the Study, or were deficient in the Knowledge of Nature; for he abounds with noble Illustrations from her Works: All I intend is, that the Author of the Book of *Job* seems to have a Claim to this Knowledge, as his more peculiar Distinction. And, perhaps, there is no Book extant in the World, which, could any Person be found equal to the Undertaking, might be commented upon more usefully, in order to explain and establish the true Principles of natural Philosophy.

XVII. I mention these Names, among a great many others, to shew, of what Advantage it may be, to have a fine, lively and great Imagination; notwithstanding the Danger to Virtue, which  
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may accidentally attend the Abuse of this Talent; for a great many Instances, to the Shame, and Scandal of human Nature, may also be found of such Abuses.

XVIII. It may deserve the Consideration of such Persons, what Sentiments themselves would have had, and all the rest of the World ought to have had of the four great Writers last mentioned, if, instead of employing the Talents of Imagination, towards promoting Virtue and Piety, they had made use of them, to confound the very Distinction of Virtue, and Vice; *to call Good Evil, and Evil Good,* and after having thrown down the Boundaries between them; and given Men a discretionary Liberty, without any Restraints  
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of Conscience, to take whatever Way they might be inclined to chuse, should, upon the whole Matter, recommend Vice, where it could be practised with Safety and Impunity, as more eligible to them, in their private Capacity; and, especially, as most conducing to the flourishing State of the Commonwealth; or as necessary to preserve it in a flourishing Condition.

XIX. Such a System of Morality, instead of transmitting the Names, or Works of any Person down to Posterity, with Honour and Lustre, would have rendered him the Object of universal Detestation. Even *Epicurus* and his Followers, tho' they destroyed the Obligation and proper Motives to Virtue, yet supposed a certain innate Decency and Comeliness

liness in it; for which it was of it self desirable; and many of them both practised it, and recommended the Practice of it to others, as most conducing to the Happiness of private and publick Life. *Lucretius* distinguished by that Kind of Wit, I am considering, tho' more loose, in several Respects, than the Masters from whom he copied; yet never advanced any Thing, to the Prejudice of moral Life, like what we have seen in a Nation; I do not say, professing Christianity, but formerly celebrated in the World, for writing *justly*, and thinking *soberly*.

XX. If Persons of no great Talents, in the corrupt Essays of their Imagination, have yet been able to mislead weak and ignorant People, who either cannot give  
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the requisite Attention towards the Discovery of Truth; or are incapable of detecting the Sophistry of false Reasoning: What ill Effects might have been apprehended from them, had they been distinguished by the Talents of a *Homer*, a *Seneca*, an *Isaiab*, or a *Job*. It is by a happy Disposition of Providence, that, as the Enemies of Religion are more *audacious*, and defy the living God with a higher Hand, their Abilities should, in Proportion, be less, and the Force of their Attacks more easily broken.

XXI. I grant, Men of very ill Principles have, sometimes, had an uncommon Measure of Wit; which they have employed as well, as they could, to defend those Principles: But still it may be observed, to the Advantage  
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of Morality, that the greatest Wits have always declared on the Side of moral Virtue ; and even many of those, who have been far from conducting themselves, according to those very Rules, which they confessed to be pious, just, and reasonable. Few have been able, so far, to throw off all the Regards of Decency and Conscience, as openly to teach a loose Morality ; but scarce any, who have had the Effrontery to encourage it, as beneficial to Society ; Attempts of this Nature, one would be strongly inclined to suspect, could only be formed by Men of the most abandoned Principles, upon a *Presumption* of their living in the most corrupt and degenerate Age.



## C H A P. XII.

### *Of the Passions.*

- I. *How they differ from the Senses and Imagination.* II, III, IV, V. *The Laws of Communication between the Soul and Body only to be resolved into the Will of God.* VI. *The proper Inquiry concerning the Passions.* VII. *How they are to be regulated.* VIII. *Particularly, with respect to any complexional Vice.* IX. *Why strong Passions render Men capable of higher Attainments; with the Advantages of a good and generous Birth.* X. *The End*  
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*of that Reflection. XI. Beneficial Uses of the Passions. XII. A Difficulty concerning them moved. And XIII. A Rule laid down. XIV. Another Rule. XV. The Passions are apt to impose upon us. XVI. A Third Rule. XVII. When we are, more especially, to take Care of them. XVIII. The Fourth and Last Rule towards their better Regulation.*

I. **T**HE great Obstacle to the Practice of moral Virtue still remains to be considered. There is some Difficulty in restraining the Use of our Senses, and in resisting the Action of sensible Objects; but still more Difficulty in governing the Imagination, when it is lively, strong and much heated, and moved,  
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by Occasion of them; especially, when the Blood and animal Spirits are put into a violent Motion, which sensibly affects the Soul, and even renders the Operations of it, by the Air of the Face, or some other ordinary external Appearance, sensible to others. And these are what we call the Passions; which, tho' they have a great Dependance on the Imagination and Senses, may yet be considered as different Principles of Action; but as differing only from the Inclination, according to the Degrees of more or less. For we do not desire, or find our selves inclined to pursue any Thing, but what is, in some Measure, capable of affecting us. Our Inclinations, indeed, to Good in general, are necessary, and uninterrupted. We invincibly and

always desire to be happy : But our Passions are excited, *occasionally*, and by particular Objects; and, principally, by Means of such Things as relate to the Body; to the good or ill State, to the Safety or Destruction of it.

II. We no sooner perceive any Thing, considered as pleasing, or hurtful to us, but the animal Spirits disperse themselves through the several Parts of the Body, and put it in a proper Disposition to advance or retire, to chuse or refuse, according to the Quality, good or bad, of the Object presented; that so the Soul and the Body may, reciprocally, act, and be acted upon, and continually hold themselves in Readiness to assist, and support each other.

III. By what Laws this Communication is settled; or how these  
these

these mutual Offices are performed, so that when the Mind wills, the Hand moves, and when the Hand is wounded, the Soul feels Pain; this is a Problem not to be accounted for by any mechanical Principles; nay, it is contrary to the clearest Ideas we have, concerning a material and thinking Substance, (and there is no Way of arguing concerning the Nature of Things, but from the Ideas we have of their Nature and Properties) that there should be any Manner of Union between them. And, therefore, it is only to be resolved into the Institution, and Will of God, that, by Means of certain Impressions made upon the Body, the Mind should be affected with Pain, or Pleasure; and those Impressions be followed with Pat-

sions in the Soul, according as the Object is apprehended more salutary, or pernicious to the Body. So that if God should suspend his Will, or the ordinary Effect of it, in any Person, but for one Moment, his Soul, during that Suspension, would have no more Dependancy on his Body, than on the Body of any other Person.

IV. It is easy to conceive, indeed, how two Bodies, meeting, should communicate some Degree of Motion to each other, or receive by the Collision some Change in their Size, Figure or Contexture; but what are all these different Circumstances towards producing a Passion in the Mind? What Relation is there between a Blow upon the Head by an Enemy, and the Passion of Anger

Anger and Revenge? And why should not such a Blow, if we merely consider it, as causing a certain Vibration of the Fibres in the Brain, as well produce the Passion of Love? There is no Reason from the simple Consideration of two or more Bodies, for Number and Magnitude make no Difference in the Case, why such a Collision should produce one of these Passions, rather than the other. Nay, upon an impossible Supposition, that Matter could produce any Sentiment in the Mind, a Blow, especially a more forcible Blow, upon the Head, ought rather to produce, in the Party who receives it, the Passion of Love; because if one Part of Matter could be, in any Degree, capable of sensibly affecting another, Love, not only im-

porting an Inclination to Union, but being encreased by it, the more the Parts of Matter should incorporate, or impel one another, the greater Affection ought naturally to be the Result of such an Incorporation and Impulse.

V. But the Mind and Body are, in the Nature of them, so opposite, that there can be no imaginable Concourse or Action between them. So that they, who think the Passions of the Soul naturally, and necessarily follow the Motion of the Blood and Spirits, argue not so much upon improbable, as, according to the clearest Notions we have of Matter and Mind, upon impossible Grounds.

VI. It is evident, however the Passions are occasioned, that we really experience the Effects, and  
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sometimes feel the Commotion and Power of them, to such a Degree, as is sufficient for the Exercise of the most improved Minds; and, therefore, it concerns us much rather to inquire, how the Passions may be regulated and rendered subservient to the great Ends of moral Virtue, than how they are excited ?

VII. And here the same Rules, in general, may be applied to the Government of the Passions, which have been prescribed for the Government of the Senses, and Imagination; but with this Difference; that where sensible Objects, or those of the Imagination, have proved dangerous, at any Time, to our Innocence, or, it may be apprehended, will act upon us with the like Force, on the present, or some future Occasion,

sion, Prudence will direct us to save our selves by Flight, in order to avoid the Action of them. But, the Passions being, in their own Nature innocent, and also the great Instruments of Action and a more sublime Virtue in moral Life, we do not seem under any prudential Restraints, totally, to suppress them, even where they have proved the Occasion of betraying us; so much as to moderate the Force, or to divert the Current of them; except in such Cases, where the Danger of Abuse, or Disorder from them, may be apparently greater, than the Advantage that can be proposed by giving Way, for a Time, to them. There are, for Instance, many lawful Occasions of Anger; and such particularly, when the Honour of God, or the Interests of Religion,

are



are concerned ; or when those, over whom we have any Authority, are guilty of Misconduct, wherein we may *do well to be angry* ; and to shew our selves so : But, if we are, at the same Time, of a Temper more apt to be inflamed, and the Provocation be such, as may, probably, precipitate us into the more violent Excesses of this Passion ; so as to deprive us of the Use of our Reason, and expose us to many Indecencies, to say Nothing of the more sinful and dangerous Effects of this Passion ; it is certainly, in this Case, much safer and more prudent to resist the first Motions of Anger, though the Incitement to it might be just, than to run the Hazard of those evil Consequences, by giving Way to it, which would more than over-balance the good Effects we could

could propose to our selves by indulging it.

VIII. In this, and the like Cases with respect to the other Passions, every Man is to consider his own Strength; and, especially, should have an Eye to his predominant, and complexional Temper; for we are never sooner overcome, than when we fight against the Sin that *more easily besets us*; the Sin of our Inclination. The greatest Difficulty, therefore, will be in governing the Passion by which we are prompted to gratify it. Which yet *may* be done by restraining all irregular Incitements towards the more immediate Object of it, without extirpating the Passion itself. For, indeed, the stronger the Passions of a Man naturally are, provided they are kept with-

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in due Bounds, the more capable he is, for the most Part, of attaining the Things, *that are excellent*; and of distinguishing himself by a more active and heroick Virtue. For Passions proceed from the more violent Emotion of the Blood and Spirits, or some other fluid Part of the Microcosm, whatever that is, which causes a sensible Change in it; which Change discovers itself in the exterior Parts of the Body, especially, in the Eye and the Face; from which we may generally conclude, in what Disposition the Persons are, with whom we converse; but it is always easy from these Parts to perceive, when Men are *transported* with Passion; and, for the most Part, with what Passion in particular; almost every Passion imprinting on  
them

them a different Signature visible to others, who will observe it with any Degree of Attention.

IX. Now, according to the Laws of Union between Soul and Body, the more forcible or violent the Actions of those Parts of the Body are, by Means of which we receive our Sensations, the more, in Proportion, is the Soul affected and put in Motion. So that it is not only true in Experience, that Men of the strongest Passions are the most active, enterprizing, and capable of the greatest Atchievements in Life; But a natural Reason may be assigned, why they should be so, from the Construction and Temper of the Machine, to which the Soul is united. And upon this Account it is, that Persons well born, and descended, value them-

themselves, not altogether without Reason, upon their Birth or Descent. For tho' the Soul is of celestial Extraction, and cannot be generated, yet the Operations of it so much depend upon the Frame and Temper of the Body, that Men generally excel in the Endowments of Mind, as the Body is more happily organized and disposed. And as a good, happy and generous Temper is, confessedly, as well as a vicious, crazy and weak one, transmitted from Parents to Children, there is a natural *Presumption* in Favour of Persons well born, that they should be endowed with an hereditary Virtue; for Virtue, tho' there are Instances to the contrary, is always to be supposed the natural Consequence of great natural Abilities :

bilities : For which Reason, when Persons of Birth fail in the Qualifications, or Conduct expected from them, they are, by a forcible and significant Expression, said to *degenerate* : To avoid which dishonourable Imputation, in those Parts of the World, where Persons most value themselves, upon the Advantages or Honour of their Birth, they are most careful to preserve an ancient Descent, from ignoble, and debasing Intermarriages. It is possible, in some other Nations, where this Rule hath been less observed, there may have, sometimes, happened a Degeneracy in Persons of noble Birth, from the ancient Virtue, and Spirit of their Family ; which has not so much shewn a sensible Alteration, in the Blood of it, as a total Corruption.

X. My

X. My Design, in this Digression, is to shew, by a pertinent, and I hope, not unuseful Instance; how, by Means of the Union of Soul and Body, certain *Sentiments*, which we call Passions, are excited in the Soul, the Force whereof she has yet a Power so to moderate, that, as they were designed to raise her to a higher Pitch, (and are, therefore, called the *Wings* of the Soul,) they may be improved to that End, without being diverted, by an irregular or indirect Use of them, to any other End.

XI. We do not, therefore, condemn Men for being subject to Passions; nor, even, for being of a Temper naturally more inclined to some particular Passion. The Intention of Nature, in forming them with such a Temper

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was good ; and the Abufes consequential to it, which they ought to have prevented, are wholly owing to themfelves. A Man, indeed, without Paffion will naturally be both indifpofed, and unfit for Action. It is then rather a Benefit of Nature, than a Subject Matter of Complaint, that we are born with certain Paffions, which are proper, under a due Regulation of them, to render us more active and confiderable ; more ufeful to ourfelves, to our Friends, and to human Society in general.

XII. The Queftion now is, fup-  
 pofing our Paffions not only in-  
 nocent, but, in certain Cafes, and  
 to a certain Degree, requifite ;  
 what Methods are we to take,  
 fo that the Degree given may not  
 be exceeded ? The Paffions, as  
 we



we have described them, are occasioned in the Soul by a more violent Commotion of the Blood and Spirits; and, according to the Force of that Commotion, are, proportionably, more strong and impetuous: How then can we be secure, that when they are once put in Motion, we shall be able to stop them, at Pleasure, and exactly at the Place, beyond which if we suffer them to go, they pass their proper Bounds, and become criminal and dangerous.

XIII. The Rule, in this Case, is always to keep a strict Guard, and watchful Eye over them; and never to indulge them to the utmost Extent of what is *simply* lawful; for besides that it is very difficult to discover where Virtue precisely ends, and Vice begins;

their Frontiers are divided by such thin Partitions, that the Passage, from one Side to the other, is easy and insensible. And, therefore, all prudent Persons, who would preserve their Virtue, will rather consider, how far they may go with Safety, than how far Innocence will strictly permit them to go? *He that loveth Danger shall perish therein.* A Man may, perhaps, walk upon the very Brink of a Precipice without falling; but he *may* fall; and, if he escape with Life, repent of his Folly, with the Loss of a Leg, or an Arm; Accidents, comparatively speaking, of little Consideration to him. Even the Loss of Life, to a wise and good Man, is of no farther Importance, than the good or ill State of his Soul is affected with it. But the Loss of Innocence!

nocence! A Breach in the intellectual System! A reasonable Soul of Man, in a State of Confusion, Disorder, and *spiritual* Death! This is such a Departure from those Principles, which are the Glory and proper Character of Man, and distinguish him from all other Creatures, that Nothing can be said to aggravate the Folly or Madness of a Conduct, that should lead to it. And therefore

XIV. Another Rule, for the better Government of the Passions, and towards restraining them within due Bounds, is to consider the pernicious Effects of them, when permitted to exceed their Bounds; for as they may be very instrumental to Virtue, if kept in Subjection; so when they are permitted to usurp the Throne, and to reign; they subject the Soul,

which ought to govern not only to the vilest and most abject Slavery; but introduce a Multitude of Evils into the State of the animal OEconomy it self. The Disorders, both of Body and Mind, which they occasion, are too *visible* to be mentioned: But they are also very pernicious, if we consider them, in Relation to our civil Commerce. The Maxim, that we should make no *Friendship with an angry Man*, will hold equally true, if we change the Term angry, for any other Term, that denotes a different Passion, to which a Person is violently addicted, and that has got the Dominion over him. Our Passions, indeed, when we are, in any extraordinary Degree, agitated by them, do not only cause us to break the Rules of strict Justice,

Justice,

tice, and Fidelity towards those, with whom we converse, but, frequently, all the Measures of common Decency and Respect; and even, in certain Cases, betray us, so blind and precipitate are we, when transported with them, not only to do Things contrary to our standing Inclinations, Principles, and Interests; but to the Prejudice, and, perhaps, to the Dishonour of those, whose Interests are, at other Times, as dear, in a Manner, to us, as our own. So that whether in respect to Consequences that concern our selves, or others; whether we consult the good State of the Body or Mind; it imports us to take particular Care about the Government of the Passions.

XV. This Care is still more requisite, if we consider how apt the

Passions are to impose upon us, under false Appearances and Suggestions; to confound the Nature of Things about which they are conversant; and to put *bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*; being, in themselves, innocent, and given to us with an Intention to promote our Good, particularly, the Good of the sensible Life, they are so ready to act upon the least Notice of any Thing which is pleasing, or hurtful to us, that, even, on such Occasions, they often act *spontaneously*, without consulting Reason, or waiting for her Orders. And, upon this Account of their Use and Facility in discharging the Functions proper to them, we less suspect them capable of betraying us, or of designing any Injury. But a little Experience will shew, we ought

not

not to trust too much to them ; whatever Profession they may make of a sincere and disinterested Intention to serve us. For notwithstanding they are very capable of promoting our true Interests, and of being, on many Accounts, very serviceable to us, and do actually promise some real Good, and contribute towards it ; yet they always speak, though less directly, for themselves. Like those Ministers, who propose Things, under a specious Pretence, and, perhaps, some good Appearance of serving the Publick, but are, principally, acted by a sinister Regard to their own Interests, or some common Service of a Faction ; and, upon that View, lead the Sovereign very wide of the Measures, and beyond the Bounds first designed, into innumerable  
 Errors

Errors fatal to himself, and to the Commonwealth.

XVI. The third Rule, therefore, for the Government of the Passions is, that, however obsequious they appear, we should observe the Suggestions and Motions of them with a jealous Eye; in order to prevent those Illusions, to which we are subject, when we hearken too much to them. For as they speak for the Body, and promise us present Delight, or the Removal of some present Evil, they always find us accessible; and, even, when they have through false and flattering Insinuations misled us, they are often so audacious as not only to justify themselves; but to persuade Reason to defend them, as well as she can, by any Appearances of Argument, and so to make Use of her  
 very



very Name and Commiffion, againft her own Authority. For it is the Nature of the Paflions to be always in the Right; and from the fenfible Conveniencies, that attend them, the Mind is fo apt to give a partial Judgment in what relates to them, and to declare on their Side; that there is continual Occafion for examining, previously, whether they really tend? And, afterwards, if they have not deceived or mifled us?

XVII. Thefe Rules ought to be obferved, even where the Object of our Defire is fomething, in the Nature of it, and fimply confidered, innocent, good, or laudable. For with all thefe Characters, if we do not carefully obferve the Tendency and Confequences of fuch Defire, it may prove the Occafion of betraying  
us ;

us : but if the Object of our Desire should not be so qualified ; if it is, in itself, criminal, unjust, or impure ; Reason will direct us to suppress the very first Volitions towards it ; and at the Moment, when they begin to rise. On the other Hand, Nothing ought to excite the contrary Passion of Hatred, or Aversion, but what is really evil and offensive to us ; or what we are obliged to detest, from some Motive of Piety towards God ; of Safety and real Benefit to ourselves ; of Justice or Charity to others.

XVIII. I shall prescribe but one Rule more, relating to the Conduct of our Passions, whether irascible, as they are commonly distinguished, or concupiscible. And that is, upon Supposition, they are perfectly regular, both in respect  
to

to the Origin, and the Tendency of them; yet a certain Proportion of Activity ought to be observed in applying them, according to the different Degrees of Excellency, or Evil, in their several Objects. The best, the most noble, useful, solid and lasting Things, are to be prosecuted with greater Ardor, than Things insignificant, or little; Things vain, transient, and of short Duration. The Reasons of Order and Proportion, upon which Morality is founded, require, that Things should be valued in the same Degree, wherein they appear in themselves, really valuable. And, by this Rule, whatever is absolutely, and of its own Nature, without Dependance on any other Being, worthy of our Love; that is to be loved primarily, and on Account  
of

of its own Dignity and Perfection. As what is, merely, instrumental or subservient toward some greater End, is only to be desired in the same Measure, as it has a Tendency to promote that End: That the supreme Good, therefore, ought to be the supreme Object of our Love; and that every Thing, which tends to obstruct our Enjoyment of it, is to be rejected with Detestation: That such Things, which respect the present Life; besides that they are of a more ignoble Kind, more unsatisfactory, mixed, and transient, are to be pursued with less Sollicitude; but never to be desired, when they come in Competition with our main End, the Happiness and Perfection of our Souls, so far as we may be able to attain them, whether in this, or in a  
future

future Life. These are Conclusions so evidently arising from the natural Reason of Things ; so strong and cogent ; that, however, Men oppose the practical Inferences from them : Yet, in Theory, they must necessarily assent to the Truth of them. As, on the other Hand, whatever is, in the Nature of it, more noxious, or more naturally tends to make us miserable ; especially, to bring us into such a State of Disorder, as may render us by a natural Efficiency, or thro' the Effect of an ill Habit, *eternally* miserable : This is what we ought to hate with a perfect Hatred ; and which to avoid, we should be willing to suffer, were that a necessary Condition of avoiding it, any present Evil, or temporary *Disgrace* whatever, to which we might be exposed.

C H A P.



C H A P. XIII.

*Of Desire and Inclination in  
general.*

- I. *Of the Import of these Terms.*
- II. *In what Respect, the same Inclination is common to all Men.*
- III. *This illustrated.*
- IV. *The Error of the ancient Philosophers concerning the supreme Good of Man.*
- V. *How Epicurus thought more justly as to that Article, than the other Philosophers.*
- VI. *The Prejudice under which he suffered.*
- VII. *Two of his fundamental Errors observed.*

I. **I** Here use Desire, and Inclination, as Terms, indifferently expressing the same Thing; and as properly importing that Motion of Man's Will, whereby he is invincibly, and, at all Times, carried towards *Good*. Now, tho' the Passions are inseparable from the Inclination, and always suppose it, in one Degree, or other; yet, as they are, in a certain Degree, more lively, active and sensibly moving, the Inclination may be conveniently distinguished, under a separate Head, from the Passions; especially, since there are good Grounds, from Experience for a visible Distinction between them.

II. Some Persons are of so calm and sedate a Temper, that they  
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are rarely moved, or discomposed by any Passion. The good or ill Use Men have formerly made of their Liberty, their particular Circumstances, Temper, Education and Manner of Life, expose them to many different Passions, which act upon them with a very different, and unequal Force. But Men, under all Circumstances, have the same general standing Inclination to render themselves happy. So that it may be said, notwithstanding that Variety of Pursuits and Passions, wherewith Men compass Sea and Land, to gain their several Ends, that they have, properly speaking, if we would resolve Things, philosophically, in their true Origin, but *one* Inclination. This is the Center, towards which all the Lines of Motion, in Man, tend; and wherein they will ultimately



mately terminate, though he should draw them from every Quarter, or every Point, of the World, about him.

III. So that they, who appear to direct their Views, towards very different Ends, and to place their Happiness in the Attainment of them; as of Riches, Power, Fame, or sensual Pleasures; yet are really acted with the same general Desire of Happiness: As Persons at an Entertainment, which is furnished with all the Variety of Dishes that Luxury could prepare, do severally chuse what is most agreeable to their Taste; but all are supposed to have one common End, in their different Choice, which is to please the Appetite.

IV. Had the ancient Philosophers considered this, there would

not have been any Necessity for their differing so much, in Relation to the *supreme End* of Man; concerning which, according to *Varro's* Computation, there were, in his Time, two hundred eighty eight several Opinions. Here lay the Ground of their Error; which might have been very easily corrected. It is evident they considered Happiness, not in respect to the proper and formal Notion of it; but to its efficient Cause; that is, they called that Happiness, which, in any Measure, or Degree, contributed to make Men happy, or to put the Soul in a happy State; but they did not define, what that State of the Soul was, wherein she found, and actually felt herself happy. It might, to resume the former Instance, be as justly said, that the Pleasure  
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with which a Man eats, when he is hungry, does not lie in his Palate, but in the Act of eating, tho' he should have no Taste; as that Riches, or other external Advantages of Life, make Men happy; and not an inward Consciousness of Delight; to which yet we do not deny, they may be, in many Respects, instrumental.

V. *Epicurus*, great as his Errors, and impious as his Principles, were, on other Accounts, yet thought more regularly upon this Article, than the rest of the Philosophers: He considered Happiness, *formally*, as it was to be considered, in itself; not as it depended on external or foreign Causes; without which, how convenient soever they may be apprehended, yet the Soul may be conceived to subsist in a State of

Eafe and Pleasure. As fupposing, on the other Hand, a Man in the full and entire Poffeffion of them, yet if he feel any inward Diforder, or Uneafinefs of Mind, he is, neceffarily, in Proportion, miserable and unhappy.

VI. His Maxim, therefore, was true, that the Happinefs of Man confifted in his being eafy and pleafed; but it was a wrong Inference, to fay, He taught, as he hath been charged, that Men had Nothing to do, but to give a full Scope to the Appetites of eating, and drinking; or to indulge themfelves in Exceffes of any Kind, to which their Inclinations might prompt them. For it appears fufficiently from *Cicero*, that he prefcribed Temperance and Sobriety as proper Means of moderating the Paffions, and of prevent-

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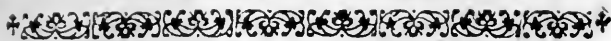
ing their irregular Effects; and, as tending, on that Account, directly to make Men happy. For there can be no Happiness without Freedom from Pain; tho' we are, indeed, more perfectly happy in the Enjoyment of actual Pleasure. But the Word Pleasure carrying in it an ambiguous Signification, and importing both innocent and criminal Pleasures, the other Sects of Philosophers having a Jealousy from the atheistical Principles of *Epicurus*, that he intended Pleasure in the worst Sense, united in decrying his Doctrine, and in rendering his Memory odious; pretending, that his System, as it had Relation to the Conduct of human Life, directly opened a Way to all Manner of criminal Liberties; and, particularly, to that of an impure

Commerce between the two  
Sexes.

VII. His Notions, however, in general, as to the formal Cause of Happiness, were true and well founded; but in these two Respects false: *That* he did not make God the Author of our Happiness, who alone can produce, in the Soul, those Sensations, which make us happy; and *that* he denied the Existence of immaterial Beings; which alone can have any Sensations, either of Happiness, or Misery.



C H A P.



C H A P. XIV.

*Whether moral Virtue is really practicable?*

- I. *One Reason of proposing the Question, from what had been said before concerning the Passions. II, III, IV, V. The Difficulty on that Occasion removed; and of the Passions of Envy, and Ambition, in particular. VI. No Consequence from the latter of these Passions, especially, to the Prejudice of moral Virtue. VII. Other Arguments tending to shew, that moral Virtue is impracticable, proposed to be examined.*

*examined. VIII. Concerning the Depravity of human Nature, and the Deceitfulness of human Virtues. IX. Objections from them formerly considered by the Author. X. But why here proposed to be summarily examined. XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX. Several Arguments in Confutation of them. XXI. A just Sentiment of St. Austin. XXII. Man's Destruction from himself.*

I. **A**FTER all that has been said, in the last Chapter, concerning the Passions; it may, perhaps, be pretended, that if moral Virtue should depend on the Government of them, according to the Rules there laid down, there is little Probability, that



we should be capable of practising moral Virtue. For totally to eradicate the Passions is impossible; or, were that possible, it would not yet be proper, or convenient, to oppose the End and Design of Nature in them; an End, on many Accounts, salutary and beneficial both to ourselves, and to others. There is, therefore, not only a physical Necessity, that we should be subject to the first Impulses of Passion, which are naturally unavoidable, and operate in Virtue of a mechanical Construction of our Body; but a moral Expediency, that they should very often be gratified. But yet we know the Nature of them is such, that they grow more bold, extravagant, and ungovernable, by Indulgence: The Consequence of which is, that instead  
of

of animating us, in Pursuit of what is really beneficial, and salutary ; or in avoiding any Thing noxious and prejudicial to us ; they pervert the very Use of Reason ; cause such Emotions in the Body ; and spread such a Darknes over the Mind ; that we see Nothing in a true Light, but blindly chuse the worse instead of the better Part : And even, sometimes, Men are transported by Passion, to commit the most shameful and execrable Crimes. To this it is added, that Persons of the greatest Reputation for Wisdom, and other Abilities, have been, on certain Occasions, excited, by their Passions, to do Things that are not convenient ; Things inconsistent with their known Principles, and below their Character : The meekest Men have been provoked by  
giving

giving Way to Anger, to speak *unadvisedly with their Lips*; and Persons of eminent Sanctity and Devotion, by hearkening to the Desires of impure Love, have involved themselves in the Guilt of very impious and unjust Actions. And the like ill Consequences might be exemplified in respect to all the other Passions; concerning which it has been farther observed, that as we find it difficult, at all Times, to oppose our Inclinations, especially, when more violently provoked, and put in Motion; so there are some Passions which appear to be, in themselves, directly criminal; and, as to these, we are told, Men ought not so much to consider the Method of Regulation, as how they may totally extirpate them.

II. That

II. That I may not be thought to have prescribed any Thing, in the Nature of it, above human Capacity; it may be proper to say Something distinctly in Answer to these several Objections.

III. As to the Power of the Passions, in order to pervert the Use of Reason; we grant this to be an Effect, which hath frequently happened; but it is an accidental and irregular Effect; which Men might have prevented, thro' a good Use of their Reason and Liberty, by which their Passions ought always to be regulated. The Fault, therefore, was not in the Passions, but in the Abuse of their Power and Liberty; and in exceeding those Bounds, wherein the Passions were intended by the Author of Nature to be restrained.

IV. As

IV. As to the Examples of great, and, in respect to their general Character, of good and pious Men; all that can be inferred from the Excesses, into which they have been betrayed, is; that there are Seasons, wherein Persons animated with a strong and lively Sense of Virtue, are yet more unguarded; or, wherein, there are some peculiar unhappy Circumstances of Temptation, adapted, in one Kind, or other, to the Situation they are in, attended with a Force, they are less able, or, at the Time, less inclined to resist. But, whatever, the violent Motives, to such Disorders may be in great or good Men; their Conduct is no farther a Precedent to us, than it is agreeable to Reason; the *common* Law, by which all reasonable Beings are

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to be governed. Precedents, where there is any competent Authority to recommend them, may reasonably be followed, if no certain or stated Judgment can be made, in the Case, from the Letter, or Intention of the Law ; but they are never to be followed, or upon any Pretence of Authority whatever, against Law. And, as to the last Suggestion, that there are some Passions, of which Nature Envy is, pretended to be directly evil, and unreasonable in themselves : This is precariously spoken, and without Grounds. All the Passions, so far as they are natural, are good ; Envy therefore, as it imports a State of Uneasiness, or Discontent, at the Happiness, or superior Merit of another Person, not being a reasonable, cannot be a natural Passion, it being the De-

Design of Nature; which always proceeds according to a certain and well regulated Order, that there may be no opposite inconsistent Principles in her Work; but that the governing Principle in Man, should govern every Part; that there should be no *Schism in the Body*, or natural System; but a due Harmony and Subordination of every Member to the Head. Tho' even, in respect to *Envy* itself, that most ungenerous and ignoble Passion, as proceeding from the Motives before mentioned; yet if it only imported an Emulation of those Things, wherein Persons of real Merit excel, and a secret Regret at our own Defects, followed with an Endeavour to repair and amend them; it would be so far from being a culpable Passion,

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that

that it might be attended with many happy Consequences advantageous to ourselves, and to Society. The Sorrow or Grief, which attends it, is not, as such, criminal, but indifferent; and becomes good, or ill, according to the Occasion whereby it is excited, or the End which is proposed by it.

V. The same may be observed concerning another Passion; which, tho' not criminal in a qualified Sense, yet, in popular Acceptation, is reputed among the irregular Passions, I mean that of *Ambition*; to which Men of great Minds, of an active and enterprizing Spirit, are, in Proportion, commonly more addicted. But if the End of it be only a Desire, which a Man hath to distinguish himself by great and noble Actions, or to be put in a better

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Capacity of doing Good ; or of appearing in a better Light to that End ; for without this Advantage, the finest Qualities in the World will be of little Significancy ; Ambition, if confined to these Views, and regulated in all its Pursuits by them, is not only innocent, but highly laudable. Nay, a Man, to whom Nature has given a greater Extent and Elevation of Mind, is wanting to himself, and to her Intention, if his Views are not raised and extended in Proportion. The Difficulty is, lest, in affecting to strike too high or quick a Note on this String, he should give it too strong a Tone : Temerity and Boldness being more incident to such, who have more Fire and Spirit in their Temper. And, therefore, it is too common for the ambitious,

instead of endeavouring regularly to establish a Reputation by great, generous, and useful Services, in that Sphere of Action which Providence has assigned to them, to observe no Measures of Conscience towards God, or towards Man; so they may be able to remove every Thing, and every Person, that stands in their Way: For, when Ambition breaks out into this Tumour, there is no Consideration either of publick Good, or of private Right; no Respect of Justice, or Humanity; of Truth, or Honour; that will be of Force sufficient to restrain it. Bribery and Corruption, Cruelty and Oppression, Breach of Faith and Friendship, and of all Laws human and divine, even, in more brutal Tempers, those of common Decency, and good Nature, will

will be thought lawful ; at least very excusable ; under a Pretence of being necessary to the main End proposed.

VI. But these Consequences of an irregular Ambition, or whatever particular Effects of it might be enumerated, as destructive to the Peace and Tranquillity of private Men, of private Families, and frequently of whole Communities, which are made a Sacrifice to it, are only to be considered as Deviations from those Rules, whereby truly great Minds ought to regulate their Desires. Such abusive Characters of Ambition, may, however, afford an excellent Caution against all irregular Motions of it ; and ought not to prejudice a Desire, which the Reader, if he pleases, may call Ambition, of excelling in such Things, where-

by a Man may really distinguish himself, as a more useful, or honourable Member of Society. An Ambition to be, and to do good, being an Ambition to be more like the most perfect and holy Being, the Fountain of all Goodness. This Passion, therefore, which is thought so peculiarly impatient of Restraint, and to set itself above all Rules, which are, indeed, inseparable Characters of it, when immoderate; is yet, when regulated by the Intention and Ends of Nature, capable of being very subservient, if not, of all other Passions, the most subservient, to great and glorious Actions.

VII. We must seek, therefore, for some other Reasons to shew, that moral Virtue is impracticable, than those, which are pretended from the Difficulty of governing

verning the Passions. For supposing our Affections perfectly well regulated according to Nature, in respect to such Things as are Objects of our Love, or Averfaction: There is still Something further requisite to the Morality of our Actions; namely, that they should be performed in such a Manner, and with such Purity, and Simplicity of Intention, as may render them acceptable to God. For our Happiness, the End of all our Actions, depending upon the good Pleasure of God, if we cannot perform an acceptable Service to him, a Service which it may please him to reward with a Happiness proper to our State and Condition, we should in vain endeavour to perform it.

VIII. Now, it is pretended, that whatever the Rectitude of

human Nature might be, when Man was originally formed by a wise, holy, and good God ; yet human Nature ( by what Means it is not here necessary to inquire ) hath much declined from the supposed Order and Perfection of that State. So that even when Man does not appear to act from any particular Impulse of Passion, yet his Action is seldom or never conformable, in all Respects, to the Rule of it ; which requires, that Man, in his Character of a moral Agent, should always act with a virtuous and good Intention. And yet were his best Actions, those which are materially good and regular, as to the external Manner of their Performance, to be examined by this Rule ; we are told, they would not only be found deficient, but  
many

many Times very blameable and vicious. It is owing, say they, to Pride, Vanity, Ease, Decency, a Desire of obliging in order to be obliged, the Awe of Superiors, Custom, Education, natural Temper, or acquired Habits, the Fear of Shame, of Punishment, or Loss, that Men perform certain exterior Duties in common Esteem, without any Regard, any separate Regard, to a Principle of Conscience. It was this Want of a virtuous and good Intention, that, in the Opinion of some Persons eminent for human, as well as theological Knowledge, rendered the most heroick Virtues of the Heathens, as they appeared in the Eye of the World, only so many *splendid* Sins. And there are some, who pass the like Censure upon those, who profess to believe  
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the Truth, and to be conducted by the Rules of a divine Revelation. There are modern Wits, philofophical Wits, who will not allow, that there are any Persons in the World, except a select Number distinguished, from the rest of human Race, by a special Sanctification; who are capable of performing the least Act of moral Obedience, that God can approve; or which can forward them towards the Ends all Men invincibly pursue, Freedom from Pain, and Happiness. So that the moral World, how beautiful forever Morality is, in the Theory, yet, in Fact, is only made up of Appearances; and the best Actions of Men, could we see upon what Motives, with what Temper, and for what Ends they act, would have a very different Sentence

tence



tence passed upon them by him, who *seeth not as Man seeth, and whose Judgment is always according to Truth.* It is, in particular to Pride, that, they say, Men owe the Reputation of many Actions, which the holy and righteous God detests.

IX. I have, on another Occasion, mentioned and confuted a Principle, which I considered not only as highly injurious to human Nature, but to the Honour and Goodness of God: And it being asserted by certain Names of Distinction in the politer Parts of Literature, I particularly examined some of the principal Reasons, whereby they endeavoured to support it; not that I had to do with weak or artless Adversaries; but the Love and Force of Truth was superior to all other Considerations;

rations; and now constrain me to observe, what occurs to my Thoughts towards a general Answer, of so pernicious a Principle; without descending to take Notice the particular Arguments advanced to maintain it.

X. And it is the more incumbent on one, who would write a Treatise of Morality, to refute this Principle; as it is not only espoused by Authors, who are supposed to have written with greater Freedom of Thought, and not to have been remarkable for a very strict Morality: But, as some Persons of great Learning, and Piety, have maintained the same Principle, as a special Article of Belief, and a necessary Consequence of human Depravity; however, it was originally occasioned, or has been since propagated. And, XI. If

XI. If Man, in his natural State, for I confine myself to that, be under an absolute Incapacity of doing any Thing, really acceptable to God; any Thing, but what is highly offensive and provoking to God; and which, therefore, tho' Man uses his best Endeavours to please him, must be necessarily displeasing to him; this Incapacity must proceed, either from Want of Direction, or Assistance: Either Man has not sufficient Light to inform him concerning his Obligation to a moral Conduct; or it is, such a Light, as serves only to shew him his Way, and direct him to his End, whilst he has no Power, or perhaps, no Inclination to follow it.

XII. That Man does not want a competent Light for his Direction appears from what has been said; and, indeed, supposing Man  
 wanted

wanted such Light, he could be under no moral Obligation to act; for the Morality of any Action necessarily supposes a previous Knowledge of what we ought to do, and a Conformity of Behaviour to some stated Rule. So that we can never be obliged to act, but in Consequence of what we know to be our Duty; at least, by some general Law. Neither can we be obliged to act any further, than according to the Extent of our Knowledge.

XIII. And, therefore, the general Opinion is, that Man's utter Deficiency, in discharging what we call moral Duty, does not proceed from Want of Knowledge, but of *Strength*: The Light which is in him being sufficient to reprove, to rebuke and exhort him, and so to render him self-condemned

ned; while no natural Means are afforded to him, whereby he may be enabled to act according to it. Yet such a Light, which only shews a Man his End, to render him more miserable, by the Incapacity, he apprehends himself under, of attaining it, and which directs him to no Remedy, or Method of Cure, does not give us that Idea of the divine Goodness, which naturally arises in the Mind, when we contemplate it. Neither is it more consistent with the Justice of God to deprive Men of Happiness on Account of Offences, if such *can* be Offences, which it is naturally impossible for them to avoid; than it is consistent with his Goodness to give them the Desire, and Knowledge of Things, which after all their Endeavours they must ever despair of possessing,

sing,

ing. And yet on Supposition that Man, in his natural State, has not a competent Measure of Light, and Strength, whereby he may be qualified to know and practise moral Duty, in some acceptable Manner to God, both these Consequences appear to be unavoidable.

XIV. So that whatever the Advantages of revealed Religion may be, which will be considered in the Sequel. it seems more honorary to these glorious Perfections of God, his Justice and Goodness, to which may be added his Attribute of Holiness, that Men, in a mere State of natural Religion, *may* act from truly religious Motives, and upon a Principle of Sincerity; and it is also more human and candid to believe that several of the Heathens did act in that  
 Man-

Manner, than to resolve all those shining Actions, which they performed, and for which we now admire them, solely, into a Motive of Pride, or Vanity.

XV. To render an Action acceptable to God, if any Qualifications can be conceived proper to that End, it is requisite that we should love him, that we should refer what we do to his Honour and Glory; that we should esteem Virtue for the native Beauty, and Excellency, as well as for the consequential Rewards of it; and, especially, as it brings us nearer to an Assimilation with the most perfect Being; the Rule and Model of Perfection to all other Beings. A divine Revelation, we grant, will very much tend to strengthen these Motives; and cause them to operate with

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far

far greater Force: Yet to those, who will attend to the natural Principles of Religion, it must be owned, they do not want their due Weight to persuade; at least, it will be impossible for any Man to shew, that they are, in all Cases, too weak to persuade. Being, confessedly, reasonable in themselves, why should it be impossible for reasonable Agents to be conducted by them? Why should a Man's Reason have the least Power to determine him, where the Decisions of it are the most clear, strong, and incontestable; and where it is his Interest withall that he should be determined? If Men will not attend to these Motives, that is not to be charged to any Want, either of Light, Strength, or Conveniency in them; but to their own  
cul-



culpable Neglect: The Effects of which they might, by duly considering them, have prevented; and such a Consideration would readily have discovered to them, that the Motives, I have here mentioned, to moral Virtue, are, in their own Nature, more powerful to persuade to the Practice of it, than any temporal Considerations can be to induce a contrary Practice. And why should not Men, in an Affair of the greatest Concernment to them, and where they are now presumed to act deliberately, with Knowledge and Conviction, be as capable of acting conformably to what Reason and Prudence direct, as in other Cases of far less Consequence to them? Why should they not, in this Case, govern themselves according to that Maxim by which

all wise and prudent Persons are governed in every Case; that is, *to* prefer a more strong and excellent Motive, to a weak and unjust Motive.

XVI. Those very Persons, who say, Man, in his natural State, never acts from a true Principle of Virtue, will not deny, the Light of Reason is sufficient to inform him, that he ought to love, to fear, to honour God; and to pursue his own Happiness; his true Happiness; by all those Means, which God has appointed towards the Attainment of it. Several of the Philosophers discovered these Truths; and they are so obvious, indeed, when we give the least Attention to them, that they seemed rather to flow from the primary Conceptions of Nature, than to be the Result of Art, or  
any

any philosophical Inquiry. Now, on Supposition, Man might, by the Light of Nature, know these Principles, it will be impossible to shew, they neither, in *Fact*, had, nor, *virtually*, could have, any Regard to them in their Conduct.

XVII. Upon a general Consideration, were we not otherwise convinced by Experience, it would be an Inference supported by much stronger Appearances of Probability, that reasonable Agents have always acted, upon the most clear, powerful and reasonable Motives: And such are, incontestably, the Motives above-mentioned, to all those, who will consider them, with any becoming Degree of Attention.

XVIII. It is, therefore, not only a more pious and charitable, but also a more natural Conclusion, that several of those, who

had no other Light to direct them, but that of their own Reason; such of them, especially, who have been much, and publickly, esteemed for their Wisdom and Probity, did act upon a virtuous Principle, than that they had no other End in all their Actions, but Vanity, Interest, Regard to external Decency, or some like foreign, and, merely, human Motive. It will be impossible to prove, that the Heathens did not do, what was, in the Nature of the Thing, reasonable to be done; and what it, principally, concerned them to do, in Point of their true Interest.

XIX. It is a Truth flowing from the essential Perfections of the divine Nature, that God, in creating Mankind, designed their Happiness; and willeth, consequently,  
*That*

*That all Men should be saved.* For, whatever that Expression may be extended to signify, in the holy Scriptures, it only imports, according to the present Acceptation of it, that God will-eth, all Men should *be happy*; happy, in some Measure, porportioned to their natural Powers and Capacities; at least, in such Measure, that the Miseries, to which they may be here exposed, shall not exceed the Benefits of Life to them, unless thro' a culpable Abuse of their Liberty.

This being admitted, the first Consequence is, that God, who always adapts proper Means to the End designed by him, will have *all Men come to the Knowledge of the Truth*; that being the Light, the true Light, where-

by every Man is to conduct himself, in his Way to Happiness. And, therefore, it is necessary, in this Method of arguing from the Perfections of the divine Nature, (which, of all other Methods, is the most certain and conclusive, upon the Subject of Morality) that such a Measure of Knowledge should be communicated to Man, as is sufficient, when he follows the Direction of it, to render him happy. For, otherwise, contrary to our Supposition, God, having proposed an End, a most excellent and beneficial End, an End worthy of himself, in the Creation of Man, had yet left him without the necessary Means, that should lead to it.

A second Consequence is, that every Man in, his natural State, must farther be supposed, to have  
competent

competent Abilities in order to attain, what the natural Light of his Mind directs him to pursue. For, otherwise again, besides the Inconveniencies before mentioned, on Supposition of God's dispensing a Light to Man, which would serve only to reproach and condemn him, to shew him his Defects and his Misery, the Consequence immediately foregoing, with respect to God's Failure of the End proposed by him, a Consequence, highly derogatory to his Honour, would here also equally hold good.

XX. So certain, therefore, as it is, that God designs the Happiness of Man; and that moral Virtue is necessary to Man's Happiness; so certain we may be, God did intend to afford Man the Means, and hath actually afforded

ed him the Means of practising moral Virtue, in such a competent Degree, as may tend to render him happy. It is necessary, indeed, we should form this Conclusion, not only for the Reason here mentioned, but, to the End, we may avoid, at least, one of these two impious Suppositions; either that God hath implanted in Man strong and invincible, but, at the same Time, vain delusory Desires of Happiness; or that, he has commanded Men to do, what, in the Nature of the Thing, is impossible to be done, in order to attain Happiness.

XXI. A learned and pious Father of the Church hath, indeed, in the Heat of Dispute, advanced some Things less favourable to Mankind, and to the greatest and best of Men, in a mere State of  
 natural



natural Religion. Yet the Force of Truth, when he did not directly attack the *Pelagians*, or his Zeal against them, was, probably, less inflamed, drew this most just Expostulation from him.

“ Who would not exclaim against  
 “ the Folly of a Man, that should  
 “ pretend to direct one, who is  
 “ known not to be capable of  
 “ following his Directions; or  
 “ that should condemn any Per-  
 “ son for Disobedience, who had,  
 “ confessedly, no Power of obey-  
 “ ing \* ”. Reflections of this  
 Kind are so natural and obvious,  
 and the Force of them so irre-  
 sistible, that it is surprizing to  
 consider, Men should ever have

\* *Quis non clamet stultum esse præcepta dare ei  
 cui lilerum non est, quod præcipitur, facere; & ini-  
 quum esse eum damnare, cui non fuit potestas jussa  
 implere. S. August.*

been

been put under a Necessity of asserting the Reasonableness of them.

XXII. I do not here enter into the Inquiry, concerning the different Degrees of Happiness to Men in another Life, according to the different Degrees of Light or Grace, communicated to them, in this Life: It is sufficient for my present Purpose, to assert, that all Men, how unequal soever their present Condition may be, in both these Respects, have yet not only sufficient Light, but Strength, except by their own Default, to qualify them for a competent Measure of Happiness; and that their *Destruction*, consequently, *is of themselves*, and *only* of themselves.



C H A P. XV.

*Of common, or sufficient ; and  
Special Grace.*

I, II. *The Grounds of this Distinction.* III. *Concerning the Incapacity Man is said to be under, in his natural State, of doing any Thing that is good.* IV. *Two Suppositions, on either of which a Principle of divine Grace may be asserted.* V. *And the Justice and Goodness of God vindicated.* VI. *A natural and strong Reason, why God should cause Man to depend continually on the Assistance of his Grace.* VII. *The natural*

*natural Grounds of Prayer. VIII. Of moral Actions, as opposed to spiritual. IX. A State of moral Virtue, in this Life, not a State of Perfection. X, XI, XII. Yet moral Virtue supposes a Conduct, in general, agreeable to the moral Law. XIII. We are to distinguish between moral Duties, and moral Virtue. XIV, XV. This Distinction illustrated from the Character of Fortitude in Men, and of Chastity in Women. XVI. The proper Inference from it.*

I. **W**HAT hath chiefly given Rise to the Dispute, whether Man is now capable of acting upon a virtuous and truly moral Principle, is a popular Notion, that towards enabling him,  
in

in his present degenerate State, to perform an Obedience in any Kind, or Degree, acceptable to God; or rather an Obedience, which is not directly displeasing and offensive to God; there is not only Occasion for a *natural* Light to direct his Practice, and a competent Measure of natural Strength, to excite and engage it; but a Necessity, to both these Ends, especially, to the latter of them, that he should be assisted with a supernatural Grace.

II. It is here, then, convenient to distinguish between that common Light, or that common Grace, which is, absolutely, necessary to qualify Man for a competent Discharge of his Duty, from such a special Light or Grace, as God may think fit to dispense to a select Number of  
Persons

Persons, towards rendering the Knowledge of their Duty, at once, more extensive and distinct, and their Practice of it more uniform and perfect. And they, whom God has been pleased to illuminate and sanctify, by such a special Grace, are, certainly, as will appear from the Sequel of this Discourse, in a much better Capacity of performing to him an acceptable Service, and of *working out their own Salvation*.

III. But, still, we say, God never doth, or can require, that Men should work to any End; but where he gives them those Abilities, which may be necessary to effect such End; necessary, in the Measure and Proportion, whatever that is, according to which, God intends, it should be effected. All, therefore, any Man can  
 prove

prove, from the present degenerate State of human Nature, is, that Man, considered, merely, in his natural Capacity, can do Nothing pleasing to God. This has not only been the Opinion of private Persons, and among them, of many learned Men; but the publick Decisions of Authority, in some Churches, have been alledged to support it. Now, admitting those Decisions to be incontestably true, and well founded; how will it, therefore, follow, that God does not, by some secret Method of his Will, afford to every Man a Measure of common Grace, which may be sufficient to repair his natural Disorders or Defects, in such a Manner, as, may recommend his moral Conduct to God's Acceptance?

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IV. And

IV. And whether moral Agents, in the Discharge of their Duty, act by Virtue of any natural inherent Power; or of a preventing celestial Grace; the Equity of God's Procedure, in relation to them, is the same; since, on either Supposition, the Obedience preredquired of Man to his Happiness, and to God's Acceptance, is still practicable.

V. Upon a Concession, therefore, that Man, *in his natural State, cannot turn, or prepare himself for good Works*; no Manner of Inconvenience, respecting either the Goodness, or the Justice of God, will follow; provided, what Man cannot do by his natural Strength, he may yet be enabled to do by the Assistance of divine Grace, special or common; according to the Nature,  
or



or Defign of the Work, to which he is appointed.

I will add, that, in a human Way of reasoning upon this Article, it is more probable, that God should, by a particular Donation or Will, confer on Man the Grace, in whatever Degree, necessary to a Conduct truly virtuous; than that he should give to Man such a Power of regulating his moral Behaviour, as might be wholly arbitrary, and independent: Since, by this Means, the natural Pride of Man, the most common Source of Corruption in him, would not only be kept under a continual Restraint, from a Sense of his own Imbecility: But the Apprehension, that God's Assistance is always necessary to him, in the Discharge of his Duty, would render him, at

once, more cautious of provoking God to withdraw it; and excite him, under all the more difficult Tryals of his Obedience, *by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, to make known his Requests unto God.*

VI. This Consideration discovers to us the natural Grounds of Prayer, as a religious Duty; with a very wise and cogent Reason, why Men should *continue instant in Prayer.* “ It being one  
 “ principal Design of Religion  
 “ to keep Men in a constant De-  
 “ pendance on God, this being,  
 “ indeed, one of the most pow-  
 “ erful Motives to a religious  
 “ Life; what could be more rea-  
 “ sonable, than for God to make  
 “ that the Condition of an ac-  
 “ ceptable Obedience to him,  
 “ which might cause Men to de-  
 “ pend

“ pend, more absolutely, upon him.

VII. So that the Notion of an inward and divine Power, supplying the natural Defects, and animating the religious Endeavours of Men, is so far from being an Objection, as some weak and ignorant Pretenders to Reason have made it, against divine Revelation; that Nothing can be more reasonable, than to suppose, God has appointed such a Power, as a standing and ordinary Means to Men, of performing an acceptable Obedience to him, even, in a State of natural Religion.

VIII. The Distinction between moral and spiritual Actions, tho' in a Sense, very proper and commodious; yet as to the Scope of my Argument, and the Nature of human Liberty, makes no sensible Difference. But to evince

that it does not, instead of my own Thoughts upon the Subject, I shall cite an Argument from Bishop *Taylor*, which, in the Construction of it, appears to me equally beautiful, and strong.

“ The Case of moral Actions and  
 “ spiritual is all one; for that  
 “ Action is moral, which is done  
 “ in Obedience to a Law; and a  
 “ spiritual Action is no more;  
 “ save only it relates to another  
 “ Law, to the evangelical, or  
 “ spiritual Law of Liberty: But,  
 “ in the Nature of the Thing, it  
 “ is the same; and one may as  
 “ well be chosen as the other,  
 “ when they are equally taught,  
 “ and alike commanded, and  
 “ propounded under the same  
 “ proportionable Amability; and  
 “ till they be so propounded,  
 “ they are not equally Laws.

“ Besides

“ Besides this; the denying Li-  
 “ berty in all moral Things; that  
 “ is, in all Things of Manners,  
 “ in all Things of *Obedience* to  
 “ the Laws of God and Man; and  
 “ the allowing it in Things, un-  
 “ der no Law, is a Destruction  
 “ of the very Nature and Pur-  
 “ pose of Liberty. For the only  
 “ End of Liberty is to make us  
 “ capable of Laws, of Virtue  
 “ and Reward, and to distinguish  
 “ us from Beasts, by a distinct  
 “ Manner of Approach to God,  
 “ and a Way of Conformity to  
 “ him proper to us; and except  
 “ in the Matter of divine and  
 “ human Laws; except in the  
 “ Matter of Virtue and Vice; ex-  
 “ cept in order to Reward and  
 “ Punishment; Liberty and Choice  
 “ were good for Nothing: For to  
 “ keep our selves from Harm,

“ from Poison, and Enemies, a  
 “ natural Instinct, and lower Ap-  
 “ petites, would serve our Needs,  
 “ as well as the Needs of Birds,  
 “ and Beasts. And therefore to  
 “ allow it where it is good for  
 “ Nothing, and to deny it, where  
 “ only it can be useful, and rea-  
 “ sonable, and fit to be done,  
 “ and is given by the wise Father  
 “ of all his Creatures, must needs  
 “ be amiss \*.

IX. It is not intended, by any  
 Thing, that has been here advan-  
 ced, as if Man, by the best Use  
 he can make of his Liberty, in Con-  
 currence with the common Grace  
 afforded to him, were in this Life  
 capable of an absolute, or *Stoical*  
 Perfection; we only contend for  
 such a Degree of moral Virtue,

\* *Duc. Dub. B. IV. p. 752, 753.*

as is sufficient, in general, notwithstanding the many Failures in his Duty, to denominate a Man virtuous; and entitle him to that Happiness, for which God originally endowed him with proper Capacities and invincible Desires.

X. But whether, and how far, particular Deviations from the Rule of moral Virtue, in certain Cases, do destroy the general Character of a virtuous or good Man, will, more, particularly appear from the following Considerations.

XI. Moral Virtue may be defined a Habit, formed by deliberate repeated Acts, exciting us, on all Occasions, to discharge our Duty faithfully, and enabling us to discharge it, with greater facility.

XII. What

XII. What I am principally concerned to shew, at present, is, that moral Virtue ought to be denominated, not from this, or that particular Instance, but from repeated Acts of our Duty, and and the general Tenour of our Conduct, *as* reasonable and free Agents. For the same Reason, which directs us, in one Case, to regulate our Choice or Action, by the natural Law, doth require, that they should be regulated, accordingly, in all Cases. The Rule of our moral Conduct, being always the same, should always operate with the like Force, and produce the same Effect; at least, no Person has a Right to be called a moral good Man, where such an Effect does not discover itself, upon a common Survey of his Actions.

XIII. We



XIII. We must here, then, distinguish between two Things, which Men are very apt, by using them promiscuously, to confound; moral *Duties*, and moral *Virtue*. A Man may perform a considerable moral Duty, or many shining moral Duties, without being morally virtuous. Duties respect every particular Choice or Action, to which we may be obliged: *Virtue* is the governing Principle, which presides over *all* our Actions; and from a Conformity to which, an habitual, if not always an actual Conformity, we can only be termed virtuous.

XIV. The principal moral Distinction, for Instance, of the two Sexes, are *Fortitude*, and *Chastity*; and yet no Man or Woman, except in a partial popular Sense, can be reputed virtuous  
from

from either of these Characters, simply considered, and without Regard to their moral Behaviour in other Respects. It is often found, that, even, those very Men, who are brave and valiant *by Profession*, and who discover all the Effects of a gallant and intrepid Courage, whenever they are called upon to exert it, are not yet, always, of the most strict and regular Conduct, in every Respect. So that the Camp and the Army, wherein we should naturally expect to see this *Virtue* in all its Lustre and Dignity, yet would not, I suppose, be the *first* Places, where we should go to seek for a pure and scrupulous Morality.

XV. As Chastity, indeed, is the peculiar Ornament and Glory of the female Sex, we more readily attribute moral Virtue to them

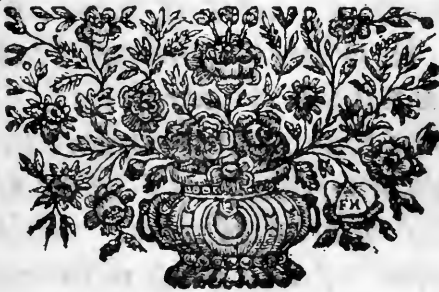
-them under a general Notion of it, on that Account; which yet we rather do from a favourable Prejudice, that *they, who are faithful in much, will be faithful in that which is little*, than from any necessary or certain Consequence in Fact; for how nice and exact soever Women may be in preserving this Character, and in conforming to all the Measures and Decencies of it, yet we sometimes find it in Conjunction with other Qualities, that are not to be examined too strictly by the general Rules of moral Virtue. And, in such Cases, we cannot, upon the *sole* Merit of it, admit them to be simply, or absolutely speaking, virtuous. Especially, when there is observed a visible Deficiency in such other Parts of their Duty, as have a more special Reference

to

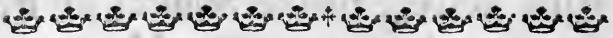
to the tender and delicate Formation of the Sex; Affability, Piety, and Complacency of Manners, with all the *Ornaments of a meek and quiet Spirit*. A manifest Failure in these feminine Qualifications, even should the Sex be so prudent and cautious, as, in respect to the principal Character of it, never to be chargeable with an indiscreet Look, Word, or Action, would nevertheless preclude them from a just Claim or Title to moral Virtue, in the true Acceptation, and full Latitude of it.

XVI. These two Instances are sufficient to shew, that moral Virtue consists in acting conformably to Reason, the Rule of it, not in particular Cases, but at all Times, in all Places, and under every Relation: And, indeed,  
 Morality

Morality, when considered by Men with respect to the Subject of it, the Regulation of their *Manners*, does evidently imply the whole Extent of their Duty ; Manners, in the direct Signification of the Term, importing, not simply any particular Act or Instance of Behaviour in Men, but the general Current and Character of their Actions.



CHAP.



## C H A P. XVI.

### *Concerning the Nature and Force of moral Habits in general.*

- I. *Connection with the two preceding Chapters; and of the two principal Qualities towards forming a Habit of moral Virtue.* II. *Whether moral Habits are natural or acquired?* III. *Moral Habits, how distinguish'd from artificial.* IV. *The Origin of moral Habits.* V. *The Temper of the Body influential on our moral Conduct.* VI. *More concerning the natural Reasons of Prayer.* VII. *An Attempt*

*Attempt toward explaining the Operation of the Habits mechanically. X. Inference from it. XI. Habits sooner formed in young People. XII. The Reason, why the good Resolutions of Men often prove so ineffectual. XIII, XIV, XV. The Use to be made of it. XVI. A farther Illustration concerning the Power of moral Habits. XVII, XVIII. As Habits are not acquired, neither are they lost instantaneously. XIX. The different Force of virtuous and vicious Habits. XX, XXI. A Difficulty moved and obviated. XXII, XXIII, XXIV. Another Difficulty considered. XXV. A general Rule towards confirming a Habit of moral Virtue.*

I. **I**T sufficiently appears from what has been said, in the two foregoing Chapters, that moral Virtue, that, which properly denominates a Man virtuous, does not consist in the Performance of particular, transient, or occasional Duties, how excellent soever they may be in their different Kinds; but, in a Conduct agreeable to the Rules of Morality in general. The same Law of moral Agents, which prohibits Sin in any Kind, prohibits it in every Kind: And, therefore, Moralists have generally defined moral Virtue to be a permanent Quality, or Habit of Choice, acquired by repeated Acts, whereby we are disposed and rendered more prompt to do whatever Reason may require to be done; and to avoid whatever is sinful: To which Ends these two Qualities are  
 prin-



principally requisite, *Prudence* and *Sincerity*: The former is properly seated in the Understanding, directing us what we are to do, and how to do it; the latter in the Will and Affections; inclining us to do it constantly, and without Interruption.

II. It has been disputed, whether it ought to enter into the Definition of moral Habits, that they are acquired? And if they may not rather be said to be natural? But the Arguments, for the common Notion of their being acquired, have been, generally, thought to preponderate, for these Reasons: That from a naked, and simple Consideration of those Affections or Qualities, which are natural to us, or which operate, in Virtue of our very Frame and Constitution, we can neither, as moral Agents,

confessedly, are, be capable, in a strict Sense of Blame, or Praise; of Reward, or Punishment: We may commend a Man, indeed, for his Strength, good Shape, or Constitution of Body; or for an extraordinary Capacity of Mind; as we may do other Creatures that excel in their several Kinds, in Strength, Beauty, or Usefulness; but, in a moral Sense, the greatest natural Advantages make no Difference among Men, except they have been improved by a regular Conduct upon virtuous Principles, to promote the great Ends of Morality. But such a Conduct, however it might have been attained by a gradual, and, perhaps, insensible Growth in Virtue, had Man continued in a State of Innocence; yet, in his present degenerate State, is not attainable,

as

as a happy Constitution of his Body may be preserved, by the mere Strength of his natural Powers; but with much Diligence and Application; and, in many Cases, not without some Violence and Opposition to his natural Temper: Whereas, all natural Habits, as all other Actions of Nature, are easy, sweet, and pleasant, and so far from being opposite to our Inclinations, that a Restraint from exercising them is always attended with a sensible Pain. To which it is added, that all natural Qualities, or Powers precede the proper Acts of them. As, in the Order of our Ideas, the Faculty of seeing is supposed prior to the Object of Sight. And so, in respect to all the other Senses; whereas Men are only denominated virtuous from the

subsequent Action; or on Supposition, at least, of an Action *effectually* chosen: Thus, before a Man can acquire the Reputation of Fortitude, he *must*, actually, surmount, or give sensible Proofs of his being prepared to surmount, such Difficulties and Dangers, where-with he may be exposed to conflict: As he, who would be thought temperate, must lay a Restraint upon his irregular Appetites, and previously exercise many proper Acts of Self-denial. From whence it is concluded, that moral Virtue, especially, a Habit of moral Virtue, is not a natural or infused Quality, but is formed or acquired by repeated Acts.

III. As moral Habits are distinguished from such, which we term natural; so it may be convenient to observe the Distinction between  
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tween them, and such Habits, as may be called *artificial*. In moral Habits Men are termed good, not only from their Capacity of acting, or of doing what they ought to do, with the greatest Address and Facility; but from an actual Application of their moral Abilities, whenever a proper Occasion of exerting them may present. He cannot preserve the Character of a good Man, who neglects to improve such Occasions to the Ends of moral Virtue. It is otherwise in Habits artificial. A good Physician is denominated from his Skill in the medicinal Art, and would not forfeit that Character, tho' he should refuse to visit a sick Person in Extrémité, and, upon no other Pretence, than that he is engaged in Company with a Number of select

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Friends.

Friends. However, such a Refusal might expose him to just Censure, as a Man of Humour, of Pride, of Insensibility, or Negligence; yet, as a Man of *Art*, he would still suffer no Imputation. It is the same, in respect to a good Painter, we call a Man so, who draws, in just Proportion; with Life and Vigour, with strong, lively and lasting Colours; with a due Conformation and Structure of Parts; a good Mein, and all the heightening Advantages of Shade and Light; tho' he should, for some time, intend or resolve for the future, wholly to discontinue the Use of his Art. There is also this remarkable Difference between moral and artificial Habits; that, in Morality, we are less culpable the more we sin out of Ignorance, or through Constraint,

straint. But the Master of any Art, or who pretends to be so, does not expose himself so much to Reproach, when he offends against the Rules of his Art, by *Design*, as when he does so, out of pure Ignorance. Thus a Statuary, if he should not intend a perfect Piece, would lose no Reputation, if it should appear less regular; but should he undertake to shew his Art in finishing a Piece, and after all his Care and Pains to that End, it should come out of his Hands very ill designed, or proportioned, or, on any other Account, notoriously defective, it must necessarily tend, in some Measure, to the Diminution of his Credit. The Case is very different in Morality. Ignorance here excuses; and we have the Character of doing well or ill, not so much

much from the Acts of the Understanding, as from those of the Will, and the Intention.

IV. Now, in order to know, more particularly, how a Habit of moral Virtue may be acquired, it is first requisite we should enquire concerning the proper Causes of it. I do not here speak of such supernatural Infusions of Light, or Grace, whereby God may think fit, in an extraordinary Manner, and to serve some extraordinary Ends of his Providence, to distinguish some particular Persons; and, especially, on a Supposition, of his designing to reveal his Will to Mankind, or to raise up any chosen Person or Persons, whom he intends to make the Instruments of some great Revolution in the World; admitting, what I now, all along, suppose a divine  
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Providence, there is Nothing repugnant to our natural Notions of Things; Nothing, but what is rather highly agreeable to them, in conceiving God may, sometimes, interpose in the Government of the World, by such supernatural Methods. But I am here only speaking concerning the common and ordinary Principles, into which moral Habits are to be resolved.

V. We must seek for the more remote Origin of them, in the Formation and Structure of the Body; for without the Body, certain moral Actions cannot be performed, nor, consequently, a Habit of them acquired. And since, by the Laws of Union God has established between the Soul and the Body, the Soul commonly follows the bodily Temper and Disposition, it happens that some  
Persons

Persons are much more capable, than others, of receiving Impressions of Virtue and Goodness, both on Account of a finer, and a more forward, Inclination: For not only the Strength, but the Liberty of the Mind, is very much owing to a more happy Texture or Conformation of the Machine, to which it is united. And, certainly, a natural and ingenuous Disposition to virtuous Actions in general, or even in particular Instances, is one of the greatest Blessings of Providence, to which we could have been born. For tho', by ill Education, through the Force of Custom, or bad Example, a contrary Temper may be, and is, God knows, sometimes introduced; yet such a Change cannot be effected without great Opposition and Reluctance; and against  
much

much stronger Checks and Conflicts of Mind, than other Persons feel in being corrupted, who are naturally of a Temper less sensible and ingenuous. And yet, even they, whom Nature has formed after such a Manner, may through a good Use of their Liberty, and the Exercise of virtuous Acts, by Degrees, new model themselves, and, at length, acquire not only a Propension to such Things, to which they were before more averse, but a Facility in practising them; which will be attended with much Satisfaction, if not with a sensible and permanent Delight. The Endeavour here, it is true, will be, at the first, and, for some Time, more painful and difficult; but the Glory of the Triumph will be greater, in Proportion, to the  
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Obstacles surmounted in the Way to it. It was this Consideration which rendered *Socrates* so much admired in his own, and in succeeding Ages; not simply, because he had acquired a Habit of living according to the Rules of a more pure Morality; there was Nothing here *singular* in a Professor of Philosophy; but because he had been able, by a strict, severe and uniform Course of Life, to overcome a perverse and vicious Temper, which rendered him naturally less capable of virtuous Attainments.

VI. Yet we are not, in our Endeavours either to improve a good, or to correct a bad Disposition, to rely wholly on our own Strength. I have assigned the Reasons before, why God has obliged us, for a Supply of all our Wants,

Wants, to have Recourse to him by Prayer. And, if our Prayers are, therefore, necessary, or will be heard by him, on any Occasion; we have the greatest Reason both to pray, and to expect our Prayers will be heard, for such Things, which are most necessary to the Ends, for which God created us, that is, to our Happiness, and to our Perfection. If *we, being evil, know how to give good Things,* Things physically good, or respecting only the present Conveniencies of Life, *to those that ask us;* we may conclude, with much stronger Assurance, that a wise, good, and all-powerful God, will hear our Prayers to him, for those Things which he sees really beneficial and salutary to us; and, especially, for such a common Measure of Light and Grace, as  
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he hath determined to confer indifferently on all Men, in such Proportion, as may render them capable of attaining the Ends, for which, in his Wisdom and Goodness, he hath created them.

VII. But the Cause, by Means of which, under the divine Direction we acquire a Habit of moral Virtue, are repeated Acts of moral Duties; for, however, we may be naturally formed, or inclined to do any Thing; yet through Use and Application we shall still be enabled, to do it with much greater Facility. The Truth of this is not only confirmed by Experience; but Philosophers have assigned natural, if they may not be termed, mechanical Reasons for it.

VIII. The

VIII. The Operations of the Soul of Man, as united, at present, to his Body, do, in great Measure, depend upon the State of his Body, especially, upon the Motions, which are excited, or performed in it, by Means of the animal Spirits; or of certain material Agents, whatever specifick Name we give to them, which actuate the several Parts of the Body; and, particularly, the Brain, the occasional, and most immediate Cause of our Sensations. For it is not necessary towards an Explication of the present Subject, that we should exactly define what the animal Spirits are. Let our Conceptions about them be true or false, the internal Motions which are performed, in the Brain and Nerves, by Means of any material Particles, whatever

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they

they may be, will equally tend to inform us concerning the Power of moral, or other Habits. Since, if the animal Spirits are not the occasional Causes of moving the Soul; it is, at least, moved by the Action, of some other subtile and active Parts of Matter; much after a Manner, from which we may draw the like Consequences.

IX. It is visible, for Instance, that when the Body is much debilitated by Sicknes, or for Want of Nourishment, how desirous soever the Soul may be of putting any Part of it upon a brisk Motion, it cannot always supply, to that End, sufficient Recruits. Whereas a Man, in perfect Health, no sooner wills, his Leg or his Arm should be extended, but there is a visible Inflation of his  
Muscles,



Muscles; which could not be made, except some bodily Particles, whatever those may be, were, in Obedience to the Order of the Will, received into the Muscles. From whence it is concluded, that the Soul exercises her Authority over the Body, by Virtue of certain corpuscular Emissaries, which, from the Life, Activity, and Force of them, are called animal Spirits; and, perhaps, not without good and reasonable Grounds. Now the Brain being the principal Place, where the Notices of the Soul, from external Objects, are received, and her Orders issued out: There is, always, in some Part of it, when it is in a regular State, a sufficient Number of these Spirits or Messengers, to take the Course, and to go directly to the

Place, for which they are ordered. And the more, the Paths, thro' which they convey themselves, are frequented and beaten, the smother, and easier, and, consequently, the more pleasant will their Passage be. Nay, after frequent Journies, the Spirits will, by Occasion of any Objects, whereby they have formerly been put in Motion, flow fortuitously, as it were, and of themselves, without waiting for the Orders of the Will, into the Channels wherein they were used to run. This is the Reason, why Habits are not only more easy, in the Practice, but render us more susceptible of such Impressions, as are principally apt to effect us, or have much, and, frequently, affected us formerly; for, by the continual Action of the Spirits, the Way is  
made

made so plain to them, and all Manner of Obstruction so entirely removed, that Light does not more naturally insinuate its self into any Aperture proper to transmit it, than the Spirits into such Pipes, or Passages of the Body, which lye open to receive them.

X. From this Explication, it is easy to conclude, why neither in the Works of Art, or the Offices of moral Life, we, at first, acquire that Facility of acting, to which afterwards we attain by Use and Application: Why, for Example, a Man, when he is first taught to play on a musical Instrument, does not move his Fingers with that Agility, which he will be able to do after repeated Tryals; when the animal Spirits, or whatever we call the Instruments of a more quick and easy

Motion of the Parts which compose the Body, have gained a free, and more open Current, through the Canals proper to convey them.

XI. It is, for the like Reasons, that Habits of any Kind are sooner formed in Children, than in aged Persons. Nature, while we are young, being tender and ductile, easily gives Way to the least Impressions, and long retains them: In an advanced Age, it is more difficult, from the firmer Contexture of the Parts of the Body, to open new Passages in it; or new Traces in the Brain; or if, at any Time, such Passages, or Traces are opened, they are not easily kept clear, and without any foreign Mixture from Spirits of a contrary Nature, and apt to excite contrary Passions, or Sentiments.

ments. For though, through some extraordinary Emotion of the Soul, occasioned by any very moving Providence, Discourse, or Accident, the Spirits may, for the Time, take a different Course; yet so soon as such Emotion, proceeding from any such particular Cause, is over, they will naturally return again into their old Channel.

XII. This is the Reason, why we, sometimes, observe so little Effects of those pious Resolutions, however animated they may appear, which Men make upon the near, and, as they apprehend it, certain, Prospect of Death; or upon any other Occasion, when the great Truths, of Morality, by Reading, Meditation, or Discourse, appear to them, as they often do to the most obdu-

durate Sinners, with a Light and Evidence, that cannot be resisted. I will add, that divine Grace, it self, whether special, or more common, while the Mind is enlightened, or the Heart powerfully moved by it, yet does not work Miracles upon the Body. A Man, who approaches the Throne of divine Grace, with the most holy and sanctified Dispositions; who forms the most lively and strong Resolutions of entering upon a virtuous Course of Life, yet is not to expect, without a Miracle, to be freed from the Power of his evil Habits, but in the same Method, whereby he acquired them; that is, by repeated Acts: But by Acts, which require a Revulsion, and contrary Course of the Spirits. There is no other Way, or natural Means of his Recovery. He  
may

may as well, hope, immediately, upon his Prayers to God, and without any physical Application, to recover the Use of a Limb, which he has lost, or is mortified; as to expect, that God will give, and, miraculously, continue to him, a different Motion of his Blood, or Spirits, or excite different Sentiments in his Mind by Occasion of them, from those to which he has been accustomed. I repeat it again, God does not convert the Soul of Man, by altering the mechanical Construction of his Body. The Grace of God, indeed gives us those Assurances, whereby we may be enabled to correct our ill Habits, and the Disorder they occasion in the animal Oeconomy; but he does not, by an immediate and positive

sitive Act of his Will, free us from the Power of them.

XIII. If, therefore, upon our praying to God, that we may be enabled to overcome the Power of our evil Habits, we do not, immediately, find our selves freed from them; let us not conclude our Prayers fruitless, or insignificant, God hears them, and will answer them, so far as it is consistent with the Methods of his Grace; which are agreeable to those of his Providence; in the Course whereof, notwithstanding his absolute Power over second Causes, he, ordinarily, leaves them to act according to stated Laws, without interposing in the Government of them, by a miraculous Power. Thus he will afford the common Measures of his Grace, towards reforming our ill Habits;  
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thro' which we may, by a good Use of our Liberty, gradually, induce a contrary Habit of Virtue: But it is not to be expected, in ordinary Cases, that God should convert us by a miraculous Power.

XIV. These Things deserve very well to be considered, in order to restrain us from contracting ill Habits; especially, in our younger Age, when the soft, delicate, and flexible Contexture of the Parts of the Body, render them capable of receiving any Form. And the same Reason, if we have been so unhappy as to contract any ill Habits, and are confirmed in them, at a riper Age, should excite us, immediately, with all the Force we can apply, to set about the Work of our Conversion: A Work so painful and difficult, and distasteful, that to succeed in it  
 may

may, without a forced Expression, in Regard to such Persons, be termed a *new Creation*; a *Putting on the new Man*; a *Renewal of the Spirit of our Minds*. The Organs, whereby the Soul acts, by the Ministry of the animal Spirits, being grown dry, hardened, and stubborn with Age, and unapt, on all these Accounts, to suffer any considerable Change. It is almost, in a human Way of Argument, as natural to put the Question, Can dry *Bones live*, or Can a dead Body be raised to Life again? As, Can an old, habitual, and obdurate Sinner, turn from the Evil of his Way, and superinduce a contrary Habit of Virtue; or bring forth *Fruits meet for Repentance*.

XV. Yet I do not speak this to discourage a Sinner, under the  
Power

Power of the most inveterate Habits, from endeavouring his Conversion, but to shew the Necessity he is under, if he would not look upon his Conversion as desperate, of attempting so important a Work, without farther Delay; and by beginning to withdraw the Supplies, which have fed his corrupt Habits, as soon as possible: For without doing this, or endeavouring to give a different Course to the Spirits; it will be as impossible for him, to effect a Cure; as it is for a Wound to be healed, while it is continually probed, or kept open.

XVI. This being a Consideration of great Importance, it may not be improper to illustrate, farther, the Power of moral Habits, from certain natural Effects, in other Instances, besides those I have mentioned.

mentioned. By Use, such Things as have been less palatable, and, even, offensive to the Taste, have become grateful and pleasant; not from any real Change in the Quality, or Relish of the Meat; but, because, by Degrees, the Organs of Taste conform and assimilate themselves to the Particles of it. So that the Inequality, which was before, in their Configuration, is removed, and a more exact Proportion arises between the Pores of the Palate, and the Particles of Meat: Which Assimilation occasions that Agreeableness of Taste, which was before wanting. Thus it is in moral Habits. Our Desire and Appetites, naturally, incline, and conform themselves to such Objects, to which they have been accustomed: And, upon this Account, we say that Custom is

is a second Nature; or has the like Effect, by rendering any Object familiar to us; which we experience, when we are conversant, or employed about such Actions, for which Nature originally formed and *disposed* us.

XVII. This is so true in Fact, and common Experience, that Habit, and Custom are Terms indifferently used to express the same Thing. And, Custom, in the natural and obvious Notion of it, always implies a Repetition of the same Acts; but not to insist upon Words of an ambiguous, or indefinite Sense; that Habits proceed from repeated Acts, and can only be produced by them, is evident from the Reason of the Thing. For a Habit, according to the common and natural

tural Idea of it, always supposes an easy Manner of Action; which yet is not to be acquired, by a single Act or Endeavour, but by frequent Use. As Engines newly made, and never before tried, will not play so well, or readily, as after the Parts of them, by Use, are grown smooth, pliant, and better adapted to the Action of one another: This Illustration, from artificial Constructions, is not improper to represent that Facility of Action in Man, which proceeds from a more open, free, and gentle Current of the Spirits, through those several Parts, or Organs of his Body, which Nature has designed *as* the Instruments of their Conveyance.

XVIII. And as a Habit cannot be acquired, instantaneously, or by a single Act, neither can it be so  
lost.

loft. A temperate Perfon, who, through Surprize, or, perhaps, on fome particular Occafion, drinks, knowingly, to Excefs, does not, therefore, wholly forfeit his general Character, of being a Man of Sobriety; much lefs, doth an intemperate Man, by a fingle Act of Abftinence, or Self-denial, when an Occafion may be prefented of indulging his ftanding Inclination to Excefs, thereby, acquire the Character of a fober Man.

XIX. There is, however, this remarkable Difference to be obferved, between virtuous and vicious Habits; that finful, and fenfible Pleafures, for Reafons refpecting the prefent State of Man, which I fhall not repeat, affecting the Soul after a more powerful, and lively Manner;

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than the Pleasures, arising from a virtuous Conduct; fewer Acts, and a less intense Endeavour, are requisite to form a Habit of Vice, than a Habit of Virtue. I will not say, but it may, possibly, happen, that even a single Disorder, accompanied with an extraordinary Emotion of the Blood and Spirits, may have the same dangerous Effects, towards corrupting the Heart, as several particular Acts of the like Kind, performed under less aggravating and violent Circumstances: As, to keep to the former Comparison, a greater Force, applied to a new Engine, may supply the Want of that easy Motion, or Lubricity of the Parts, which might, gradually, have been produced, by a more frequent Use of it.



XX. It would be insignificant, here, to object, that if one Act be not of Force sufficient to introduce a Habit, neither would a second or third; upon a Pretence, that the several Acts, supposed necessary towards introducing such a Habit, do not concur, or operate, at the same Time: For though we may easily conceive, how several Persons, with united Force, may move a heavy Body, which could not be moved by any single Hand; yet the Case is very different, when we reason concerning the Nature of moral Habits. The Application of those Acts, which are proper to produce them, is not simultaneous, like that of Men, who, go Hand in Hand, to effect any Work, but successive. So that, if the first Act of Power, in their Way of

reasoning, do not produce a Habit of Virtue, neither will a second or third; the Force of them, separately considered, being equally insufficient, towards attaining the End proposed.

XXI. In Answer to this, it may be said, though a single Act does not produce a Habit of Virtue; yet it is not, wholly, fruitless; but, in some Proportion, influential towards the Production of it. As a Man, though he cannot, by his own Strength, move a Stone, yet may communicate some Degree of Force, according as he has more Strength, to the common Endeavour, whereby it is moved. As to all the Force concurring, at the same Time, that is accidental, and does not affect the Nature of the Thing. Neither, indeed, can the Illustration  
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be applicable to moral Habits; because, it is not practicable, that several Acts should concur, at the same Time, towards forming them. And, therefore, to shew the gradual Improvements of a virtuous Agent to that End, it would be more proper, to compare the several Acts of Virtue, in order to the Formation of a Habit of Virtue, to the repeated Strokes of an Ax at the Root of a Tree; upon which tho' several of them may make but small Impression, yet every one of them contributes, more or less, towards cutting it down.

XXII. The Objection, which I now proceed to consider, appears to be more difficult. It is pretended, that if a Habit gives a greater Facility and Freedom of Action; it will follow; there is less

Merit, because less Difficulty and Opposition, in acting from a confirmed Habit of Virtue; than there is in such virtuous Actions, which wicked Men themselves, may, sometimes, be induced to perform.

XXIII. In Answer to this, we say, that the Difficulty, which attends any Action, may be considered, either in respect to the Nature of the Thing done, or to the Party, by whom it is done; that the Nature, or inherent Quality, indeed, of any Action, morally, good, always enhances the Value of it; but that the Difficulty, proceeding from the proper Default of the Agent, and not from the Nature of the Action, cannot be supposed to add any Excellency, or Advantage, in any Kind to it: By Default of  
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the Agent; I mean some accidental Incapacity, which he hath brought himself under, by his own Irregularity, or Neglect. As, when a Man, for Instance, has, for a long Time, habituated himself to hard Drinking, and, therefore, finds greater Difficulty in the Practice of Sobriety, than a Person of a sober and regular Life: He is not, therefore, more praiseworthy for a single Act of Temperance, than a Person, who is, habitually, temperate.

XXIV. Yet, though upon a general Consideration, a single Act of Vice may not produce a vicious Habit; nor a single Act of Virtue a virtuous Habit: There are certain Cases, wherein, as to their Consequences, the different Acts of Virtue, or Vice, may have the like permanent and

powerful Effects, as if they had really proceeded from settled Habits. As there are some unwholesome Meats, which do not destroy the Constitution, except by Degrees, and by repeated Use; but some Poisons, which if they do not, at once, put a Stop to all the Motions and Springs of Life, yet occasion such Disorder in the animal Oeconomy, and deprave it in such a Manner, as will terminate, at length, in its Dissolution. On the other Hand, when the Soul of Man, sometimes, exerts itself with that Ardor, and those generous Efforts of Zeal, in the Cause of Virtue, Truth and Honour, where Men chuse rather to dye, than to purchase Life by base, and ignoble Submissions; such Acts of heroick Resolution, if they be not really productive  
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of virtuous Habits; yet suppose so exalted a State of Virtue, and of that inflamed *Charity which casteth out Fear*; that it is pious to believe, they, at least, ingenerate, in the Soul, such a settled, and excellent Disposition, as is equivalent to the Force of a Habit; and which a good and righteous God will, accordingly, reward.

XXV. It might not be improper, to add certain Rules towards confirming a Habit of Virtue. But the only Rule, I would here lay down, is, that the Acts, proper to produce it, should not be too much intermitted; but that having begun a good Work, Actions of a like Kind should follow, before the Impression of the former is worn out. As he that would learn any manual Art; will make a better Progress in it, by a constant

stant Attendance upon the proper Means of learning it for one Year, than he would do in several Years, if, through long Intervals, or Difuse, he should afterward have Need to be taught again the first Rudiments of it.



## C H A P. XVII.

*How good Habits may be preserved, or augmented, and ill Habits destroyed.*

- I. *Repeated Acts necessary to preserve,*
- II. *And to destroy moral Habits.*
- III. *The gradual Acquisition and Decrease both of good,*
- IV. *And bad Habits.*
- V. *The Difficulty in extirpating*



*ting them. VI. The proper Inference from that Consideration. VII. An Objection removed. VIII. An unjust Excuse of Men, who have contracted vicious Habits, not to be admitted. IX. How a Man may discover the true State of his Soul, as well in respect to good as ill Dispositions, or Habits.*

I. **A**S Habits are acquired, they are also confirmed and augmented by repeated Acts, or rather repeated Acts are, absolutely, necessary to preserve them; for if those Channels, wherein the Spirits, which we suppose the instrumental Cause of their Operation, are either choaked up, or replete with Spirits proper to excite a different Disposition, different  
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ent Sentiments in the Soul, will naturally, follow such a Change in the bodily System. Since the Union of the Soul and Body, a ( Truth, frequently, necessary to be repeated, is Nothing but the Correspondency between the Thoughts of the Soul, and the Motions of the Body; not by Virtue of any natural Law of Contact, or Communication between them, but, purely, in Consequence of the Will of God; who has established such an Order between them, that certain Impressions, made upon the Body, shall excite particular Sensations in the Soul. And, therefore, the Authority of *Hypocrites* need not be urged to shew, that the Inclinations of the Soul change at the same Time with the Blood, and Humour; Wine, taken in a moderate Quantity,

tity, exhilarates a Man; and, in a larger, disturbs Reason: A good or ill State of Body; a Transport of Passion, and even external Accidents; the Sight of a Person whom we much love, or by whom we have been very ill used; a bright, or a cloudy Day; a moderate, or violent Exercise, often give such a Turn to our Thoughts, and so different an Air to our Conversation; that we appear, both to ourselves and others, to be, in a Manner, different Persons.

II. As Habits are acquired, and preserved by repeated Acts, they may, by a Disuse of those Acts, be, gradually, impaired, or, at length, totally destroyed; especially, by Actions contrary to them, or apt to ingenerate a different Temper. For in Morality, as in Physicks, whatever is capable of

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Augmentation is subject to Decay. But, then, neither the Transition of Men from good to bad, or from bad to good Qualities, is instantaneous, but gradual, like the Growth and Decrease of Plants or Animals. Between those two Extremes, there are several intermediate Spaces, through which a Man must necessarily pass, before he can arrive at either Point.

III. But notwithstanding vicious and evil Habits are more suited to the Inclinations of corrupt Nature; are of a quick Growth; take deeper Root in less Time, and sooner come to Maturity: Yet even before wicked Men can contract a settled Habit of Vice, and, especially, before they can fill up the Measure of their Iniquity, they must overcome several Checks and Admonitions

nitions of Conscience, and surmount many other Difficulties in respect to their Ease, their Health, their Reputation, or, perhaps, their Interest. And besides these positive Acts of Sin, they will, by Degrees, intermit the Practice of Piety, or perform the Duties of it after a very cold, negligent, and supine Manner, before they can, wholly, efface, if that be ever practicable, all the former Impressions of a virtuous Habit ; especially, such as proceeded from a virtuous Education. A Man, for Instance, who has been long, and in his younger Age, accustomed to perform his Devotions, at stated Times, in a regular and truly religious Manner, with Zeal and Fervency, cannot, at first, without sensible Regret, and many inward Conflicts of Mind,

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entirely omit so reasonable a Service to *him*, who made, and who, continually, preserves him; *And in whom he lives, moves, and has his Being.* Before, therefore, he can reconcile himself to such an Omission, he will begin to dislike the Duty of Prayer; to complain, *What a Weariness is it?* to resist the secret Admonitions which he may occasionally feel in his Mind to it; and, if he cannot, absolutely, overcome them, yet perform his Devotions without Life or Energy, till his Zeal, gradually, abating; will grow, at last, wholly unactive; and, upon a Competition between his Prayers and his Passions, he will not be long divided; *but either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.*

IV. Thus

IV. Thus too the Cause of destroying vicious Habits may be considered negatively, or positively. In the former Respect; when the Means, wherewith they are fed, or supplied, are intercepted, or cut off, as when an intemperate Person avoids the Occasion of those vicious Disorders to which he has been formerly habituated; or, if he cannot wholly avoid them, lays such a reasonable Restraint upon his Appetites, that he doth not indulge them to Excess. In the latter Respect, when he actually exerciseth those Duties, which, in the Nature of them, are proper to destroy the ill Habits he has contracted, and to introduce Habits of a contrary Kind; for these Methods are attended at once with two Effects; they cure former Disorders, and, at the

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same Time contribute to a more firm and healthy State of the Mind.

V. The greatest Difficulty, relating to the present Subject, lies in persuading Men to break off those ill Habits, in the Practice, and under the Power of which, they have long continued. For, besides, that the best Arguments, have generally little Force, against the predominant Passions of Men; and no Passions are more violent than those, which proceed from inveterate Custom; should such Persons, who have been deeply engaged in a sinful Course of Life, be really prevailed upon to think of a Change; and to form, as the most profligate Sinners, will sometimes do, certain transient Designs of a Reformation; still the great Opposition they



they must expect to meet with in the Attempt; the Force, they are to put upon themselves; and the Sacrifice they will be obliged to make of what, is through Custom, become, in a Manner, natural to them; and which, perhaps, they apprehend it as painful to make, as to *cut off a right Hand, or pluck out a right Eye*: These Things would be so apt to intimidate, and discourage them, from executing so good a Design, that, probably, it would have no other Effect, than those pious Resolutions, wicked Men, ordinarily make, in the Heat of their Passion or Zeal, when awakened into a Sense of their Sins, under the Apprehension of present Death. Men would rather be inclined to think such a Transformation, which is requisite to introduce

new and contrary Habits, in old Sinners, equally impracticable, in a mere human Way of arguing, as it would be for an *Æthiopian to change his Skin, or a Leopard his Spots.*

VI. It is not dissembled, that the Difficulty of converting a Sinner from the Evil of his Ways, is greater, in Proportion to the Continuance, and the Strength, of his sinful Habits. But the Difficulty of a necessary Work is rather an Argument, why it should be sooner undertaken, and, at the same Time, with more Vigour, and Resolution. However difficult such a Conversion may be, it is still possible, in the Use of those Means, which God will afford to all Persons, that are sincere in their Endeavours, to be reclaimed from sinful to good Habits.

Habits. A great many Persons through a settled Resolution supported by a just Greatness and Force of Mind, have been reformed from a vicious, to a regular and strict Course of Life. Habits of Vice do not render Men, therefore, incapacitated for contrary Acts of Virtue; but only through an Abuse of their Liberty, which it is in their Power to correct; for, otherways, they could have no Liberty: Though this Faculty of the Mind may, indeed, be much impaired, as the healthful State of the Body frequently is, by irregular Living; it may still be recovered; as the Powers of Life, by Care, Temperance, and great Caution, may after a long Sickness, and great Weakness, be restored to their former State and Activity.

VII. To those, who would discourage Men from all Endeavour to reform their ill Habits, by pretending, that it is equally impossible for an habitual Sinner, to do any Action tending to introduce a virtuous Habit; as for a *corrupt Tree to bring forth good Fruit*, it may be answered, that Comparisons of this Kind are not to be extended beyond the proper Import and Design of them. A corrupt Tree, while it continues in that State, without any Culture or Improvement, cannot bring forth good Fruit; yet, if it be well manured, if the dead or superfluous Branches of it be cut off, and it be dressed according to the Rules commonly practised in like Cases, may, in Time, recover its former Strength and Fœcundity. As, a good Tree, for  
Want

Want of being cultivated, will degenerate, and either produce Fruit in less Quantity, or less grateful to the Eye, and the Taste. But though Illustrations of this Kind are very proper and instructive, in the restrained Sense, wherein they are to be understood; we must not argue any farther from them; Things that act, by a Necessity of Nature, admit of a very different Consideration, from reasonable and free Agents; who, if they will exert it, have a congenial Principle of Action, and Culture within themselves.

VIII. It is a weak Pretence, therefore, of wicked Men, that they have contracted such Habits, as those of Swearing, Lying, or Impurity, that they are unable to correct, or oppose them. This Pretence is impious and unjust;

not only, as these Vices were certainly voluntary in their Causes, but also, if they will use the proper Means, curable in their Effects. So that whether they reflect upon themselves, as having contracted them, or as continuing in them; they are equally *without Excuse*.

IX. From this Account of the Habits, I shall conclude with observing, that Men may, at any Time, really discover (and there cannot be a Discovery of greater Use) what State they are in, with Respect to Virtue and Vice. In order to a Resolution in this important Enquiry, they have Nothing to do, but impartially to examine the Nature of their own Actions, and after what Manner they perform them; as whether they are done with Facility or Reluctance? with Constancy, or  
only

only by occasional, transient, or less frequent Acts? with a greater, or less Degree of Ardour and Resolution? If they are, in particular, less disposed to any virtuous Action, or find themselves averse to it; if they are rarely excited to set about it, or perform it with Coldness and Indifferency, without Alacrity, or that sensible Pleasure, which attends all the Actions of Men, when they act from the Motions of the Heart; they may, then, justly conclude, Virtue, in that Respect, has very little Power over them; but they are, *certainly*, far from having, as yet, formed any true or settled Habit of it. And, by Parity of Reason, they may make a decisive Judgment, when they examine themselves upon the like Heads of Enquiry, concerning  
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the State they are in, with Respect to sinful Habits.

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## C H A P. XVIII.

*Whether a Principle of Honour, in Contradistinction to that of moral Virtue, is to be admitted?*

- I. *A real, and nominal Idea of Honour.* II. *In what Sense a Distinction between Honour and Honesty, allowable.* III, IV, V. *The Grounds of that Distinction farther illustrated.* VI, VII. *Whether, on any Occasion, or in what Respects, it may be lawful to dissemble the Truth.* VIII. *An Opinion of Grotius*



Grotius upon that Head. IX, X. Honour, according to the nominal Idea, or abusive Sense of it. XI, XII, XIII, XIV. That Sense exploded. XV. XVI, XVII, XVIII. Of Dueling. XIX, XX. The Rule, and Advantage of true Honour. XXI. Honour, negatively considered, and in its due Extent. XXII, XXIII. And in Relation to Society. XXIV, XXV. Reflections, by Way of Improvement, from what has been said upon the Subject of Honour.

I. **I**N order to a Resolution of this Enquiry, it will be necessary to consider *Honour*, according to the real, and to the popular, or *nominal* Idea of it. In the former Respect, Honour always

ways supposes the Lawfulness of our Actions. When we say, any Thing is honourable, we only use a different Expression to signify Something, that is, *Praiseworthy and of good Report*. These Terms, therefore, if they are not promiscuously applied; yet, in the natural Construction of them, inseparably infer one another. For Nothing, in a moral Estimation of Things, can deserve Praise, but what is agreeable to the Rules of Morality; Nothing but what is lawful, and *Honest*.

II. When we speak, therefore, concerning a Man of Honour, the Lawfulness, and Honesty of his Actions, is always presupposed. And so the Difference between a lawful or honest, and an honourable Action, does not appear to lie so much, in Kind, as  
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in Degree ; or, however, to depend on the different Circumstances, under which such Actions are done. A Man, who acts out of the Simplicity of his Heart, and considers, only, whether the Action be, in the Nature of it, strictly lawful, may, in that Respect, be termed an honest Man ; because he does not offend, directly, against the Rule of Honesty, though he may not, perfectly, or in every Respect perform it, with all the Graces, or to all the Advantages, whereof it may be, possibly, capable. One, for Instance, who is just to his Promise, and faithfully observes all his Contracts with other Persons, is so, far an honest Man ; but a *good Man*, or Man of *Honour*, will even, sometimes, exceed in what he promised ; and not merely execute

ecute the Conditions, to which he had obliged himself, according to the Letter; but where they may bear too hard upon the other Party contracting, according to an equitable Construction of them; and so will have Regard, not only to the Measures of strict and legal Justice, but to the generous Motions of Liberality and Beneficence.

III. The different Circumstances, also, of doing Things, may cause a sensible Difference between acts of Honour, and those of Honesty. A plain Man, who designs Nothing more, than barely to discharge his Duty, in any Instance, satisfies himself with the Thing done, without nicely examining the Decency, the Propriety, or Advantage of it; whether in Respect to the Good of the Publick,

or

or that of private Persons. Whatsoever Things, therefore, are *lovely*. Whatsoever Things are *true*, whatsoever Things are *pure*, whatsoever Things are of *good Report*, are the proper Rules and Standards of Honour: Whereas, Honesty, according to its more simple and separate Idea, principally respects the Nature of the Action, considered abstractly from these beautiful and enobling Circumstances.

IV. It is upon these Grounds, we found the Distinction between a *righteous*, and a *good* Man; and that certain Duties of moral Life are performed, as having the Force of strict Commands; and others only, as being Counsels of Perfection; wherein there is this material Difference to be observed; that Matters, indeed, of  
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strict Duty, oblige at all Times, and in all Places: But Matters, which relate only to the exterior Form or Dignity of the Action, changing under different Circumstances, there is a greater Latitude, or rather Liberty of Discretion, in the Use of them. What is, in the Nature of it, unlawful, can never be done at any Time; but that may be decent, comely, and praise-worthy, at one Time; which, on another, would be very improper, and unbecoming, on all these Accounts, though not, strictly, unlawful.

V. But, though an unlawful Action may never be done, it does not, therefore, follow, that a lawful Action may always be done. It is a common Notion; indeed, that Men may do, without Scruple or Blame, what

no express Law has restrained them from doing. As to Circumstances of Decency or Fitness, they think themselves under no moral Obligation to regard them; especially, where they run no Hazard of their Reputation, or their temporal Interests. But these are only Rules to Men, to use the softest Terms, of vulgar and mean Spirits; and who are altogether Strangers to the Principles of a more exact and refined Morality. A Person, who has any just Sense of the Dignity of human Nature, the Interests of Religion, the Good of Mankind, and the Honour of God, will restrain himself in a thousand Instances, from doing such Things; which yet, considered, simply, in themselves, might lawfully be done.

VI. Among the Measures, whereby a Man of Honour, by which, according to my Notion of Honour, I understand only a more exalted State of Virtue, arising commonly from a superior Force and Greatness of Mind; I mentioned such Things as are *true*: which, perhaps, may occasion some Scruple in my Readers, as if I supposed *Truth*, not strictly as being of necessary Obligation; but among the Things, wherein that Liberty may be used, which is sometimes necessary to a more *perfect* State of Virtue.

VII. To prevent any Misconstruction of this Kind, I would observe, that *Truth* may be considered, as opposed to *Lying* and Deceit, negatively, or positively. In the latter Sense, it can never  
be



be lawful, under any Circumstances, to assert a downright and, especially, a pernicious Falshood. But it yet may, sometimes, be lawful to disguise or conceal the Truth. And in respect to this negative Acceptation of Truth, a Man, without directly offending against it, may often use a greater Liberty of Discretion. And, accordingly, several great Authorities are cited by *Grotius*\*, to shew, and among the rest, that of *Cicero*, in several Places; that it is lawful, especially, in Persons entrusted with the publick Administration, on many Occasions, to use Artifice in dissembling the Truth. But, however, this Liberty may be contended for, it is more laudable, generous, more a-

\* *De Jur. Bell & Pac. Lib. 3. Cap. 1.*

greeable to the Dignity of human Nature, and, in all these Respects, to the Rules of *Honour*, that Men should never have Recourse to Diffimulation; that being, confessedly, an Argument of Imbecillity, accompanied with Fear and Distrust. And, therefore, *Plato*, who allows the Use of it, in certain Cases, to Men, yet justly acknowledgeth, that God, notwithstanding his sovereign Dominion over Men, cannot make use of such a Refuge; as always implying a tacit Confession of Weakness. So that when *Cicero*, in another Place, asserts, that Fraud and Diffimulation ought to be banished out of human Life, to make him consistent with himself we must suppose, he speaks here agreeably to the Distinction, which occurs so often in his admirable Book of *Offices*;

*Offices*; where he puts a Difference between such Things and Actions as are, simply, lawful, and such as are really laudable. The Necessity of Affairs, in the Commonwealth, may, sometimes, possibly, render it no indirect Breach of moral Honesty, to dissemble the Truth; but still it is more *honourable*, in every State of Life, private or publick, to avoid the very Appearances of Falshood; and to restrain our selves from the Use of a Liberty, which, however, it may be successfully employed, is, at the best, but an ignoble, and inglorious Means of Success.

VIII. And, therefore, *Grotius* having enumerated the several Authorities and Arguments, commonly, used to excuse, or defend, political Lying; to correct the ill Impressions, which Men of

more loose Principles might make from such Concessions, delivers himself like a Casuist, who had a Sense of *Honour*, as well as Justice, in the following Words: “ We know there are some Kinds  
 “ of *Deceit*, which tho’ naturally  
 “ permitted, yet are condemned  
 “ and exploded by several Per-  
 “ sons; not strictly on Account  
 “ of their *Unlawfulness*, but out  
 “ of a certain Grandeur of Mind,  
 “ and sometimes from a secret  
 “ Conscioufness of their own  
 “ *Strength*”. Which Opinion he confirms by several remarkable Authorities, especially in respect to Princes, from the best of the ancient Moralists; and his Citations from them deserve very well to be consulted.

IX. Having thus endeavoured to state the true Notion of Honour,  
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my next Business is to shew, what the popular, or *nominal* Idea of it, does, ordinarily, import?

X. And here, there is a proper Occasion of observing, that the most common Terms are often the most confused and ambiguous. Every Man, because they are frequently used in Conversation, or Writing, apprehends, he perfectly understands them; while few annex to them the same Ideas, and others appear to have no certain or distinct Idea of them at all. Among several Words of this Kind, which Use has made current, without impressing any *real* Character upon them; such as Conscience, Liberty, publick Good, and Loyalty; and, in some Cases, Law and Justice itself, I am here, particularly to add, that of *Honour*; than which, if

we consider it in its true Notion, and as inseparable from Honesty, Nothing is more intelligible. But if we consider it in the abusive Sense, wherein wicked Men frequently agree to express it; and even, sometimes, Men who would be thought to conduct themselves by the Rules of Conscience and Religion, Nothing is more irreconcilable to Reason.

XI. It is absurd to suppose, that any voluntary Agreement, or Compact of Men, should oblige them, whatever the Pretence may be, to an unlawful Action; they being already under an antecedent and contrary Obligation to that universal Law of reasonable Beings, which alone ought to be obeyed, absolutely, and without Reserve. No Man can be obliged to an Impossibility;  
 now

now, in a just Way of Reasoning, with respect to moral Agents, what cannot, lawfully, be done, is *impossible* to be done.

XII. And, therefore, all Casuists are agreed, that no Engagements of any Kind, not those confirmed by the most solemn Promises, Oaths, or Affeверations, can be of any Force to oblige against the natural Reason, or Equity of Things. For, otherwise, it would follow, that a Combination of wicked Men, in promoting any unjust Design, might vacate the Laws of the supreme Legislator: And that, in such Cases, it would be reasonable to *hearken unto Men, more than unto God*: Which Principle being admitted, it would, at any Time, depend on superior Force and Numbers, to establish a quite different Scheme  
of

of Morality, from that, which before had really, and, perhaps, in all Ages, obtained; and may, in the Course of a few Years, obtain again, in the very Place, where it was before proscribed. For if the Distinction of Virtue and Vice, of Honour, or Infamy, are only founded in human Compact; the governing Part of the World will have the same Power to vary the Notions of Virtue and Vice, of Praise and Blame, as they will have of making arbitrary Laws, concerning Things that are only founded on mere prudential Considerations. So that Men would be at a continual Loss to know, whether Truth and Justice, Sobriety and Chastity; to which the Idea of Praise and Virtue are now affixed; would not, in some future Time, when the Legislature should  
 so



ſo enact, juſtly expoſe Men to Punishment and Diſgrace.

XIII. No Obligation, for theſe Reaſons, can lie upon a Man in Point of Honour, by Virtue of any human Conſtitution or Authority whatever, to an Action, notoriously, ſinful: This can admit no Diſpute. But there is another falſe Notion of Honour, which, ſometimes, obtains among Perſons of weak, or ill-informed Minds, which ought, alſo, to be removed. It is common for Men, when they have once, openly, committed ſome Error or Folly, to think themſelves obliged in Honour, and that they may avoid the Reproach of Levity or Inconſtancy, to proceed in it. So that though their Hearts ſecretly accuſe them of Temerity, or Indiscretion; yet they

they will defend what they have said, or done: And the Defence of their Conduct, frequently, is worse, and exposes them to greater Censure, than the very Fault, wherewith they are charged. As a Person once guilty, or suspected to be guilty, of a Lye; to avoid Detection, often, brings himself under a Necessity of covering it, by a Train of additional Lies, or, perhaps, of horrid Imprecations.

XIV. And if a Notion of Honour cannot oblige against Reasons of Prudence, or in respect to such Things, as have, perhaps, Nothing directly criminal in them; much less can it oblige to any Acts of Injustice, to the Prejudice, or Provocation of other Persons; notwithstanding Custom may, in great Measure, have lessened

lessened the Infamy, wherewith such Acts ought to have been, and would have been, otherwise, attended.

XV. I refer, here, to that false Notion of Honour, which puts Men upon revenging themselves, where any real, or imaginary, Indignity is offered them, by shedding the Blood of the Offender: No less a Sacrifice being thought sufficient to atone for the Injuries they have sustained. I do not, here, inquire, how far, in a State of Nature, and Independency, one Man may have a Power over the Body, or Life, of another, where he is violently attacked, in his Person, or Reputation; and cannot, otherwise, defend either of them, but by repelling his Adversary by Violence. But where Men are incorporated  
into

into regular Societies, and have submitted to be governed by certain Laws, which take Cognizance of all Offences, that may arise among them; to the Decision whereof, the Judgment, concerning such Offences, is referred. In this Case, for a private Person, to take the Power of the Sword into his own Hands, upon any Pretence, is, directly, to make himself a *Ruler*, and a *Judge*; and to transgress the Laws, in the highest Instance of Contempt and Disobedience, that of invading the Right, the proper Right, of the civil Magistrate.

XVI. Now, an Obligation to all human Laws, so far as they are just and equitable, being founded in the Laws of Nature and Reason, they have, consequently, in them the Force of a  
 divine

divine Law. And the same Argument, whereby we prove that Nothing, which is contrary to the natural Law, can be agreeable to the Laws of Honour, will invincibly prove, that *Honour* can never oblige us to act in Breach of those human Laws, to which we profess, and owe, Subjection.

XVII. I will add, that even, abstracting from human Laws, and, on Supposition, that a certain Number of Men should meet, or be cast fortuitously, upon any Part of the uninhabited World, where upon their first Congress, no one could pretend to have any Power, or Authority, over another; yet, even here, in Case of any Injury offered, the Party injured could have no Right to demand, or seek, Reparation, except

cept in a reasonable Degree of Proportion to the Injury done to him. For though he is not restrained by any positive Compact, to which they have by Consent submitted; still the common Law of Reason, of Humanity, and Charity; that Law, in particular, of not doing to another what, in a supposed Change of Circumstances, a Man would not have done to himself; a Law, universally, binding in every State and Condition of Life, will oblige him, not to extend his Demands of Satisfaction, beyond the Degree of such Injury, as he hath received. Nay, he will rather, in many Cases of less Concernment, chuse to *suffer Wrong*, and even to recede from those Methods of Retaliation, which he might, in strict Justice, take, than endeavour

vour to revenge himself, for flight or trival Offences.

XVIII. Would Men, in civil Society, moderate their Passions and Resentments, by these Rules, they would not, so readily, work themselves up, or fly out (especially, when the Injury apprehended, or received, is inconsiderable) into those violent Heats, which Nothing but Blood can allay; and which frequently, therefore, terminate in their own, or their Adversaries Death; and, sometimes, in the Destruction of both; and that upon a vain fantastick Notion, of what they call Honour: Which, saith, *the excellent Gro- tius, upon this Subject*: “ ap-  
 “ pears no less contrary to Rea-  
 “ son, than the Maxims of sound  
 “ Piety. For Honour, import-  
 “ ing an Idea of some Excellency

“ and Merit; he that can put  
 “ up an Affront, discovering a  
 “ Superiority of Mind, as being  
 “ above the Sense of it, rather  
 “ augments his Honour, than  
 “ does any Thing to the Di-  
 “ minution of it. Neither is it  
 “ of any Significancy, that some  
 “ Men, through a corrupt Judg-  
 “ ment, traduce this Virtue with  
 “ false and opprobrious Names.  
 “ For the Errors, or false Judg-  
 “ ments, of weak, or wicked  
 “ Men, do not alter the Nature  
 “ of Things. Neither are they,  
 “ who believe the Christian Re-  
 “ velation, only, of this Opinion;  
 “ but even the Philosophers have  
 “ argued, from a common Prin-  
 “ ciple of natural Reason, that  
 “ it is the Sign of a weak, mean,  
 “ or effeminate Soul in Man,  
 “ not



“ not to be able to bear Injuries \*.”

XIX. I would not, hereby, insinuate, as if Men could be too cautious in preserving their Honour; provided, this may be done in a just and honourable Way. But Honour, as every Thing else, that is excellent, ought to have some distinct Characteristick, whereby it may be known and ascertained. Now, by what Rule can we so properly try and examine a Quality, wherein some peculiar Perogative of a human Mind is supposed to lie; as by that Reason, whereby human Nature, itself, is dignified and distinguished? that Reason, by acting in Conformity to which, we

\* Grot. *De Jur. Bell. & Pac. Lib. 2. Cap. 1.*  
p. 10.

alone approach nearer to the Original Source of all Excellency.

XX. Nothing is, therefore, here intended to the Diminution of Honour, in the true, but only in the improper, or abusive, Notion of it. No Character, indeed, is of such Importance, I do not say, toward effecting our more private Designs (an Advantage, by no Means, in itself, contemptible) but towards a happy Conduct, and Execution, of any great, or publick, Enterprize. This is so visible, that let two Persons of equal Fortune, Capacity, or Address, express themselves in the same Terms; give the same Advice; and negotiate the same Affair; yet what they say, or do, shall operate, after a very different Manner; or be attended, with very different  
 Success,

Success, as they are differently *thought* of, or esteemed. If we entertain a good Opinion of any Person, or consider him as a *Man of Honour*, all his Motions are well received; all his Actions supposed to proceed from good Motives, to be conducted by the wisest Means, and to prosecute the best Ends. His Advice, his Persuasions, his very Reproofs, find an easy Access to the Heart. But a Person, who lies under any Calumny, or Suspicions, cannot exert himself to the Benefit of others, even when his Measures are well concerted, his Admonitions just, and his Designs and Actions prudently conducted, without committing some Kind of Violence upon them.

XXI. It is not, therefore, sufficient to a Man, who would ren-

der himself, in any superior Degree, useful, or considerable, in Society, that he should be *negatively* honest, or honourable; that is, conduct himself after such a Manner, as not *to* offend, directly, or openly, against publick Fame; it is incumbent on him, if he will preserve that Degree of Esteem in the World, which will give him any Weight, or Authority in his Station, not only to *provide Things honest in the Sight of God, and Men*; but to *approve the Things that are excellent*.

XXII. I will here add, that Honour always supposes some Quality, or Action, more peculiarly, relating to Men, considered as Members of Society. And, therefore, the Signification of it is properly restrained to such Instances

stances of our Duty, whereby we promote, in one Kind, or other, the Good of other Men; or discover, at least, a generous Disposition, where we want Power, to that End. A Man of Piety, of Meekness, and Sobriety, will, on account of these Qualities, render himself accepted of God, and approved of Men; but the more proper Subjects of *Honour*, are Acts of Justice, whether commutative, or distributive; and, *especially*, of Beneficence. And the Idea of Honour, indeed, is so restrained to these Subjects, that the Character of it is, in a Manner, by common Use, appropriated to Persons of Distinction in the World; who have larger Abilities, on one Account, or other, and a wider Compass, with more

Occasions of doing Good, in civil Life.

XXIII. From which Consideration, a farther Argument may be formed, to shew, that Honour ought never to be separated from Honesty; as all Persons in Proportion to the Advantages they enjoy, of a more liberal Education, and improved Understanding, are under a stronger Obligation to assert, recommend, and exemplify, a strict Morality.

XXIV. It appears, then, without any long Recapitulation of what has been said upon this Head, that Honour, when distinguished from moral Virtue, is not, in Reality, any Character, really, separable from it, but only imports a different Manner of conceiving moral Virtue, particularly,

larly, in respect to the Branches of it just before mentioned, *Justice*, and *Benevolence*. Honour, therefore, in the Language of wicked Men, who acknowledge not a real Distinction of Virtue and Vice, of lawful, or unlawful, but what arises from common Opinion, seems to be one of the most pernicious Principles, that the human Mind is capable of entertaining. For, in this Way of Reasoning, a Man of Honour, as he is called, can only be obliged to consult his external Reputation. No human Laws, or Compacts, can reach the Heart, or lay any Obligation upon the Conscience. Nothing can do this, but the internal Monitor, which speaks, continually, within us; the silent, and still Voice whereof is heard in our greatest Privacies,  
and

and Retirements. But to one who disowns the Power and Authority of this internal Monitor, He cannot be of the least Use, or Sgnificancy. And, therefore, the Man of Honour, according to his Notion of Honour, may commit, without Shame, or Remorse, the most unjust and abominable Actions, provided he can do it with Security, and in private, that is, without offending against publick Fame, or what the World has agreed, at present, to call Honour; whatever may happen to be called so, in any Time future; for the Opinion of the World, if there be no real Difference in the Nature of Things, cannot affect the Nature of them; so that a Man is at Liberty, provided he can escape the Eye, or Censure, of the World; to act, in such a  
Case,



Case, as private Passion, or Interest, shall direct him. This Opinion, therefore, which destroys all the inward Restraints of Honour, (and it is easy, on a thousand Occasions, to evade the outward) is so *pernicious*, that I do not know, whether it be of more fatal Consequence in moral Life, to say there is no God; than to acknowledge the Being of a God, and to assert, at the same Time, he has given no certain, or stated, Rules; no Rules, but what depend upon the mutable Humour, or Opinions, of Men, for the Conduct of moral Life.

XXV. I do not say, but that some Men have naturally so good and generous Dispositions, that they cannot easily do a base, or unjust Action, without offering  
much

much Violence to themselves. And it must be owned, this Disposition does often carry Men, not otherwise very scrupulous in Matters of Conscience, a great Way, in all the Appearances of Honour. But it is not to be depended upon, especially, in Cases of Extremity, which much affect us, except it be animated and enforced with that internal Principle, of which I have been speaking. We may call Honour, in such Persons, Humour, Fashion, good Nature, Sensibility of Temper, a higher Fermentation of the Blood, or some other occasional Cause, of giving a more violent Agitation to the Spirits, whereby the Soul is powerfully affected. But, Nothing, to conclude, can deserve the Name of

*true*



VII, VIII, IX. *Of the Stoicks; particularly, Zeno, Chryfippus, and Seneca.* X, XI, XII. *Of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI. And Cicero.*

I. **I** Proceed, every where, upon this Principle; that Reason is the proper Rule of human Judgment, and Action. Reason, whereby a Man endeavours to discover the true Nature of Things, with the several Relations, wherein they stand towards one another; and, thereupon, having formed the Scheme of his Conduct, determines effectually to follow it. To this End, every Man must assert that natural inherent Right of judging for himself, from which no Man, considered as a reasonable Agent, is excluded. But it is very consistent with private Judgment, that

that we should inquire, especially, in more nice and intricate Cases, relating to moral Life, (since the Reason of all Duties is not equally evident) what has been the Opinion of other Men concerning them? especially, of of such Men, if they can be found, who have had, for Ages past, an established Reputation throughout the World, for their great Wisdom, and Knowledge.

II. Were I thought worthy to be consulted, by any Person, upon such an Inquiry, I should direct him to several ancient *Christian* Writers; yet not, strictly, under that Character, or as they confirm the moral Truths and Instructions delivered in their Writings, by a divine Authority; but because there is certainly to be discovered in them, without any  
 Regard

Regard to divine Authority, a more strict, pure, and perspicuous, a more uniform and consistent Scheme of Morality, than can be found in the moral Tracts of any ancient Heathen Writer whatever: Which Assertion, tho' it be not admitted, neither, in this Place, do I design it should be admitted, as an Argument, to prove the divine Inspiration of the holy Scriptures; yet it is a very strong Argument in Proof of their Excellency and Perfection, as a Rule of moral Life.

III. But since he, who should move the Question, might possibly except against Christian Writers, as being prepossessed with Christian Principles, and, consequently, as less equal, or competent Judges in the Case. I should, in the next Place, propose to lead  
him

him into the philosophical World, not to take a minute and distinct Survey of it; that would be an Attempt of more Trouble and Curiosity, than Use; but only to make such transient Discoveries, upon which some general Account might be given, concerning the Temper and Produce of the Country.

IV. And here to quit the Metaphor, and examine the Thing in a plain and natural Manner, it is readily granted, that we find, in the Writings of the Philosophers, many excellent Rules and Precepts, here and there dispersed, for the Conduct of moral Life. And if they did not always resolve those Precepts into their true and proper Grounds, it was not from any invincible Defect in human Reason, but for

Want of particular Attention, in themselves; or, because they did not make that Use, in every Respect, they might have made of those reasoning Powers, wherewith God had endowed them. For human Reason is the same in all Ages: The great Difference lies in the Exercise and Application of it; which, tho' it much depends on the native Strength, or Liberty, of our own Minds; may, yet, produce different Discoveries, in different Ages, relating to Morality, by Means of several accidental Causes, under the Direction of divine Providence.

V. It must, however, be acknowledged, that with all the new Lights, that are now afforded to us in moral Philosophy, we  
owe



owe very much to the ancient moral Writers; if not for the Purity and Strictness of their Rules, yet for the lively, beautiful, and natural Manner, wherewith they did so happily embellish, and recommend them.

VI. It seems, indeed, much more difficult to resolve, why the Philosophers have not left us any just, or perfect, System of Morality; than, why many of them, celebrated for their great Wisdom and Learning; so grossly erred, concerning some of the most fundamental, and even common, Duties of moral Life;

The Morality of the Stoicks, more strict, than *pure* or *perfect*, was, particularly, taught by *Zeno* and *Chrysippus*, as two of the *grand Masters*, or Heads of that Sect, if the former was not the original

Founder of it. Yet we are not to expect much Light from him, towards discovering either the true Principles, or the proper Duties of Morality. His Way of reasoning, upon all Subjects, being rather to amuse and perplex, than to establish any Thing, *as* certain. His Business was to take the Field, and fight against all Comers; and if he could not subdue his Adversaries by main Strength, to circumvent them by any Artifice, or Stratagem, that a subtle and ready Wit could supply. When he set himself to confute an Opinion, or baffle an Opponent, all he proposed was to triumph, without Regard to the Truth, to the Probability, or even Possibility of the Matter in Contest: And, upon this Account, *Seneca*, enumerating several absurd

furd Doctrines, advanced by the Scepticks, represents none of them so extravagant in his Notions, as *Zeno*. Some of them denied the Truth of one Thing, some of another; but, \* according to *Zeno*, there was no Truth or Certainty in any Thing. It cannot be pretended, this Observation ought to be confined to Subjects of natural Philosophy; since *Sextus Empericus* has proved, both, according to *Zeno*, and *Chrysippus*, that there is no real, or certain, Difference between Virtue and Vice. We are not to be surprized, if upon such an uncertain and fluctuating Scheme, these two Fathers of the Stoical Sect, erred very much, when they came to explain them-

\* *Si Zenoni, ne unum quidem.* Senec. Ep. 88.

selves upon particular moral Duties: That the former of them, for Instance, taught, Men ought to permit, to one another, a promiscuous Use of their Wives; and is violently suspected to have practised, if he did not teach, a Sin which ought not to be named: That the latter of them asserted the Lawfulness of an incestuous Commerce, between Persons in the first Degrees of Consanguinity; and that both of them filled their Writings with such obscene Passages, which could not be read by Persons, who had any Sense of Shame, or Modesty.

VII. The succeeding Stoicks being sensible, that according to the primitive and fundamental Doctrines of that Sect, the Honour of it could not, possibly, be defended,

defended, endeavoured, in some Measure, to reform and soften them; and to bring them nearer to the Principles of a pure Morality: Particularly, about the Time when the Christian Doctrine began to spread, and to enlighten the World. Yet the Notion that all Crimes are equal, as that it was indifferent in the *Nature* and *Reason* of the Thing, whether a Man should murder his Father \*, or kill a Cock, did still, generally, obtain among them.

VIII. An Affectation of Subtlety seems, indeed, to have been, no less, the Character of *Chrysisippus*, than of *Zeno*; but it, sometimes, engaged him in Difficulties, out of which he could find

\* *Tull. pro. Muræna.*

no Way of extricating himself. He would propose Objections with such Force, and in so good a Light, that his Answers were neither, always, so solid, nor so clear, as to oblige an Assent to the contrary Opinion. At other Times, he advanced Notions, not so much unworthy of a Philosopher, as altogether chimerical; as that Virtue and Vice, Arts and Sciences, were corporeal, and rational Animals; which, besides, the Temerity of the Assertion, without Proof, or the least Appearance of Probability, by uniting the Ideas of corporeal, and rational, in the same Subject, Ideas the most foreign, and incompatible in Nature, is, of itself, sufficient to discover to us, that with all his Subtlety, this Philosopher did not propose it as a  
 Rule

Rule to himself, always to argue, from clear and distinct Ideas. Most of the Absurdities, indeed, and Paradoxes, objected by *Plutarch*, against the Stoicks, are taken from *Chrysippus*.

IX. Among all the Stoicks, no Person appears to have endeavour'd more to recommend Morality in its full Compass and Extent, or to have made greater Improvements in the *Theory* of it, than *Seneca*. Yet, he has rather declaimed, like a Man of Wit and Experience, against Vice, than established moral Virtue, upon its true Foundation. He understood the Strength, and Defects of human Nature; and knew, how to adorn his Subject with all those Ornaments, which were proper to set it off to Advantage; but,

but, designing, if we may judge concerning his Intention, from the Effect of his Writings, rather to surprize and please, than to convince, he seldom went to the Bottom of Things, or reduced the fine and beautiful Reflections, wherewith he abounds, to any true, or certain Standard. This being the Character of a Person, much celebrated for his moral Writings, which are in the Hands of many Christians, and in several Languages, I think my self obliged to confirm it by two Authorities, against which, there will lie no Exception; the first is from *Seneca* himself, as cited by St. *Austin*; who, on Occasion of what he had written, concerning certain impure, and wicked Rites of Pagan Superstition, represents him, saying, that a wise Man will conform



form to those Rites, not on Account of their being acceptable to God, but in Obedience to human Laws \*; founding the Obligation of observing them, not in the Law of Nature, but in positive Institution, contrary to the Law of Nature. † The other Authority is that of *Quintilian*, whose Character of this Moralist imports, that tho' he had an excellent Faculty of exposing the Vices of Mankind; yet he was far from being exact in his Researches, considered, strictly, as a Philosopher.

X. But may we not expect greater Discoveries, in Morality, from those three shining Lights which appeared in the philosophical World, in the same Age;

\* *S. Aug. Civ. Dei. L. 6. C. 10.*

† *In Philosophia parum diligens, egregius tamen vitiorum insectator. Inst. L. 10. C. 18.*

*Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle?*  
As to the former, if we consider moral Philosophy, as reduced into a Method for the Conduct of human Life; or as a useful and practical Part of Knowledge; the greatest Improvements, to that End, have been ascribed to him. Before his Time, the Principles of it lay loose and dispersed, in certain short Aphorisms or Sentences, without any regular, much less, any entire Dependence of one Thing upon another. But whatever Improvements this excellent Person made in the moral, and practical Parts of Philosophy, they appear to have been, solely, owing to the Light of his own Mind; for, since he did not travel, as others of his Country Men did, in Search of Knowledge abroad, neither was there any Occasion, that

that he should take this Method, in order to inform himself, concerning that, which by attending to the common Principles of natural Reason, he might, at any Time, discover, in his closest Retirements; and the sooner, for being retired. Yet we know little of his Discourses, upon moral, or other Subjects, but what has been transmitted down to us, in the Writings of *Plato*, and *Xenophon*; the former of whom, especially, is supposed to have made him the Author of several \* Things which he never said. From whom, however, it appears, how orthodox soever, generally speaking, *Socrates* has been in his Doctrine relating to Morality itself, yet in the Method he took to propagate it, he discovered

\* *Aul. Gell. L. 14. C. 3.*

much

much Diffidence, and Uncertainty.

XI. *Plato* improved, upon the Principles of this Philosopher; but, notwithstanding the easy, flow, the happy Cadence, and Beauty of his Expression; he is not, always, perfectly clear in his Sentiments: Concerning which, therefore, we must, sometimes, satisfy our selves, at last, with making the most probable Conjectures. But the Difficulty we are under, of finding out his Meaning, in certain Cases, does not afford so just Matter of Regret, or Complaint, as certain gross and notorious Errors which occur in his Writings. For he not only held, with *Socrates*, a Community of *Wives* lawful; but he delivered it as his Opinion,  
that

that Infants might lawfully be destroyed, or exposed to starve. And, herein, he is followed by *Aristotle*, who yet might, *here*, have found a much better, and more just Cause, of contradicting him, than on several other Occasions, which he affects to improve to that End. What seems more unaccountable is, that *Plutarch*, who had, with much Care, examined, and confuted, the Errors of several other moral Writers; yet, speaking concerning the Laws of *Lycurgus*, observes, he found Nothing in them repugnant to the Laws of Justice, or Honesty: And, yet, not only, these two Errors, relating to a Community of Wives, and the Murthering of Infants, if weak or sickly; but Theft, also, was legitimated by those Laws.

XII. *Ari-*

XII. *Aristotle* hath, indeed, left us a methodical System of Morality, wherein most of the Duties relating to private, and social, Life, are, according to his Scheme, very well deduced and established; but, besides, that in his *Ethicks*, as in his other Works. He is, sometimes, obscure; if he did not really affect to hide himself, as there is Reason to believe, from the Apology he made to *Alexander*, for the Publication of some of his Books, contrary to the Sentiments of *that* Hero; “ That they were published, and, “ in Effect, not published, because “ not intelligible”. It may be, farther, observed, concerning *Aristotle*, in common with other Philosophers, that he never established the Truths of Morality, upon their true and proper Grounds;

Grounds; or hath shewed the Obligation we are under to practise them, in Conformity to the Will of God; the Reasonableness, and Piety, of imitating him, in all his imitable Perfections; and from a Consideration of future Rewards, and Punishments.

XIII. *Cicero*, himself, was deficient, in not giving these several Sanctions, to the Duties of moral Life. And, therefore, it may be said, concerning those admirable Rules of Virtue, which he hath laid down in his Works, that there is a great deal more Beauty in them, than Strength; that they want that Force, which they would have had, to persuade, had he superstructed upon the true, and sure Foundations of Virtue. Even, in a Court of publick Judicature, where he was

D d

plead-

pleading, he endeavoured to expose the Doctrine, concerning a future State of Punishment, to wicked Men, as a groundless Fiction\*. And, on another Occasion, this grave and learned Orator did not think it inconsistent with his Character, in either Respect, openly, to apologize, for the criminal and impure Liberties, wherewith *M. Cælius* was charged: Not, as, it might have been expected, a Philosopher would have attempted, at least to do, from the Nature or Reason of Things; but merely, from the Licentiousness of the Age, and former Custom, and Connivance. Which was, in Effect, to teach, before the greatest Audience, at that Time, in the World; that where Men have

\* *Pro Cluentio.*



been able, by Means of superior Force, or Numbers, to introduce, or support, any wicked Custom, contrary to natural Order, or the Law of God; such Custom, and consequently, Men, ought to be obeyed, rather than God.

XIV. We are not to be surprized, if a Person, who did not carry his Researches after moral Virtue, to the true Original of it, and where it is only to be found, was easily retained to plead for a loose Morality; and that, after all the excellent Rules he hath laid down, for the Conduct of moral Life, he was scarce sure, or positive in any Thing. I shall give a remarkable Instance, of the doubtful, and insecure Grounds, upon which he proceeded in his moral Philosophy, from what I shall, presently, observe, relating to

*Carneades.* In the mean Time, I have no Design, on any Account, to detract from *Cicero's* Merit, or the Glory, whereof he has been so justly possessed, in all succeeding Ages, and among the best Judges, for the many admirable Maxims, relating to moral Life, which he has interspersed in all his Works; but, whereof, in his Book of *Offices*, he has formed a very regular, and beautiful, Plan; though he has no where, as hath been observed, established Morality upon its true Basis; nor, always, upon the best Principles, which himself has, sometimes, advanced. An Argument, that his Notions were fluctuating, and uncertain; as *those*, of all Men, naturally are, who build either upon false, or more precarious Grounds.

XV. Most

XV. Most of the Arguments, which he employs to establish, and recommend moral Virtue, are taken from the Conveniency of it, with Respect to the Tranquillity of the Mind, or the Health of the Body; to our Ease, our Reputation, or Interest, in the Commerce we maintain with other Men. All these are very proper, and reasonable Topicks of Persuasion, because they, severally, suppose some physical Good; to which moral Good naturally tends, and which it has, indeed, a very powerful Influence to promote. But yet these are Motives, wherewith, as they are founded in Considerations merely prudential and temporary, very wicked Men, even Men, who believe Nothing of a

God, or Religion, may be, in certain Cases, much affected.

XVI. That, upon which *Cicero* appears to lay the greatest Stress, towards securing the Interests of Virtue, is a Sense of Glory. His Sentiments upon this Head were sublime, and agreeable, to his Character, as a *Roman*; but, besides, the Influence which the Genius of his Country, and the Principles of his Education, might be presumed to have upon him, in this Respect; his violent Thirst after Praise seems to have proceeded, in great Measure, from Constitution. It was owing to this Motive, that when he desired *Luceius* to write the History of his Administration, he authorized him, plainly, to neglect the Rules of historical Truth,

Truth, in his Favour. He wrote on the same Occasion, as if there had been Nothing new, or exceptionable in the Request to his Friend *Atticus*. The Account, of this his irregular Ambition, remains; while the History of his Administration, if it was ever written, hath perished.



C H A P. XX.

*An Argument of Carneades, relating to the Subject of moral Virtue, particularly, considered.*

- I. *A general Character of this Philosopher.* II. *His Argument proposed.* III. *Cicero*

had too formidable Apprehensions of it. IV, V. What might have been said in Answer to it. VI, VII. The Rights of Nature, and the Law of Nature, distinguished. VIII. IX, X. The Argument of Carneades, in one Branch of it, proves too much. XI, XII. Inconclusive on another Account. XIII. Urged by the Author, with an additional Force, XIV. And answered. XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII. The Design of these historical Remarks; and, in general, concerning, the Measures of Submission to Authority.

I. I Mention *Carneades*, distinctly, in the last Place, as his Arguments relating to Morality, that great Branch of *Justice*, appeared, so very formidable to *Cicero*, that  
 he

he declined to answer them. The general Character of this Philosopher was, that in Reference to the Conduct of *moral* Life, he allowed Nothing but Probabilities; he believed there was, upon that Head of Inquiry, no Certainty, or Evidence, in any Thing \*. And, therefore, after the Example of *Socrates*, and *Arcefilas*, his Business was rather to dispute, than prove; to propose and consider Difficulties, than to establish, or ascertain Truth, upon clear and distinct Grounds. When he was sent on an Embassy to *Rome*, with *Critolaus* and *Dio- genes*, to sollicit the Mitigation of a Fine, imposed upon the *A-thenians*, the Reputation, and

\* *Quæ quaquam non perciperentur, tamen quia visum haberent quendam insignem & illustrem, his sapientis vita regeretur.* Cic. de Nat. Deor.

Force,

Force of his Eloquence, was thought so dangerous, that *Cato*, the Cenſor, advised they ſhould be diſmiſſed, as coming rather, by Means of it, to extort, than, in Form of Supplicants, to ſolicit a Favour. The *Roman* Youth were moved to a Degree, by his Harangues, as if they had been ſeized with a Kind of Enthufiaſm; which begot in them a ſudden, and violent Paſſion for Philoſophy. But his Diſputing, alternately, two Days, in publick, for, and againſt, Juſtice, did not, appear, altogether, ſuitable to the Dignity of the *Roman* Senate; or, indeed, to the Character of a ſolemn Embaſſy from *Athens*. This was too nice, and tender a Point, to be made a Trial of Wit before the moſt grave, and auſtious Aſſembly in the World. And there is ſcarce



scarce a civilized Nation, any where, at this Time, which would not look upon it as ridiculous, either to act, or suffer, such a Part as seems to have passed, upon that potent, and polite People, without any Censure.

II. But, I shall descend to consider, in particular, the Force of that Argument of *Carneades*, against *Justice*, which *Cicero* thought so formidable, that he had not Courage to undertake the Examination of it: Though I humbly conceive, *Lactantius*, in saying the Heathens were incapable of answering it, had not thoroughly considered, what Solution might be given to it, upon clear and natural Principles.

“ If there be such a Thing as  
 “ Justice, it must be founded, ei-  
 “ ther, upon positive Right, or  
 “ natural

“ natural Right. Now it is not  
 “ founded upon positive Right;  
 “ for that varies with Times and  
 “ Places; different People apply-  
 “ ing it to their own Profit, or  
 “ Interests: Nor is it founded  
 “ upon natural Right; which is  
 “ no other than a Byass, Nature  
 “ has impressed on all Animals,  
 “ which leads to a Search after  
 “ what is useful to them. And it  
 “ cannot be regulated, according  
 “ to this Byass, without commit-  
 “ ting a thousand Faults, and Vi-  
 “ olences; from whence it fol-  
 “ lows, that this natural Byass  
 “ cannot be the Foundation of  
 “ Justice: *Again*, it may be pro-  
 “ ved, by a great many Examples,  
 “ the Condition of Men is such,  
 “ that if they have a Mind to be  
 “ just, they must act imprudent-  
 “ ly, and foolishly. And if they  
 “ have

“ have a Mind to act prudently;  
 “ they are unjust; from whence  
 “ it is concluded, there is no such  
 “ Thing as Justice; for a Virtue,  
 “ inseparable from Folly, cannot  
 “ be just.

III. This Objection seems to be  
 proposed, in a Light sufficiently  
 clear; and to be more artfully  
 contrived, towards unsettling the  
 the Notion of moral Justice, than  
 any Argument that has been ad-  
 vanced upon the same View, by  
 any of our modern sceptical  
 Wits. Let us see whether a good  
 Answer may not be given to it,  
 or if *Cicero* had so great Reason  
 to fear it? who, in his Book of  
 Laws, where he lays it down as a  
 fundamental Principle, that there  
 is an inherent Rectitude in certain  
 Actions, abstracting from all hu-  
 man, or positive Institutions,  
 parti-

particularly, begs Quarter from *Arcefilas* and *Carneades*, in Terms of Submission, which shew, as if he, really, apprehended, these two Philosophers, superior to himself, in Force of Argument. "I am an undone Man, saith  
 " *he*, how well soever my Measures  
 " have been concerted, if I be at-  
 " tacked on that Side; I chuse,  
 " therefore, to bespeak their Fa-  
 " vour, rather than to dispute the  
 " Ground with them\*".

IV. And yet, there needs no other Answer, after all, to the Argument, of *Carneades* above recited, which is supposed by *Lactantius*, to have put *Cicero* in such a Fright, but what a Person of much less Capacity, or

\* *Placere cupio, submovere non audeo. De Leg<sup>3</sup> L. I.*

Penetration, than *Cicero*, might easily have been capable of making;

V. He might have argued, that Justice is founded, *both* on positive, and natural, Right; that there is no such Inconsistency between these two Rights, as *Carneades* supposed; but they may fairly stand together; that it can be, therefore, no Argument of Violence, on one Hand, or of Imprudence, on the other; for a Man to conduct himself, according to the Rules of Justice, in both these Respects.

VI. For Proof of this, we need only observe a necessary Distinction, between the Rights of Nature, and the Law of Nature. A Right of Nature is, strictly speaking, no Law of Action to Man; but simply a *Permission*;  
which

which he has from the Author of Nature, to act: The Law of Nature, on the other Side, which is Nothing but the Law of Reason, does not, always, confer a Right; because it is reasonable, in certain Cases, in order to attain some greater Good, that a Man should recede, even, from such Rights, which Nature had otherwise permitted to him. The Right of Nature, therefore, in general, considered, is a Liberty of doing whatever is pleasing, or agreeable, to our natural Appetites; for Appetites had been given us in vain, if not in order to be gratified, where the Gratification might really tend to our Good, or no particular Reason should intervene, why they ought not to be gratified. We are, therefore, naturally permitted  
 what-

ever we naturally desire; and it would import, indeed, little less than a Contradiction, to say, any Thing is naturally prohibited to us, towards which our Desires naturally carry us. But though Nature has not, and cannot, properly restrain her own Rights, yet they, being only Rights of *Sufferance*, not of *Obligation*; Reason may direct us upon good and wise Considerations, to restrain them, either by legal Compacts, or by a positive Act of our own Choice. Every Man, for Instance, in a State of Nature, has a natural Right to any Thing, upon which he can first lay his Hands; and some Remains of this Right still subsist in the best regulated Societies in the World; for no Man is any where under a legal Restraint from breathing

the common Air, or from taking up a common Stone in the Highway. But it being found necessary, when Men were formed into a regular Society, and towards attaining the Protection, and other beneficial Ends of it, which could not be attained in the natural State, that Property should be secured; it became reasonable, and consequently agreeable to the Law of Nature, that what was, before, a common Right to all Men, should be restrained to the more peculiar Use, and Benefit of particular Persons.

VII. We readily, therefore, grant, that the Peace of Mankind, could not be well, or sufficiently, provided for in a mere State of Nature; but we deny, that Justice cannot be regulated, according to the natural Byass, or Appetites,  
of



of Man, without committing a thousand Faults, or Violences; for, even, setting aside all human Compacts, Man, in whatever Condition of Life we place him, is to be considered as a reasonable Agent; and, therefore, as regulating his Appetites, and Conduct, by the Law of Reason. Now, Reason will direct every Man, not to do to another, what in a supposed Change of Circumstances, he would not have done to himself; it will, therefore, restrain him from doing any Injury to an innocent Person, or from attempting to deprive him of what he actually has in Possession, merely to gratify his own cruel, or avaricious Temper. For even in the natural State, there are, certain fundamental, and immutable Rules of Justice, which ob-

blige Man every where, and at all Times. Such is that already named, with others, which arise from the common, and natural, Affection of Man, termed *Humanity*; concerning which, *Carneades*, himself, has left us a most excellent, and signal Testimony. “ If, *saieth he*, you, certainly, “ knew, that an Asp lay conceal- “ ed in a Place, where another was “ going to sit down, by whose “ Death you might propose to “ your self any extraordinary Ad- “ vantage, you would commit “ a high Act of Injustice, if you “ did not give him Notice of the “ Danger; though you might o-

\* *Si scires, inquit Carneades, aspidem occulte latere uspiam & velle imprudentem aliquem super eam assidere, cujus mors tibi emolumento futura sit, improbe feceris, nisi monueris ne assideat; sed impune tamen id te constaret fecisse: Quis enim coarguere possit?*

“ mit

“ mit to do it with Impunity, or  
 “ any Apprehension of being cal-  
 “ led to Account.

VIII. The great Force of the Objection seems to lie against the Notion of Justice, as founded in *positive Right*; because “ it is very  
 “ often foolish, and imprudent, to  
 “ act, as positive Laws direct; and  
 “ the Ideas of Folly, and Injustice,  
 “ are incompatible, in the same  
 “ Subject.

IX. This Part of the Objection proceeds upon a Supposition, that the Restraints which are laid upon Men, or which they voluntarily agree should be laid upon them, in Society, are Arguments of Folly, and Imprudence, because contrary to their natural Rights. Now if this Argument proves any Thing, it proves there ought to be no Government;

and, therefore, no regular Society in the World; because it is impossible to form any Scheme of Government, or legal Constitution, wherein Men shall not be obliged to depart from their natural Rights, in several Respects. But, setting this Consequence aside, where is the Folly, and Imprudence, in giving up a precarious, vagrant, and indefinite Right, in Consideration of a fixed, and standing, Property? Can any Thing be more agreeable to the standing Maxims, whereby all wise Men have, ever, governed themselves, than, upon the Competition, to postpone a less, to a far greater Advantage? But this Question, indeed, may be determined by a Case incident to Man, even his natural State. Nature has not given to Man any Right  
more

more clear and indisputable, than that to the Use of his bodily Members; in particular, of his Hand. But in Case of a Mortification, or Gangrene, which would require that his Hand should be cut off, in order to preserve other Parts of his Body; Reason will, notwithstanding, direct that he ought to suffer the Amputation. Yet, according to *Carneades*, he would act foolishly, and imprudently, should he submit to it, as consenting, hereby, to an Action, evidently repugnant to *natural Right*.

X. The Case is the same, if applied to the body Politick. A Man, who would entitle himself to the Benefits of it, and enjoy that Security from Violence, and Oppression, which is only to be found in it; ought, in Reason, to

part with several Rights, and Conveniencies, to which, otherwise, he might have layed Claim, yet not without much Hazard, and in continual Fear of his Life. It is, in this Case, not an Act of Folly, and Imprudence, but of Wisdom, in Man, to resign his Pretensions to certain former independent Rights of Nature, into the Hands of the civil Magistrate, that he may be admitted to share in the much greater Privileges of a regular and legal Government.

XI. I have omitted Nothing, that may deserve to be considered in this Objection, except, perhaps, where it is said, “ Positive  
 “ Right cannot be the Founda-  
 “ tion of Justice, because that  
 “ varies with Times and Places ;  
 “ different People applying it to  
 “ their

“ their own Profit, or Interests”.

XII. To which it may be said, the general Rule, or Reason of Justice, is, notwithstanding, still the same; and the Difference, which arises, in different Places, from the different Application of it, only respects such human Sanctions as are made concerning Things, in their own Nature wholly arbitrary; thus one Order of Men, may be appointed, by positive Law, to wear such a particular Habit, wherein, by the same Authority, it may be criminal for other Persons to appear; as in a thousand like Instances, where Nothing is enjoined contrary to natural Equity; but no Law can render it just for a Man to hate, to defame, or to destroy, an innocent Person. In the former Respect, though we grant the  
Subject

Subject Matter of moral Justice changes, as to Times, and Persons; yet the Assertion, in general, that positive Right varies with Times and Places, is, notwithstanding, at the best inconclusive, and equivocal; as supposing, positive Right, only in a *partial*, and restrained, Sense, and excluding it in that Sense, which is properly the Subject of the Question.

XIII. I have endeavoured to answer whatever I apprehended material, in this irrefragable Objection, as it appeared to *Cicero*. But, there is so little Reason, for apprehending any Danger to the Cause of Morality, from it; that I shall proceed to give it still greater Force, by a Concession, which the Generality of the Terms, wherein it is expressed, doth not oblige me to make.

*Carne-*



*Carneades* supposes, if his Argument imports any Thing, that all positive Laws, contrary to the Rights of Nature, are unjust; this crude, and general Assertion, is easily confuted, from the many Benefits Men reap from Society, and which are more than equivalent to the natural Rights, from which they depart, for the Sake of them. But, I will now admit, that it is possible, certain Cases may happen, wherein Men may be exposed to greater Evils; the Loss, for Instance, of Life, or Liberty for many Years, under cruel, and barbarous Usage, greater Evils, than any Advantages of Society can well be supposed to ballance. In this Case, it may seem contrary to the Rules of Prudence, and consequently of strict Justice, that a Man should  
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owe any Duties to Society, or positive Laws, which will render him more miserable, than if he had never been a Member of Society.

XIV. I shall endeavour to comprize my Answer, to this Difficulty, having mentioned it on another Occasion, in few Words. If Society be only of human Ordinance, I do not see, how any Man can be obliged, for the Sake of it, to suffer, or expose himself to suffer greater Inconveniencies, than the Benefits, he can propose to reap from Society, will compensate. Because Government being, upon this Scheme, founded, upon popular Consent, no Man can reasonably be presumed, to have consented to the Laws of it, on that Condition. But if Government be the special Ordinance

dinance of God, and it is necessary, to the Ends of it, that Men should expose themselves to Sufferings of this Kind, in Discharge of their Duty to it, this is a solid; and clear Answer to all Objections which may arise, whether in respect to Prudence, or Justice. As God has a Right to command our Obedience, in the most difficult Instances of it; so he can, and will make up all Inconveniences, in Pursuance of his own Institution; and if they are not supplied in this Life, it is a convincing, and clear Argument, that there is another Life, wherein they shall be supplied.

XV. I have had no Design, in these transient Remarks, on several of the most eminent Philosophers, but to shew, how, with all their Excellencies, they had

had their Defects and Errors; and that without detracting from the Praises, which in all Ages, since they flourished, have been thought due to them, we ought so to consult them, as to make use of our own Reason, or any additional Lights, which the Improvements made by succeeding Ages, may have afforded to us.

XVI. But how then, in this our Enquiry, concerning the Authority of Philosophers, in reference to the Subject of moral Virtue, shall we come to any determinate Resolution? Seeing none of them was free from Error, and many of them were subject to gross Errors. If we say, such wise Men did not always reason justly, it may be asked, how we come to be more enlightened, or how we, certainly know, that  
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we are more enlightened. In order to prove that any Person did not reason justly, there must be some certain Test, or Standard of reasoning justly, with which if his Arguments do not agree, what he saith can be of no Authority.

XVII. But does not, then, a greater Difficulty, here occur; and which entangles us in a Circle? The Authority of Philosophers, saith the Reader, is proposed to me as a Guide; and now I am to judge, whether my Guide conduct me in the right Way: Is not this to change Hands, and to invert the natural Order of Things? I am no longer to follow; my Office at present is, to inform, and correct my Guide.

There is no Remedy, but in the following Distinction, between  
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an absolute, and a conditional Obedience to my Guide. Out of the Confidence I have in his Skill, or Honesty; I will follow where I do not know, or cannot see my Way; but where I have some imperfect Knowledge of it, or have Cause violently to suspect, that he is going to mislead me; I will rather endeavour to find out the Way my self, than to follow him into a Quagmire; or, perhaps, down a steep and dangerous Precipice, with my Eyes open.

XVIII. The Application is obvious, we ought not to judge of what is reasonable by Authority, but to examine Authority by Reason. Yet, where our own Reason does not afford sufficient Light; in that Case, but in that Case only, Prudence may, sometimes, direct

direct us, to be determined by Authority; *and*, especially, if we are under Circumstances, as we, sometimes, are, that oblige us immediately to act.

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### *The* CONCLUSION.

*That no just Inference can be drawn, against the Expediency of a divine Revelation, from any Thing that hath been said, concerning the Light of natural Reason.*

**T**HERE is one Objection, which I have had continually in View, throughout this Treatise, the Force whereof, it may be here, in the Conclusion of it, very proper for me to consider. It is questioned, if the Principles

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of Morality are really deducible from the Light, and Evidence of natural Reason: What Necessity could there be, that an infinitely wise God, whose Action always bears the Character of his Attributes, and who does Nothing superfluous or in vain, should confirm those Principles to us by an express Revelation? The natural Proofs concerning those Principles, which we might, at any Time, consult, being at Hand, what Need was there of any farther Witness; or of a Testimony altogether supernatural?

Without Inquiring at present, whether a divine Revelation concerning the Duties of moral Life, was absolutely necessary to Mankind; we shall sufficiently obviate this Pretence, by saying, there may be great Occasion for the  
Use



Use of certain Means, in order to attain an End, which yet might, *possibly*, have been attained without them. There are some Men, who, by the Advantage of an extraordinary Capacity, may make a considerable Progress in several Sciences, without the Instruction of any Master. But no Man will be so weak as to argue, that such Books which teach the Rudiments of those Sciences, which metho-  
 dize and explain them, *are*, therefore, *superfluous and in vain*: It is still more irrational to argue against a standing Digest of Laws, confirmed by a divine Authority, that Men, by the Use of their natural Powers, might at length have discovered the Reasons, and obligatory Force of those Laws. For the same Argument which

possibly, have made such a Discovery, will evidently prove, that the much greater Part of Mankind, would, very probably, not have made such Discovery. And what if God, willing to shew his abundant Love and Compassion, towards more weak and illiterate Persons, less capable of deducing, on all Occasions, the Rules of their Duty, by a Train of just Consequences, hath been pleased to lay down those Rules in so many clear, simple, and distinct Propositions? Or, (since the Duties of *Morality* are not, in all the Instances of them, equally evident and demonstrable) what if God, in Favour to more knowing, and inquisitive, but still fallible, Men, hath referred them to a *Law*, and to a *Testimony*, from which there lies no Appeal; and

and in following the Directions whereof they cannot err? We have observed the great Defects of moral Philosophy, where, from the Character of those who taught and professed it, we might have expected much higher Improvements; but if any one of the Philosophers had really been capable of compiling a perfect System of the moral Law, this could have been no Reason still, why the rest of Mankind should, implicitly, have assented to the Doctrines he taught, or without a particular, and distinct Examination of them. For admitting he had not actually erred, yet the very Supposition of his being fallible, or subject to Error, would have required that Nothing he advanced should be absolutely believed upon his bare Affirmation.

Whereas, should God interpose by any special Notification, to ascertain the Rules of moral Life, his Authority would admit no Dispute. A Doctrine, plainly revealed from Heaven, needs no other Proof. It is a sufficient Reason for our assenting to such Doctrine, that we see no Reason against it, though we may not, perhaps, be able to discover, in a clear, and distinct View, all the Reasons for it.

By endeavouring, therefore, to establish natural Religion on its proper Grounds, I am far from having any Design, to question the Expediency of a divine Revelation; without considering at present, whether such a Revelation hath been actually made, the Reasons already mentioned, with many other that might be mentioned,

tioned, for a standing decisive Authority, to ascertain a Rule of Life to Mankind, are so evident and strong, that the *Deist* must confess, at least, it is very desirable, very agreeable to the Wisdom, and Goodness of the divine Legislator, that he should interpose, for the common Benefit, and Instruction of Mankind, after such a Manner; whether he hath, hitherto, actually interposed to that End, or not?

The Expediency of divine Revelation, in respect to a standing Rule of moral Life, is the only Thing I am now obliged to consider; it is not here incumbent on me, to prove that such a Revelation hath been actually made. This hath been done so often, and so incontestably, by Christian Writers, ancient and modern,

not to mention the *Jewish*; that one cannot without Astonishment, observe the present Effrontery, and incorrigible Temper of Unbelievers; if after all, they who more openly, in their Writings, espouse the Cause of *Deism*, and would be thought the chief Oracles of it, are really Unbelievers: Or, if it may not rather be suspected, they only affect to be thought so, from a Spirit of Vanity and Opposition, or to the End, they may have an Opportunity of saying very bold and extravagant Things, with some pompous Appearances of Learning: Tho' the most elaborate \* Performance in that Way, which hath been lately handed about with much Industry, and Ostentation, contains Nothing, but what any

\* A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion.

Person

Person of ordinary Capacity, might easily, in a short Time, have been able to collect, provided the common Languages had been known to him, or the mechanical Rules, to be practised, in a good Library, of becoming learned without Reading or Reflection.

But this is not a proper Place for animadverting upon the pernicious Design of the Book, to which I have referred; the Author of it may, in convenient Time, receive, from a proper Hand, the Treatment he hath deserved, for the Service done by him to the Cause of Infidelity: It appears, in the mean Time, of sufficient Force, to obviate any ill Consequences, that may be drawn from what he hath said, in Prejudice to the Truth of divine Revelation, that in his Way  
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of arguing, should God be really supposed to make a Revelation of his Will to Mankind, it would be impossible for Men to produce any certain Proof, that such a Revelation has been actually made; and, consequently, God could have no End worthy of his Wisdom, and Goodness in making it. For in Order to prove the Truth of any Revelation, except God should reveal his Will, by immediate Inspiration, to every particular Person, there appears to be no other Method, but either by the Interposition of a miraculous Power to confirm the Doctrine revealed, or by a Prediction of future, and distant Events, that have no Manner of visible Connection, with the Order of Causes, at the Time of divulging it. But in this Author's  
Method



Method of reasoning, if we pursue it in its natural and direct Consequences, no Argument could be drawn from either of these Proofs, to confirm the Truth, I do not say of the *Jewish*, or *Christian*, but of any supposed Revelation whatever; since no Revelation can be conceived; where the Evidences of it, in both these Respects, will appear more strong, than those, upon which the Truth of the *Mosaick*, and *Christian* Faith is founded; so that, whereas, other Unbelievers have argued, in general, against the Reasonableness, and Expediency of divine Revelations; this Writer has, in Effect, denied the very Possibility of the Thing. For it is absolutely impossible, that a wise and good God should do, what he could  
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have no wise, or good End in doing; or, which is the same Thing, that he should reveal his Will to Mankind, and at the same Time, leave them without any certain, or sufficient Proof, that he hath revealed it. Now I aver it again, if the Proofs of the Christian Revelation, in particular, are not certain, and sufficient to this End, it is impossible, without a continued Series of Miracles, in every Age (which no *Deist* will be so weak, as to suppose necessary) that stronger Proofs should be produced for *any* Revelation:

But without descending to examine, particularly, the Grounds, upon which the Truth of our holy Faith is established, I shall only take the Liberty to observe, concerning the Advantages of a stand-

standing Revelation in general, that, though Morality, in the Reason, and Foundation of it, hath, in all Ages, been the same, and ever will continue the same; though there are some Truths, which the most barbarous, and illiterate Nations see, and of which, perhaps, they feel the Force, as well as the most knowing, and polite; though the Heathens, in general, who have not *the Law*, any written, or revealed Law, are a Law unto themselves, their *own Consciences accusing, or else excusing them*; yet a sure *Word of Prophecy*, which should prescribe to Mankind the exact Measures of their Duty, would certainly appear very desirable to them; both towards preventing those Errors, to which the wisest of Men have been subject,

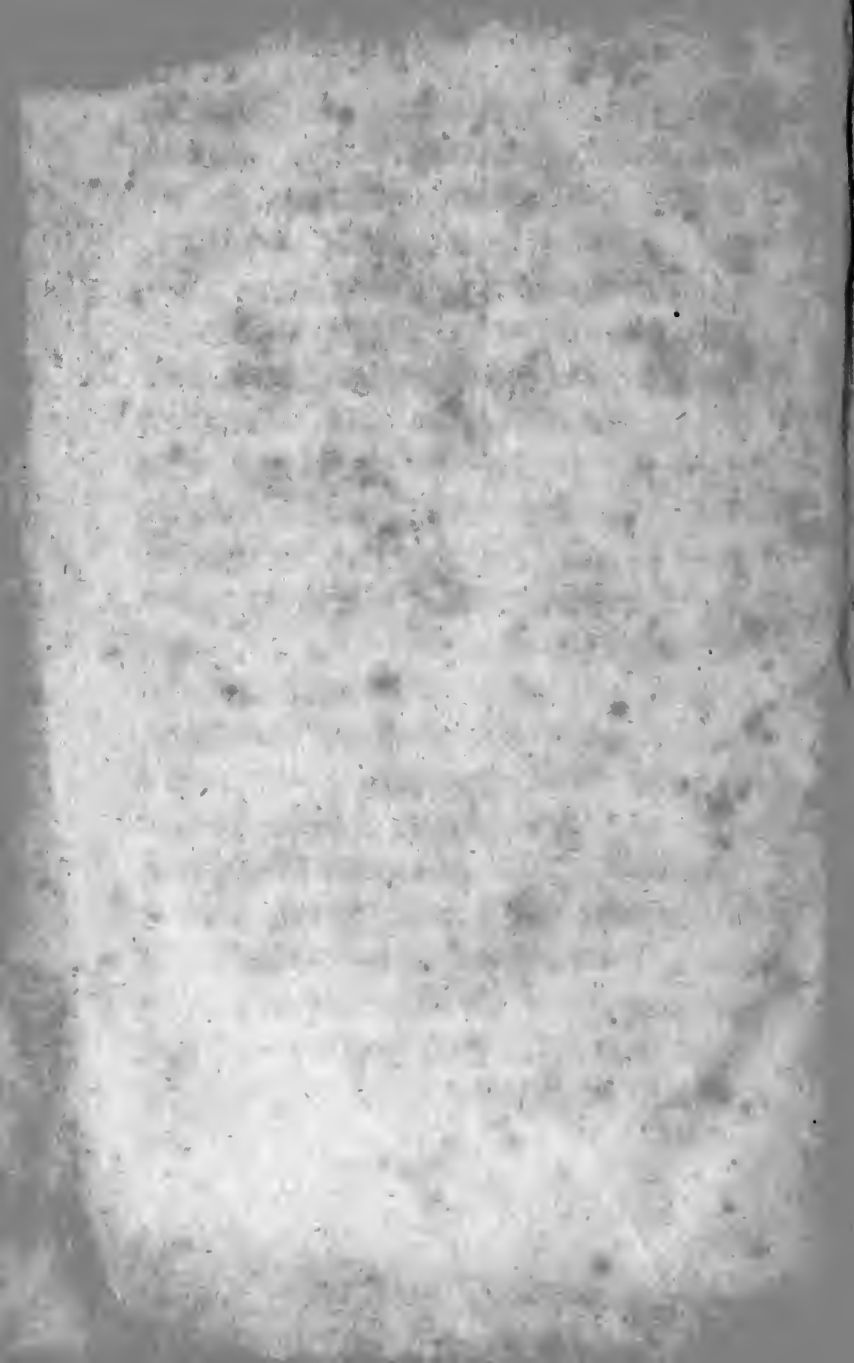
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in reasoning even upon the primary Articles of natural Religion; and to ascertain many particular Truths, which, however deducible, in a strict Way of Argumentation, yet, we must confess, are not equally clear or evident to all Men.

**F I N I S.**









L. P. B.





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