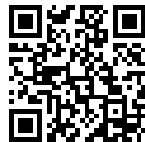

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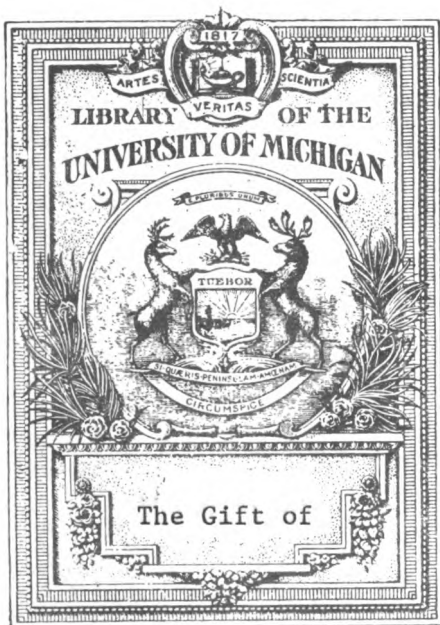
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I n T H R E E P A R T S .

B Y
R I C H A R D L U C A S , D . D .
Late Prebendary of *Westminster*.

V O L . I .
Of the Possibility of obtaining HAPPINESS.

Κεῖος ἐκείνα φιλοσοφία λόγῳ ἢ μηδὲν ἀνθρώπου πάθος διακεύεται ὡσπερ γὰρ ἰατρικῆς ἐκ ὀφελῶ μη' τὰς νόσους ἐκκαμύσσει ἀπὸ τῶν ζωμάτων, ἕτως ἡδὲ φιλοσοφίας εἰ μη' τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς κακὸν ἐκβάλλῃ. Pythag. apud Stob. Serm. 8c.

Qui quod tibi parum videtur eruditus, ea causa est quod nullam Eruditionem esse duxit, nisi quæ Beatæ vitæ Disciplinam juvaret.
Cic. de Finib. Bonor. & Mal.

The SIXTH EDITION.

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(iii)

TO my WORTHY FRIEND

Mr. *WILLIAM POWELL*,

RECTOR of *Llan-Wentarth*, &c.

My DEAR FRIEND,

WHOM neither thy prosperity nor my affliction has ever divided from me; it has ever been your good fortune (and your mind has ever been better than your fortune) from the first day of our friendship, to stand upon the higher ground, and to have always been doing kindnesses, and never needed any. I will confess, if you will pardon me, that I have sometimes secretly repin'd at this your good luck, and envy'd the honour and the pleasure which this advantage gave you: and can you blame me, since it excluded me from a share in one of the most ravishing delights of

A 2 friend-

iv *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

friendship? You know what attempts I have made to redeem this inequality, but all in vain till now. Now I flatter my self, that I have found a present to make you, that cannot provoke your generosity, tho' it were nicer and more scrupulous than it is. I have now at length found a way to end most happily the only difference that has ever been between us in an uninterrupted friendship of near seventeen years. You shall always be fortunate, always able to do kindneses, and be in need of none; and I will always strive to vanquish and surmount all the disadvantages of my fortune, and, in despite of them, find some way to express my affection, and return your obligations. And thus, if I fall not short of my design, I shall be equal with you: for 'tis no small service I propose to do you. I will now be your guide; I will conduct you, not as you have done me (tho' for that too I must ever thank you) through barren and impoverish'd *Picardy*; but through all the ways of *pleasantness*, and all the paths of *peace*; I will

The Epistle Dedicatory. v

will give you a sight, not of *France*, but *Canaan*; I will make you a sharer of that immortality which I aspir'd to, and bring you to that heaven which is the sacred abode of sacred friendship and sacred joys. What a dark cottage, what a rude heap will the now admir'd *Versailles* then seem to you? But see whether I have suffer'd this passion to transport me! How easie is it for one, that follows the conduct of affection, to be rather *obliging* than *discreet*? I had almost forgot how little you stand in need of these kind helps; being not only a sufficient guide to your selfe, but a prudent and successful one to others in the way to happiness. However, though you need no guide, I may serve you as the companion of your journey; I may oblige you to quicken your pace; I may entertain you with reflections and remarks upon the country as we pass, and ever and anon mind you of the beauty and the pleasures of that country we travel to. These, and such like assistances, the most perfect need:

A 3

These

vi *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

These are the offices of the truest friendship; and these, the papers I send you, may, I hope, in some measure perform. Adieu,

Thy Affectionate

R. L,



T O

TO THE
R E A D E R.

IT has pleas'd God, that in a few years, I should finish the more pleasant and delightful part of life, if sense were to be the judge and standard of pleasure; being confin'd (I will not say condemn'd) by well nigh utter blindness, to retirement and solitude. In this state conversation has lost much of its former air and briskness: Business (wherein I could never pretend to any great address) gives me now more trouble than formerly; and that too, without the usual dispatch or success. Study (which is the only employment left me) is clogg'd with this weight and incumbrance; that all the assistance I can receive from without must be convey'd by another's sense, not my own; which, it may easily be believ'd, are instruments or organs as ill fitted, and as awkwardly manag'd by me, as wooden legs and hands by the maim'd.

viii To the READER.

In this case, should I affect to procure my self a decent Funeral, and leave an honourable remembrance of me behind; should I struggle to rescue my self from that contempt to which this condition (wherein I may seem lost to the world and my self) exposes me; should I ambitiously affect to have my name march in the train of those All (though not all equally) great ones, Homer, Appius, Cn. Aufidius, Didymus, Walkup, Pere Jean l'Aveugle, &c. all of them eminent for their service and usefulness, as for their affliction of the same kind with mine; even this might seem almost a commendable infirmity: for the last thing a mind truly great and philosophical puts off, is, the desire of glory. Hence Tacitus (Hist. Lib. 4.) closes his divine character of Helvidius Priscus thus; Erant quibus appetentior fama videretur, quando etiam sapientibus cupido gloriæ novissima exiit. But this treatise oweth neither its conception nor birth to this principle; for, besides that I know my own insufficiency too well to flatter my self with the hopes of a romantick immortality from any performance of mine, in this ingenious and learned age; I must confess, I never had a soul great enough to be acted by the heroick heat, which the love of fame and honour hath kindled in some.

— Tut

To the R E A D E R. ix

—Tuta & parvula laudo.

I have ever lov'd the security and contentment of privacy and retirement, almost to the guilt of singularity and affectation.

But the truth is plainly this, the vigour and activity of my mind, the health and strength of my body (being now in the flower of my age) continuing unbroken, under this affliction; I found, that if I did not provide some employment that might entertain it, it would weary out it self with fruitless desires of, and vain attempts after its wonted objects; and so that strength and vivacity of nature, which should render my state more comfortable, would make it much more intolerable.

*I confess, my zeal for publick good by the propagation and endearment of divine truths, was less fervent in me, than could well become the particular obligations of my profession, or the common ones which every christian, in proportion to his talents, lies under. I was almost induc'd to believe, that this chastisement which had removed me from the service of the altar, did at the same time discharge me from all duty owing to the publick: but my good friend Mr. Lamb
revised*

X To the READER.

revived the dying sparks of a decaying zeal, and restor'd me to a proper sense of my duty in this point; for whether by design, or by providence, governing chance, I know not (for he never seem'd to address or design the discourse particularly to me) he had ever and anon in his mouth this excellent principle, that the life of man is to be esteem'd by its usefulness and serviceableness in the world. A sober reflection upon this wrought me up to a resolution strong enough to contemn all the difficulties, which the loss of my sight could represent to me in an enterprize of this nature. Thus you see on what principles I became engaged in this work: I thought it my duty to set my self some task, which might serve at once to divert my thoughts from a melancholy application on my misfortune, and entertain my mind with such a rational employment as might render me most ease to my self, and most serviceable to the world. Being now abundantly convinc'd, that I am not releas'd from that duty I owe that body, of which I am still a member, by being cut off from a great part of the pleasures and advantages of it: therefore, like one that truly loves his country, when no way else is left him, he fights for it on his stumps; so will I ever, in the remains of a broken body, express, at least, my affection for
mankind,

To the READER. xi

mankind, and breathe out my last gasp in their service.

The fitness and tendency of this subject to serve these ends, is so apparent, that I will not impertinently detain the reader by a justification of this choice. How fit I am for it, will be best judged by the performance: yet, that this may not suffer any disadvantage from such prejudices with which the consideration of my state may easily prepossess men, I think my self obliged to obviate them by a word or two.

I have had so much experience of all the several pleasures, that I am sufficiently capable of setting a true rate and value upon them, and of judging their subserviency to true happiness. And I am so well acquainted with trouble and affliction, that I am sufficiently sensible, as of the weakness of human nature, and misery of this mortal state; so of the necessity and power of virtue, in relieving and supporting man under both: And, after all, my mind lives now in the body (like a soul in a separate state) retir'd, as from the pleasures, so from the troubles of the world; and is therefore the more able to pass a free and more dispassionate judgment upon both:

It

xii To the READER.

It may probably be fear'd, that the same should befall me, which has many Monkish writers; who, being much retir'd from the world, having much leisure and few books, did spin out every subject into wandring mazes and airy speculations; like plants, which, destitute of a well manur'd and fat soil, run all into the exuberancy of leaves and fruitless springs: but the commerce I shall maintain with the world, may in part prevent this error; and the nature of the subject, so fruitful of many necessary enquiries, will of it self lead me on to useful and profitable thoughts.

There is one thing which may be by some objected against my manner of treating this subject, the freedom I use in it being not altogether so common to my profession; but, I hope, it will not be found, that I have abus'd the liberty I have taken, to the disparagement of the least truth of our religion, or to the least discouragement of virtue; and therefore, I think, it cannot justly reflect any disadvantage upon my calling.

Besides, I have in a former treatise, wherein I design'd the same end, the happiness of mankind, treated this subject in a manner suited to the generality of readers: but this discourse

To the READER. xiii

course I design for such who are not content to submit to inferences deduced from received principles, unless they can be fairly convinced of the reasonableness and truth of the principles themselves. Nor should I think it any crime, were I master of such talents, if I did mingle with necessary truths, all that variety of thought, all that finesses and briskness of fancy which might render them as delightful as useful; the example of God himself in the great work of the creation, would justify this liberty, who has created as well leaves and flowers, as herbs and fruit: And in the variety and beauty, in the colours and figures of all that he has produc'd, he appears plainly to have made provision, not only to feed the appetite, but even the fancies of his creatures.

There is, after all, I confess, one thing that stands in need of an excuse; which is, the publishing what should come forth a just treatise, by small parts. To this I may truly say, having laid together all the materials I saw necessary to compleat this discourse, I found it grown unavoidably to that voluminous bulk, that I took this method, partly out of compliance to the ease of my reader; but especially in compliance to my own: for in my present circumstances I saw no other way to avoid that confusion which would
inevi-

xiv To the READER.

inevitably have disorder'd the contexture of a long discourse, if I should have charged my memory with the contrivance and connexion of so many and various parts at once: and I foresaw, that all the strength of my mind, which should be collected and united in the treating every single argument, would be unprofitably spent in distracted, divided, and imperfect efforts.

THE

T H E

INTRODUCTION;

O R, A

Brief SCHEME *of the* Design *of the* WHOLE WORK.

TO inform man what is his true and proper happiness, and to mark out before him the right way to it, hath been, and ever must be, the aim of all philosophy, and all religion; and yet so numerous have been and are the disputes on this subject, and so seemingly insuperable the difficulties which encounter us in every way, that the *despair* of attaining happiness, at least in this world, seems almost as universal as the *desire* of it: and as nature will never give over the pursuit of it, so will man never forbear the tragical complaints of his disappointments, and the raving exaggerations of human misery. That therefore I may attempt at least, to treat this subject satisfactorily, I will endeavour,

Sett. 1. To shew you, that happiness is not a mere airy and imaginary notion; but is a real state, and really attainable; and that our disappointments and unsuccessfulness must be imputed to ourselves: and this shall be the work of this present volume.

Sett. 2. To explain the nature of happiness, to examine wherein it consists, and what is the high-way to

xvi *The Introduction.*

to it: in which to proceed successfully, I thought the plainest method I could take, would be this, to fix and define the notion of the most absolute and compleat happiness, that so we might discern what it behoved us to aim at, and how near we could approach the perfection of happiness. Now, the most perfect idea of happiness that the mind of man can frame, is this: *Happiness is the state of a perfect being in the unmix'd, uninterrupted, and eternal enjoyment of the most perfect pleasure:* such I conceive to be the happiness of God himself.

In this definition there are *three parts*, which manifestly appear to be the ingredients of a divine happiness.

First, Perfection of being. *Secondly*, Freedom from trouble. *Thirdly*, Eternal enjoyment of the most perfect pleasure.

It's therefore now evident, that to discover the nature of human happiness, and the way to it, I am obliged to discourse,

1. *Of the being of man, and its perfection.*
2. *Of indolence, or freedom from pain or trouble.*
3. *Of fruition, or the enjoyment of pleasure.*

Each of which shall be the subject of a distinct volume. And because there may some questions arise of a more general nature; such as, Whether every man's particular happiness ought to be dearer to him than the happiness of another; or whatever else can be imagined? *Secondly*, On supposal that an entire happiness cannot be attained; what part then of it ought to be preferr'd? and such like: I will therefore,

Sect. 3. Assign a particular volume for the discussion of such questions, and the establishment of such inferences as will naturally result from the former discourses.

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An Enquiry after HAPPINESS.

S E C T. I.

Of the motives to this enquiry, and of the objections which may be form'd against it.

C H A P. I.

The importance, the necessity of it.

THE desire of happiness is the first, most powerful, and most universal principle of human actions: this moves the prince and peasant, the learned and the idiot: revelation and reason take this for granted; all laws, both divine and human, proposing our happiness as the sole and sufficient motive to our obedience.

The importance of this enquiry.

But all this while, tho' all sorts of religion and government do unanimously consent in the proposal of this one general end; yet so great is the diversity (I may say contrariety) in the methods in which they pursue it, that it seems to imply the discovery of happiness, a matter of no less uncertainty than importance; there being necessarily as great a variety in the opinions

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of

of men about it, as in their lives and actions, or in the forms of religion and government in the world: since all these seem, according to the different judgments of men, so many different paths which lead to it.

And yet till I have fix'd the notion of happiness, and found out what it consists in, 'tis impossible I should live rationally: how shall I steer the course of my life aright, when I know not what port I would make? how shall my actions tend to any wise or noble purpose, when I have no mark prefix'd 'em? till then I must live *extempore*, and act at random, I must abandon my self to wind and tide, to time and chance.

Quo me cunque rapit tempestas, deferor hospes.
Horat.

*Tost by a storm, for my retreat I take
Whatever shore th' unguided bark can make.*

In a word, till I have fix'd this notion, and know what to aim at, business will be but a mechanic drudging out of life, and study but a vain amusement of my mind: whereas, when all the inclinations of life and soul shall have one uniform bent and tendency; when every desire of the soul, and every action of life, shall be a step advancing in a direct line towards happiness; when the vigour and activity of my mind shall not be suspended and frustrated by incertainties and fluctuation, nor deluded and lost in wandering errors and deviations, but shall ever carry me streight forwards towards my journey's end; then certainly all my labours will

will thrive and prosper, and my progress will be great, tho' my motion should be but feeble and slow. Thus plants, whose native vigour mounts streight upwards, tho' their bulk be less, yet their height and beauty is greater than theirs whose luxuriant nourishment wastes it self in gouty knots, and distorted branches.

Having considered this, I resolv'd, that I could not spend my time more manly and philosophically, than in an enquiry, what the happiness of man is, and how attainable: every advance towards this, is an accession to my life and being; and all travail, which doth not lead me on towards this end, is but so much of life mispent and lost: what a silliness were it to load my memory with terms and words, with numerous instances of matters of fact; to marshal up in order lines and figures; to talk of unknown seas and distant shores; to tumble over each page in nature's system? what trifling cunning to skill the gainful mysteries of trade? what solemn and laborious foppery to penetrate into all the subtilties of government, and arts of conversation? if after all, I have no receipt for a troubled mind, no cure for distemper'd passions: if I have no principle to support my mind under a sinking fortune, or govern it in a rising one; if I have nothing to arm me against my fears, or to disperse my griefs; would any one think I had spent my time well, or stock'd my self with useful knowledge?

But to find out what would make me happier, to find out what would free my mind from the slavery of uneasy passions; what

would make it serene, steady, great and manly in all the accidents of life: this every man sees at the first blush, to be a wise, generous and serviceable employment of my reason. This,

*Æquè pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æquè,
Æquè neglectum pueris senibusque nocebit.*

*This learning rich and poor alike do need,
And its neglect does certain ruin breed,
To old and young alike.*

This occasion'd St. *Austin's* ingenious reflection on the polytheism of the *Romans*: when he consider'd that they worshipp'd *Felicitas* (by which they meant that deity that could confer happiness upon men) he could not but wonder, why this was not the most ancient of all their gods; or why, when this deity was found out, they did not presently discard the other idle multitude of superfluous and unnecessary gods, since this alone was sufficient to supply all the necessities, and gratify all the desires and appetites of mankind.

But tho' happiness should be a project too great, too ambitious for a poor silly mortal; yet sure the redress of those evils which oppress our state and nature, is such an humble and modest design, as may well become the meanness of men; and therefore, if I could not excuse the confidence or presumption of this enquiry, by pleading the innate desire
of

The necessity of this enquiry for the redress of human misery.

of happiness; yet sure I might, by urging the multitude of those evils which infest human life, which 'tis not only irrational, but impossible, so far to yield and submit to, as not to struggle to free our selves from 'em, or endeavour to lighten their afflicting weight, or study to prevent 'em: this, I confess, was the first, and none of the least prevalent arguments that engag'd me: I love my self, and would be, if not happy, at least not miserable; and I am neither insensible, nor fearless: I know the common portion of man; and I cannot so far flatter my self, as not to apprehend approaching evils; nor am I naturally so hard and tough, as not to shrink and gall under the weight of them: and I suppose most men are of the same nature with me, and as liable, as I am, to all the evils of time and chance; and consequently this one consideration of human misery ought to work very powerfully in us, and effectually oblige us to this study.

Aristotl.'s definition of man, that he is a rational creature, is flat and heavy, in comparison to that of *Apuleius* the witty, tho' dissolute *Platonic*.

* *Men, the inhabitants of earth, are endow'd with speech and vaunt of reason; immortal are their souls, mortal their limbs, inconstant and anxious their minds, brutish and obnoxious are their bodies; unlike are they in their manners, like in their errors;*

* *Homines ratione plaudentes, oratione polentes, immortalibus animis, moribundis membris, levibus & anxiiis mentibus, brutis & obnoxiiis corporibus, dissimilibus moribus, similibus erroribus, pervicaci au-*

daciã, pertinaci spẽ, ca-
so labore, fortuna cadu-
cã, volucris tempore, tar-
dã sapienciã, citã morte;
querelã vitã terras incol-
lunt. *Apul. de Deo Socr.*

*sturdy is their confidence,
and obstinate their hope;
fruitless their toil, uncer-
tain their fortune, swift
their years, and slow their
wisdom, speedy their death, and their life full
of plaints.*

Thus miserable is our state; and shall we now sit down, and only childishly bewail our selves? Shall we sink under the weight of those evils, by adding to 'em one heavier than them all, *despair*? Shall we think the thread of evils is so closely and fatally wove into one piece with the thread of life, that no wisdom, no industry can prevent 'em? That no philosophy (how divine soever) can divide or separate the one from the other? and consequently never think of any other than that one universal remedy of *Virgil, patience*?

— *Fortuna omnis superanda ferendo est.*

*Oh wretched nature! oh too helpless state!
If nought but suffering can o'ercome our fate!*

No, no; let others do what they will, I'll never thus abandon my self, I will not tamely and dastardly renounce my hopes of happiness; I'll study and contend for it whilst I have a being; whatever calamities assault me, they shall find me ready arm'd from head to foot, nor shall they ever gain o'er me an easy victory; death it self, when'er it comes, shall find me struggling to the last for life, eternal life and happiness; nor can I entertain so unworthy a thought of the most perfect Being, but that he loves this resolution
where-

where-e'er he meets it, and will be most ready to assist his creatures in so just and rational an endeavour.

C H A P. II.

Objections against this enquiry.

FIRST, Happiness is too divine a state for man to aspire after.

Secondly, The utmost happiness of this life is so trifling and inconsiderable, that it cannot recompense our time and travail.

Thirdly, There is no need of study or enquiry after happiness; nature and custom being the best guides to it.

Fourthly, The great variety there is in the nature of men, and consequently in their happiness, abundantly refutes all attempts of this nature, and demonstrates it impossible either to frame one uniform notion of human happiness, or prescribe any constant and general rules for the attainment of it.

But as the *Israelites*, when they march'd in arms to take possession of the promised land, were told of the sons of *Anak*, gigantick enemies, and cities wall'd and fenc'd up to heaven; so shall I, or any man that goes about to possess himself of so great a blessing as happiness, be discouraged by worldly and sensual men, with the toil we are to undergo, with the difficulties we are to encounter, and generally with representations of the folly and rashness of the attempt; these must indeed be contemned and slighted, but it must be upon rational grounds; and therefore I must consider their weight and strength before I proceed.

Various is the working of human fancy ; they that will pretend to be acute and wise above the vulgar part of mankind (for such are always apt to despise speculation and learning) look upon

Object. 1.

Happiness too divine a state for man to aspire after.

happiness as too divine and glorious a state for so mean a creature as man to affect ; it was not the only vain, but sinful ambition of our first parents to aspire to the likeness of God, *Ye shall be as gods*, Gen. iii. and what can be more truly the prerogative and peculiar possession of God, than happiness ? or what can make us more * like God ? To affect this therefore were the folly of those earth-born creatures in the poet, which sacrilegiously invaded heaven : let us be content with the portion of man, and rest satisfied with those easy and obvious pleasures which best suit this imperfect nature and imperfect state.

I know not how well some may please themselves with this sort of talk ; but this is plain to me, these men are contradictious to themselves, and their philosophy to all true reason ; for notwithstanding this affected debasing of human nature, the transports of these voluptuaries are as bold and ambitious as those of the haughtiest *stoick* ; and 'tis no strange thing to hear an *Epicurean* boast of a parity or equality with his *Jupiter* in the point of happiness or pleasure. But to answer the objection in a word : be the nature of

* Omnis enim per se divum natura necesse est,
Immortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur,
—— Privata dolore omni, privata periculis
Ipsa suis pollens opibus. *Lucr.*

mankind

mankind what it will, I do readily confess, that it were, if not a sinful, yet a vain ambition for man to affect any other happiness than what is suitable to his nature; for it were to pursue what he were not capable of; it were like the folly of *Semele* in the poet, when she might be entertain'd by *Jupiter*, not only with the passion of a lover, but the glory and majesty of a God; and so being fatally successful in her wish, she perished in the embraces she had so proudly begg'd: this therefore we readily grant, happiness is a state of pleasure, and pleasure is the result of the proportion and agreeableness of the object to the capacity or appetite; so that he that aspires to a state of happiness that infinitely exceeds his nature, foolishly doats on contradictions, and affects a happiness devoid of pleasure: or, which is all one, covets a pleasure which he cannot enjoy. And thus this *Epicurean* objection vanishes into air and nothing.

As to that charge of sacrilege and impious boldness, which is insinuated in the objection against our ambition for happiness, when it is remember'd that we propose no happiness, but what the make and frame of our nature qualifies and capacitates us for, and consequently the God of nature design'd for us; it will be easily granted, that God does not only allow of, but direct and delight in man's endeavours after happiness: those faculties and capacities with which he has endow'd him, being the fairest declaration of the divine will in this point.

There

There are others of that sluggish and brutish temper, that being unable to raise their conception above sense, or discover any charm in a rational and philosophical pleasure, they seem to despise that happiness the wise and religious part of mankind profess to seek after; and to think all the pleasure man can enjoy, so little, that 'tis scarce worth the while to take much pains for it.

Object. 2. *Happiness here too trifling to require much toil.*

It is true, I am but a man, that is, a little atom in the vast matter, and my life is but a short moment in an endless stream of time: but then I feel a strange kind of comprehensiveness in my soul, it stretcheth forth it self to times past and to come, it enjoys things that are not seen, by faith and hope, and sometimes things that are not at all, by memory and fancy; and tho' my life is but a moment, satisfaction and pleasure hath its degrees; and therefore if I can possess it in its height and perfection, I shall live much, tho' not long; I shall enjoy eternity in a moment, the world in a little globe. Nor is this a mere fancy and romance; for when I read St. *Austin*, so far inflamed with the love of true philosophy by *Cicero's* book *ad Hortensium*, that he presently abandons all the luscious pleasures of his pagan conversation, for the sake of those which he should afterwards find in a philosophical life: when I find *Cicero* in, surely, a holy ravishment of soul, preferring *one day spent according to the precepts of virtue, before a sinful immortality*; and the Psalmist, almost in the same words, as well as the same passion,

passion, *One day in thy courts is better than a thousand*, Pſal. lxxxiv. I cannot chuſe but think there are irrefiſtible charms and beauties in virtue, and pleaſures in true philoſophy, as raviſhing as they are pure and ſacred: and who can reſtrain himſelf from the glowing deſires of, and reſolute endeavours after a ſhare in them? when I have read *Socrates* dying with a generous charity, and ſerene hopes, and with an undiſturbed mind eaſily parting with all here below; when I have read of *Simeon* waiting for, and expecting death, as weary labourers do the evening-ſhades, or as hirelings the reward of their work; when I read *St. Paul* with humble impatience expreſſing his devout deſire of death and diſſolution; when I have ſeen ſome (as ſome I have ſeen) ſitting in calm, and majeſty, and triumph, as if they had attended death as the old *Romans* once did the barbarous *Gauls*, in their chairs and robes; when I have ſeen men die, not only with content, but almoſt in an extaſy; and the ſoul, breath'd forth not in a groan, but an ejaculation; I muſt needs ſay, I could not chuſe but wiſh with *Balaam*, Num. xxiii. *That I might die the death of the righteous, and that my latter end might be like his.* Theſe are degrees of happineſs, which I ſhould judge it reaſonable to purchaſe at any rate, whatever there be hereafter; a ſmooth, contented, delightful life, ſuch as would not only bear, but invite reflections on it; a chearful, liſtſome death, able to make the living in love with it.

But

But after all, whether this present life be all my portion; whether I die all of me together with my body, or whether this life be only the time of our probation and preparation for another, and death be nothing but the rough passage from one shore to another, or the horizon that parts the hemisphere of darkness from that of light, is a question I will not now determine; 'tis sufficient to propose it here as a doubt, whereof one side or other must be true. If therefore this life be in order to eternity, it nearly imports me to consider my present relation to a future state; if it be not, then this life, call it what you please, a span, a dream, or a bubble, yet is it my *all*, and I must make the most of it.

But,

Are not *nature* and *custom* the best guides to happiness? what needs there so much poring to find out that which instinct leads us to? we do not see that the most learned clerks are always the most happy men; let such demonstrate

Object. 3.
There is no need of study or enquiry after happiness, nature and custom being the best guides to it.

the truth of their philosophy by their own success: and thus they magnify nature, not out of any honour they design to do it, or the Author of it; but that they may with greater security condemn the one, and deprave the other by sluggish luxury and unbridled lust.

I am not easily tempted to a contempt of nature, or of customs; for by the one I should seem injurious to God, who is the Author of nature; and by the other I should prove injurious to mankind, whose concurrent sense and constant practice

tice creates a custom. Therefore as to the former part of the objection, were it but once truly determined what were to be understood by *nature*, this objection would vanish. I think, our souls within us may be justly suppos'd to constitute a part of our nature, as well as our bodies; and therefore I cannot be content that the body, much less vicious habits (commonly called indeed a second nature) should usurp the name and authority of nature; nor consequently can I be content to allow the mere sensual appetites of the body, much less the dictates of vicious habits, for the laws of nature. The body indeed is an essential part of our nature, but then it must be remember'd, 'tis not the governing part; and therefore its instinct cannot arrogate to it self the authority of a law. It remains therefore, that tho' the rational soul within us be but a part of our nature, yet being the better part, the *ruling* part, its dictates must have the force of *laws*; so that the law of nature will be nothing else but the commands of right reason. I shall be most ready to grant, that we ought to follow the conduct of our nature, taking it in this sense, *Beate vivit qui secundum eam partem animæ vivit, quam dominari in homine fas est: He indeed lives happily who follows the conduct of that part to which belongs the undoubted right of sovereignty and dominion in man.*

Aug. contra
Academicos.

As to the latter part of this objection, which sets up custom, that it may exclude philosophy: by *customs* is commonly meant those principles
and

and practices which are generally receiv'd and fashionable in the place we live. I have a just veneration for whatever is the sense of mankind; but I think their suffrage is not to be taken by number, but by weight: nor are we to follow the opinion or example of the most, but of the best: nor indeed is it possible to understand what is the sense of mankind in this point; for we have custom against custom, nation against nation, and religion against religion.

It ought farther to be consider'd, that principles taken upon trust have seldom an equal influence upon us, with those which we take upon strict examination and mature deliberation; that men will easily be tempted to desert those for which they have no better authority than the vote of a multitude: nor can any thing tend more to the disparagement of any persuasion than this, that 'tis not the result of our judgment but our fortune; or to the dishonour of any religion than this, that 'tis magisterially obtruded by the authority of laws, and terror of force, and will not submit it self to the trial of sober philosophy: and so I take it to be a credit to the Christian religion that it did not force assent, but gain it by irresistible arguments; that is, so far from shunning the trial of impartial philosophy, that it did always invite men to a sober examination of its evidence; and commanded its disciples, *Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you,* 1 Pet. iii. 'Tis true indeed, as the case now stands, religion may, may, must be recommended by authority of
of

of law and custom, and ingratiated by particular practice of it, but afterwards must grow up and be confirmed by reason, like a tender plant that is fixed by the help of another's hands, but afterwards it stands firmest upon its own roots: and this method our Saviour himself did sometimes make use of, when either the stupidity of nature, or prejudice of education render'd those to whom he addressed his doctrine incapable of entering into a thorough examination of it; *Then if any man will do my will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.*

Lastly, To trust to others, who themselves with like rashness and credulity do trust to others in the matter of the highest moment of life, seems to me inconsistent with common prudence, with the very constitution of rational nature; for what use can be as much fancied of reason, if I slight its service in so important an affair as this?

It is true, temper, fortune and education have *de facto* so great a share in the happiness or misery of some kind of men especially; that I must not yet dismiss this objection, till I have taken a little notice of such for whose defence and service it was at first found out: these are,

First, The stupid and brutish part of mankind: these seem to have met with happiness whilst they seek it not; their fancies flat, their prospect short, and their desires few and easy; and consequently if their pleasures be not rais'd, neither are their troubles deep; time and chance happen to 'em, and they bear the one, and wear out

out the other without any very melancholy or tender resentments; stupidity in them out-does all the habits of philosophy in others; and want of sense makes them laugh more loudly, live more securely, and die more unconcernedly than the acutest and thoughtfulest of men can.

Were the incapacity of these men great enough to justify their contempt of reason and religion, I should almost be tempted to call them happy; but at the same moment I should

* Non ideo tamen quisquam felicia dixerit, quibus non est felicitatis intellectus.
Sen. de Vit. beat.

despise their happiness; * for I cannot call those happy, whatever their enjoyments be, whose souls are too sluggish and drowsy to understand or reflect upon their happiness: or, if I must call this happiness, 'tis the happiness of a beast, not of a man: with me to live, is somewhat greater than to feed and rest; and to be happy, must be much more than to live. The extrem to these are,

Secondly, The gay, the gaudy, the modish, the unthinking part of mankind: these in their own opinion, and truly in the opinion of the world (most men being either flatterers or envious of their good luck) may pretend to happiness; and if their pretence be well founded, their way to happiness is a more ready, plain, and compendious one, than any that ever was, or ever will be discover'd.

But alas, shortness of sight cannot pass with me for wit, nor an unthinking confidence for wisdom: I have seen most of those dreams the world can present the gayest fancy with; and upon

upon the utmost of my trial, I have perhaps found something that would divert my fancy, nothing that could satisfy a rational soul. I will not here examine what is the employment, what the pleasure proper to a rational being; nor will I now go about to shew, that that mind can enjoy no sober or lasting peace, much less pleasure, which is engag'd in such a method of life as it cannot give a good account of, or rationally justify to it self; both which considerations would be plain refutations of this gay objection: 'tis enough in this place to say, that this sort of life is repugnant to those principles which religion reveals, which reason seems ready to embrace, and which are back'd by all the authority which the unanimous approbation of the wisest and best part of mankind can give 'em. It behoves us therefore not to abandon our selves to this kind of life, till we have narrowly discuss'd and try'd these principles; for if they should prove true, then will this sensual, careless life betray'd us to a miserable eternity: and tho' they should be false, yet till we are upon rational grounds convinc'd that they are so, we have little reason to commit our happiness to so great a hazard, where the odds are very great against us, that we are in the wrong.

It remains, notwithstanding all these objections, that it behoves every man to pursue his happiness by a rational enquiry after it, neither under-valuing human nature or its happiness, nor giving up himself to the guidance of the brutish and blind part of him; but seriously and thoroughly to examine whatever end be propos'd

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pos'd to him as his happiness, or whatever method be propos'd to him as the way to it: but when we have blown off these not formidable objections against this enquiry, but loose and wanton excuses of the neglect of it, there are others yet that seem by a fairer shew of reason to deter us from it by the difficulty and unsuccessfulness of the attempt.

Happiness (say they) is like *Proteus* in the poet, it puts on so many different forms and shapes, that it seems impossible to circumscribe it within general rules, or to represent it under any one fixt, definite and single notion

Object. 4
*The great variety
 there is in man; and
 consequently his hap-
 piness explodes these
 attempts.*

or idea; and it deserves well to be examin'd, what weight or truth there is in the vulgar notion of happiness, that for a man to be happy, is nothing else but to live according to his fancy: and it seems no less absurd to invite every man to the same heaven, or gratify every humour by the same kind of happiness, than to entertain all appetites with one and the same dish.

But as in that great variety of complexion, feature, shape and motion; and in that great diversity of capacities and endowments which we behold in men, there is yet one common nature wherein they all agree, whereby they are constituted creatures of the same species; just such accidental varieties may the happiness of man be capable of, and yet the life and being, the soul and substance of it, may be one and the same, and consequently may be comprehended under

under general rules. And if this answer were not sufficient, it would not be absurd to say, that happiness, like beauty, may put on various dresses, and yet be still charming and delightful in each; or that this bread, like that of heaven (for so the *Rabbins* tell us of *Manna*) has that in it which gratifies every palate; there are sovereign and unallay'd blessings, such as *life, perfection, indolence, &c.* which take with every appetite, and are universally well-com'd to all the sons of men. Or, I may truly say, that happiness must not only be prepared and fitted for man, but man for his happiness; he must become a rational creature e're he can enjoy a rational pleasure: 'tis from this want of preparation that diversity of opinions concerning happiness springs, which is so universal a discouragement. For,

It cannot be deny'd, but that the opinions of men concerning happiness have been and are extremely various: all the different sects of philosophy and religion being so many different paths which the different apprehensions of the minds of men have mark'd out to happiness. I have no undervaluing thoughts of the abilities of mankind, or overweening opinion of my own; I cannot think my self clearer sighted, nor can I promise that I shall be more fortunate or more industrious in my search, than others: this is my comfort, that my miscarrying in this attempt is more honourable, than success in a trifling and impertinent one——

Magnis tamen excidit ausis.

Nor can I think that uncertainty, which this diversity of opinions seems to imply, sufficient to deter any wise man's enquiry. No sick man in his wits will renounce the desires or hopes of a cure, because physicians differ in their opinions about the method of it: the study of philosophy has never been utterly forsaken, tho' that of one age baffle and overthrow that of another; and this stands rather upon the weakness and obscurity of the former, than its own strength or evidence. The *academies* do not seem to have entertain'd so gross an absurdity as some have fancy'd, when they taught that wisdom consisted in the search of truth, even at the same time when they believ'd that it could not be fully found out: for where certainty cannot be had, it is not unreasonable to follow the fairest probabilities. And if this were rationally practised in any study, certainly much more in that happiness; since the necessity of this study above any other, doth more indispensably oblige us to it: for all labour and learning that promotes not the great end of happiness is to no purpose, since we are ne'er the better for't; for to be the better, and to be the happier for't, is all one.

But there is no reason why we should take up with these cold and lifeless answers, which will satisfy none, but those who are extremely well inclin'd: we may now boldly say, the difficulties that former ages met with are of no force now to deter us; we can now free our selves from the distracting terrors of an invisible Power, without banishing him out of that world which himself created;

created ; we can now prove a judgment to come without the assistance of poetic dreams ; and the existence of souls after death, without their pre-existence before our birth : to be short, we have now revelation for our rule, and every good man a divine spirit for his guide ; nay, every man (if he be sincere) in such enquiries as these. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him,* Jam. 1. So that now we may very rationally conclude, that fatal ignorance or fatal error in this point must be imputed either to a lazy and sottish contempt of that knowledge we are most nearly concern'd in, and the means conducing to it, or to an obstinate resistance of that conviction which God endeavours to beget in us by his word and his spirit, or at least to the want of that just consideration we ought to allow to reveal'd truths, or of that necessary preparation which fits us for divine assistance, and enables us to understand the divine will ; and for this reason the dissensions and sharp contentions of Christians ought to be no prejudice to the authority or perspicuity of revelation, or to the assertion of the spirit's conduct and assistance : for, besides that unity of faith is an unity of fundamentals, not of fancies ; it must be confess'd, that our sects and divisions have their rise and propagation from these and such like causes ; nothing being more common than that mens tempers, and complexions, and educations, and interests, and passions should give a bias to their judgments, and a tincture to their tenets and opinions : it

is easy to see, that the errors of some are the dreams of a drouzy carelesness; of others, the wandrings of a wanton confidence; of others, the crooked windings of designing interest, and so on: for it may with much truth be affirm'd, that all erroneous philosophy in matters necessary and fundamental, is the result of some unworthy lust and passion: but all these matters, namely, the use of revelation and God's spirit, the vanity of all objections form'd against religion, dissensions about it, the difficulties the heathens were to encounter in their enquiries after happiness, &c. shall be more fully treated of in their proper places.

Thus I think, I have in this section, *First*, sufficiently evinced the importance and necessity of an enquiry after happiness, since 'tis impossible to steer the course of life aright, without a clear knowledge of that which ought to be the end, the center of all our desires and endeavours, that is, *happiness*: without this, 'tis not only impossible to be happy, but, what ought seriously to be weighed, impossible not to be miserable. *Secondly*, I have cleared this undertaking from those objections with which it is generally assaulted. Let us not therefore so far disparage and undervalue human nature, or dishonour the Author of it, as ever once to fancy that happiness is too great for us, or we too little for it; or that God should disallow, as a sacrilegious ambition, the most rational attempts of a rational creature, I mean, those of becoming happy; since we seek no other happiness than what the make and frame of nature,

nature, and consequently the God of nature, appears plainly to capacitate us for, and design us to, the greatness of which nothing can so well express, as the transports and raptures of happy men.

But let us not think this happiness so easy a purchase, that it will run into the lap of the sluggish, or prostitute it self to the embraces of senseless brutish lust. No, no; nothing but industrious reason, pure and vigorous philosophy, can ever attain it: the sluggard or the wanton, the fool and vain, may have some fits of mirth; only the rational, only the philosopher, can possess true and lasting happiness: nor let the endless quarrels, the numerous contentions of vain and proud pretenders, discourage from following the conduct of reason and revelation; these are the contentions of lust, not philosophy. Truth and happiness (as some have lately fancy'd of love) inhabit a palace, into which none can enter but humble, sincere and constant lovers.

S E C T. II.

Of the attainableness or possibility of happiness in this life.

C H A P. I.

The notion of happiness stated; granted imperfect, compared to that of another life, yet in it self considerable and desirable.

HAVING removed such discouragements as were less considerable, I come now to examine that which attacks my design with the rudest violence, and undermines the very foundation of it; I mean, the *impossibility* of obtaining happiness in this world. 'Tis true, if our endeavours after happiness here could succeed no further than to secure it to us hereafter, none could deny them reasonable upon this sole account: yet, because this persuasion would blunt the force of one of the most powerful motives to religion, which is, *That its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace,* and consequently very much abate our vigilance and industry in pursuit of it; I judge it indispensably necessary to enter into a full discussion of this point. In managing which, I will, *First*, Assert the possibility of obtaining happiness, by plain, and, as I think, unanswerable arguments: and then, *2dly*, I will endeavour
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to give full satisfaction to all objections to the contrary. But, before I do either of these, as well for order and instruction sake, as to obviate mistakes, I think 'tis fit I should explain my notion of the happiness I propose: I must therefore acquaint my reader, that I do not promise him a heaven upon earth; that

I do not promise him the happiness of angels, but of men; and that I do not understand happiness in this proposition of that which is every way perfect and absolute, to which fancy it self can add nothing; but of that which is, like our nature, incompleat and imperfect, speaking comparatively, and yet truly great and excellent in it self too. *Seneca* doth somewhere describe this happy man much after this manner; 'He is one who despises all those things which are subject to change; who accounts nothing good or bad, but virtue and vice; who is not puffed up by prosperous events, nor cast down by adverse ones; one whose great pleasure is to despise pleasure; one above either desire or fear, content with the riches which are the true and proper possession of virtue, and coveting nothing more: such a one, he thinks, cannot chuse but be happy.' And I think so too, and I fear, a great deal happier than any man on earth can ever be. This is a gay dream, but well suiting that philosophy which requires the tranquillity, and steadiness or constancy, of God to be joined with the frailty of man; a composition of things infinitely more incompatible than that of an immortal soul and mortal body can be fancy'd

The happiness of this life granted imperfect.

fancy'd to be. For my part I am content to call a building beautiful, tho' there be something in it which doth not answer the test of the strictest art, or at least of the most accurate fancy: I am content to call it a day, tho' flitting clouds and showers do now and then a little obscure the light; so can I not chuse but call him righteous, who is sincere, tho' not perfect; whose life is, generally speaking, bright and exemplary, tho' not utterly void of spots and blemishes; whose motion is a progress towards virtue, tho' it be sometimes retarded, nay, sometimes interrupted: and so I am content to think him a happy man, not who is utterly exempt from all disturbances in mind or body; not who lives in constant extasy; but him whose pleasures are more and greater than his troubles, whose hopes are more and greater than his fears; one whose enjoyments, tho' they do not transport, do satisfy him; one whose serenity and calm of mind, tho' it may suffer interruptions, suffers but few and flight ones. I will entreat the reader to admit of this notion of happiness here, till we gradually advance to a clear and full discovery of it. Now, as we are not to lay aside any advice of being virtuous, because we cannot arrive at the height and constancy of holy angels; so neither are we to cast off all thoughts of happiness, because we cannot equal theirs: for if we are happy in such a degree as the imperfection of our nature and this inferiour state will permit; if we can free our selves from those miseries which do involve the foolish and vicious part of mankind;

if

if we can possess our selves of those humble and modest joys that human nature is here capable of, it will be worth all the time and travail we can spend upon the design: and, that we may advance thus far, the following considerations, will, I think, render it more than probable.

The possibility, &c. proved.

C H A P. I.

The possibility of attaining happiness, asserted.

1. *Some happier than others, and this owing to their virtue.* 2. *Good and evil in the world.* Obj. *Evils more than goods, answer'd, by asserting the contrary. From the suffrage of the good. The make of the world. The nature of man. Scripture. The confession of Atheists and Epicureans.* Obj. 2. *Evil more efficacious than good, answered. What impressions evils ought to make on man, examin'd. Natural evils slight, unless sharpened by our selves. Moral evils avoidable. What impressions evils actually have, examined. Man proved naturally furnished with inclinations and arts that magnify good, and lessen evil.* Obj. 3. *Good and evil not dependant of man, answered, by considering the nature of wisdom and folly. A recapitulation of the arguments of this chapter.*

First, It cannot be denied but that some men are more happy, or at least more miserable, than
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Because some are more happy than others.

than others: who will deny *Titus* to have been infinitely more happy than *Nero*? *Titus*, whose government of the *Roman* people was not more mild and gentle than the impartial reflections of his conscience upon himself and actions, if we credit *Suetonius* (*in vita Titi*) in his relation of his death? *Nero*, that guilty wretch, whose conscience was no less a plague to him than he to *Rome*? Who prefers not the character of *Mitio* in the comedian, before that of *Demea*? (*Terent.*) *Mitio*, whose smooth and kind, as well as prudent behaviour, render'd him easy and amiable to his family and relations, and made the fortune of his whole life flow calmly and gently to the end? *Demea*, whose sour, suspicious and severe behaviour did exasperate and ruffle the minds of all that related to him, and did disturb and muddy that stream of his affairs, which would otherwise have run smooth and clear? Who will compare the pleasant retirements, the modest contentments, the regular and virtuous enjoyments of *Atticus*, with the turbulent popularity of *Gracchus*, or the fatal luxuries of *Cataline*, or the proud cruelties of *Sylla* and *Marius*? What then? Shall we attribute no share of happiness or misery to the virtues or vices of the one or the other? or no part of their virtues or vices to themselves, but to (I know not what) fatal and irresistible causes? If we assert the former, with frontless confidence we contradict unquestionable matters of fact; if the latter, we rob the virtuous of that merit which render'd 'em belov'd

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in their lives, and ever since has preserv'd their memories sacred and honourable; and we acquit those from all blame or guilt, which the laws of their own country, and the common sense of all mankind have ever condemn'd and detested. What gross and monstrous absurdities are these? Shall we; now after the improvement of so many ages (for we pretend to grow more wise and learned daily) dispute whether vice or virtue be the better guide of human actions, or the more serviceable to human life? Shall sloth and luxury be thought to conduce as much to the prosperity and decency of our lives, as industry and frugal temperance? Shall ambition, pride and choler be now judg'd as instrumental to promote and preserve the peace and repose of our minds and states, as modesty, meekness and charity? Or if this be too daring a defiance to sense and experience, shall we contend that the slothful and luxurious, the unjust and cruel, are as blameless and innocent; nay, if we extend the principles to their just consequence, as commendable and worthy of praise as the industrious and temperate, the meek and gentle, the just and charitable? For this must inevitably follow, if neither mens virtues nor vices be in any degree to be ascrib'd to themselves. Wretched and desperate is that shift that equals the just and unjust, the industrious and sluggard, the great mind that stands upright under and out-braves misfortune, and the dangerous one which effeminately shrinks and breaks under it! Wretched the shift that equals the tyrant and most gracious prince, the loyallest subject and the traitor, the faithful friend and perfidious flatterer ;

terer; and all this we must be driven to, or else, as we cannot deny that some are happier than others, so we must not deny that the happiness of the one, or the misery of the other, is owing, in some measure at least, to their virtues and vices, and these to themselves. And if this be true, 'tis evident we may be happy if we will; and tho' we may not equal the most happy (for I will not exclude temper, education, fortune, from all share in mens misery or happiness) yet since every degree of happiness is truly valuable, let us with all our might endeavour to be as happy as we can.

*Nec quia desperes invicti membra Glyconis,
Nodosa corpus noli prohibere Chiragra:
Est quiddam prodire tenus——* Hor.

*The mighty Glyco's strength you can't attain;
Don't therefore scorn to free your limbs
from pain [gain,
Of knotty gout: ease, tho' not strength to
Is no small happiness——*

But to pursue our proof:

2. It is a great absurdity to confound or equal virtue and vice; but 'tis not the greatest they commit who deny the possibility of attaining happiness: for he, who banishes happiness out of the world, does at the same time banish good and evil out of it too: for good being nothing else but the subserviency of some things to our true interest and pleasure, and evil the tendency of others to

*Because there is
good and evil in the
world.*

to our trouble and injury ; it must needs follow, if there be good and evil in the world, that he, who has a greater share of good than evil, is a happy man ; and he, that denied good and evil, may with as plausible a confidence deny all human passions, and assert that there is neither love nor hatred, neither joy nor grief, nor hope, nor fear, nor pity, nor envy : for good or evil are the objects or causes of all these. I may then, I think, take it for granted, that no man will take the confidence to say, that there is no such thing as good or evil in the world ; and consequently all men must be oblig'd to acknowledge such a state as happiness in the world too, unless they will affirm one of these three things ; either first, that evil grows up every where in thick crops ; good, thin, scatter'd, and rarely to be found, especially grown up to its maturity : that consequently there are none whose share of evil doth not infinitely out-weigh that of good. Or, Secondly, That evil hath so much of venom and malignity in it, that a little evil contributes more to our misery, than a great deal of good can to our happiness ; so ripe and full grown is evil ; so lank, under-grown, and every way imperfect is good in this world. Or, Thirdly, That we our selves can contribute nothing to that good or evil which is our portion ; 'tis the product, not of reason or industry, but of time and chance, or of some other principle which is not in our power. All these deserve to be weigh'd, not only because the examination of them will tend to cheer and encourage the minds

minds of men, and to render the great Creator and Governour of the world more dear and venerable to us; but also, because it will be of some use and service to the whole enquiry

First, Therefore let us examine what truth there is in that fancy which supposes the weight and number of the evils in the world infinitely to exceed that of good things. I know there are a sort of four and murmuring, of proud and ambitious wretches, who deal with their God as with their prince or patron; and estimate favours and benefits, not according to their merit, but expectation, greedy and haughty expectation which even prodigal bounty cannot satisfy: 'tis the strange temper of some men that they wither and grow lean with discontent and envy; even whilst their studied meals distract the wanton appetite, and their very attendants are sleek, and full, and fat with the remains of their feasts; and the meanest of their relations thrive into pride and insolence by the mere sprinklings of their plenty. I know 'tis natural to some to blaspheme God and the King, to quarrel with and reproach providence and their government; while loaded with good things, they stretch themselves on silken couches, under roofs of cedar, and loll at ease in their gilt coaches; and yet at the same time the honest countryman, who with security, tho' much drudgery, ploughs and sows, and reaps a few acres, eats his plain meals with chearfulness, sleeps with-

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1. *Evils not more than goods in the world. From the suffrage of the good.*

without disturbance, blesses God, and magnifies the goodness of his prince. The contentment of one is an evident proof of God's bounty and goodness; whose provision doth far exceed the necessities of his creatures: the discontent of the other can be no disparagement to it, since he has dealt extremely liberally with 'em, tho' they enjoy not what they possess. We are not therefore to judge of the world by the clamours and invectives of such as are always mutinous and dissatisfied, but by the suffrages of those most humble, modest, and grateful souls, who know how to value the favours of heaven and themselves as they ought to do; who do not mar and corrupt every blessing by peevishness, or envy, or pride, or wantonness; but can weigh their enjoyments, their hopes and their merits, in just and equal balances; and discerning how much the one does exceed the other, chearfully adore and praise the world's Author and Governour. If this controversy were to be determin'd by such, we should find these even under uneasy and tyrannical governments, and in the more barren and niggardly countries, confuting this objection by their chearfulness and contentment: what would they have done, if providence had planted 'em there where a fertile soil and thriving trade had unladed the wealth and plenty of the world into their arms, and a mild and gentle government had secur'd and guarded their enjoyments?

But let us decide the controversy not by votes, but reasons; let us consider the state and nature of the world;

From the make of the world.

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is there one in a thousand who is left utterly unfurnish'd of all means of wise and wholesome instruction, which is the good of the soul of man? or is there one in a thousand maim'd and defective in the powers and faculties of the soul, or senses and members of the body? Is there one in a thousand born under so unlucky and envious planets, that he cannot by any industry or virtue provide himself a comfortable subsistence? View and survey the world; examine and consider man, and tell me whether there be any room for those reproaches and spiteful reflections, by which some men have so outrag'd nature and providence? *Philo Judæus* (*de plantatione Noe*) tells us a rabinical story to this purpose, that when God had created the world, he demanded of a prophet, whether he saw any thing wanting to consummate and compleat the glorious work? Who told him, *nothing* but an intelligent being to praise the wise and gracious architect. The *Hebrew* philosophers (it seems) thought the world exactly perfect; such a work as might bespeak God the Author of it: and no wonder, for they were inspir'd by *Moses*, who brings in God reflecting upon his own creation, thus: *And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.* How unlike is all this to the *Epicurean* Philosophy, whose great patron *Lucretius* endeavours to infer, from the ill contrivance, the manifold defects, the innumerable evils of the world, that God could not be the Creator of it! That ever the work by which God design'd to exalt his glory, should be drawn into an occasion of dishonouring

honouring and reproaching him! That ever that work which deserv'd the praises of men and angels, should at last stand in need of apologies and defences! If we look up to the heavens, such is the beauty of those bodies, so uniform and regular their motions, so exactly are they dispos'd both for ornament and service, that the speculation naturally exalts the mind, and insensibly raises it above the body: nay, it has tempted some to think every itar mov'd and acted by some understanding spirit. If we look upon the earth, so wonderful is the variety, so inconceivable the wealth and plenty of it, that it is not only sufficient for the needs and desires of the sober and temperate, but even for the luxury and wantonness of the fanciful and intemperate: every place almost is a paradise; there is no country almost which cannot afford us *tempe* or *campania*, *opus gaudentis natura*, a work which nature seems to have created when in the gayest and the kindest humour. If there were room for fancy in sacred things, one would almost think that *Moses*, out of ignorance of other countries, or love of his own, had confin'd *Eden* within those narrow bounds he sets it; and that it had only been lost there, because a fuller discovery of the world had now found it almost every where: this is the world we complain of.

Let us now consider man, and we shall find with the Psalmist, *That he is wonderfully made; he is but little lower than the angels; he is crowned with glory and honour, and all*

From the nature of man.

the creatures are put under his feet, all the fowls of the air, and all the beasts of the field, Psal. 8. and 129. How infinitely wise, as well as kind, does God appear in his contrivance? So modest are his appetites, that a small portion of nature's good, is a full meal or feast; and yet so various, that there is nothing in all the provision, in all the joys and luxuries of nature, which he is not capable of tasting and enjoying. If we regard the mind of men, 'tis capable of a most surprizing satisfaction in the contemplation of the hidden powers, the secret laws and operations of nature; nay, it rises higher, it passes the bounds of mechanic nature, it entertains it self with moral perfections, and the spiritual excellencies of an invisible world, and gazes on those charms and glories which are not subject to the bodily eye: *vultus nimis lubricos aspicere*: such is the nature of the soul, that when it pleases it can retire within it self, withdraw from sense, and be secure and happy in its own strength and wealth, *ipsa suis pollens opibus*: and when it pleases, it can walk forth like *Dinah*, to see the daughters of the land, those beauties that sense presents it with; and that too (if guarded by awful virtue) without the danger of a rape. To say all of it in a word, 'tis capable of a share in all the good, and not necessarily subject to any of the evil of this world.

———— *Fatis avolsa voluntas.*

*There are no fates that can controul
The sovereign freedom of the soul.*

IF

If this be a true account of man, and the state of the world which he inhabits; if the one be fill'd with all things necessary and delightful, and the other be endow'd with all those capacities and appetites that fit him to enjoy 'em: nay, if his soul can raise it self above the pleasures, and exempt it self from the changes and revolutions of it; nothing is more manifest, than that the evil in life cannot be greater than the good, unless it be owing to our selves.

And to leave this matter beyond dispute, no man pretending to receive revelation, should admit of the contrary opinion: for no texts of divine writ are more plain, than those which proclaim to us God's love of mankind; *That he doth not afflict or grieve willing the children of men*: that the book of creation and providence is writ all over with the legible characters of love; so legible, that it renders the idolatry and wickedness of the *Gentiles* inexcusable: and finally, *That he gives us richly all things to enjoy*, 1 Tim. 6. where the apostle excellently expresses at once the bounty and design of God: his bounty, in that he gives us all things *richly*; his design, not to enkindle, and then delude our desires, like the *tree of life* or *knowledge*, made only to be forbidden us, but on purpose to be enjoy'd by us. So then the Christian cannot believe the evils to outweigh the goods of life, without contradicting revelation; nor the Atheist or Epicurean, as shall appear from what follows, without contradicting himself.

From scripture.

If nature has contriv'd the world so ill, if it has scatter'd good things with such a sparing and envious hand, whence are all those transports and extasies we meet with amongst these men? What is the ground? What is the matter of them? Whence so rich a crop of worldly sensual pleasures? Whence so much dotage on, and fondness for the world we so much complain of? Whence are the charms and irresistible temptations which the generality of mankind is vanquish'd by? Whence is it that men are so willing to set up their rest on this side *Canaan*? Whence that dread and aversion for death, as the most formidable evil?

Again, if nature has been such a step-mother to man, if it has frowardly and peevishly design'd him little else but mischief: whence that sagacity and penetration of mind, searching with delight into all the retirements of nature? Whence that comprehensive and almost immense capacity of pleasure? Whence that strength and greatness of soul enabling not only to confront, but to despise evils, and to be happy in despite of 'em? These are advantages so incomparably great and good, that no evils can be ballanced against them: and 'tis evident that no writings, no, not of the *Stoicks* themselves, were ever more stuffed with boasting and daring accounts of the nature of man, than those of the *Epicureans*. And thus, from all put together, whether we consult the nature and state of the world and man, the testimony of revelation or reason,

reason, the suffrages of the good-humour'd and grateful part of mankind, or the confession; of the voluptuous and atheistical, 'tis evident the good does out-weigh evil in the design of God or nature. But have I not my self, in the beginning of this treatise, acknowledg'd the weight and number of *evils* great? Yes, but *evils* not of God's creation, but our own: for the truth of the whole is, *περὶ αὐτῆς τῆς ἀνθρώπου ἢ τῆς πλάτης ἀλλὰ περὶ τῆς προσημίαν δὲ γὰρ.* Not things themselves, but the shades and fantasms, wanton, superstitious, effeminate or froward minds do raise about 'em, disturb the quiet and repose of man. So then, if we our selves do not multiply the number of our evils, our share of good in life may be much greater than our share of evil; and if we be not accessory to our own misery, we may be happy, unless,

Secondly, Evil hath so much venom and malignity in it, that a little evil contributes more to our misery than a great deal of good can to our happiness. We may judge of the force and energy of good and evil, either by that influence they generally *have*, or they *ought* to have upon the state of mankind. If we consider what impression they *ought* to make upon men, the question will come to a speedy and a happy issue; for then we must either reckon nothing an evil but a moral one, that is, sin and vice; or at least we must acknowledge that the venom of other evils is not comparable to that of moral ones. This latter opinion is an unquestionable

2. The efficacy of evil not greater than that of good. Natural evils contemptible to the virtuous. Moral ones avoidable.

truth: for who will not make a wide difference between a misfortune and a crime, between an affliction and a punishment, between those inconveniencies, trouble, and pain which we suffer as guilty criminals, and those we suffer as unfortunate innocents, or afflicted heroes or saints? For notwithstanding the evils or pains should be, in the matter of 'em, the same, yet there is a vast difference in the suffering; the one makes man much more miserable than the other; for our misfortunes only reach the body, not the mind: but when we suffer for our crimes, the whole man suffers, the soul as well as the body. Misfortunes, when the storm is o'erpass'd, leave no deform'd ruins, no wounds, no scars behind 'em; but our crimes, leave stains and guilt behind, which haunt the mind with perpetual horror. From this distinction of the nature and effect of evils, we may infer this comfortable conclusion, that nothing can make man *wholly, truly* miserable, but himself; nothing can oppress him by the weight of moral evils but his own choice; for nothing can compel or necessitate him to be wicked: the strokes, the wounds of natural evils (so I will call all the rest distinct from moral, and owing their being to the revolutions of time, and chance, and nature) are faint and slight; the mind of man ought not to suffer it self to be too deeply and sensibly affected by them. It is the work of reason and religion to fortify the mind against the impressions of these evils: and truly that mind that is furnish'd with true notions of things, with a rational and solid faith, with steady and well grounded

grounded hopes, may bear the impetuous shock of all these waves and storms calm and unmov'd: nay, I may boldly affirm, not only that virtue checks and controuls these evils, blunts their edge, and abates their force; but, what is more, that their natural strength, their own proper force is weak and contemptible, unless our own vice be combin'd and confederated with them against us. Our pride must aid our enemy to render his affront provoking; our covetousness and ambition must assist fortune, to render its contempt or hatred of us destructive to the tranquillity of our state. Falshood, under a disguise of friendship, could never have abus'd our confidence, by betraying our infirmities, or forsaking us in affliction, had not our own folly and self-conceit first betray'd us, exposing us a naked prey to flattery and treachery. The coldness or neglect of great men could never wound us; the hollow deceitful professions of those above us, could never fool or fret us, did not the fondness of our own desires betray us first into vain presumption, and a flattering credulity. The storm that snatcheth away a relation or a friend, could never overthrow me, if I stood upon my own bottom, if I were not guilty of one of the greatest weaknesses, of placing my happiness in any thing out of my own power, and so making myself dependant upon another man's fancy or fortune. Finally, Death it self must derive its terrors from the mournful solemnities we dress it in, from the darkness and horrors of our deluded imaginations; or else, it would prove but a contemptible

temptible bugbear, a very inconsiderable evil, or *none at all*. Thus 'tis evident, that if we distinguish evils into natural and moral, we shall have little reason to think the influence of evil so malignant and deadly, since 'tis in our own power to avoid moral evils; and natural ones strike but half way; they wound not the soul that is armed and guarded with reason and religion.

But now, if, with the *Stoicks*, we should admit of no other sort of evil, but what is moral; if we should allow the name of good to nothing but virtue, or of evil to nothing but vice; then we must look upon temporal and external misfortunes as inconveniences and disadvantages only; they may make us less happy, but they cannot make us miserable. And truly if we should here suppose, or take for granted, that there were another life, or that the pleasure of virtue triumphing over calamities and afflictions, were considerably great; this opinion cannot imply so great an absurdity as some would fasten upon it, or be a mere *λογωμαγία*, or idle contention of words, since I cannot tell with what consonancy to truth, or propriety of speech, we can call those troubles or hardships *evils*, which directly tend to procure for us an infinite good, or a pleasure which doth abundantly out-weigh our sufferings.

I think, 'tis now sufficiently evident, that natural evils are not of that mighty efficacy and deadly venomous quality, that it should be thought that a little evil doth more effectually contribute to misery, than a

great

What impressions evils do in fact make upon men.

great deal of good can to our happiness: 'tis apparent how slight the impressions are, which they *ought* to make upon us. It will now be time to consider, what impressions they do generally make upon us, what their real effect commonly is, how men generally are moved and affected by them. 'Tis true, there are some who mix heaven and earth upon every slight occasion; that will receive good, but no evil at the hand of God; most insensible of blessing, but extremely tender and sensible of any evil: but this speaks not the nature of evil, but of man; it speaks him ingrateful, but not the evil intolerable. Nor is human nature to be measur'd by this whining querulous humour of a few, but by the sense and temper of the generality; amongst whom 'tis easy to observe, how instinct teaches us to elude the stroke and force of evil: nature opens its arms, and enlarges it self to receive good, and all the powers of the mind greedily strive to share in it; but it contracts and shrinks, retires and stands upon its defence at the approach of evil: 'tis apt to flatter it self, and apt to hope, apt to lessen evil and magnify good, apt to put off the thoughts of approaching trouble and to anticipate its pleasures: 'tis full of great designs and gaudy projects, and easily prone to delight and content it self with thin, airy and imaginary schemes of good: this, and much more is evident in a thousand daily instances of human life; by which 'tis plain, nature in the contrivance of man kindly design'd to fit and dispose him for happiness, by giving him such inclinations as might serve to lessen the evil, to en-

crease

crease the good, to supply the defect of this mortal and imperfect state. Is it not manifest, that whereas evil looks less to us, good looks bigger at a distance? we are willing to help fortune, and call in the aids of fancy, to adorn and enrich her gifts. Nor is it easy to defeat man of this humour; he dreams of a bottomless abyss in every good, in every pleasure: and, notwithstanding the daily confutations of experience, he still desires to repeat his enjoyments over again, as if he did still hope to find some new untasted sweet, some pleasure undiscover'd, untry'd before. How apt are we to flatter our selves, and willing to be flatter'd! every man represents himself and state under the fairest idea that he can possibly frame of it, and turns away his eye and thought from every thing that may offend him: beauty, strength, health, understanding, wisdom, reputation, attendants, power, wealth, and whatever future good he can form, tho' but a slender pretention to, make up the gay idea; nay, and even long life and undisturb'd security, are there drawn as two pillars to support the building, the daring but kind confidence of man, that makes himself the master of fate and fortune! If you should mark this tablet with ever so prying and curious an eye, you would not be able to discover either deformity or folly, or dishonour, or poverty, or disease, or death: for these, man, kind to himself, banishes far from his thoughts, and suffers not to enter into the portraiture of himself. And hence 'tis, that most men never disturb life with the apprehension of its end, and never feel death till they are dying;

dying; kind instinct shewing us an easier way to lessen this evil, than the reason of most philosophers ever could, making our suffering extremely short; and even then too, almost in the midst of death, men fondly dream of, and hope for life, and can scarcely suffer their hope to expire in the last gasp: nay, so willing to be deluded, so easie to be impos'd upon are men, that they make even those things which are the trophies of death and the monuments of man's frailty and vanity, minister to them some slight comforts at least against mortality; they divert and entertain themselves with the mourning and pomp of their obsequies, with blacks and tombs, with the dying echo's of surviving reputation, and with the grandeur and felicity of their posterity; as if they did fondly persuade themselves that they should be concern'd in all these things, that something beyond the grave did relate to them, and that they did not utterly perish and die. And if this kind as well as obstinate hope do in some measure break the force of the greatest evil, that is death, we cannot but expect that it should be highly serviceable to man in moving him to despise, or enabling him to vanquish less evils: hence 'tis that no examples of the inconstancy or change of fortune, of the uncertainty of royal or popular favour, no instances of slighted service, deluded hope, sudden death, or any thing of this kind, are sufficient to discourage the attempts, the pursuits of mankind after worldly things. We boldly adventure upon those seas which we see scatter'd over with numerous wrecks, and confidently pursue

sue those paths, where we every moment meet with the ominous ruins of disappointed hope, and fruitless drugery, and baffled presumption. Thus it is, I determin'd not that thus it ought to be, I examin'd not what is here the office of philosophy, or the work of virtue; I have barely represented the humour and inclination of man, only that you may see that he is not such a defenceless, shiftable creature, but that his reason dares confront, and can vanquish evils in open battle and by downright force, and his instinct elude 'em by various, and those (if well conducted) useful and innocent arts. It doth therefore appear, that as the number of evils is not greater than that of goods, so neither is the vigour and energy of the one so much greater than that of the other, that a little evil should outweigh a great deal of good; that a little evil should contribute more to a man's misery than a great deal of good to his happiness. There remains nothing further to be examin'd. But,

Thirdly, That fancy which ascribes man's portion of good and evil to time or chance, &c. not man's virtue or industry, to any thing but to himself: and he that can with confidence affirm this, may with as good grace assert, that there is neither wisdom nor folly in the world; for if there be, this imagination must soon vanish, since wisdom is nothing else but the choice of true good, and rejection of evil, the pursuit of our true happiness, by all the most rational and probable means, and

3. *Man's good or evil depends upon himself, from the nature of wisdom and folly.*

and a declining and flying from all those things that are repugnant to it. And tho' success and good fortune do not always attend wisdom and virtue, yet you shall never persuade any but mad men or fools, that 'tis in vain to be virtuous, or irrational to be wise. *Solomon* has indeed observ'd as an instance or proof of the vanity of all things, *That the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill*, Eccles. ix. I exempt not the wise from subjection to time and chance, which is all that *Solomon* complains of here: but notwithstanding I must ever think with him, *That wisdom excels folly as much as light doth darkness*, Eccles. ii. Not only because chearful, delightful to it self, but also because 'tis the happiest guide of human life, blest generally with success, as well as rich in intrinsic good, and in some measure self-sufficient: nor does our *English* Proverb, *Fools have the fortune*, imply any more, than that the prosperity of fools is to be imputed to their fortune, that of wise men to their merit; that success does commonly wait upon virtue and wisdom, and nothing but an extraordinary chance can turn it upon the fool or sinner; tho' all this while I understand success in things necessary, not superfluous, for I cannot see, how it can be any disparagement to providence to turn that plenty another way, which would not, like soft distilling rains and dew, cherish, refresh and increase the tender plants, wisdom and virtue; but, like a flood, wash away the earth from their roots, and

and either utterly extirpate 'em, or leave 'em opprest and buried in rubbish. If this were not true, if the experience as well as reason of mankind did not confirm it, men would not serve apprenticeships to trades, men wou'd not strive with toil or hazard to make their point; but lazily and securely stay till fortune rain in golden showers into their laps.

By a recapitulation of all that has been hitherto discoursed, it may easily appear how far I have advanc'd in the proof of that assertion I undertook to make good, namely, that happiness may be attain'd in this world. I have shew'd, that some are happier than others, or at least less miserable; and that this difference of condition or state, is to be imputed to the virtues of some, and the vices of others. I have prov'd, that the world abounds with good things, and there is no appetite nor capacity of man, that may not find objects proper and agreeable, and such as in a great measure may delight and satisfy; and that man is endow'd with such a variety of faculties and senses, that there is scarce any thing in all the variety of beings the world contains, which he is not capable of enjoying. From whence it clearly follows, that man may be happy in the enjoyment of these good things, unless the evil of life sour and embitter the good, or the attainment of the good be out of the power of man. To remove all suspicion of both which, I discours'd something, tho' briefly, of the nature of evil, and the nature of man, evincing plainly the impotence and feebleness of the one, and the strength and preparations of the other

other: and, for the close of all, I have endeavour'd to make it manifest, that good and evil are not so much the result of time or chance, &c. as the necessary consequence of wisdom and folly. From all which the conclusion that naturally arises, is this; that if man be miserable, 'tis his own fault; or, which is all one, a man may be happy if he will, which was the thing to be prov'd.

Let us now make a close application of all that has been said, to the wants and necessities of mankind;

A recapitulatory conclusion.

what the evidence, what the conviction, what the real use and force of this discourse is. I am unhappy, I am miserable; whoe'er thou art that sayest so, thou must needs mean one of these two things. Thou do'st enjoy no good, or, art oppress'd with evil: if the latter, I demand, what evil? Speak out, speak plainly. There are three sorts of evils; the evils of the mind, the evils of the body, the evils of fortune. Which of these art thou oppress'd by? The evils of the mind? These are either sinful passions, or, what is the effect of them; guilty fears: nothing can compel thee to be wicked; cease to be wicked; and thou wilt cease to fear. The evils of the body? They are generally the effect of vorul passions and a disorderly life; and where they are not, the pleasures of the mind will out-weigh the pains of the body. The evils of fortune? 'Tis in thy power whether these shall be really evils, or no: they befall thy possessions, not thee: the foolish and vicious mind only suffers in these; the wise and virtu-

ous one is much above them : 'tis therefore thy own fault if thou be opprest with evil. But wilt thou say the former? I enjoy no good, no satisfactory good. Why, is there no good to be enjoy'd? I have already prov'd the contrary; and, if I had not, how easy were it here to do it? There's truth to entertain thy understanding, moral perfections to delight thy will, variety of objects to treat thy senses, the excellencies of the visible and invisible world to be enjoy'd by thee: why then dost thou defer to live? Why dost thou not begin to enjoy? Here 'tis evident that thou must be forc'd to say one of these two things; either that thou art not capable of enjoying the blessings, or that they are out of thy reach, out of thy power: to say, thou art not capable of 'em, is to renounce the faculties of thy soul, and the senses of thy body: to say, they are out of thy reach, is in effect to say, that virtue and vice, wisdom and folly are all one; or, which is every jot as absurd, that thou art wicked and sottish, and canst not help it. And this is that indeed which in effect all do say, that accuse fortune, or fate, or nature, or any thing but themselves, as the causes of their misery: and yet, as absurd as this is, it must be now examined; because the minds of men are perverted and discourag'd by such notions. I will therefore now proceed to the next thing, that is, to answer the objections against the attainment of happiness.

C H A P. II.

God not the cause of man's misery.

Object. 1. *Imputing to God man's misery, answered; and God's goodness and holiness asserted. The transition to the objections. The importance of the right notions of God. Polytheism, superstition and atheism. The issue of wrong ones. Sect. I. Of the goodness of God. 1. God proved infinitely good. The absurdity of the contrary. God the original of all perfections. The testimony of pagans and scripture. Object. 1. From God's dealings with the pagans, answer'd. Object. 2. Other dispensations, vindicated. 2. Of the influence of God's goodness on man. Whether God's goodness extended to man, concerns not the main objection. That it does, is proved, from whence inferr'd, 1. That God is not the cause of man's misery. This proved by reason and authority, human and divine. 2. That he is forward to assist man in acquiring happiness. 3. Divine assistance, what it imports. The manner of it consider'd and freed from contradictions. This assistance farther proved in fact, by God's government of Christians, Jews, and Pagans. The idolatry of the philosophers, examin'd. Sect. II. Of God's holiness. From whence is inferr'd, what is necessary on our side to intitle us to divine assistance.*

Would men talk coherently, the assertion of my former chapter would meet but few opposers; none can be rationally allowed to deny the possibility of happiness, but such as assert fate: for he that leaves to man his liberty, leaves him in a capacity of happiness; it being hardly possible to conceive, that man should be free in his choice of good or evil, and yet necessarily or unavoidably miserable: besides, few of those who are fond of fate, are willing to extend its empire over the liberty of man's mind; it being as easy to confute their fancy, if they did by some instance of a free choice, as it was by moving or walking to confute his, who denied motion.

If it be in the next place consider'd, that none can rationally maintain fate, but such as deny a God, since the belief of a God does naturally include his creation and government of the world; and this again naturally infers, either vice or virtue, rewards or punishments: but on the other hand, the denial of a God, and the admitting no principle of all things but *matter* does not only introduce a fatal connection and dependance of events on their causes, but also renders every motion of the mind of man as necessary and determinate, as that of fire, wind, or water. All this put together amounts to this much, that none shall exclude happiness, but such as exclude God and liberty out of the world; and since very few, I hope, are guilty of this, I ought to have very few antagonists. But when I am to answer objections, I am not to consider so much what men should

should say, as what they do; nor must I chalk out my own path, but follow men in that they take, tho' it be far enough from being the nearest way. Since therefore men are wont to impute there misery one while to God, and another while to chance, now to fate, and anon to incapacity, I must examine what truth or justice there is in these complaints.

In this chapter therefore I shall not only vindicate God from all aspersions and calumnies, but also fully assert the love of God to mankind; whereby I shall not only baffle all the poor pretences of such as charge God directly or obliquely with their misery; but also more strongly establish my own position, by demonstrating God's readiness to contribute all assistance that is necessary to our attainment of happiness. In prosecuting this, I shall,

First, Evince the importance of entertaining right notions of God.

Secondly, Because of all God's attributes, his goodness and holiness have the most direct influence on the present question, I shall particularly confine my self to these two. To begin with the *First*, If what *Epic-*

tetus said with respect to many gods had been spoke with respect to one, nothing had ever been said with more exact truth, or a better pois'd judgment. The first and chief thing in religion is to have rational and true notions of God, it being otherwise impossible that religion should serve the

True notions of God, of great importance.

The chief end of religion is to have rational and true notions of God, it being otherwise impossible that religion should serve the
Epicteti Lectur. c. 37.

great interest of God's glory and man's happiness; for false and unworthy notions of him must needs bereave God of the honour and worship due to him from his creatures, by alienating the minds of men, and betraying 'em into superstition, idolatry or atheism: and thus that religion, which was design'd to glorify God, by the manifestation and acknowledgement of his divine excellencies and perfections, and to advance man into a state of blessedness, by influencing his life, and filling his mind with security and cheerfulness, shall be perverted to ends directly contrary, and prove instrumental to dishonour God, and render man miserable. The truth of this has been too too evident in those visible effects of ignorance, or misrepresentation of the divine nature amongst the *Gentiles*; the want of conceiving aright his omnipotence and immensity, &c. joined with the numerous necessities of mankind, did bring forth, or at least confirm polytheism; groundless apprehensions of cruelty in God brought forth superstition, and the absurdities of polytheism and superstition gave being to atheism: and at this day there are many mischiefs, which I must impute either to false notions of God, or want of just consideration of the true ones, or at least, to not arguing clearly and truly from 'em. For from one of these reasons it proceeds, that the worship of some men is so slight, empty and trifling; the religion of others so melancholy and uncomfortable, and truly superstitious: and I am afraid, there is too much of atheistical looseness, sensual carnal presumption and wretched

wretchless despair, and many other evils owing to the same cause. Had men worthy notions of God, how were it possible they should ever fancy, that God would accept the sincerity and devotion of a communicant sitting, but not kneeling? after supper, but not in the morning? that the whiteness of the garment would pollute and unhallow the spiritual sacrifice of prayer and praises? and such like. Would not a right notion of God easily convince such a weak and scrupulous trifler, that God were not to be pleas'd, but by sincere and substantial holiness and righteousness; nor to be displeas'd, but by voluntary wickedness? all things else weighing nothing in the balance of the sanctuary, and not deserving the notice or regard of the Governour of the world: and tho' such a one should suppose his scruples warrant'd by divine command; and consequently, because the sovereignty of God renders all his commandments indisputably authoritative and binding, he should therefore think himself as indispensably oblig'd to reject these things, as to shun a sin; yet even here a right understanding of the divine nature would soon instruct him how to distinguish the divine commands, and teach him, that those, which did enjoyn holiness and righteousness, were the standing and fundamental laws of the divine government; that those, which did enjoyn duties subservient to that end, were of an inferiour nature, and did bind in proportion to their necessity and tendency; that such, as did enjoyn or forbid things of a more remote and distant nature, circumstantial, ritual, &c. were

merely positive and arbitrary, temporary and mutable; and the interposing necessity of superior duties is at any time sufficient to supersede their obligation. To proceed to other effects of mis-conceptions of the divine nature; how were it possible that any one, who rightly understood the unspeakable goodness of God, should, after he had done all he could, be tormented with doubtful fears and jealousies concerning his state, nay, sometimes with a melancholy dread of God, as if he were a hard master, and impossible to be pleased? or how could such a persuasion as this, that one were damn'd from eternity; and that neither prayers, nor tears, nor industry, could ever reverse the fatal sentence, find any entertainment in that man who were possessed with a true sense and firm belief of the boundless love which God has for all his rational creatures.

It is evident therefore, of what importance 'tis to propagate and settle in the minds of men a right understanding of the divine nature; and of all the attributes of God, there are none that have a more immediate and powerful influence, either upon the conduct of man's life, or the comfort of his mind, than these two, his holiness and goodness: these make us willing and desirous to believe that there is a God; these make us love him and depend upon him, as one from whom we may rationally expect all that is good; *He that comes to God (saith St. Paul) must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all those that diligently seek him.*

Ὁς ὄντων ἢ διοικῶν
 τῶν ἢ ἀνακράτων ὁ
 ἀδικῶν. Epict.

These

These words do not only assert the being of a God, but also his holiness and goodness; both which may be clearly infer'd from three propositions couch'd in those words of the apostle, *that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* First, That all men may seek God diligently if they will. Secondly, That it is the desire of God that they should do so. And, Thirdly, That God will reward all that do so. On these principles is religion founded, on these principles the honour of God, and the happiness of man must be establish'd. I will therefore discourse here, first, of the goodness; and secondly, of the holiness of God; which I distinguish from one another only for method's sake.

Treating of the goodness of God, I will,

First, Prove it by undeniable arguments.

Secondly, I will shew that it extends it self to man.

Thirdly, I will explain the nature of divine assistance, I mean, that which God vouchsafes man in order to happiness.

First therefore, To begin with the proofs of God's infinite goodness.

Cruelty was the property of the Gentile gods, and not of the true God; human blood in which the *Canaanites, Carthaginians, and others* sacrific'd, was an oblation fit for *Baal, Moloch, &c.* that is, for devils, not for God: innate wrath and cruelty is inconsistent with a happy nature or a happy state; for these are furious and tormenting passions: nor can we imagine that such a being should make its residence

Of the goodness of God.

dence in heaven, a place of peace and love, or be delighted with hallelujah's and adorations of angels: this were no pleasure, no musick to a being, in whom wrath and cruelty were predominant. Nor were those good, those holy, those charitable spirits fit attendants, fit ministers for such a being. No, could we suppose (as some hereticks once fancied) that there were two first principles, a good, and bad one; could we suppose, there were an evil God, one in whom cruelty and wrath were his beloved attributes; we must necessarily conclude, that he would make hell his court, that his guards and courtiers would be fiends and furies, and that the shrieks and torments of wretched creatures would be the pleasure, the harmony he delighted in: this were a God fit for a *Hobbist*; one, who can discern no difference between virtue and vice, between good and evil, between love or charity, and devilishness. And yet I cannot in charity but retract and condemn this thought: for O! no other God, is fit for him, but he whom he denieth! no other God is fit for such a wretch, but the God of love and mercy! to whom I recommend him, and proceed.

All who believe a God, must believe him a most perfect being: for whence else should the scatter'd perfections of his creatures have beginning? But if any man will say, that there is no difference between perfections and imperfections, I would know why doth he reverence wisdom more than folly? or why he dotes on beauty rather than deformity? Or, if he tell me, that he acknowledges a distinction between natural, but none between moral perfections or imperfections;

not

not to urge, that the virtues of the *will* are as truly natural as those of the understanding, the capacities of, and aptitudes to each, being born with us, tho' not the habits; and the one being as agreeable to the nature, and consonant to the interest of man as the other; I will ask him, why he does not love the froward and peevish, as well as the sweet and gentle? the cruel and implacable, as well as the kind and charitable? the proud and wilful, as well as the humble and modest? and whatever answer he gives me, will abundantly serve to refute his fancy. If then there be natural and moral perfections, and God be the most perfect being, we must needs ascribe to him those properties which we look upon as perfections in his rational creatures, and that in such degrees as exempt him from all imperfection: if therefore goodness, charity, clemency be universally acknowledg'd for perfections, we must necessarily suppose them in God in the most perfect degree. Nor let any one think it absurd that the same should be the virtues of God and man, of a finite and infinite being; for we suppose them in God in a manner suitable to his majesty, and in man in a manner suitable to his meanness; and unless we acknowledge this, there cannot possibly be any settled and certain reason for our love, or hope, or dependance, the great parts of divine worship. That therefore God is good and merciful, a lover of man, was ever the constant and unanimous sense of the wise and good part of mankind: Poets indeed and painters, degenerate, dastardly, cruel and vicious men

men, did represent the Deity under hideous shapes, and in such colours as their guilty fears or vices furnish'd 'em with: but philosophers,

*Ἀποδιδυύλων τὴν τῆ
Θεοῦ στανότῳα μὲν φη-
σότηλοσ κὶ μισαλοφροσύνησ
μετὰ βίας κὶ κωδὲμονίας.
Plut. de Superstitione.*

as *Plutarch* observes, were al-
ways wont to represent him
most amiable and lovely; al-
ways tempering his majesty
with love and goodness; his power and justice
with tenderness, mercy and compassion. Hence
it was, that they were wont to attribute all
those things, which were extreamly useful and
beneficial, to God as the Author of them; as
government, laws, arts and sciences: they look'd
upon their gods as the guides and guardians of
men, and ascrib'd to 'em whatever they at-
chiev'd bravely and happily in life. But on the
other hand, frowardness, wrath and cruelty did
ever seem so ugly and detestable to wise and
virtuous men, that they not only despis'd, but
abhorr'd, as well the wickedness as folly of su-
perstition, which represented God, or rather
dishonour'd him, under such characters. And

*Οἱ ὃ δὲξάλλοι φοβερόν
τὸ ἰσχυρὸν, κὶ τὸ τυραννικόν
τὸ πατρικόν, κὶ ἰσχυρόν
τὸ κωδὲμοσιόν, κὶ τὸ ἀ-
μικτόν ἀβρίον κὶ θυρωράδες.*

this notion of the Deity, which
represented that being which
was kind and benign, as terri-
ble and dreadful; which was
gracious and fatherly, as tyrannical; which was
friendly and careful of us, as injurious and hurt-
ful; which was mild and gentle, as fierce and
savagē; gave such a distaste and disgust to all
ingenuous tempers, that they thought atheism a
much more excusable impiety than superstition.
Hence is that of *Plutarch* (so generally prais'd
by

by all writers;) I had rather men should say of me, there neither was, nor is such a one as *Plutarch*, than that they should say, that he was a man of a fickle, unconstant, froward, revengeful and implacable temper. Let us not therefore entertain such an idea of God, as human nature would recoil from, and start back pale and scar'd at the sight: let us not fasten those characters upon God, which a good temper'd man, if charged with them, would look upon as the foulest reproaches and most injurious accusations; especially since a defect is not only more conspicuous, but more reproachful, where there should be nothing but perfection: and peevishness and cruelty are infinitely more mischievous in an almighty, than impotent being. I might shun *Polycrates*, *Dionysius*, *Periander*; but how should I shun God? I might leave *Samos*, *Sicily* or *Corinth*, and where clemency and justice made their abode, I might make mine; but whither shall I go, what place should be my refuge, if the governour of the world were but an almighty tyrant? thus 'tis manifest, such kind of representations of God tend not to enamour man of God, but to alienate and estrange him: they tend not to advance religion, but superstition; they tend to make men dread God, but not to love him: they are therefore to be banish'd out of the world, and God is to be represented such as our dear Lord, who lay in the bosom of his Father, has reveal'd him, a
God

Ἐργον ἢ ἐν ἰδίῳ μᾶλλον τῶν ἀνθρώπων λίγην εἶναι ἐμῶ, μᾶλλον γὰρ εἶναι τὸ παράπαν, μᾶλλον εἶναι Πλάταρχον ἢ λίγην, ὅτι Πλάταρχος ἴσθι ἀνθρώπος ἀδίκαιος, ἰσχυρὸς βίβλος, χεῖρος πρὸν ἔργον, ἢ τῶν τυχοῦσι τιμοῦτος ἀπρόλεπτος. Ἰβίδ.

God of hope, a God of love, a God, who is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. This is the dictate of nature; this is the dictate of the spirit, *God is love*. Let it not be thought an absurd or barren tautology, tho' I should recite this one text a thousand times oftener than I do: for no tongue can express the divine nature so much to the life, as he who was inspir'd by the spirit of God, the spirit of love.

Nor let God's dealing with the gentle world before the revelation of Christianity, be alledg'd as an objection against the goodness of God, and his tenderness and compassion for mankind: 'tis true, *God in times past suffer'd all nations to walk in their own ways; and the times of this ignorance he winked at,* Acts 14. and 17. He publish'd no reveal'd law to the *Gentiles* from heaven; he deputed no prophets to 'em, as to his people the *Jews*, with a commission to restore by signs and miracles, that natural religion, conformably to which they were to worship God; which is the import of those places of *St. Paul*: and yet 'tis true that the belief of the living and true God, and the natural law of good and evil, was strangely effaced and obliterated amongst the *Gentiles*. But notwithstanding all this, it must be remember'd too, 1. *That God left not himself without a witness* in any age of *Gentilism*; the heathen were never destitute of so much light, as might have conducted 'em to God, and that happiness he design'd 'em: for, besides the traditions

God's dealing with the Pagans vindicated.

traditions transmitted from *Noah* to posterity, the book of nature and providence was ever open to 'em, and this did in most legible characters assert the being of one supreme God, and instruct 'em in the knowledge of his power and goodness. Thus *St. Paul*; *Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness*, Acts 14.

Nor was this testimony so unsuccessful, but that in all ages there were some excellent men, who did ascribe the original and government of the world to God, and gave such an account of his holiness and goodness, as was sufficient to have founded a rational and excellent worship upon: these were so many lights shining in dark places, as so many justifications of divine providence, and reproaches of man's wilful stupidity.

2. 'Tis not in the least to be doubted, but that the nature of their duty, and consequently the condition of their happiness, was proportion'd and confirm'd to those manifestations which God made 'em, to those obligations which he laid before 'em, and to that strength and assistance which he vouchsafed 'em: for God is not a hard master, he will not make good the accusation of the wicked servant; *he will not take up*

Sunt autem alii philosophi, & hi quidem magni atq; nobiles, qui Deorum mente atq; ratione omnem mundum administrarij & regi censeant; neq; vero id solum, sed etiam ab iisdem vitæ hominum consuli & provideri: nam & fruges & reliqua quæ terra pariat, & tempestates, ac temporum varietates, cælique mutationes, quibus omnia quæ terra gignat, maturata pubescat, a diis immortalibus tribui generi humano putant. *Cic. l. 1. de natura Deorum.*

up what he laid not down, nor reap what he did not sow, Luke xix. In a word, if God do at the last day deal with men according to those several Oeconomies of his providence which they were under; and if he has afforded all nations means proportionable to those duties he required of them, and to those degrees of happiness to which he design'd them: then he was always the God of the *Gentiles* as well as once of the *Jews*, or now of the *Christians*; and there is no one part in the whole series of providence, which can give us any colour to call in question the care or goodness of God towards mankind. This, I think, is enough to remove this objection as it lay in my way; if my design did not hasten me on, and I did not judge this satisfactory, I could easily make appear God's goodness to the *Gentiles*, by presenting the reader with a scheme of the religion of the *Pythagoreans*, *Platonics* and *Stoics*; by examining the difference of the idolatry of the wise and virtuous part of the *Gentile* world, and that of the sottish and vicious part of it; by considering the assistances that God vouchsaf'd 'em, and giving an account whence it came to pass, that the worship of one true God by holiness and virtue, was so far stifled and oppress'd in the *Gentile* world: but I have said enough to vindicate the goodness of God; and the state of *Gentiles* and infidels does not so nearly concern my present enquiry, as to deserve so exact a discussion.

The

The barrenness of some countries, the servitude and poverty of some people, is a much slighter objection; for till it can appear, that poverty is an enemy to virtue, or that wealth, which is the instrument of luxury, and the nurse of sloth and wantonness, is absolutely necessary to man's happiness; it will weigh but very little against so many demonstrations of divine love, that he has not heap'd upon all nations so many temporal blessings as might put 'em into a capacity of being lazy, wanton and insolent.

*Other dispensations
of God vindicated.*

Now give me leave to make a stand, and, like a traveller when he has gain'd an ascent, look back upon the way I have gone, and see how much of my journey I have dispatch'd. My undertaking was, to demonstrate the love of God to mankind; thus far I have advanc'd towards this with undeniable evidence. I have proved, that peevishness, malignity, and cruelty cannot belong to God, because this were inconsistent with the perfection of his nature, or the happiness of his state: nor can it rationally be supposed, that the same properties should belong to those evil spirits, which for a long time deluded the world; and that God, who has done so much to destroy that kingdom of darkness, to rescue man, and restore him to a capacity of happiness and glory. How could it be, that God should have done so much, as it appears he has in the contexture of our nature, and the contrivance of our state, to make us in love with goodness, and irreconcilable enemies to tyranny, cruelty, arbitrary revenge, &c.

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if

if he himself were passionate, furious and arbitrary in his cruelties? Nay, I have advanc'd further, and have prov'd, *Secondly*, that boundless love and goodness are the unquestionable attributes of God: for the very same arguments which exclude all manner of imperfections and evil from the Deity, do necessarily assert to it all manner of perfection and good: nor doth the unconceivable majesty and eminence of the divine Nature only, but also the indigence and weakness of human nature, require this; since without it he could not be the object of our love, or dependance, and consequently our worship.

Having proceeded thus far, and prov'd, that tyranny and cruelty are utterly repugnant to the divine Nature, and boundless love and goodness the essential and inseparable properties of it; I can scarce think it necessary to prove that the emanations of this his goodness do extend even to man: for tho' the *Epicureans* acknowledging God perfect, did at the same time allow him no other employment than the enjoyment of his own perfections: and tho' *Aristotle* confin'd the providence of God, and consequently the irradiation of his goodness, within heaven; and tho', lastly, before the creation of the world, we are incapable of conceiving any subjects about which divine love could exercise it self, and consequently can conceive of it no otherwise than confin'd within himself: all which seems to conclude thus much, that the Deity may be infinitely good, and yet this goodness not extend it self to man: all this concerns
not

not our present question: for tho' man should not be the object of divine goodness, yet if God be infinitely good, this will be enough to free man from unreasonable and superstitious fear of him, and to acquit God from the least suspicion of being the cause of human misery; which is the utmost I was oblig'd to make good in pursuance of the design of this chapter. Besides, they who accuse God of their misery, do not suppose him unconcern'd about all things but himself, as *Epicurus*; nor bound and limit his providence within the inclosures of heaven; but do plainly suppose all the affairs of mankind to depend upon the first contrivance of God in the creation, or upon the over-ruling influences of his providence in his present government of the world.

However, I am not willing to quit one inch of the ground I have got; and therefore,

Secondly, I must now take notice, that the goodness of God extends to man and has a particular regard to his happiness. The goodness of God extends to man The world be-

ing now created, and mankind form'd after God's image (*τὸν ἑαυτοῦ εἶκος ἕμου*, *We are his offspring*, saith *St. Paul* out of the poet) unactive and unconcern'd love seems to me a contradiction, and infinite boundless goodness, confin'd within heaven, cannot but seem as gross an one: let it therefore remain an unshaken truth, that God is good, and that his goodness doth exert and express it self towards mankind; and we shall from hence gain these two points.

1. That God is not the cause of man's misery : and, what is more yet,

2. That he is most ready and willing to further and assist him in all his endeavours after happiness.

The first of these is apparent: for if God be infinitely good, then every thing that came out of his hands, must in the state of its creation have been exceeding good; the end of the creation must have been something extremely kind and gracious; and the law he prescrib'd his creatures for the attainment of that end, must be as good as wise: this must have been the glorious state of things when God contriv'd this wonderful frame of nature, when he erected this vast work, the world; and in all the continued progress of divine providence, we are to expect no other acts of government than what may become the most gracious prince, the most tender father: for the same immense goodness that once created, doth ever continue to rule the world. Let us not therefore accuse God, but our selves, if we be not happy. Blessings indeed and mercies, like warm sun and fruitful seasons, descend upon us without our importunity or merit; but evils and mischiefs come not till our sins and provocations have pull'd 'em down upon us. *Solon* indeed in *Herodotus* tells *Craesus*, το Θεον φονεον η παραχωδες, that the Deity was envious and froward, and delighted to magnify it self in the disturbance of the settled happiness

happinefs and calm of poor men: but alas! 'tis our fondnefs or our pride, our peevifhnefs or our wantonnefs, which raifes in us thefe unworthy thoughts of God; he may indeed, like a kind parent, train up a fon, through a ftrict difcipline, to virtue and glory; he may throw difficulties into our way on purpofe to reward our conqueft; he may, like a wife phyfician, reftore us to our health by bitter potions, and will, like an excellent governour, punifh, if need be, our wanton contempt of love and mercy, by feverity and chaftifements; but he will never, like a falvage tyrant, delight in the fufferings or ruin of innocent or humble fubjects; he will never prefcribe impoffible laws, that he may enjoy the pleafure of bloody executions; he will never make the groans of wretched people his mufick; nor think mifery and death the beft marks of his abfolute power, or faireft ornaments of his throne: no, we fhall never need any other proof to clear the divine Majefty from any fuch imputation, than to examine our felves, and reflect upon our own behaviour; we fhall foon find that we alone are guilty of our ruin, and that God is utterly free from it; our exceffive enjoyments create the difeafes of the body, and our exceffive paffion the pains and torments of the mind, and moft of the changes in our fortune derive themfelves from both: a languifhing body, and a languifhing reputation, a broken eftate, and a dejected mind, are the common effects of a diforderly and debauch'd life; and fuch a life is the natural effect of a mind enflaved to the

body, and estranged from God, not only by a neglect, but by a contempt and defiance of all those means by which a good God design'd to bring him through virtue to glory; and then at last a guilty conscience, a distracted mind, and a most melancholy, miserable death, is the consequence and end of all. This is the progress which our voluntary sin and folly makes: we cannot think that a good God can direct or necessitate us to these courses; they are as repugnant to his laws, as to our own interest; and the same time we forfeit our happiness, we disappoint his love and goodness: all the ways and methods of God are kind, and gracious, and wise, and rational: inanimate bodies do not desert those offices he has prescrib'd 'em: animals move regularly by those instincts he has implanted in them, and so both the one and the other do necessarily serve those excellent ends for which they were created. But man having no necessity, but liberty wove into the constitution of his nature, and having no compulsory, but only directing law prescrib'd him, has perverted his own ways, abus'd his liberty, and made that his ruin, which, if well us'd, had enhanc'd his merit and reward. This is the account which the scripture gives us of man's misery; it imputes it wholly to himself, and represents his obstinacy as ungrateful and displeasing to God, as 'tis fatal to himself: *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self, Hos. 13. As I live, I delight not in the death of a sinner; turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? Ezek. 32. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,*

rusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not? Matt. 22. Nor is this account of things which the scripture gives us, any other than that which was generally embrac'd by the heathens, this being not the sense of any particular prepossessions or private opinion intil'd by custom or education, but of natural reason, and fairly and easily deduc'd from those notions of divine goodness which were universally entertain'd by all judicious and understanding heathens: and how scandalous a thing were it, if that comfortable and heavenly truth which the darkness and idolatry of the superstitious could not extinguish in the pagan world, should be rejected or suppress'd by Christians? Not the will of the Gods, but the luxury and riot of men, is the cause of those evils which infest the body, &c. Hence that charitable piece of heathen devotion;

Οι Θεοι τῶν κακῶν εἰ-
 σιν ἀνάσσει, ἢ νόσοι, ἢ
 ὅσα πᾶσι σώματα ἀνο-
 λασίας ἐστὶ σαρμικαία,
 &c. --- Γραῖον δ' αἰθέρ-
 ος ἀδούγηλα πέριτ' ἔ-
 χερτας, Τανύμοιαι. Jam-
 blicus de Vita Pythag.
 l. 1, & 2.

Σεῦ πάτερ ἢ πολλῶν τε κακῶν παύσεως ἀπανῆα,
 "Ἡ πᾶν δείξαις οἶον τῷ δαίμονι χερῶναι.

*O father Jove, from num'rous evils free
 Mankind, or shew 'em their ruin's. not from
 thee*

*A gracious and benign Deity;
 But from themselves*

¶ 4

I will

I will here add a testimony of *Apuleius*, as containing the sense of the *Platonick* philosophy in this point of God's Government of man-

Omnia quæ naturaliter & propterea rectè feruntur, providentiæ custodia gubernantur, nec ullius mali causa Deo poterit ascribi. *Apul. de Dogm. Platon.*

kind: all the motions of providence are wise and regular; nor must any evil be ascrib'd to God as its cause. But this is not all we gain from the assurance of God's infinite goodness, that we have no reason to apprehend any harm or mischief from him, that he cannot be the author of our misery: but we may confidently perswade our selves on the other side.

Secondly, That he is most ready and willing to further and assist us in all our endeavours after happiness. And now, methinks, I am so far from questioning the possibility of attaining happiness, that I begin already to feel and enjoy it; I see the day breaking in upon me from above: how can he choose but be happy, who is the love, the care of God! I may walk, like *Peter*, on the waves, and bid defiance to the storms; I know I shall never sink, whilst that God upholds me, who calls me this way to him: I can now easily believe that my temper may be transform'd, my corruptions may be put off, and I be made partaker of a divine Nature; since the spirit of God will dwell with me, the light of God will always shine upon me, and the power of God will always succour and aid me: can I imagine as much as any colour or pretext, why I should not now be able to attain to an excellent

lent state of virtue, or why this virtue should not be able to vanquish all those difficulties that oppose my happiness, since I am assur'd that God will not refuse me his spirit if I ask it, and that his grace will be sufficient for me?

You see of what vast importance this truth is, that God will be always ready to assist every man in his endeavours after happiness; and therefore tho' it stand here as a necessary and undeniable conclusion from the foregoing discourse; tho' the perfection of the divine nature do amount to little less than a demon-

stration of it: for * beneficence to his creatures is as necessarily included in the notion of perfection, as perfection is in the notion of a God: yet, as well for my own pleasure, as the interest of my position which is nearly concerned in this truth,

I will dwell a little longer on the confirmation and illustration of it. There

are three eminent acts of divine assistance; the *first* is, such a direction of the events of secular affairs, that they may tend to our good: the *second* is, his assistance of us in the attainment of virtue: and the *third* is, his recruiting us by fresh supplies of strength in all our hazardous conflicts and extraordinary trials. Now tho' I could not give an account of the manner how God performs this kind work of his providence, yet ought not that to dissuade me from the belief of it; because we know, that our comprehension ought

* Εἰ γὰρ μὴ τέλειον ἐκ αὐταρκείας, ἢ δὲ ἐκ αὐτάρκειας, ἢ πρὸς τέλειον, ἢ δὲ αὐταρκείας, μὴδὲ τέλειον, πρὸς ἰσχυρὸν; αὐταρκείας δὲ ὄν, ἢ τέλειον ἢ ἰσχυρὸν καὶ ἢ τὴν τελειότητα τὰ ἀγαθὰ βουλή; καὶ τὴν αὐταρκείαν ἔχει κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἰσχυρὴν δύναμιν, βεβήμενος δὲ ἢ ἔχον καὶ δυναμειὸς κατὰ τὴν μὴ δυνάμειν. Max.-Tyr. D. disert. 22.

Divine assistance, what it imports.

ought not to be the standard of divine perfections, nor the narrow bounds of our imagination be the utmost extent of the Almighty's power. However, 'tis not difficult to explain this assistance of God in such sort as may free it from the least suspicion of implying a contradiction.

For, *First*, As to his direction and conduct of temporal events, how easy will it be for us to conceive this possible to God, if we consider, *First*, That God can form what impressions he pleases in the minds of men, and inspire them with what affections he shall think most serviceable to his designs? For there is not the least pretext or colour to imagine, that the soul is any more exempt from the sovereignty of God, than the body; or that God cannot do that which the great, or the cunning, or the eloquent, nay, the popular and ambitious do seldom fail to do, raise what passions he pleases in the mind of man: or, if we consider, *Secondly*, That the power and efficacy of nature is wholly in his hands; that life and death, plenty or poverty, every thing depends upon his will: for the winds and seas, earth and air, fire, hail and vapour obey his voice, and are all of them, as often as he pleases, the instruments and executioners of his will: he that stills the ragings of the multitude, and becalms the passions of the mighty; he, at whose command new creatures enter upon the stage of the world, and the old leave it: What is it impossible for him to do? nay, what is it this Almighty Governour cannot do, without moving one step out of the common road of his providence, without im-
 ploying

ploying any extraordinary instrument, or exerting any act of extraordinary power? for what secular interest can there be imagin'd whose success or disappointment depends not upon some or other of these natural causes? And yet we must acknowledge further, *Thirdly*, That the Almighty has not prefix'd or set himself such immutable, unalterable laws, but that he has reserved to himself the prerogative of suspending or over ruling 'em when he pleases, I mean with respect to the motions of natural bodies or revolutions of secular affairs: and if such an interposal of a divine power cannot be conceiv'd to be other than a miracle, I must confess, I do not look upon one age only, but every age, an age of miracles; nay, I believe such as these wrought every day for the protection or relief of those who depend upon this Governour of the world: for I know not to what purpose I should, like *Jonah* or his mariners, call upon God in a storm, if it were never to be laid till it had naturally spent its force and fury; I know not to what purpose I should implore the Almighty's direction upon all my deliberations, in perplex'd and entangled affairs, if I could expect no other light than what my labouring mind could give it self; I know not why I should address my self to God in the pains and danger of an insupportable disease, if the medicines will be the same, and their virtue the same, if the fever will abate, and its flames be extinguish'd, or extinguish life in the same degree and manner, if I pray, or if I do not. All these ways of divine providence are very plain and

and intelligible: and therefore 'tis manifest that we may without any absurdity ascribe to God such a superintendency and direction over human affairs, as may render the issue of 'em most serviceable to the true interest of those that worship him.

As to the second part of divine assistance, which consists in aiding us in the attainment of holiness and virtue, I do readily acknowledge as far as this is perform'd by the internal operations of his spirit, by the influx of divine light or heavenly vigour; I do no more understand the *τὸ πῶς*, the manner of sanctification, than that of the creation of the soul; this I know, that virtue is the rational work of a rational creature; 'tis the work of man, tho' assisted by God; 'tis a rational work, which implies the knowledge of our duty, and a power to perform it: and therefore this I know, that this aid must consist in the improvement of my rational faculties in some accession to the reason of my understanding, and to the power and liberty of my will. Now tho' I cannot comprehend how God does this, yet how easily can I believe it possible for him to do it, since 'tis natural to imagine, that he, who created my understanding, can improve it, and he, who invested me with a rational liberty, can confirm or enlarge it, or, if you please, rescue it from that diseas'd and servile condition, unto which it was degenerated, and restore it to the health and soundness of its first state?

The third act of divine providence does not imply a new manner but a new degree of assistance

assistance, and therefore contains in it no new difficulty: and as to the truth and certainty of this sort of assistance, no man who believes the gospel can question it, since this every-where ascribes as well *perfection* as *conversion* to God, as well the *finishing* as the *beginning* of *sanctification* to his grace; it every-where promises us the *might* and *power* of God's spirit to *strengthen* and *establish* us, and *exhorts* us to *come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in the time of need.*

This time which I have spent upon the illustration of divine goodness towards man, will not, I hope, be judg'd misemploy'd or lost, if it be consider'd that such is the confidence, or rather such is the wantonness of some men, that they reject every thing which carries in it, I will not say, any seeming contradiction, but any seeming difficulty.

But it doth not so nearly concern the happiness of man to be instructed in the manner, as to be thoroughly perswaded of the truth of divine assistance; and therefore

*A further proof
of divine assistance,
from divine govern-
ments.*

choosing rather to be tedious than defective in the proof of it, I will add to those arguments taken from the nature of God, whatever force and strength can be derived from the consideration of divine government, which is the expression of the divine nature, and the image of its perfection visible in its effects.

The gospel contains this doctrine in almost every page, and the lives of apostles and martyrs are so many illustrious instances of the divine

vine faithfulness and love, performing those promises which he had made 'em by his Son. The Jewish polity was a *Theocracy*, God did for a great while preside over 'em immediately, and govern them (if I may so speak) without a substitute or vice-roy; repeated miracles, repeated prophecies, extraordinary manifestations of himself, and extraordinary revelations, were the illustrious proofs of God's affection and care for that people; so that it were to insult over my reader's patience, or to reproach his stupidity, if I should go about to confirm this truth from the Old or New Testament: 'tis therefore only necessary to examine what the heathen thought of the necessity of this divine assistance, and what instances of it may be found amongst them.

Whether the *Gentiles* had any notion of the fall and corruption of man, is not here necessary to be enquir'd; but this I am sure, they were extremely sensible of that opposition which virtue met with from the world and the body; they were extremely sensible that the inclinations of the one, and the affluence and troubles of the other did naturally tend to engage 'em in vice; and therefore tho' they do sometimes magnify human nature, yet they were not so forgetful of their own infirmities, or the condition of this life, as not to judge the assistance of God indispensably necessary to render them virtuous and happy: hence 'tis, that *Pythagoras*, *Socrates* and *Plato* were eminent in prayer and invocation: Σωκράτης εἰς Πειραία κατὰ θεωροδρόμους πρὸ θεῶν, καὶ τὰς ἄλλας προσετίθειτο καὶ ἦν ὁ βίβλ. Σωκράτης μετὰ σύχνης. *The life of Socrates*

tes was a life of prayer, Max. Tyr. Dissert. 20. And hence it was, that they did generally ascribe their laws to those gods from whom they receiv'd their oracles; the *Cretans*, *Romans*, &c. not more confidently believing that they receiv'd their laws from *Minos*, *Numa Pompilius*, &c. than that these receiv'd them from *Jove*, *Ægeria* and other gods. And I wonder not, that *Cicero* should somewhere say, *Nunquam vir magnus sine divino afflatu, That there never was a great man who enjoy'd not some divine impulse*; since it did so generally obtain through the *Pagan* world, to attribute all the surprizing excellencies, or extraordinary exploits of their heroes and eminent men to the immediate favour and patronage of their gods. Must *Vespasian* restore life to the expiring state of *Rome*? Prodigies and miracles shall prepare his way; and the extraordinary marks of some divine assistance shall consecrate and destine him to this great work. Must *Alexander* conquer the eastern world? Miracles shall attend his march, as it did that of *Moses*; and the *Pamphylian* sea retreat before the one, as the red sea did before the other: nor let any one think that this was usual only amongst the barbarous people; *Athens* it self, *Athens*, the very abode of wit and philosophy, did attribute the perfections of *Eleusinian Melesigoras* and *Cretan Epimenides* to the instruction of some divine being; and those of *Socrates* to his guardian angel, as well as the *Scythians* those of their *Zamolxis*; or they of *Proconesus* those of *Aristeus*, to the peculiar favour and assistance

tance of their gods. Nor ought it to seem strange, that the works of *Hesiod*, *Homer*, or other poets, should be ascrib'd by the heathens to divine inspiration; since those of *Aboliab* and *Bezaleel* are by *Moses* himself ascrib'd to the spirit of God: for the poems of the former could not but seem to the heathens as rich a piece of fancy, as the embroideries of the latter did to the *Jews*. And this puts me in mind of an excellent argument *Maximus Tyrius* makes use of to prove virtue deriv'd from the assistance and bounty of God. *If arts* (saith he, *Differ. 22.*) *less excellent in their nature, and less useful in their end, be owing to God, how much more virtue, the divine guide and comfort of human life? If there be no good that descends not from above, much less surely the chief and soveraign good of man; ἄλλα μὴν ἑστὶν ἕστιν ἄλλο ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθὸν ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐξ ἑαυτῶν ἐρχεῖται.*) Thus far I have proceeded to shew you what the heathens thought of the necessity of divine assistance, particularly in the attainment of virtue: for as to secular matters and temporal events, their sense of the over-ruling power and influence of divine providence, was so notorious, that 'tis not to be call'd into question: the being and providence of God seem'd so inseparable, that the *Epicurean*, who deny'd the latter, could never find belief when he profess'd himself to own the former: nay, even those very men who could not be convinc'd of a providence by the bounty, were convinc'd of it by the severity of God in his chastisement of sins. Hence that bold and brisk,

tho'

tho' not very religious reflection of *Tacitus*, (*Lib. 1. Hist.*) upon the miseries the *Roman* empire suffer'd under *Galba*, *Otho* and *Vitellius*; *Nec enim unquam atrocioribus populi Romani cladibus, magisve justis judiciis approbatum est: non esse curæ diis securitatem nostram, esse ultionem: The justice and the greatness of our plague abundantly evince the gods concerned, tho' not for our prosperity, yet for our punishment.* Such is man's disingenuous temper, that he is more easily convinc'd by the wideness and fatality of a wound, that it was inflicted by an almighty arm, than he is by the greatness of the benefits he receives, that they are distributed by a divine munificence; tho' the number and infinite value of the good things we receive, be in it self a much clearer proof of a divine providence, than the evils we suffer can be. There needs nothing to be said to convince you what the heathens thought of providence with respect to outward and temporal things; nor is it, I think, now to be question'd, whether it were their opinion that the divine assistance was necessary to the attainment of virtue and happiness; nor would I add a word more, but that the words of *Hierocles* on this subject carry in them, not only so full a conviction, but also so extraordinary a relish of a wise and religious humility that I cannot prevail with my self to pass them by: that is, *We need no motive or incentive to vice but our own inclinations: but to make us virtuous, we stand in*

Και ἴδιν δι' κακῶν ἀρ-
χῆς, ἅτε ἐτυποκλιμένης,
ἅτε ἔξωθεν κακοποιῶν αἰ-
τιῶν ἐνδιδούσης. Ἀγα-
θῶν δὲ δι' ἀρχῆς μάλιστα
καὶ μέγας, καὶ τῆ κακῶ-
ν ἀρχῆς πάντων λογικῶν οὐ-
ουσίαν ἐπαρῆ κενερωσῶς.

σιῶν, οἷος ἔστι ὁ Θεός. ἡ δὲ ἐτυποκλιμένης αἰτιαίς, καὶ τῆ κατ' οὐσίαν ἐπαρῆ κενερωσῶς, οἷος ἔστι ὁ ἴδιος λόγος. Hieroc. in Pythag. Aur. Carm.

G need

need of the aid of God, join'd with that of Reason.

And this opinion of the necessity of God's assistance sprung not only from the experience of the weakness and corruption of human nature, but also of the power and goodness of the divine nature; for I cannot think that the order, beauty and greatness of the creation, the fixt and constant returns of fruitful seasons, *the filling mens hearts with food and gladness*, were the only testimonies which God gave the *Gentiles* of himself and his care for mankind: when I read that angels are the ministering spirits of God; when I read in *Daniel*, of the princes of *Gracia* and *Persia*, and find that provinces were committed to angels as the vice-roys and lieutenants of God, I cannot think that those devout and charitable spirits did with less zeal in their provinces labour to promote the honour of God and the good of man, than evil spirits did the dishonour of the one and the ruin of the other: and unless the frequent appearances of angels in the beginning had possess'd mens minds with a firm persuasion that there was a constant commerce maintain'd between heaven and earth; and that spirits very frequently did visibly engage themselves in the protection and assistance of men; I cannot as much as imagine what foundation there cou'd be for the numerous impostures of oracles, or upon what ground the custom of putting themselves under the patronage of some tutelar spirit, could so generally have prevailed in the Pagan world: without this superstition, the poetry of *Homer* had

had been so far from being entertain'd as sacred and inspir'd, that it had been universally contemn'd and dislik'd as an idle rhapsody of unnatural, incredible and fulsome characters of their gods. How could any man, who had never heard of the appearances of spirits, nay, who could not conceive any other notion of such fancies than as something absurd and impossible, ever digest the gross confidence of a poet bringing in a God upon the stage at every turn? I do not therefore doubt, but that the *Gentile* world received very many good offices and advantages from good angels, as well as suffered many mischiefs from evil ones: and I think I might with good probability believe, that every good heathen as well as *Socrates*, had the assistance of a good spirit very frequently.

Nor was the ministry of angels the only assistance that God afforded the *Gentile* world, but in every age he rais'd up wise and good men to be his prophets or interpreters of nature's law to the *Gentiles*: I know *St. Austin* does, in two places at least of his retractions, censure and condemn that charity which he had elsewhere express'd for the philosophers or excellent men among the *Gentiles*; which is the more to be wonder'd at, since he so frequently acknowledges himself to have been first inflamed with the holy love of true philosophy, by reading a piece of *Tully*: but were the matter to be carry'd by votes, I do not question but I could produce testimonies in favour of those men, of such, whose antiquity, learning and

piety might more than balance the authority of St. *Austin*. 'Tis true, their faith differ'd much from that of a *Christian*; and no man, I think, in his wits, could expect it otherwise: for how vast is the distance between the light of nature and that of revelation? but if we look upon those motives and principles to virtue by which they were acted, they were such as a *Christian* need not blush at, or be ashamed of: they look'd upon it, not only as the perfection of human nature, the bond and support of society, the delight, guide and comfort of every particular man's life; but also as the image of God, that which did render us like him, and therefore acceptable to him; as the only thing that could unite man to God, that could raise man above the bodily pollutions of sensuality, that could enable him to out-brave the fears of fortune and death; as that which could fit him for the conversation of heaven; and lastly, they look'd upon it as the gift of God.

'Tis true, together with all this, you'll say, they were idolaters: I do not

The idolatry of the philosophers distinguish'd from the vulgar.

question but they did often partake in the pollution of the idolatrous multitude. But if we regard the idolatry of their religion, and compare it with that of the heathen multitude, there was a vast difference between both; and that in these three points; the object, the acts of worship, and the effects of it.

As to the *object*, the philosophers, 'tis true, did worship spirits, but good ones; the multitude did worship devils: how contradictory are those

those characters which the sensual infatuated multitude bestow'd upon their idols, and those by which the philosophers describe the nature of their gods or their *Genii*? Lust and cruelty make up the one; purity, goodness and chastity the other: this needs no proof; 'tis evident from almost all the writings of *ancient philosophy* that are extant. Yet, I think, it cannot seem superfluous to produce one testimony containing an account of the nature of their *Genii* or *guardian angels*; by which it will be easy to conclude what notion they had of those superiour spirits whom they supposed to dwell always in heaven in the presence of the supreme God; and whom, though they call'd 'em gods, they thought infinitely inferiour to that one God, their Creator and ours; but yet much superiour as well in the excellency of their nature, as dignity of their place, to those angels which they look'd upon as the messengers and ministers of God to man, and as the guardians of man, and the interpreters or conveyers of his requests to God. These are thus describ'd by *Apuleius*; the substance of all

which is, This our truly guardian-angel, our immediate superintendent, the domestick spy of all our actions, the conscious witness of our desires and thoughts, the approver and encourager of our virtue, and the hater and discourager of our vice; if he be heedfully minded by us, rightly known and reli-

Hic quem dico
 prorsus custos, singularis præfectus,
 domesticus speculator, proprius curator,
 intimus cognator, assiduus observator,
 individuus arbiter, inseparabilis testis,
 malorum improbator, bonorum probator,
 si ritè animadvertatur, sedulo cognoscatur, religiose

giously

G 3

colatur, ita ut à focrate justitia & innocentia cultus est, in rebus incertis prospector, dubiis pramonitor, periculosus tutator, egenis opitulatur; qui tibi queat tum in somnis, tum in signis, tum etiam fortasse coram, cum usus postulat, mala averruncare, bona prosperare, humilia sublimare, nutantia fulcire, obscurare clarare, secunda regere, adversa corrigere.
Apul. de Deo Socrat.
 p. 68.

giously worshipp'd with righteousness and innocence, as he was by *Socrates*, will be our counsel in doubtful, our guard in hazardous affairs, &c. But all this while they were idolaters. Admit all this: if they were damned for this idolatry, good God! What will become of that great part of the church, whose practice at this day is infinitely more inexcusable than theirs was? Because God has publicly declar'd, that he has appointed one Mediator, thro' whom he wills us to approach

him. There was then room for the plea of humility; but now a pretence of humility, what can it be in reality, but wanton fondness, or presumptuous wilfulness?

Thus widely did the virtuous and understanding part of mankind differ in the object of worship from the sensual and stupid herd. And since the manner of worship is naturally derived from the notions men entertain of that Being which is the object of it; it could not be otherwise, but that they must differ as widely in the essential parts of worship, as they did in the objects of it. Hence it was, that whilst the people offer'd to their gods their lusts and passions, and sacrific'd to them in uncleanness or cruelty, the philosophers thought that nothing could be so welcome a sacrifice to theirs, as the imitation of their purity and goodness, holy af-

affections and good works. From both these differences there follow'd a

Third, consisting in the different effects which the religion of the one and the other did produce; the idolatry of the one (as wickedness always will) utterly estrang'd them more and more from the service of God; the idolatry of the other (for so I call it to avoid dispute) seem'd to unite them more and more to him, since they look'd upon the spirits they worshipp'd, not only as the creatures, but most lively images of the true God; and acknowledg'd, that all good gifts proceeded from him, tho' they receiv'd 'em by the ministry and mediation of angels; and that virtue, which they look'd upon as the only grateful worship of God, did exalt their minds; and by rendring 'em more like him, must needs render 'em more near to him. Thus they talk'd, whether thus they liv'd or no, is not very material to my present purpose: for after all, tho' their lives should not have come up to their philosophy, these their discourses could not choose but be some way serviceable to mankind, being a manifest reproof to the stupid idolatry, to the brutish and barbarous worship which then prevail'd in the world. These doctrines could not but manifestly tend to convince the world of the being and nature of the supreme God; they could not but tend to restore the law of nature to its just authority, and present the corrupt and degenerate world with a natural, that is, a lovely idea of virtue; and give 'em a just sense of the obligation they lay under, and of the sanctions by

G 4

which

which God establish'd that law which he writ in the minds of men. Who sees not now, that God, by raising up such men, and by assisting them with a spirit of wisdom and a spirit of courage, which the constancy of a great many of them in suffering for these truths, and the lustre and beauty of their writings in those dark times abundantly testify, was an undoubted proof of God's goodness to the *Gentiles*, and of his concern for their true interest and happiness? Why should not this light, which God lent the then wandering benighted part of mankind, be as kindly interpreted by man as it was design'd by God? Why should not the philosophers of the *Gentiles* be look'd upon as priests and prophets well enough suited to the oeconomy of the law of nature? Very excellent use have Christians, even the most learned and pious, made of them; and surely they ought to have proved as much more beneficial to the world they liv'd in, as they were then more necessary.

I think, I have by this time said enough, not only to extinguish in any man all superstitious fears, and unworthy apprehensions of the divine majesty, but also to enkindle in him a grateful love of God, and chearful hopes of true happiness, by establishing this perswasion upon unshaken foundations; That God is a good and gracious God, That he is always ready to further and assist every man in his endeavours after happiness. But now let not that doctrine be perverted to the betraying of us into sloth, which was design'd to inspire the mind with a fresh vigour, to quicken and confirm us in an industrious pursuit

suit after our true happiness: for we must remember, that God is not only good and gracious, but also.

Holy too: I shall not insist long on this point, because I think 'tis already proved; holiness being as necessarily imply'd in perfection, Sett. 2. Holiness of God. as love or goodness. I know some have talked, as if God were a mere arbitrary Being, as if his laws were not the image or expression of his nature, but merely the positive precepts of an arbitrary will. If any man can be so senseless, as to believe that the most perfect Being can love or hate without any reason for't; or that all the laws and actions of God shall be consonant to the strictest rules of justice and goodness, and all this by chance; for mere arbitrary motion is blind and unguided: such a one seems to me as incapable as he is unworthy of instruction: I can as soon believe lightning and thunder, wind and storm a God, as believe him to be a mere arbitrary Being. The heathens believ'd a God, *Proteus*, that could turn himself into all shapes; but these men believe what is infinitely more absurd, a God not of various and uncertain shapes only, but also of an unfixed, uncertain, indetermin'd nature: for the will must always be agreeable and consonant to the nature of that being whose will it is. Thus liberty and indetermination of will in man proceeds from some contrariety in the principles which constitute him; unsteady judgment produces unsteady will, and brutish nature brutish will or inclination. If we consult the scriptures, nothing is more evident

dent than the sanctity of the divine nature: we are there exhorted *to walk in the light, because God is light*; and *to be holy, because he is holy*; which holiness doth not regard the declaration of his will, but his nature; this being given us as a motive to oblige us to walk according to his righteous precepts: because this alone is that which can please a righteous God, this alone is that which can make us like and dear to him: from that attribute of God, that is, holiness, we may plainly infer,

First, That we are not to expect any assistance from him, but then, when that which we enterprize is just and lawful, and we our selves are not wanting to our selves; for 'tis inconsistent with the holiness of God to make his providence the refuge of laziness or impiety. Ἀρετῆς γὰρ ἔλπις ὁ Θεὸς ἔστιν, ἢ ἀθλίας πρῶφασις, *God is the hope of virtue, not the excuse of sloth and cowardice* (Plutarch. *de superstitione.*) 'Tis a rational and well weighed prayer which *Josephus* puts into the mouth of *Moses* standing on the shore of the red sea; inaccessible rocks and mountains deny'd the *Israelites* passage one way, the numerous host of the *Egyptians* had fill'd all others: before them was the red sea, whose waves threatned as certain and more dreadful a destruction than the sword of the *Egyptians*; there was no weapon for fight, no provision for a camp, no place for flight. In this case *Moses* prays thus, καὶ ἄνθρωπος μὲν ἀγνοεῖς, &c. *Lord, thou knowest that no contrivance, industry, or force of ours can here avail us; 'tis in thee alone to find out a way to the rescue*

rescue of this people, who by thy command and under thy conduct have left Egypt: despairing of all other ways, we flee to thee alone for succour; Lord, let it come speedily; give us a clear proof of thy divine omnipotence and faithfulness; we are in great straits, great to us, but slight and inconsiderable to thee. The sea is thine, and it stops our progress; the mountains that shut us up, are thine; thou canst divide this sea, or turn its waves into firm land, and make us find a safe passage through the devouring deep: or, if thou thinkest fit, thou canst make us march in triumph aloft through the open sky. This was a noble faith; this was indeed an expectation almost as wonderful as the success it met with: but then, it was no less rational than successful; their condition was capable of no deliverance but a miraculous one; and it was their obedience to the divine commands had reduced them to this condition. This is a safe rule to guide our faith and reliance by; in all our distresses and difficulties, we must have recourse unto God; for those are the times wherein human infirmity requires the support and comfort of divine assistance; the utmost strength and perfection of virtue is too weak to bear the shock and brunt of calamity alone, *ἐνθα δὲ αὐτὴ Θεοῦ συλλήψεως καὶ σωτηρίας καὶ παρασάτη*, *It must be reinforc'd by power from above,* (Max. Tyr. *Dissert.* 26.) But then these difficulties must be such to which our vice has not betray'd us; and our own courage and industry must be as vigorous as our prayers: for in vain do we beg new supplies of strength, if we

we use not what we enjoy'd before. Divine bounty doth never supersede man's industry; fruitful showers, and enlivening rays do not prevent, but second the labours of the husbandman: God observes the same method in the production of a nobler sort of fruit, wisdom and virtue; the soul, as well as the field of the sluggard, shall be o'er-run with weeds: there only shall the divine fruit of philosophy and happiness grow, where religious discipline tills the ground, and wakeful study sows the seeds of thriving truths among the furrows. Accordingly, if we consider the lives and practice of excellent men, none were ever so much favourites of heaven, that its gifts grew up in 'em, like corn and wine in the golden age, without culture and dressing: inspiration it self did not exempt man from the necessity of industry, but oblige him to a greater: thus under the old testament a prophetic life was a life of a greater strictness and retirement than that of others; and in the new, not to mention the watchings, the fastings, the retirements, the prayers of our Lord and Master, that account of himself which *St. Paul* gives us, will inform us, not only what his life was, but what it was expected the life of every one should be that shared with him in the ministry and dignity of an apostle. *But in all things approving our selves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,—in labours, in watchings; by pureness, by knowledge,* 2 Cor. 6. Amongst the heathens, whatever perfection and excellency they attributed to human nature, whatever

whatever they attributed to an *εὐφροία*, a con-
 texture and frame of nature more than common ;
 whatever, lastly, they attributed to the favour,
 the extraordinary favour of God ; yet did they
 always judge a strict life and indefatigable in-
 dustry necessary to the acquiring of true philo-
 sophy and happiness: their *Pythagoras*, so dear
 to their Gods, that it seemed to be a doubt a-
 mongst them, whether he were not himself a
 God incarnate ; not content to have been the
 scholar first of *Pherocydes Syrus*, and after-
 wards *Hermodamas*, travell'd first into *Egypt*,
 and afterwards to *Babylon* and I know not,
 whither, pursuing wisdom and happiness with
 great industry, and as great abstinence. *Socra-
 tes*, however inspir'd by his *Genius*, did yet
 learn musick of *Connus*, poetry of *Evenus*, a-
 griculture of *Ischomachus*, geometry of *Theodo-
 rus*, &c. And to all this he added the religi-
 ous discipline of mortification, even to a *volun-
 tary poverty*. What should I multiply instan-
 ces? there is not a man amongst the *Gentiles*
 remarkable for wisdom or virtue, that is not
 as remarkable for that travail and self-denial by
 which he purchased both ; I add self-denial, in-
 dustry alone being not judg'd sufficient: for,

Secondly, 'Tis easy in the next place to in-
 fer from the sanctity of God, that they who ex-
 pect his assistance, should endeavour to be good
 and holy: 'tis virtue that constitutes a man a
 subject of the heavenly kingdom, and a favourite
 of God ; and therefore 'tis this that gives him
 the best claim to his protection and patronage :
 vice is a state of rebellion and defiance against
 God,

God, and he that has put off his allegiance, cannot expect rationally the benefits of that government which he refuses to be under. 'Tis true, the infinite goodness and clemency of God which is not easily vanquish'd by man's ingratitude, may pursue such a man with repeated overtures and tenders of grace and pardon, and may leave him in the possession of common benefits, such as health, plenty, friends, &c. but God will never confer upon him the most excellent gifts, the marks of his especial presence and particular favour: he will withdraw from him the aids of his spirit, and leave him to himself, a blind, indigent, and forlorn creature: *The holy spirit of discipline will fly deceit, and will not abide when unrighteousness comes in*, Wisd. 1. Which is nothing more than that the heathen by the light of nature did affirm concerning his *Genius*, *ἑὰν δὲ μετὰ μαρτυρεῖν δειξῆς ψυχῆν, ἀρεσιῶν αὐτῆς καὶ ἀνεπιστάμων*, *Wicked souls have no good angels sojourning with them, or presiding over them.* (Max. Tyr. Differ. 26.) Our souls, like temples, must be prepared and consecrated to him, if we would have God dwell in them. Righteousness and holiness are the only things that charm and captivate God; nothing else can invite him to dwell with man. This very reason *Maximus Tyrius* assigns for the residence and abode of a *Dæmon* with *Socrates* after so extraordinary a manner. *Dost thou wonder that a prophetick spirit should dwell with Socrates so intimately united, so friendly, so inseparable, that he seemed only*

not

not mixt, and become one with his own mind?
 with Socrates, whose purity of
 body, charity, and goodness of
 soul, strictness of conversation,
 depth of judgment, melody and
 persuasiveness of speech, reli-
 gion towards God and inte-
 grity towards man, render'd
 him worthy of such a guest,
 such a friend? From all which it is evident,

Θαυμάζεις ἢ Σωκράτη
 συνὴν Δαιμόνιον φίλον,
 μακρινόν, αὐτὸν ἀπειρο-
 μων, ἢ μόνον ἔχει τῶ
 γούμῃ αὐτῷ ἀτακτοκρεμέ-
 νου, ἀνδρὶ καθάρῳ μὲ τὸ
 σῶμα. ἀγαθὸν δὲ τὴν
 ψυχὴν, ἀκριβοῦς δὲ τὴν ἐν-
 αιτῶν, δυνάμει δὲ ῥητορῆς,
 μουσικῶς δὲ ἱππῶν ἢ δὲ
 τὸ θεῶν εὐσεβεῖ, ὅσοι δὲ
 τὰ ἀνθρώπινα. Idem ib.

Thirdly, What different rates we are to set
 upon the different gifts of God: *Every good
 gift, and every perfect gift comes down from
 above*, Jam. 1. But every gift is not equally
 good, equally perfect; being neither equally
 necessary, nor profitable. Wealth, power,
 friends, relations, health, strength, beauty,
 wit, discretion, virtue, are all good, but not
 all equal; their value is different, and therefore
 the degrees of our importunity, and of our faith
 or reliance upon God, must be proportion'd ac-
 cordingly: a confident faith, and an almost im-
 patient zeal, doth well become us, when we seek
 the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness
 thereof; when we seek of God the divine gifts
 of wisdom and virtue; but an humble modesty,
 and a most profound submission, is the ornament
 and beauty of those who are petitioners for in-
 ferious temporal blessings: for God has promis'd
 the former to all that earnestly sue for them,
 peremptorily and without any tacit reservati-
 ons: but his promises of the latter do always
 imply this condition, *If they shall be for our
 good*: for the perfections of the mind are moral
 and

and immutable beauties; but those of the body, and all the gaudy things of fortune, are like the fading beauties of a flower, the heat scorches it, the cold nips it, every little chance cracks the stalk, and the hand of a child will serve to crop it. Nothing therefore is more acceptable to God, than the modesty of our petitions for *these* good things, and the fervency of them for the *other*; nothing more delightful to him, unless the granting of them. The things therefore that we are to beg of God, not only with the greatest importunity, but also in the first place, are those which *Maximus Tyrius*, *Dissert.* 30. thought the subject of *Socrates's* prayers: *What*

Ἡ οὖν τὸ τοῦ νοῦ κατὰ τὸ
 Σωκράτους ὅπως αὐτῷ
 χρήματα γίνοντο, ἢ ὅπως
 ἀσθεῖ Ἀθηναίων· --- ἀλλ'
 νοῦ κατὰ τὴν τοῖς Θεοῖς· ---
 ἀρετὴν ψυχῆς καὶ ἡσυχίαν
 βίου, καὶ ζῶν ἀμειψίων,
 καὶ ἀνελπίων θανάτου.

are these? a virtuous mind, a quiet state, an unblameable life, and a cheerful death, full of good hopes. These were the matter of his requests; not wealth, or honour, or popula-

arity. This at once brings to my thought another objection rais'd against the possibility of attaining happiness, and instructs me how to answer it.

CHAP. IV.

Of the influence of fortune on our happiness.

The independence of our happiness on fortune already cleared: and why, further considered. Fortune, what; how far its sway extends. Fortune pretended necessary to remove the impediments of virtue. Every man the architect of his own fortune. Fondness for the world springs from infidelity and sensuality, and the folly of both. Competency, what; and the use of it with reference to our happiness. The tendency of wealth examined, with reference to the mind, the body, the outward state of man. The admiration of wealth arises from false and gawdy appearances.

A *Second thing which men charge with the guilt of their ruin, is fortune. I might pass over this point slightly; because afflictions will come more properly to be consider'd in the fourth volume, where I treat of indolence: and because I have already clear'd two great truths, which are of themselves abundantly sufficient to baffle and defeat this trifling objection; namely; First, That virtue and vice, wisdom and folly, are the things, to which, generally speaking, we owe our temporal prosperity or adversity; and consequently that those, supposing the ordinary assistance of God being in our power, these must be so too. Secondly, That*

H we

we are assur'd of the assistance of God, even in these things, as far as he shall see them truly subservient to our good; however, because the persuasion of the usefulness, nay, absolute necessity of the favour of fortune, has taken such deep root in the minds of men, that it would be thought little less than a contradiction, to imagine that a man can be *unfortunate and happy* (so that even *Seneca* himself has let fall one of the greatest paradoxes a *Stoic* was ever guilty of) such an expression as this better becoming the mouth of a peasant than a philosopher: *That*

Sed ei qui ad virtutem tendit, etiam si multum processit, opus est tamen aliqua fortunæ indulgentia, adhuc inter humana luctanti, dum nodum illum exolvit, & omne vinculum mortale. *Seneca de vit. beata.*

not only beginners, but proficient in virtue, till they have put off mortality, will stand in need of some indulgence of fortune. And few men find any belief with the world, when they talk of the contempt of wealth, it being generally interpreted either in

the laziness of an unactive and degenerate mind, or the dissimulation of one who affects to be thought to defy fortune, while he doth secretly and inwardly repine and fret at the neglect and coldness she expresses toward him. I will therefore bestow a little time on the consideration of this objection.

What dost thou mean by fortune? if mere chance, then to envy the lot of others, or murmur at thy own, is folly; if providence, then 'tis impiety: for whatever goodness, guided by unerring wisdom, doth, must be so well done that it cannot
be

Fortune what.

be mended; and whatever is merely in the power of a blind, giddy, and inconstant humour (which is the notion by which men chuse to express fortune) can neither be prevented, fix'd nor regulated. But what is it,

Secondly, thou dost put in the power of fortune? the under-
How far its sway extends.

standing and liberty of mens minds; wisdom, temperance, industry, courage, and in one word virtue? If thou dost not, she has no influence on thy happiness, she cannot prevent thy attainment of it, nor bereave thee of it when attain'd: if thou dost, thou dost enlarge the empire of fortune too too far; let her rule and insult over soldiers, courtiers, lovers, factious demagogues and time-servers, but not over philosophers: let those who are her minions, be her slaves; let her dispose of money, lands, farms, commissions, benefices, honours, graces, fame; nay, if you will, crowns and scepters too: virtue and happiness, and souls are too precious commodities to be the sport and traffick of fortune. *Solomon* observed long ago, *Wisdom* cries out, *she uttereth her voice in the streets; she cries out in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city she utters her words,* Prov. 1. Our Saviour in the great day of the feast cried, saying, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;* John 7. which is an invitation of the same nature with that in the prophet, *Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, buy wine and milk without money, and without price,* Isa. 5. This ever was, and ever

will be true; a great fortune is not necessary for the attainment of faith, hope or charity: and he that is endowed with these, can't be miserable; you may learn the whole system of divine and important truths; you may acquit your self with all the beauty and enjoyments of virtue at a very cheap rate; and you may learn temperance, fortitude, justice, modesty, constancy, patience, contempt of the world, without the assistance of much more wealth, than will serve to feed and clothe you: and can't thou not be content with these possessions? is not this a sort of merchandize to be preferred before that of fine gold?

I know, the greater part of those who accuse their fortune of misery, do at least pretend that their condition and circumstances of life are so incommodious, that they

Fortune pretended necessary to remove the impediments of virtue.

have not time to attend to the great interest of the soul, or at least not with that application which they should. Alas, thus not the mean only, but almost all talk, from the porter to the prince: the circumstances of one are too strait, too narrow; of another too full of trouble, because too full of state: one complains that he is withdrawn from his great end, by the many allurements and sensual temptations to which his rank and quality in the world exposes him; another, that he is daily fretted and indisposed by the little cross accidents, and the rugged conversation which he is necessarily oblig'd to bear with: one complains of too much business, another of too little; the hurry and multitude of things distracts the one, infidel fears and anxious

ous despondencies the other: one complains that his acquaintances and friends are too numerous, and intrench too far upon his precious hours; another is querulous, melancholy, and peevish, because he looks upon himself either for his meanness neglected, or for his misfortune deserted and forsaken: company is burdensome to the one, and solitude to the other. Thus all conditions are full of complaints, from him that trudges on his clouted shoo, to him who can scarce mention the manners or the fortunes of the multitude, without some expressions of contumely and disdain. Thou fool, dost thou not see that all these complaints are idle contradictions? for shame correct the wantonness of thy humour, and thou wilt soon correct thy fortune: learn to be happy in every state, and every place: learn to enjoy thy self, to know and value the wealth that is in thine own power, I mean, wisdom and goodness: learn to assert the sovereignty and dignity of thy soul. Methinks that if philosophy could not, pride and indignation might conquer fortune: 'Tis beneath the dignity of a soul that has but a grain of sense, to make chance, and winds, and waves, the arbitrary disposers of his happiness; or what's worse, to depend upon some mushroom upstart, which a chance smile raised out of his turf and rottenness, to a condition of which his mean soul is so unequal, that he himself fears and wonders at his own height. O how I hug the memory of those honest heathens, who in a ragged gown, and homely cottage, bade defiance to fortune, and laugh'd at those pains and hazards the vanity

and pride of men, not their misfortune, drove them to! men may call this pride, or spite in *them*; as the beggarly rabble doth usually envy the fortune it doth despair of: but there were a great many of these who laid by envy'd greatness, to enjoy this quiet, tho' generally despicable meanness: but let the contempt of the world be what it will in a heathen; let it be pride or peevishness, vain-glory or any thing, rather than a reproach to Christians; what say you to the followers of our Lord and Master? *Then, said Peter, silver and gold have I none, Acts 3.* None? what hast thou then, thou poor disciple of a poor master? a true faith, a God-like charity, and unshaken hope: blessed art thou amongst men; nothing can make thee greater, nothing richer, nothing happier, but heaven. You see plainly then, a man may be virtuous, tho' not wealthy; and that fortune, which prevents his being rich, cannot prevent his being happy.

This discourse will never down; this is not calculated for this age: philosophy must be a little more mannerly, and religion a little more genteel and complaisant than formerly, ere it can be adapted and accommodated to the present state of things. Go on then, let us try how far it will be necessary to condescend. You cannot be happy; why? because you are not *rich*: go then to God, and beg you may be *rich*; I have not the face to put up such arrogant and intemperate requests to God: 'tis plain then, 'tis not necessary to be *rich* in order to be happy: for whatever is necessary to this, thou may'st

may'ſt with good aſſurance beg of God. But thy deſires are more humble and modeſt; thou aimeſt at nothing but what is very neceſſary; a fairer houſe, another ſervant, a diſh or two of meat more for thy friends, a coach for thy convenience or eaſe, and a few hundred pounds apiece more for thy children: O heavenly ingredients of a rational pleaſure! O divine inſtruments of human happineſs! O the humble and mortify'd requeſts of modeſt ſouls! Well, if theſe things be ſo neceſſary, and theſe deſires be ſo decent and virtuous, if thou canſt not be happy, and conſequently muſt be miſerable, without them: put up a bill, repreſent thy condition in it, ſuch a one—wants a more commodious houſe, more ſervants, more diſhes, &c. and deſires the prayers of the congregation for ſupport under this affliction. You are profane: far be it from me: I would only let thee ſee the wantonneſs of thy deſires. If thou think'ſt this would expoſe thee to publick laughter, go to thy miniſter, unfold thy caſe to him, let him pray for thee, he is a good man, and his prayers will go far; you rally and ridicule me. Enter then into thy cloſet, ſhut thy door, thou may'ſt truſt God, he pities and conſiders even human infirmities; I could even almoſt *in my mind* deſire it of him; but I am aſham'd to do it in a *ſet* and *ſolemn prayer*: I could almoſt make the petition in the *groſs*, but I bluſh to think of deſcending to *particulars*. Well, then I ſee plainly, that wealth in any degree of it is ſo far from being neceſſary to our happineſs, that it has ſo little of uſefulneſs or conveniency in it,

that in thy conscience between God and thee, thou canst not think fit to complain of the want of it.

But this answer will never satisfy him who complains of want, or of being engag'd in continual troubles, and tossed by the daily changes and revolutions of the world.

Every man the architect of his own fortune.

I confess, it will not: but I must tell such a one, if *Solomon's* observation be true, *The hand of the diligent maketh rich*, Prov. 10. and that other, *Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men*, Prov. 22. Then his poverty is his crime, as well as his calamity; he must redeem himself from this his punishment by industry and prayer. As to calamities, this must be acknowledg'd, that the mind of a good and great man, which stands firm upon its own *basis*, a good God, a good Saviour, and a good conscience, may remain unmov'd, when the earth trembles, and the sea roars round about him. Changes indeed befall things temporal; but he leans not upon them. I may say farther, that he, who upon mature deliberation, and upon necessary obligations of duty engages himself in a just cause, may be unfortunate, but he cannot be miserable: his sufferings carry a secret pleasure in them, and his misfortunes are full of hope and glory; if he consider, if he reflect, if he do not feed on vain and airy projects, and suffer himself to be unwarily transported by very irrational, though seemingly just passions. I must lastly add, that 'tis not the necessity of their affairs,

affairs, nor the iniquity of times, which doth commonly involve and intangle men in publick or private calamities, but some secret vanity, some blind impetuous passion, some ill laid project, or some treacherous or dishonourable fear. The state of *Rome* never felt more or greater changes than in the life of *Atticus*, as is obvious to any one who shall reflect upon the history of his time: and yet in all the turns and mighty changes of fortune, *Atticus* enjoy'd a constant tranquillity and well settled peace, being scarce ever reduc'd to the necessity of a retirement but once, as I remember. Nor was it the meanness of his quality, or the narrowness of his fortune that secur'd him; he was a man great in both: nor was it the secrecy of a private life, or the sluggishness of a stupid mind, which render'd him unworthy of any man's fear, and unable to provoke a danger. No, he was a man, as well for the eminence of his parts, and vigour of his mind, as for the largeness of his fortune, well known to the greatest and most active men of all parties; and yet steering his life by the rules of virtue and true wisdom, he liv'd untouch'd by, unconcern'd in, the strange alterations of so long a life as his; which were such, and so many, that the historian has observed, that they, who were one day in the height of power and honour, were the next in the gulph of danger and despair: so that his remark is generally very true, *Sui cuique mores fingunt fortunam. Every man may fashion and shape his fortune as he will his manners. (Corn. Nep. in vita Attici.)*

Not

Nor was the success of his behaviour less in private than publick: for *Cornelius Nepos* has observed in his life, that those friendships he entered into, he was very happy and constant in; nay, such was the gentleness, such the discretion of his behaviour, that it preserved him in the favour of an uncle (I think) of his, who was so sour and peevish, that none could please him; such a *Nabal*, a man could not speak to him; nay, he not only kept in with him, but possessed him so entirely, that he was left his heir. Nor was all this in *Atticus*, the effect of temper or nature, but of virtue: *Neque id fecit natura solum, quanquam omnes ei paremus, sed etiam doctrina; nam & principum philosophorum ita percepta habuit præcepta, ut iis ad vitam agendam, non ad ostentationem, utebatur*: (Ibid.) For he had studied philosophy, not for ostentation, but the conduct of his life. I might now presume, I had given satisfaction to this objection, especially since I oblige my self to take the case of temporal and outward calamities into full consideration hereafter; but the infection is got into the mass of blood, and has diffused it self thro' mankind, and 'tis not a slight and weak medicine that can purge it out: therefore I have observed that the heathen were never more copious, or more vehement than in the refutation of this error. Our baptism doth scarce proclaim a more solemn war against the pomps and vanities of the world, than philosophy did in all ages: no doubt therefore the expugning this fancy, which makes man's happiness depend upon his fortune in the world, must needs

needs be a matter of great importance, since both revelation and reason have so earnestly and solemnly endeavoured it; I shall not therefore, I hope, seem impertinent or tedious, if looking upon this objection as considerable, in *opinion*, tho' not in it *self*, I treat it with more respect and solemnity than it really deserves.

My design therefore is to examine what real good or convenience there is in wealth, how valuable, or how necessary 'tis, and that not in a declamatory or sophistical, but such a sober and rational manner, as may be satisfactory and convictive to every unprejudic'd mind.

First therefore, I will give some account, whence 'tis that men are so intent upon their worldly interest, so wholly bent upon being rich.

Secondly, I will state what is meant by a competency, and what the advantage and necessity of it is.

Thirdly, I will consider what the natural tendency of wealth is. From all which it will easily appear, what connection and dependence there is between our fortune and our happiness.

If we enquire whence 'tis men are so intent upon the world; one reason is a secret infidelity; men are desirous to lay such a foundation, as time cannot wear, nor winds and tempests o'erthrow: they cannot trust providence, till they see, or at least, fancy themselves in a condition to defie it: and this they look upon as a great piece of prudence, to provide for themselves a safe retreat at once from the storms and changes that generally pursue mankind, and the contempt

1. Reason of love of the world, infidelity.

contempt which unjustly pursues *those* who are overtaken by them : I cannot tell which is the greater, the folly or the impiety of this humour ; for 'tis a wretched folly to flatter our selves with the vain hopes of a security which is not to be found any where beneath heaven ; or to imagine that a great estate is less liable to the blasts of fortune, than a small one ; or to fancy that the contempt which attends those who never rise, is more insupportable than that which attends those who fall : nor is the impiety one jot less than the folly ; for what can be more wicked than amidst so many visible and undeniable proofs and assurances of a God and providence, to let the same anxious and jealous fears fill and disturb our minds, which would scarce be pardonable, if there were neither ? What greater affront can we offer to the goodness, the wisdom, the omnipotence and faithfulness of God, than to refuse to repose the care, the trust of providing for us upon him, when he not only offers, but presses himself upon the employment ?

A *second* cause why we so eagerly pursue wealth, is *sensuality* : being
 2. *Sensuality.* strangers to the peace and joy of faith, insensible of the divine delight of charity, incapable of the extasies, of the full assurance of hope, and in general, of the rational pleasure of a philosophical mind ; what can be expected but that both wind and tide should drive us violently on another shore ? I mean the whole force and inclination of our nature should impetuously tend towards sensual, worldly pleasures

fures and enjoyments, and consequently towards wealth, as the necessary instrument of both. You grant therefore that wealth is necessary to a pleasurable life? To a pleasurable one 'tis, to a pleasant one 'tis not. The sensual pleasure of a sensual man, *i. e.* one who is all body and fancy, requires a good fund of wealth, but the temporal enjoyments of a virtuous man do not. I grant, that ease and rest are necessary to the sluggish, state and height to the proud, variety to the intemperate and the wanton, and to all this wealth is necessary; but I deny, that sloth or pride, intemperance (I will add niceness) or wantonness, is necessary to our happiness: nay, I will confidently affirm, that a vigorous mind and active body is a much greater pleasure than sluggish ease; that an humble, if contented, state is much more easy than the proud grandeur, and the ἀλαζονεία βίη, or *the ostentation of life* in St. *John*; that sober and thrifty temperance is a far greater pleasure than variety; and the modesty, constancy and friendship of a virtuous affection is not only a more calm, generous and steady, but a more transporting satisfaction, than the fanciful rambles of a wandering lust. And I hope, none will be so fond as to judge wealth necessary to the obtaining these virtues; if any are, their silliness and vanity are to be exploded and laugh'd at, not seriously confuted; for who in his wits can believe, that ease is the best nurse of industry; that affected state and ambitious grandeur are the parents of humility and contentment; that affluence and daily delicacies are the most effectual instruments of abstinence,

stinance, and that variety is the mother of chastity? If not, then 'tis apparent how far servicable wealth is; for all that lies in its power is to provide for us these temptations: but tho' a wise and virtuous man wants no wealth, I deny not but that he needs a competency; what this is, is the next thing to be enquired: for this pretext of having what is enough, is frequently made use of to justifie and legitimate avarice and ambition.

The measure of competency is the necessities of nature, not the extravagancies of fancy: a little heap, where frugal temperance and humble industry are the stewards, is a plentiful provision: but where-ever wasteful luxury and wanton fancy rule and govern, plenty it self is a mere dearth. What treasures would not the expensive riots of *Apicius*, *Orata*, *Clodius* exhaust? how small a particle of which would have been ample revenues to *Curius*, *Æmilius Pappus* or *Fabricius*? competency then is that provision which the virtuous man needs as his *viaticum*, as the support of life and instrument of virtue; the modelt wish of *Jacob*, Gen. 28. *Bread to eat, and raiment to put on*. The use and advantage of this, is not to keep us or our children from being exposed to contempt (that is too slight an evil for a Christian or philosopher to dread) but to the barbarous pity or charity of rich and great friends. A second use or advantage of it is, that it helps to keep the mind erect and free; that it puts us into a capacity of employing our reasons, and enjoy-
ing

ing our selves our own way ; and leaves us not under any temptation to unmanly compliances, or unchristian jealousies and fears : for he whose ambition goes not beyond this, will easily trust providence, if he believe there be any ; or his own industry, if he believe none : how he that divides and separates providence and industry, will thrive in this matter, I know not ; but he that joins his own industry with God's blessing obtain'd by prayer, can never miss of this his aim. Having proceeded thus far, I shall be more easily able to resolve,

Thirdly, What the value, what the necessity of riches is. 'Tis a pretty speech which *Plato* in *Stobæus* makes in the defence and commendation of wealth. But in

The tendency of wealth, with reverence to the soul. Scrm. 82. ex Telecte.

the first place, I do not call every thing wealth, that is not mere beggary ; I have allowed of a competency as very convenient even for a virtuous and wise man. In the next place, I trouble not my self about the grandeur or security of kingdoms, tho' peradventure the *Scythian poverty*, or *Roman virtue*, is a stronger bulwark, a better guard of these, than the riches of *Asia*. And in the last place, I do not enquire what use wisdom and virtue are able to make of wealth, which can extract pleasure and happiness even out of troubles and afflictions ; but what the natural tendency of wealth is. These things being observed, that, and all other discourses of the like nature, will appear to contain very little of solid truth, and to have very little of weight in them : let us come to a
trial

trial of the matter. If contentment and security were the natural effects of wealth, if to be rich and to be happy were the same thing, then it were not to be wondred at, that wealth should be the great idol, and ambition of mankind: but if it neither free man from those passions of the mind, nor diseases of the body, nor other calamities which imbitter life to the inferior part of mankind; what then is the advantage of it? Let us then stand still and consider this: Do not hatred and anger, envy and anxiety, ambition and lust reign more frequently and more insolently in the bosom of the great and wealthy, than of the labouring cottager? Nay, I believe upon a narrow search we shall find, that some passions are the prerogative of a proud and insolent fortune, and are not incident to a mean one; such as haughty anger, irreconcilable hatred, and unlimited ambition, and an uneasy wantonness: the plow-man and the artist, the labourer and the hind, know none of these; ambition does not break their sleep, nor a fastidious niceness make 'em disgust and nauseate their best meals; nor are they troubled with wild and ungovernable lusts, bred by excess, and nurs'd by gaudy bravery, deluding arts, and more deluding fancy.

Nor are the rich more exempt from the diseases of the body, than from the passions of the mind; excessive meals, disorderly sleeps, much sloth and much wantonness, as they are the privileges of a gay fortune, so are they the sources of innumerable diseases: scurvies, gouts, rheumatisms,

*With reference to
the body.*

matifms, fufceits, putrid fevers, and I know not what, are the confequences of proud idleneſs and exceſſive enjoyments, *i. e.* of ill-governed wealth: whereas a plain table and a ſober life, regular and cheap pleaſures, and moderate labour, beget and improve an intire habit of health, and prolong life to the utmoſt period of nature. This is a ſecond great advantage of wealth, that it gives us a diſeaſ'd body, and a ſhort life.

Sure then, the rich are the minions of fortune; and the diſaſters which oppreſs the reſt of mankind, touch not them: on the quite contrary, all annals are ſtuffed with the calamities and miſfortunes of theſe men; riſſed wealth, defeated hopes, baffled ambition, blaſted honours, broken dejected power, and, in a word, mighty changes, are the argument of tragedies, and the ſubject of a loud and raving paſſion: whereas the ſtrokes of fortune are ſoft and gentle; when they light upon the mean, theſe are not capable of tragical alterations; their minds are of a ſtronger temper, their bodies firmer, their ſenſes not nice and delicate, and their little ſufferings draw not after 'em the mourning pomp and ſtate which attends the fall, I may call it the funeral, of a great one. Here envy inſults not, malice traduces not, the petulant multitude do not follow the corps with confus'd clamours and cenſures; nor do acquaintance flock to expreſs outwardly a cold and formal regard, while they feel inwardly a ſecret joy; for that man's fall is always un-
 pity'd whoſe power was a barren and ufeleſs

*With reference to
 man's outward ſtate.*

title. But to come cloſer yet: what is it that makes up the comfort of human life? A quiet ſtate, faithful friends, good wives and good children? If we conſider it, we ſhall find the life of man little beholden to wealth in theſe points: in all changes of time are not the rich the greateſt ſufferers? the mark of envy, the prey of violence and uſurpation? Have they not more enemies, as well as more friends, than other men? friends did I ſay? they have none. They have dependents, flatterers, companions, and miniſters of their pleaſures; no friends. Hence is it, that nothing is more common than for thoſe above us to wiſh for the content, the eaſe and enjoyment of thoſe below them: for the truth of it is (if we proceed) relations, which are the pleaſure of men of middle fortune, are the burthen and incumbrance of the rich and great: for in all their contracts and diſpoſals, they are ſervants to their fortune, not their inclination; marriages among theſe are the matches of eſtates, not minds; and therefore they attend not the temper or the honour of the families they link with; nay, what is worſe, they have no regard to their education, or virtue, or wiſdom: but money weighs all down, whatever objections are put in the oppoſite ſcale: in the whole method of their lives they are ſlaves to their fortune, and to their reputation in the world, judging themſelves obliged to live, not according to their reaſon, but their quality and the humour, that is, the folly of the age, and of the acquaintance they converſe with: nor dare they walk by any other maxims in the govern-

government of the nearest to them, or in the education of their children: in all these things they must do what becomes men of their figure in the world, not what becomes true wisdom. Who sees not now, that upon the whole there is in this state or condition of life more incumbrance, and less true freedom? more shew, and less enjoyment, than in any other?

If all this be true, you will be apt to conclude mankind is mad: if wealth neither makes us more
The admiration of wealth abounds.
 wise nor more healthy, more free in our selves, nor more fortunate in our relations, what bewitches man into this extravagant dotage? What makes the world gaze upon, and envy the rich, as the only happy creatures? What makes us fawn upon them, and flatter them, as the only powerful and great things the world has? Something there is in it, and that is this; we see the outside, the pomp and pageantry of wealth; we see the gilt coaches, the rich liveries, the little town of buildings, gay furniture, and a whole squadron of dishes; and together with all this, the gawdy trappings the happy man's bedight with; the port, the grace, the confidence that all this gives to ignorance and nonsense: but if you'll consider this truly, you will find all this mere pageantry and apparition, nothing solid nor real in it. As for gay cloathing, 'tis an advantage not worth the speaking of, 'tis the pride of children, and the weakness of women: the little soul that converses no higher than the looking-glass, and a fantastick dress, may help to make up the shew

of the world; but must not be reckon'd amongst the rational inhabitants of it; serving only as painture, images and ornaments to the stage, not actors on it. As to all the rest, they *seem* to enjoy some pre-eminence, but do not: the mean man eats his morsel with more pleasure, because more appetite; and sleeps with more delight, because with more ease, neither oppress'd in body by luxury, nor in mind by care: *The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep,* Eccles. 5. 12. All the rest, as numerous attendants, many dependents, flocks of parasites, and the like, are but mere incumbrance, the unweildiness of a gross and heavy body. All these servè to encrease the noise and hurry, the care and the pomp, but not the pleasure or enjoyment of the wealthy: hence was that observation of *Solomon, If riches increase, they are increas'd that eat them: and what profit has the owner thereof, saving the beholding of it with his eyes? Ibid.* A most extraordinary happiness this, to be the host of their neighbourhood, to have one's house the rendezvous of the idle and the gluttonous, of buffoons and flatterers; and yet, if the rich live otherwise, presently they grow infamous and stink; they are look'd upon as *Indian* graves, where wealth is not laid up, but lost and buried; they are loaded with the curses of some, with the hatred of others, and with the censures of all; and this is almost as bad as to be pester'd with impertinencies and flattery. This is the whole of the matter, if people gaze
and

and admire, 'tis there ignorance; if they fawn or flatter, 'tis their baseness; but still remember, 'tis the people, 'tis the croud that doth this. Should a man of letters or of spirit be over-aw'd by the laws of custom or some unhappy necessity, into the commission of this idolatry, he could not but despise the idol he bow'd down to, and see it a mere lump of wood or stone, notwithstanding its gaudy dresses; tho' I acknowledge, I comprehend not what can reduce a philosopher to this piece of shameful dissimulation; the soul that is great in it self, is so in despite of fortune; he that can live virtuously, can live happily in the lowest state: and he that desires but little, has no need of much: he that can despise riches, can despise the insolence and pride of the rich: in one word, he that can command himself, needs be a slave to none.

After all, I think it were possible to evince the mischievousness of wealth as plainly as I have its useflessness; but that were to press the point further than my present design requires; for my business was to shew, either that fortune was not necessary to our happiness, or as far as it is, that 'tis in our own power; both which I may now presume my self to have sufficiently perform'd. I will therefore pass on to the objection from fate.

CHAP. V.

OF FATE.

The notion of fate stated. Man's fondness. Fate from spiritual pride and looseness. Fate impugned. 1. By authority. Various opinions about it, and its causes. The extent of its empire. The mind exempt. The true differences between the Pythagorean and Stoic fate—different opinions about the necessity implied in fate—Christian fate worse than Pagan. 2. By reason and revelation. Fate cannot derive it self from matter nor from God: 'tis repugnant to sense and experience, the consequences of fate. Scripture clear'd from countenancing fate. Demonstrated from the nature of God, his declar'd will and government.

AMongst the many shifts and devices men have invented to quiet conscience, and at once to excuse and enjoy their lusts, this is none of the least, that they impute all to *fate*; not only the events that befall them, but even their crimes and follies, as *Juvenal* did the dissoluteness of *Peribomius*; that is, they believe, or would be thought to do so, that all our affections and actions, and all events that befall us, are inevitable; that no prudence can prevent, no industry frustrate the decrees of *fate*, against which we struggle but in vain. This

The notion of fate stated.

This is the popular and general notion of *fate* taught first by *Democritus*, *Empidocles*, *Heraclitus* and *Leucippus*, and so deriv'd down from age to age, and prevailing mostly amongst the multitude. Thus *Bacchylides* in *Stobæus's Eclogue*, expresses the popular notion of *fate*:

'Tis not in man to choose his state, whether wealthy peace, or inexorable war, or all-confounding sedition; but fate, the sovereign arbiter of each, leads us on blind and hood-

Θνητοῖς ἢ καὶ αὐθαίρετοι,
οὔτ' ἄλγον τ' οὔτ' ἀκαμπτ-
τος ἄρης, οὔτε πάντοφρσι
στάσι· ἀλλ' ἐπιχρίμψι
νίους ἄλλοτε ἐπ' ἄλλαν
γὰν ἀπάνθορος δίσσασαι.
Stob. Ec. Phys. c. 8.

wink'd to our ruin. And *Euripides* expresses the other part of the opinion, containing the adamantine chain, the insuperable necessity of fate, thus; *μῦρσιμα δ' ἔπε φυγῆν θεμυς ἔπε σφια τις ἀπώσσει· ἀλλὰ μάταν πτόθυμος αἰεὶ πύνον ἔξει.* *'Tis not permitted us to shun our destiny; nor can any human prudence ward its blows; nor can any thing but endless and fruitless troubles attend our contention with it.*

'Tis a sign of a desperate cause, or desperate impudence, to dispute against our common sense, and to defie the daily experience of mankind; and yet all this the abettors of an universal fate (such as this is) are guilty of: for they deny that liberty in man, which all laws, divine and human, all exhortations and advices, all commendation and reproof, *i. e.* plainly God and man do suppose: for if the mind of man were over-rul'd, if his present and future state were fix'd and determin'd by a fatal and inexorable necessity; then, as laws, advice, and exhortation would be usefess and impertinent; so

all reproof would be unjust, and all praise and reward undeserv'd: and yet tho' the assertion of fate be oppress'd and over-borne by all these absurdities, it wants not at this day its maintainers and sticklers: for there are who maintain a necessity in human affairs and events, deriv'd from the influence of heavenly bodies. Which notion of fate, take in the words of *Manilius*:

*Fata regunt orbem, certâ stant omnia lege,
Longaque per certos signantur tempora cur-
sus.*

*Nascentes morimur, finisque ab origine pen-
det.* Manil. Astronomicon 4.

*Fate rules the world, fix'd laws do all
things guide,
And long time through their certain chan-
nels slide.*

*Death of the birth, of the beginning th' end,
And all th' events of human life depend.*

And there are others, who, tho' they condemn judicial astrology in set treatises, write against it, do yet maintain such eternal degrees as imply a more inflexible fate than any Pagan but *Democritus*, and those just now mention'd with him, did ever hold: nay, a fate more impious than that of *Democritus*; for what he imputed to senseless matter, these do to God; and as much more rigid as it is more impious than his; for he never thought of another life wherein eternal misery should punish those actions that were unavoidable in this.

Now

Now the reason why this doctrine of fate, this absurd and baffled doctrine is so greedily embrac'd and eagerly defended by many, is very plain; it feeds the vanity and curiosity of some, and the pride of others; 'tis a luscious pleasure to curious and vain minds, to fancy themselves masters of a starry *Cabbala*, able to spell out and interpret the laws of fate, and pry into the destinies of future ages, which are cover'd with thick clouds and impenetrable darkness to all but them alone: 'tis a delicious pleasure, no doubt of it, to the proud and haughty, and ill-natur'd, to see themselves carefs'd and exalted by God as his particular favourites; while the miserable multitude, the rest of mankind, are excluded from the capacity, and, much more, the hopes of happiness and heaven; and in general, 'tis a ready apology for idleness and lust, and all manner of sins: for men might sin confidently and without remorse, if they did sin fatally; or rather, nothing could be branded with the infamy of sin and shame, when whatever men did, were the effect, the unavoidable effect of nature and necessity, an act of obedience to those fatal laws which they could not transgress. *Tertullian* therefore speaks very properly when he saith, *Mentis malæ impetus vel fato vel astris imputant, nolunt suum esse quod malum agnoscunt: They impute the heat and sallies of their lust to stars and fate, being unwilling to charge themselves with the guilt of that which they own to be evil.* This is the use

Man's fondness for fate, whence.

Donec *Cerealis*
mulceret animos, fa-
cto acta diffidans quæ
militum ducumque
discordia, vel fraude
hostium evenissent.
Tacit. l. 4. hist.

use *Cerealis* makes of this doctrine of fate in *Tacitus*: the *Roman* legions had behav'd themselves very unworthy of the name and reputation they possess'd, and were extremely de-

jected under the conscience of it; therefore he, to cheer and encourage 'em, and to wipe off the stain and dishonour of their misdemeanour, imputed to fate that which ought with truth to have been imputed to the dissension of their leaders and themselves, and to the fraud and cunning of their enemies. From this little that has been said, as it appears why proud and vicious men contend for fate; so does it likewise of what importance it is to free mens minds from a persuasion so pernicious to the interest of virtue, the peace of the publick, the happiness of man, and the honour of God.

To which purpose, that I may contribute all I can, I'll consider,

First, On which side stands the advantage of authority, whether for or against fate.

Secondly, What plain reason, and as plain revelation, do dictate in this point.

As to the first, I will not pretend to make a just and intelligible collection of the different notions which have been taken up of fate; 'tis evident from that which

Variety of opinions concerning fate and its cause.

Grotius has done of this kind, not only how tedious and voluminous, but also how obscure and confus'd the discourses of men have been on this subject: I shall only therefore, as far

as

as my memory will serve me, consider their opinions in such a manner as the nature of this present enquiry shall oblige me. Most philosophers do agree in one general notion of fate, that it is a connection or series of causes successively depending upon one another, and producing a necessary effect or event, εἰς αὐτῶν ἀναγκάτων, (Nemesius.) Opinions concerning the first ground or original of this necessary connection or dependance were very various; some ascribing it to *demons* or spirits, some to the influence of *stars*, some to the circumaction or whirling about of the heavens, some to an universal soul, some to the force of motion, some to the contexture and contrivance of nature, others to atoms, and others to God: and indeed since *matter* or *mind* are the two only things into which all philosophers have ultimately resolved their search and enquiries after the original of all things, they ought to have look'd for no other original of fate than one of these two. But this concerns my present question but very little; for if man be over-ruled and determined by fatal laws, it matters little how it came to be so: nor did I mention this variety of opinions for any other reason than this, that it gives us just occasion to suspect faith it self as an erroneous and ill-grounded position; for obscurity, and intricacy, and multiplicity of different notions about the same thing, are the general marks of falshood and error.

But

But there are two things very material to be enquired after.

First, How far the empire or dominion of fate was generally extended.

And *secondly*, What kind of necessity, or what degrees of it were generally supposed to constitute fate.

As to the extent of its power, this one thing is very remarkable, that the
 1. *The extent of its empire.* heathens did exempt the *mind* of man from its sovereignty.

Democritus indeed believed the soul of man as *necessarily* and *fatally* moved by the impressi-
 on of his atoms, as any other natural or irrational body. But *Epicurus* deserted him in this; and following the conduct of common sense and experience, acknowledged the liberty of the soul of man, and laboured (as *Plutarch* tells us) with all his might to assert it, and to preserve the distinction of virtue and vice, which fate destroys: to serve this *Hypothesis* it was, that he invented that new motion of his atoms, call'd by *Lucretius*, *Clinamen*, sufficiently expos'd by *Tully*, and how well defended by *Gassendus*, I am not concern'd to examine: for I have produc'd his opinion only as an instance of the clearness of this truth, that the soul of man is not subject to fate: for had not its *liberty* been undeniable and self-evident, the principles of *Epicurus's* philosophy had certainly oblig'd him to follow *Democritus* in this, as in all other points, and to have believ'd the soul it self over-rul'd by fate.
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The poets indeed made the monarchy of fate so universal, that they believ'd the gods themselves subject to it. Thus *Jupiter* in *Homer* bemoans the fate of his *Sarpedon*, which he could not prevent. And thus another poet represents *Apollo* striving in vain, by all the power of art, and virtue of herbs, to restore life to his *Hyacinthus*. Nor was this the only poetick fancy; 'tis usual with *Plato* to extend the dominion of fate over the gods themselves: but this was no wonder; for fate with him imports the immutable laws of the supreme God, and gods those spirits that were created by him. The *Stoics* indeed (at least some of them) assign'd a worse reason for this sovereignty of fate; namely, that the supreme architect could not correct the defects and incapacities of *matter*. After all this, 'tis no wonder that *St. Austin* (*de Civ. Dei*, l. 5. c. 1.) should take this to be the general notion of fatal events, that they were such as proceeded from the necessity of I know not what order, maugre God and man. But all this while it must be remember'd, that this dominion of fate, tho' it limited the power, did not over-awe or necessitate the *will* of their gods. And no wonder: for I never find, as I remark'd before, that any but *Democritus* and his tribe did extend the dominion of his fate over the soul of man. *Hierocles* makes the *Pythagorean* fate nothing else but the execution of that immutable divine decree, that the *virtuous* shall be rewarded, and the *vicious* punished; and at the same time doth utterly deny, that man is any way necessitated or over-ruled

led in his choice or actions. *Alcinous* representing the *Platonick* fate, determines indeed the event of things fatal; but at the same time he leaves the minds of men possess'd of their just and natural liberty. And whatever unavoidable connection of causes the *Stoicks* talked of, no one did more exalt and magnify the liberty and power of the mind of man:

Οἱ δὲ λέγοντες τὴν αἰ-
μιαν τῶν πρακτῶν ἐφ' ἡ-
μῖν εἶναι. Τὴν δὲ τῶν
αἰρεθέντων ἀπόλασιν ἐπι-
τῆ ἰμαρμίῃ, εἰσι δὲ τῶν
Ἑλλήνων σοφώτατοι. *Ne-
mes.* 3. 37.

so that *Nemefius* might very well in general affirm, that the wisest of the *Greeks* believ'd mens minds free, and the events of their actions fatal, whe-

ther he had respect to the former or the latter; for thus far the *Pythagorean*, *Platonic* and *Stoic* agreed, that the mind of man was free, that events were fatal. Now 'tis not to be wonder'd at, that they, who did not judge the calamitous or prosperous issues of outward things to deserve evil, should place such events wholly out of our own power, and deem 'em no way dependent upon our behaviour: 'tis enough that they left man's true happiness, *i. e.* wisdom and virtue, in his own power, which they always did.

Ἄλλα καὶ εἰσι (*scil.* Θεοὶ) καὶ μέλει αὐτοῖς τῆν ἀνθρώπων; καὶ τοῖς μὲν κατ' ἀλήθειαν κακοῖς, ἵνα μὴ περιπίπτῃ ὁ Ἄνθρωπος ἐπ' αὐτῶν τὸ πᾶν ἔδεικτο. (*Marcus Anton. l. 1.*) And it deserves here to be remember'd, that they confin'd this fatality of events to this life: for such of them as did believe the eternal duration, or immortality of the soul, did also believe, that its misery or happiness in that state, did depend on its behaviour in this. But how came the *Platonics* and *Pythagoreans*,

thagoreans, who set that value upon temporal things which they deserved, to agree thus far with the *Stoics*, in asserting the fatality of events? Or, how came the storm and fury of all writers to light so heavily only upon the *Stoics* fate, if these taught the same thing with *Pythagoras* and *Plato*? They did indeed all of 'em acknowledge events fatal, and yet they differ'd widely in their notion of this fatality.

For, *First*, The *Stoic* fate depended partly upon *matter*, partly upon *God*; whereas the *Platonic* fate depended wholly upon the will of a wise, powerful and good God.

Secondly, The *Pythagorean* and *Platonic* did believe good and evil to be dispensed by a divine and immutable law; but so, that one should be the reward of virtue, and the other the punishment of vice. So that fate with them was nothing else but the execution of that decree of God in the prophet, *Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him; for he shall eat the fruit of his doings. Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him*, Isa. xxxiii. But the *Stoics*, in their assertion of the fatality of events, had no such regard to the virtue or vice of man: nor did they settle or suppose any such necessary connection or dependence between vice and virtue of man on the one hand, and punishment and reward on the other.

Thirdly, tho' the *Platonics* taught, that all things were comprehended within the compass of fate, that is, the general and immutable laws of

of the supreme Being, yet did they not all believe that all particulars were decreed and determin'd; whereas the *Stoics* (if we follow the common opinion) did not exempt any particular event from the over-ruling necessity of fate.

*Quicquid patitur mortale genus,
Quicquid facimus, venit ex alto.*

*Whatever ill unhappy man sustains,
Whate'er he doth, 'tis what his fate ordains.*

And lastly, The necessity of the *Stoic* fate was rigid and inflexible; but that of the *Platonic* was not, or at least, not in all cases. And this puts me in mind of the

Second thing considerable in the notion of fate, *i. e.* what kind of necessity, or what degrees of it are supposed to render an event fatal? the *Stoics* did indeed think, that the necessity of fate was uncontrollable, irresistible, inevitable; tho' I cannot deny, but that the opinion of *Chrysippus* and *Seneca* too (as he explains it somewhere in his *Natural Questions*) concerning fate, if placed in an advantageous light, would look with a more pleasing and favourable aspect upon the liberty of man: but let the *Stoics* think what they will, I do not find that others thought such a necessity as this alone, and nothing less, sufficient to make up fate, or over-ruling influence of the stars; did yet believe, that the evil they threaten'd, might be diverted

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ed by prayers, sacrifices and other rites, according to that of *Nemefius*; *There are no influences, no aspects of stars so froward and malignant, so fatal and irresistible, but that prayers and expiations may sweeten and mitigate them, or else prevail with those powers which govern them, to divert their menaces.* Besides this, the distinction of fate into denunciative and perempto-

Πρὸς τὴν τὰς σόους τῆς Αἰγυπτιακῆς θεοῦ ἀλλοθι: ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς τῆς ἀστρῶν ἐπιμαρτυρίας, τριπλάς ἡ αὐτῶν ἰσχύος καὶ ἀπολόρηστος, ἢ ἢ τινος καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν τῆς ἀστρῶν διαπραξίας τὰς ἐκμηδισμοῦ αὐτῶν; καὶ ἄλλας τινὰς ἰσχυροῦσιν ἀδυναμίας, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν αὐτῶν ἰσχύος καὶ τῶν διαπραξίας τῆς θῶν καὶ τῶν ἀποτροπιασμοῦ ἐπινοοῦσθαι. *Nemef. p. 226.*

ry or conditional, was very well known to the heathens. This last was a fate, whose necessity depended upon some antecedent conditions; upon some suppositions which might or might not be fulfill'd. This *Servius* discourses largely of, upon that place of *Virgil*:

*Nam quia nec fato, merita nec morte peribat,
Sed misera ante diem —*

*Before her day fell the unhappy maid,
By love, not fate, nor her own crimes betray'd.*

Where he that pleases may see many instances of this conditional fate. And, to come to an end, the necessity of fate, in the opinion of *Aristotle* and *Epicurus*, if *Gassendus* represents it rightly, was not an inflexible uncontrollable one, but one subject to alteration and change, to chance and many impediments, being nothing else but that energy or efficacy in natural bodies, which the wisdom of man did often prevent, the industry and courage of

man did often master, and chance did often hinder and over-rule. By all this we see plainly how careful the heathens were, that the necessity of fate might not destroy the liberty of man; how earnestly they contended for such a fatality of events, as might not cancel man's obligation to virtue, nor discourage him from the expectation and pursuit of happiness: for now to draw to a point, and to make some use of this tedious recital of the Pagan notions of fate; if we assert a *Stoical* fate, we yet leave the wise man whatever encouragements he can derive from the rewards of another life, and whatever satisfaction he can derive from virtue itself in this. And certainly tho' temporal events were fatal without any connexion to, or dependance upon the choice and actions of man; yet even on this supposition, virtue were eligible, as that which teaches us to enjoy prosperity, and bear bravely that adversity which we could not prevent; but if, with other philosophers, we did believe, not only that the success of another life, but even that of this too, did depend wholly upon our behaviour, and that events were therefore only fatal, because those decrees of God, which did award happiness to the virtuous, and misery to the wicked, are fix'd and immutable; then we could not desire more powerful encouragements to virtue, or more evident proof that it is in our own power to be happy. If we grant the necessity that makes up fate, flexible and mutable, or if we suspend a fatal event upon conditions, as it were but reasonable to imagine

gine that all evil ones are suspended; there will be no reason to question whether man's happiness be in his own power. If we make the necessity of a denunciative fate, which even wisdom and virtue cannot surmount, extend it self to some few things: and that fate or fortune, which drags only fools and sluggards in chains after it, more general and universal; which is a notion *Cælius Rhodiginus* (l. x. c. 20.) seems to have taken from the *Platonics*; we meet with nothing in all this which can rationally deter the industry and hopes of any man. If lastly, with *Aristotle* and *Epicurus*, we attribute no more force or strength to fate, than to the efficacy of natural causes, which, we experience every day, is not irresistible (for the mind overcomes those inclinations we derive from natural temper, and life may be lengthen'd or shortned by temperance and luxury; it being a flame which is not of it self so inextinguishable, but that it requires our care to cherish it, and barren grounds may be improved and cultivated, &c.) then nothing is more evident than that it behoves to act like men, since our reason and virtue have their necessary tendency and efficacy, as well as any other natural causes; and since the concurrence of our endeavours may so much more properly be supposed necessary to promote our happiness, than the influence of stars, as it has a more direct and immediate operation upon our affairs, than the motion of those heavenly bodies can have.

And now who would expect to find that fate in the Christian, which was banished the Pagan world? Who would expect that the mind of man should be fetter'd and bound by a more inexorable and deplorable necessity now in this age of *light* and *grace*, than ever it was in the thickest darkness of Paganism? Who could now believe that man's eternal success, in another life, should be as fatal as ever the *Stoic* did believe his temporal one in this? Or who could ever imagine that Christians would charge that upon the decrees of a wise and good God, which the heathens, out of their honour for him, did ever refuse to do? For those of them, who made fate entirely the decree of God, did believe, that in the dispensation of evils, God did wholly regard mens crimes and sins; that there was no other fate attended any man than what he was himself the author of. And they, who did believe a fatality of events without any dependence upon the behaviour of man, did impute it to *matter*, not to God; to the *deficiency* of the one, not to the *will* of the other. 'Tis true, such a fate is not to be found in the scriptures, as we shall see anon; nor is it to be found in the fathers of the church: we may find *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and *St. Austin* himself (however accus'd by some as a fatalist) zealously disputing against the Pagan fate. What would they have done, had there been then such a notion of fate as has since prevail'd amongst some Christians; which is briefly this, that the eternal misery of nineteen parts
of

of the world (I speak modestly) and the eternal happiness of the twentieth, is fatal; that the means conducing to these ends are fatal; the one being shut up under the invincible necessity of *natural impotence*, and *rejection from sufficient grace*; the other being called and acted by *grace irresistible*; that this necessity of fate is the result of a divine decree; that this decree proceeded from mere arbitrary *will*, without any regard to the behaviour of man. They that cried out against the Pagan fate, that it subverted human life, that it defeated all laws, that it left man no use of his reason, that it left no place for rational hopes or fears; with what bitter invectives must they needs have assaulted this fate? The Pagan fate left the *will* free; this bound and fetter'd, not only bereaved of natural power and liberty (for we contend not about that) but destitute of grace and divine assistance: the Pagan fate, in the opinion of a great many, if not most, did not teach a rigid and inflexible *necessity*; this doth: they amongst the Pagans who taught the necessity of fate inexorable, understood it of *necessity*, in temporal events; but this fate extends it to eternal ones. The *Stoic*, the great asserter of fate, acknowledged, nay, eagerly contended, that man might be virtuous and happy in despite of fate; but these men make human happiness and virtue the very object of their fate; making sin and misery, virtue and happiness, as fatal as any events whatever.

In vain now shall any one of 'em think to excuse their doctrine from the imputation of fate, by telling us (as * some do) that fate in the Pagan notion, did involve God as well as man within the compass of its necessity: that what they teach, is nothing else but God's voluntary decree. This is a miserable shift; for this doth not at all lighten the weight of that fatal *necessity* that lies upon unhappy man, to think that God is not subject to the same: nay, on the quite contrary, the Pagan notion was more easy to the mind; and whilst it freed God from the guilt of man's ruin, it frees man from all hard and irreligious thoughts of God.

* *Calvini brevis
Responsio, &c. in
Præf.*

*Numina cum videas diris obnoxia fati,
Invidia possis exonerare Deos.* Mart.

*Since heavenly powers to curs'd fate subject be,
The gods you cannot but from envy free,*

It was pure piety in the *Stoic*, to impute that fatality of event, which he thought independent of the good or ill behaviour of man, to any thing rather than to God, what impiety!—But I have done, I have sufficiently considered which way the stream of authority runs; and it evidently appears to be against all such notions of fate, as put it out of a man's power to be virtuous and happy, and determine his sin and misery wholly *necessary* and unavoidable. I will now proceed to consider,

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Secondly, What plain reason and as plain revelation do dictate in this point.

Thou dost believe fate, and therefore dost despair of happiness: thy sense must be plainly this, all is in the power of fate, nothing in thine own; there is nothing in thee to do that can contribute to make thee virtuous or happy. Whence can this *necessity*, this fate proceed? There are but two principles were ever fancied to be the first causes of all things, *God* and *matter*. Dost thou believe this necessity proceeds from matter, from the motion of atoms, or the influence of stars? This belief, as *St. Austin* argues, does subvert the foundation of all religion; for he who believes that he depends upon fate, not God, can have no sufficient reason for the worship of that God, on whom he hath no dependence: but this is that, peradventure, thou wouldst have. Well, when thou art able to prove reason and understanding to derive themselves from endless atoms; when thou canst find out any kind of natural motion of matter or atoms, which can be the cause of freedom in the will, any motion that can at once be necessary (for so all motion of atoms must, be it of what kind it will) and yet free too; for such all my deliberations and all my choices I make, prove the motion of the mind to be; then I will acknowledge a fate, not only independent from, but, if thou wilt, superior to God; then I will forbear all farther attempts of charity, as vain, and leave thee to thy fate and misery: but these are notions so absurd in themselves, that no similitudes, no argu-

Reason and revelation against fate.

ments, can make 'em appear one jot more ridiculous, or irrational, than they do, to all men of sense at the first hearing. There are some errors as well as truths, that are self-evident; there needs no demonstration to convince us, that the one are errors and the other truths; and of this kind are the errors we are speaking of: if a man should assert, that death is the original of life, that senseless *matter* gives being to an understanding mind, that necessity is the parent of liberty, and such like; it were an unpardonable weakness in any man to think, that such assertion did stand in need of a laborious confutation. But there are, who suppose God the Author of all things, and yet suppose events fatal too; the former opinion was ridiculous, this is impious: for suppose mankind fatally guided by the influence of the stars, and that these stars have receiv'd this power and energy from God; is it not natural for every man

Illi verò qui positionem stellarum quodammodo decernentium qualis quisque sit, & quid ei proveniat boni quidve mali accidat, ex Dei voluntate suspendunt, si eandem id est putant habere hanc potestatem traditam sibi à summâ illius potestate, ut volentes ista decernant, magnam cœlo faciunt injuriam: in cuius velut clarissimo senatu ac splen-

to break out into the words of *St. Austin*; *How outrageously do these men reproach heaven, whilst they believe those crimes and villainies decreed by that august senate and glorious court in heaven, which had any city upon earth decreed, it had deserved to have been damned by the common vote, and raised to the ground by the united arms of mankind.* When I consider, that the stars are the work of God, that their order
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and motion was prescrib'd by him, that whatever vigour and efficacy they have, they have receiv'd from him; and then remember, that God is a most infinitely kind and good Being; I should easily suffer my self to be perswaded, that they could shed no influence upon this lower world, but what were extreamly beneficial to it; that they could have no aspects but what were favourable and benign: I could easily believe, that all the inclinations they form in the body (if they form any) could be no other than innocent and virtuous: I can never believe, that lust or falshood, malice or cruelty, can come down from above; that our minds should be impregnated with sin and folly by the influences of heaven. No, certainly, if there be any virtue in the stars that extends it self to man, it must rather be the seed of life, and health, and virtue, than of diseases, death or vice. I can easily fall in with the opinion of those learned men in *Celiv Rhodiginus* (*Antiq. Lect. l. x. c. 20.*) who thought that the virtue of celestial bodies which tended of it self to excellent ends, was marred and perverted by vicious education. And so the gravity of *Saturn* did degenerate into sullenness, nigardliness and melancholy; the magnanimity of *Mars* into rashness and fool-hardiness; the sharpness and sagacity of *Mercury* into mischievous craft and subtilty; the sweetness and gentleness of *Venus* into filthy lust, and so on. And this thought does well become every one that

didissima curia scelerata facienda decerni, qualia si aliqua terrena civitas decrevisset, genere humano decernente fuerat evertenda. *Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 5. c. 1.*

that pretends to any religion, whether revealed, or natural: for this is consonant to the excellency of the divine nature.

But this sort of fate springing from the influence of any natural bodies, is not only repugnant to reason, but to our sense and experience:

Fate repugnant to sense and experience.

for nothing is more plain than this, that any such influence cannot affect the mind, but thro' the body; and we do frequently find our reason asserting its power and dominion against all the force and strength of the body. Nor doth reason only, but in every nation law and custom, triumph over the strongest inclinations of nature. As the innocence of the *Seres*, the chastity of those in *Arabia* and *Osroene*, the abstinence of the *Brachmans*, and numerous instances, which, he that pleases, may see in *Bardesanes* the *Syrian*, and others, do abundantly manifest, that their manners are the effect, not of the influence of those planets that rule their birth, but of those laws and customs that rule their country. Since therefore that *necessity* which our natural tempers and inclinations do impose upon the mind, is the utmost fate that we can imagine to proceed from the influence of any natural bodies, 'tis nonsense to suppose that fate insuperable or uncontrollable, which we see baffled and defeated every day, and in every nation.

The sum of those reasons I have offer'd against fate, is this; if we make God the Author of it, we impiously charge him with what is repugnant to his nature; for a good God cannot be
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the cause of man's misery : if *matter*, we ridiculously suppose, that what is it self senseless and inanimate, should produce and govern a being endow'd with *life, understanding* and *liberty* : if the *stars*, we run again into the same absurdities; for if they have their fatal influence from God, then, properly speaking, God is the Author, they but the instrument of our fate: if from themselves, then our dependence on, and worship of God is vain; and besides, we absurdly subject the reason and liberty of mind of man to the senseless tyranny of atoms. If from the consideration of the causes of fate we descend to examine what our experience teaches us, what common sense informs us, each of 'em bears witness to the sovereignty and liberty of the mind of man.

If we should come in the last place, to examine what would be the consequences of a *fatal necessity* *The consequences of fate.* over-ruling man and human affairs, they are such as are not only grossly contradictory in themselves, but fatal and destructive both to the publick and private good of mankind. 'Tis true, were the liberty of doing evil taken from man, we should have no reason to complain; for then there would be nothing wanting to make the state of man happy as that of angels, but immortality: but to bereave man of all power to do good, to necessitate and compel him to be wicked, how dreadful are the effects which must follow this? He that stains his hands in the blood of his sovereign or his parent, will accuse his *stars*, not himself; he

he that pollutes himself in the incestuous embraces of a mother or daughter, may defend his actions as his fate, not choice: and how readily shall we do all that rage or lust invites us to, when there is an excuse prepared for all we do; for he is no more blameable who commits the evil which he could not help, than he is worthy of praise who did the good which he could not forbear. Were it true, that whatever mischief man did, he were necessitated to do; we might with more justice arraign the stars and atoms, than malefactors: and all the instruments of mischief would be every jot as guilty and criminal, as the man that us'd them. Were this true, we might as properly betake our selves to *magic* and *incantments*, as to advices and exhortations, when we would reclaim the vicious: nor yet could the one be more effectual than the other; for what could alter what is unalterable? And for the same reason we might forbear our sacrifices and prayers, since what will be, must be, and cannot be otherwise.

Desine fata Deum flecti sperare precando.

*You strive in vain with pray'rs to move
The inexorable fates above.*

Repentance and tears then may be, what *Seneca* calls expiation, *Ægræ mentis solatia*, *The deluding dreams of a superstitious mind*; but could never procure us any real advantage; so that on this supposition, what is now thought
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the only wisdom, would be then the only folly of a sinner, *repentance*. I think I may conclude here; for if it be not by this time evident, whether reason be for or against fate, we may justly despair of discovering what reason dictates in this or any other question. I will now proceed to examine,

What plain text of scripture speaks in this point. And here, in the first place, we are to expect no other fate than what depends upon Scripture against fate. God: for the scripture makes all things derive their original from him, and all things depend upon him. There is but one Creator, and one Lord; and therefore the creature can be subject to no laws, but such as he enacts: so that whatever fate we now lie under, must be imputed to the voluntary decree of God. Is then the eternal ruin of man fatal and unavoidable? If we enquire into the original of this unhappy necessity, it must be ultimately resolved into the divine will. When God then decreed the inevitable ruin of man, under what notion did he consider his ruin? Under that of *misery*? or that of *punishment*? If under the notion of punishment, this implies plainly, that we are to thank our selves for our ruin: for punishment is nothing else, but the infliction of that misery which our sin and folly have deserved. But if under the notion of misery; how can this consist with the infinite goodness or wisdom of God? Alas! How contradictory is this to scripture? There God swears that he delights not in the death of a *sinner*; this decree would sup-
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pose him to delight in the death of the *innocent* : there he is represented *full of compassion*, and *slow to wrath*, even upon the repeated provocations ; this decree represents him so addicted to wrath and cruelty, that he made a world on purpose to have whereon to exercise it ; and doth exercise it merely for the delight he takes in it : the scripture finally represents him full of divine love for mankind, and not only not desirous that they should perish ; but extremely desirous that they should be partakers of everlasting life : this decree supposes him so utter an enemy to, and hater of, mankind, that he made the far greater part to no other end, but only to make them miserable. Let any unprejudiced person judge now, whether this be not as contradictory to the scripture as it is to sense : nor is it possible that any one, unless prejudiced, should look into holy writ, and not discern evidently that man's ruin is the effect of sin, not only wilfully and presumptuously committed, but also obstinately and impenitently persisted in : and that God is so far from being fond of our sufferings and calamities, that he is ever and anon bewailing the disappointment of his love, the defeat of his grace and mercy, by our obstinacy and impenitence : it is the voice of his Son, 'tis the voice of God. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee : how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not !* Matth. 23. If therefore we desire to know what the will of
 God

God is, with respect to man, this is a full and plain declaration of it; there can be no other, much less any contradictory to this: if I may not confidently rely upon this declaration of the divine *will*, there is no revealed truth that I can depend upon; nor can revelation stand us in any stead: for nothing can be asserted with greater perspicuity or stronger asseveration. But I have no scruples in me about this matter, I have no fears nor jealousies of any secret decree or latent *will* repugnant to his declar'd one. I am as sure that God is *good* and *true*, as that he is eternal and almighty: and were he not, we could reap but little comfort from all his other attributes, how great or glorious soever in themselves. But, blessed be God, if from examining those declarations of his *will*, which God has made us, we proceed to examine the manner and method of his government, as it relates to mankind (which is another, and the only way left us to judge of his will and decrees) we shall find no instance in the whole series of divine dispensations, which can create in us the least suspicion of lying under an arbitrary and tyrannical fate: nay, if we consider the acts of divine providence, we find the quite contrary; that God so governs the world, that the issues of things are not fatal and unavoidable, but dependent upon our selves; that God is free, man free, and the events of things free, from any inevitable necessity: God indeed is ever bound to do what is best, what is wisest, and can do no otherwise; this is the only fate God is subject to; but a possibility of different events

events is no way repugnant to his wisdom, justice or goodness. In a proper sense, therefore, there is no fate above him, that can impose a necessity upon him; nor does he impose any upon himself: if there are in any part of his government, a fatal and a peremptory necessity, we should certainly find the tracks and footsteps of it amongst inanimate and sensitive beings: how great a liberty does God make use of in this part of his government: the sun, whose course seems certain and invariable as the imaginary laws of fate, shall, if need be, stand stock still, or, what is more, move backward towards its east (*Josh. x.*) An instance of both we read of in Scripture, when God thought fit to execute his judgments upon the *Amorites*: and condescended to give *Hezekiah* a miraculous assurance of his mercy (*2 Kings 20.*) the fire shall not exert its natural heat, but shall cease to burn and consume; and when he sees fit (as in the case of the three children, *Dan. 2.*) become as harmless as the morning light: the waters shall cease to flow, as did the red-sea, when the army of *Israel* march'd thro' it, and saw with horror and delight, the rowling waves stand fix'd and unmov'd as the rocks and shores that bounded them; and yet what necessity, what fate can we conceive more immutable, whatever connection of causes it be produced by, than that which makes the sun move, the fire burn, the water flow? If we consider his government of kingdoms, where, if any were, the periods and revolutions of misery and prosperity should seem fatal and immutable; here again we shall find the footsteps of unquestionable

able liberty: Let us, for instance, consider God's government of the *Jews*, what are the Laws which God obliges himself to observe towards them; *If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments and do them; then*

Levit. 26. 3, 4,
&c.

I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase; and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: And ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely, &c. But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments. And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that you will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant, I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of

And 14, 15, 16,
&c.

*heart: And ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it, &c. Doth not God here lay life and death, good and evil, before them? Is not the one and the other to be the effect of their own choice, their own behaviour? Are we not reasonably to suppose the *Israelites* at the time of entering into that covenant, whereof these are the sanctions, as capable of happiness, as they were of misery? What was finally the issue of things? The *Jews* rebelled and revolted from God; and as he threatned, they were harrassed and exhausted by*

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continual plagues and punishments. Well, did this happen so, because it could not happen otherwise? Was this the event, the fatal event of things which God did really *will*, and peremptorily resolve from the beginning, notwithstanding whatever professions he might make of his sincere desire of the welfare and prosperity of that people? Let God himself be the judge, who best understands his own mind. *O that my people had hearken'd to me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries: The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him, but their time should have endured for ever,* Psal. lxxxv. By this sure, if we can judge of the meaning of God by any of his expressions, we may safely conclude, not only that the obedience and prosperity of *Israel* were things possible, and consequently their disobedience and ruin were not fatal; but also that their obedience and prosperity were the things which God did most heartily and sincerely desire. If we come to God's government of particular men, we may be sure that this is of a piece with his government of mankind or kingdoms, it being nothing else but a more particular application of those universal laws of wisdom, goodness, and justice, by which he rules. An instance of liberty in temporal events, we meet with in the voyage which *St. Luke* describes; *Acts* xxvii. 10. we have *St. Paul* foretelling the fate that was like to attend themselves and their ship, if they pursued the
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the voyage they had resolv'd on. *Ver. 19.* We meet with the accomplishment in part of his prediction ; darkness and horror invades 'em, seas break in upon them, and at the same breach had death entered, had not divine providence interposed in favour, and at the request of *St. Paul*. Was their suffering fatal? Was it unavoidable? Had they not escaped the tempest, if they had believed *St. Paul*, and not departed from *Crete*? Or was their obstinacy or unbelief as fatal as the danger and the damage which attended it? The expostulation of *St. Paul*, *ver. 21.* will easily clear this doubt, *Ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.* What then! Shall we think the issues of eternity fatal, when those of time, wherein we are comparatively so little concerned, are free? Shall God not only leave us the use of our reason, but also assist us by the aid of his providence for the avoiding temporal evils; and will he allow us neither for the avoiding of eternal ones? Must temporal ruin be the effect only of our sinful choice and obstinacy; eternal ruin the effect, not of our folly or sin, but *fate*? No, surely: How often do we find God in the *Revelation* respiting his final sentence, and giving men space and time to repent, but they repented not. 'Tis true; and this was their obstinacy, not their fate: For if repentance had been impossible, to what purpose did God allow 'em time for it? That they might fill up the measure of their iniquity: An excellent paraphrase! Whom shall I believe?

God faith, he gave the *sinner* time to *repent* ; thou say'st, he gave him time to *sin* : God says, he gave him time to make himself capable of mercy ; thou sayst, he gave him time only to increase his guilt and punishment. How cruel are the mercies of some men ! This is such a grace or favour, as griping Usurers vouchsafe the careless debtor, whose fortune and estate they would swallow up and devour.

I have now, I hope, dispersed those clouds which seem'd to hover over our heads big with storm and ruin ; I mean, those melancholy imaginations which scare and terrify the weak and superstitious minds of men. We may now boldly pursue, and possess ourselves of happiness : The way to it is open, there is no cruel deity, no spiteful fortune, no inexorable fate that will oppose us ; there is no God, but one of love and goodness, which moderates his almighty power, and tempers the severity of his justice ; a God, who passionately desires our happiness, and delights in nothing more than promoting it : All is lightsome and chearful where he is ; perfection and happiness dwell with him ; *In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore*, Psal. xvi. He scatters and dissipates evil and troubles by the light of his countenance ; death and hell fly far from before him, and hide themselves in their own darkness. What can we apprehend from such a God as this is ! How can he delight in our misery, who is all *love* ! No, nothing but our guilt or folly can raise our fears ; we may rest secure of his favour, if we do not despise

despise it; nor can he ever be made our enemy, unless we first become the enemies of virtue and goodness: What then have we to fear? There is no fate but the immutable law of God; that universal law which adjudges happiness to the righteous, and misery to the wicked. There is no fortune but his providence; which is nothing but the execution of that one general law, and the application of its several parts in particular instances. 'Tis plain therefore, we have nothing now to fear but ourselves: If we be but true to our own reason, and faithful to our interest, we may confidently presume both of the assistance and reward of heaven: There is therefore nothing left now to excuse us from the guilt of our own ruin, but only that which is wont to be objected by such as are enslaved to some impious lust, and groan under the weight of those chains, which they made themselves; I mean, an incapacity of happiness: Which is the fourth objection against the possibility of attaining happiness, and is now to be consider'd.

C H A P. VI.

Of Incapacity.

The plea of incapacity supposes virtue a sufficient foundation of happiness. Incapacity three-fold, natural, moral, penal. There is no natural incapacity of happiness. Grace and nature reconciled. The strength of each examined, and demonstrated in fact, with reference to custom and fashion. Pain and pleasure. The force of inclination examin'd. Dulness consider'd, and a light thoughtless temper. Sect. 2. Of moral incapacity. The corruption of nature, and divine assistance, how far they influence the present subject. 3. Of penal incapacity.

THEY, who urge their incapacity as an objection against the possibility of attaining happiness, do suppose happiness to consist in virtue, in the pleasure that flows from it, and the bliss that will one day or other eternally reward it: They acknowledge, could they but be virtuous, they should be happy; but they despair of obtaining such a conquest over their vices, as may suffice to render their life smooth, equal and steady; and preserve the peace of their conscience, by giving them an unquestionable proof of their sincerity towards God; without which 'tis impossible that they should be fill'd with

with rational joy and peace, or abound in a rational hope. This therefore must be the supposition of my following discourse.

There may be three different kinds of incapacities fancied; which, for distinction-sake, I'll call *natural*, *moral* and *penal*: each of which may be thus explain'd in the notion the objector forms of them: *Penal* incapacity is that desperate state wherein man is by God immutably rejected from pardon and assistance. *Moral* incapacity results from the strength and absoluteness of that dominion which sin has establish'd over some men, thro' a long and continued course of wickedness. *Natural* incapacity consists in such an unteachable stupidity of temper, or in such violent and invincible inclinations to vice, or in such a slightness, levity and inconstancy of mind, as render men utterly unfit to receive any lasting impressions of virtue, or to make any steady and resolute attempt of attaining it.

I'll begin with this first: And here I desire to be excus'd, if I do not take upon me to mark out the distinct bounds and limits of *nature* and *grace*: These two sisters are not like those *Chaldee* brethren *Abraham* and *Lot*, (*Gen. xiii.*) that were too mighty to dwell together. No, they delight to mix in loving embraces; their wealth and power increase by being united; and, like some plants I have read of, they never thrive when divided. I shall not dispute what power in man is a birth-right, what a donative: For

There is no natural incapacity of happiness.

alas! every thing he possesses is a grace, a favour of his prince: His natural abilities are so many graces he derives from God, and as properly such, as any accession to 'em which is inspired afterwards: So that whenever I contend that any thing is in the power of man, I desire to be understood of all that power which God has invested him with, whether natural or supernatural.

Did men decry and vilify nature, to beget in themselves the more profound humility, and the more wakeful and solicitous industry; did they, like the *Semnonēs* in *Tacitus* (*De Morib. German.*) load themselves with chains as the badge of their subjection to, and dependence upon, the Deity; did they magnify divine grace, in order to convince themselves of the necessity and efficacy of it, and so to inflame their importunity and industry in quest of it: This were piety and devotion, not error. Or, however they might exaggerate the impotence of nature beyond strict truth, yet this would be a safe and pious error, as all humble and modest ones are: But when they endeavour to represent nature vile and corrupt, on purpose that they may the more licentiously pollute and abuse it, when they magnify and exalt divine grace out of a most contradictory and preposterous design to justify their neglect and contempt of it (for they would fain have all to be so entirely imputed to grace, that they would not themselves be put to as much as the trouble of seeking it) 'tis not only an error, but a pernicious and fatal one: For he that
abandons

abandons the use of reason, renders himself incapable of any heavenly aid. God gives his grace to men, not to beasts : I must therefore oppose this fancy, and endeavour to persuade men, that it is in their power to be virtuous and happy : Nor can I think this assertion any ways injurious to the honour or goodness of God, if it be remember'd, that whatever power I attribute to man, I acknowledge deriv'd from God. I will therefore with good assurance proceed, and try whether I cannot take in and demolish this fort which stops our way to happiness.

They, who affirm a great part of mankind incapable of virtue, forget that they dishonour God whilst they reproach their nature : For were it so, to what end could we imagine such men endow'd with reason and understanding ? Not to worship, but defy their Maker. And was it not for this end, that they were made immortal too ? Had God made man only to take his pastime in the world, like the *Leviathan* in the waves, such a soul as that which moves the fish of the sea, or the beasts of the earth, a sensitive soul, had been most proper for this end : Then might he have enjoy'd himself without reluctancy, without controul, without remorse, without shame. What can be the proper work of a rational creature, to which you allow not a capacity of virtue and religion ? Till you can shew me this, I can never believe that God should endow man with a rational and immortal mind, out of any other design than such a one as might become such a being created

created after his own image, which is the practice of holiness and virtue. But what should I wonder that men should not be aware of their contradicting reason, when they seem to be insensible of that contradiction, even to the common sense and experience of mankind which they are guilty of? To what purpose are there so many schools of learning and good manners founded? To what purpose are there so many treatises of the education of youth writ? To what purpose does the wakeful parent strive to inculcate the seeds of virtue into the child, and train him up by a wise discipline to the practice and custom of virtue? To what purpose is the proposal of rewards and punishments, and the restraint of laws, if either they cannot raise those hopes and fears they aim at; or, if hopes and fears be altogether useless and ineffectual, if no instruction, no discipline can mould and fashion rough, unpolish'd, crooked, incorrigible Nature? Now here, tho' any man might have confidence enough to disparage the judgment of mankind, and attribute all the pains they take in the education of youth, or the government and direction of riper years, to custom, not to right reason; yet surely he would not so far disparage his own observation and knowledge, as utterly to deny the success of these means: For, not to instance in particulars, 'tis not unknown to any one the least versed in the history of the world, that there have been national virtues as well as vices; that there have been times, wherein learning and religion have been as much in fashion and reputation, as wickedness and

and barbarism in others. Shall we say, those nations, those times bred none of those natures, which the objector affirms are uncapable of virtue? Let them shew what heavenly influences, what miraculous power, produc'd this change in nature: What, should I urge the power of vain and false principles, the mighty force even of irrational customs, vanquishing those inclinations which are more deeply rooted, more closely interwove with our blood and spirits, than any inclination to vice and folly can be? Such are, for example, the love of life, and the abhorrence of pain; and yet what a contempt of death is to be found, even in the most timorous sex, as in the *Indian* women! what a contempt of pain, even in the weakest age, as in the *Spartan* youth! And all this having no stronger foundation than irrational custom, and vain fantastick principles. Why should we therefore be unwilling to attribute to excellent principles and virtuous customs, blessed and aided by heaven, as much power and virtue, as we do to such as these? If the natural tendencies of man to wickedness can be curb'd; if his most furious and violent passions can be restrain'd and stifled; then, I think, it may as reasonably be suppos'd, that divine truths, religious discipline, together with the grace of God, may effect this, as any thing else whatever. If the pressing necessities and perplexities of the state could change the softness and luxury of *Otho* into military hardship and courage; I know not why a rational sense of the true honour and glory of virtue and our eternal interest, and innumerable other confide-

considerations which the gospel lays before us christians, should not be able to work the same wonders? If the reverence of *Seneca*, or any other motive, could produce a *Quinquennium Neronis*, could restrain the violent inclinations of that wretched man, so that his government for so many years should be as gentle and just as that of the most gracious and virtuous princes; why would not the reverence of God, and the terrors of eternity be able to awe and curb the most vicious nature? This, methinks, ought well to be weighed by all who assert man's impotency and incapacity of virtue; they disparage the gospel, and reproach grace, as well as man, with impotence and insufficiency: And yet both the one and the other is the power of God, and that in order to salvation. Do you consider, That if you suppose man by nature unable to do any thing that is good, and then deny him, and utterly debar him from God's grace, you introduce fate: For what more fatal necessity can wretched creature lie under, than *natural impotence*, utterly destitute and for ever forsaken of divine assistance? Or, if you bereave not man of grace, but yet bereave grace of its *sufficiency*; do you not understand, that the fatal necessity continues still the same? There is no change in the man's condition; only in this hypothesis grace is dishonour'd and reproach'd, as well as nature: And this reflects very rudely too upon God; it calls the wisdom, the goodness, the sincerity, the power of God into dispute: 'Tis inconsistent with the *power* of God not to be able by his spirit and truth

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to subdue and overpower the corruptions of nature ; 'tis inconsistent with his *goodness*, not to be willing to aid his poor creatures, when they call upon him ; inconsistent with his *sincerity*, to afford 'em such aid as must tend to their greater mischief, not good, as grace itself would, if it were only sufficient to increase their guilt, but not to subdue their sin : This were indeed, *when a child asked bread, to give him a stone ; and when he asked fish, to give him a scorpion*, Matth. vii. 'Tis lastly, as inconsistent with the *wisdom* of God to confer grace to no purpose, as it was with his *goodness* to confer it to an ill one. These, with many others, are the absurd consequences which attend the denial of the *universality*, or *sufficiency* of grace : But if, on the other hand, we do grant that God Almighty is ready to assist every man who calls on him in his endeavours after virtue and happiness, and that his assistance is sufficient to the end, for which 'tis design'd ; then we must needs acknowledge, that 'tis in every man's power to be good and happy : For 'tis no more than to acknowledge that man can do what he can do ; or, which is all one, what God has put in his power to do. By what a croud of arguments might I confirm this truth, sufficient to bear down, and even shame the most impudent caviller ? Why are not men good ? Why are they not happy ? Shall we say, that God doth not vouchsafe them his grace ? Shall we impute mens misery to God ? Shall we charge that glorious and most perfect Being with want of compassion or sincerity towards his

his poor creatures? How easy will it be for him to appeal to the sufferings of his Son; to the vigorous attempts and endeavours of his Spirit; to heaven and earth stamped with the impress of his *power* and *goodness*, on purpose to teach, invite, and almost compel us to worship and obey him; to the various methods of his providences contriving and pursuing our happiness? How easily, lastly, may he appeal for his purgation, to our own consciences? And these will tell us, as they ever do, in the distresses of our fortune, and the approaches of danger and death, to what we are to impute the cause of our ruin. What shall we say then? Doth God vouchsafe men his grace, the revelation of his truth, and the assistances of his spirit, but that this grace is not sufficient for us? Alas! how easy were it for any of us to refute this fancy, by appealing to the solemn covenant of our baptism, to the characters and descriptions of good men in the gospel, to the effects which our reason teaches us, must be natural and inseparable from a true faith and divine assistance? But I will choose to make use of one argument which St. *Paul* furnishes us with. *Heb. xi.* There the apostle proves the possibility of pleasing God by faith from undeniable instances of matter of fact; inferring from what men have actually done, what 'tis still possible for them to do. Omitting the miraculous and extraordinary effects of faith, I will reduce the instances of this chapter to three heads.

* *First*, Such wherein fate appears victorious over the temptations which arise from the vicious

cious customs of the place men live in, from the prevalency and fashionableness of sin amongst those they converse with.

Secondly, Such wherein faith triumphs over temptations, arising from sensual pleasures.

Thirdly, Such wherein it overcomes the sense of pain, and fear of approaching evil.

I will begin with the first sort of instances. It must be confessed, that considering the propensions of our body, and the vanity and sensuality which the mind naturally derives from it, and from its commerce with the world, that it is a difficult thing to encounter temptations naked and alone; how much more difficult when backed and assisted by custom and *fashion*, when universal practice gives authority and reputation to sin and folly; and the poor man is left destitute of the assistance of good counsel, and the encouragement of good examples, to encounter not only the difficulty with which the reluctancies of our nature, but also the reproach with which the popularity and prevalency of sin clogs and imbitters virtue? And yet behold *Enoch*, in a world (it seems) given up to sin, did not keep up in private to the practice of despised forsaken virtue; but was openly, and in an extraordinary manner eminent and exemplary in it; and therefore was his end as extraordinary as his life: *For having obtained this testimony, that he pleased God, he was translated.* This was owing to his faith. He was content to endure the reproach of the world, that he might obtain the approbation of God; and despise

Temptations from fashion conquered.

spise the honour and applause of popular vice, and fashionable compliances, that he might gain the kingdom wherein dwells righteousness. Such another example was *Noah*; his righteousness was like his ark afterwards, raised above a deluge, not of water but impiety; he lived in a world so wicked, that it grieved God at his heart that he had made it: In this world he was a preacher and example of righteousness, and his zeal by an *Antiperistasis*, was not quenched, but enkindled by the wickedness of the world he lived in: This too was owing to his faith; he feared those threats which that impious world scoffed at, and so *prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith*, Chap. vii. No doubt, when this strange building was preparing, *Noah* was assaulted by all the raillery and contempt, by all the shews of wit and reason, lust and prophaneness could furnish an impious age with: This man (say they) has ever been singular and phantastick in the whole method of his conversation; there wanted but such a prank as this to compleat fancy into madness: He ever dreamed of judgments, and yet we (he threaten'd) continued our mirth and pleasure; he alone in fears and anxieties has suffered the evils which his melancholy fancy created, and which are all that we shall ever see: For how long has he been preaching dreadful things, and yet still the sun shines, the heavens are fair and clear, our feasts and lusts have the same relish still: Nor does our
 experience

experience only convince us of the falshood, but our reason of the impossibility of the man's dreams : for which way shall the fixed state of nature be turned upside down? Whence will this universal deluge come? Will his God break up the fountains of the deep? Or will he open the cataraets of heaven? But while they thus profanely scoff'd and measur'd the divine power by their deprav'd fancies, *Noah* religiously fear'd, who had a different sense of the majesty of God, and provocation of sin. He knew, that as mercy, so wrath is with God; that as he is *mighty to forgive, so is he to pour out displeasure*. Ecclus. 16. And by this faith he preserv'd himself, as from the impiety, so from the punishment of the old world: for though he was not, like *Enoch*, translated; yet being preserv'd out of a general ruin, he liv'd to see an end of the old world, and give beginning to the new.

To these, I might add *Lot*, whose righteous soul was not infected, but provok'd and griev'd by the impieties of *Sodom*. *Joshua*, as eminent for his faith, as victories, who resolv'd, whatever course the *Israelites* would take (who to the last stood in need of as great prodigies to rescue 'em from idolatry, as once from *Egypt*) *He and his house would serve the Lord*, Josh. 24. These instances are sufficient to shew the power of faith in its victory over popular errors and fashionable sins, and by consequence, over many Inclinations at once: for the popularity and pre-
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vailency of any sin is a bait appropriated to our pride and vanity; which makes men affect precedence and seniority in all things which the world admires and applauds. Nor is this all; it awakens our natural inclinations, and invites us to gratifie 'em; nay, it enrages natural appetite, by giving it security and confidence, and by working upon the fancy and imagination; for the sin is always wonderfully set off, that is prevailing and fashionable. I will now pass on to the

Second sort of instances, wherein we may behold the strength and power of *Pleasure conquer'd.* faith in its victories over all temptations, which sensual pleasures can present us. Numerous are the instances of this kind, which I might produce among the heathens; where we may find a sense of the dignity of human nature, of the decency and honour of virtue, and a perswasion of the necessity of purity in order to a future state, atchieving most manifest victories over all carnal and sensual lust: but I will confine my self to two in this chapter. The first is that of *Moses*; and this is a very full and comprehensive one. His station being so near the crown of *Egypt*, presented him at once with all that the world can entertain sensual man with: there was power and wealth, the temptations of the ambitious mind (falsly call'd great;) and there was honour, the airy bait of vain unballasted minds. These, each of them single and alone, have, like *Saul* and *David*, slain their thousands and ten thousands: and yet,

yet, that it may appear that their overthrow is to be imputed to their own negligence and folly, behold here *Moses* triumphing by faith over all these, *i. e.* over all the strengths and forces of sensual pleasures joyn'd and united together: when he was come to years, he refused to be called the son of *Pharaoh's* daughter, and so deserted a station wherein nothing was bigger than his present enjoyment, unless his future hopes, which is the utmost felicity of a state of sensuality. And, what is more yet, what was it he did quit all this for? What was it he did choose in exchange? Was his soul too little to fill the great place he left? No, *Moses's* courage was as great as any thing but his meekness and humility. Was that height too open and too busie for sensual enjoyments, and and so he retired, like *Tiberius* to *Capria*, that he might indulge himself with more security and freedom, and fewer interruptions? No, he changed pleasure for affliction, treasure for reproach; the court of *Egypt* for the desert of *Midian*; he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of *Egypt*. This was all the great work of faith: his mind was betimes possess'd of a just notion of, and awful reverence for the God of his fathers, the God of heaven and earth; and therefore beyond the wants and dangers of the desert, he discover'd the peace and plenty of *Canaan*, and beyond both the glories of eternity; and therefore reasonably concluded, that it

was more eligible to be the son of God, than of *Pharaoh's* daughter; to be the heir of heaven, than of the crown of *Egypt*: all this was intimated, verse 26. *For he had respect to the recompence of the reward.*

I will add but one instance more to that of *Moses*; and indeed there can be but one instance added that is greater, which is that of *Abraham* offering up *Isaac*. In the former, we have seen faith triumphing over superfluous and unnecessary pleasures; in this, we shall see it triumphing over the natural and inseparable appetites of man. What might not *Abraham*, if he had been under the power of any principle but that of faith, have objected against this command of God? What, shall I sacrifice my son? This is a sacrifice might become *Baal* or *Moloch*, but how unfutable to the nature of that God I worship? Nor is this less repugnant to his veracity than his goodness; shall I sacrifice the son of the promise? Is it for this I forsook my home, my country, my birth-right, and followed through inhospitable deserts, and more inhospitable nations? Are all my expectations of a numerous and glorious posterity come to this at last? Thus might *Abraham* have argued; but having a firm belief of the power, goodness and faithfulness of God, he would not go about to prescribe his wisdom methods, or to limit his omnipotence by unbelieving fancies, or derogatory conceptions concerning it: but firmly believing that he could do whatever he pleased, that he would do whatever he promised: *He that had received*
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the promises, offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac thy seed shall be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. We have seen man vanquishing all the pleasures that the world can present us with, and consequently all those inclinations and appetites by which we are carried towards them. Faith in these men encounter'd and defeated whatever strength and force can be supposed either in fancy or imagination. or in sensual appetite, or natural affection. The conclusion deducible from hence is, that there is no desire of worldly pleasure in man so vehement, but that it may be conquer'd; and consequently, that we cannot be necessarily betrayed into sin by any inbred inclination of this kind. There is but one natural principle more, from whence we can imagine any necessity of sinning to arise, which is, an aversion to all pain or trouble. There are therefore temptations suited to this principle in us; such as deter us from our duty, either by the sense of present, or the fear of impending evil: and it is thought to be the highest and difficultest trial of virtue, to surmount these temptations, *i. e.* to be virtuous, when virtue is immediately attended, or visibly threaten'd with great evils. And yet behold,

Thirdly, In this chapter numerous instances of as great constancy in suffering pain, as we have seen before of continence in rejecting pleasure: *ver. 35, 36, 37. Others are tortured, not*

Pain conquered.

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accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. See here faith triumphing over all those things that are the dread and terror of human nature, reproach, imprisonment, banishment, death, death in all its variety of torments; nay, many deaths, in the lingering torments they were frequently put to. How strong, how firm, is this frail weak nature, when supported by a divine faith! All these expected a happy resurrection; they saw beyond these midnight clouds, the dawns of eternity, and unpeakable comforts ready to swallow up and extinguish the memory of their sufferings; and in this confidence they out-braved all sorts of evils. Nor is it to be wonder'd at, if faith, which overcomes the sense of present evils, should disperse the fears of future ones. Hence it was the parents of *Moses* despised the menaces of *Pharaoh*, a prince arbitrary in his power, cruel in his temper, resolv'd and bloody in the execution of mischief. — Hence it was, that *Moses* in the same manner despis'd the wrath of this king; and well knowing that no place would be able to protect him from his power and cruelty, but the desert, he forsook *Egypt*, and fled thither; where he could not but foresee he was to encounter insuperable difficulties; but he endured, as seeing him who

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is invisible; and knew, that the God of heaven was every-where present, and that in despite of every thing, under his protection, he should be both safe and happy.

Now, since there is no evil, the world can threaten us with, equal to that of torments and death, it were in vain and superfluous, after we have seen these conquer'd, to fancy other evils of a much flighter nature unconquerable; it were absurd to think that man could be frightened from his duty by popular reproach, or the displeasure of great men, or to the diminution of his estate, who cannot by death itself; 'twere absurd to fancy, that he who despises imprisonments, stripes, hunger, nakedness, torment, in obedience to his duty, and respect to its reward, should be discouraged by any little austerities or hardships which virtue may sometimes exact from him.

Tell me now then, you who complain of the corruption and impotence of man; you who magnifie the force and power of temptation, and from both infer the impossibility of being virtuous, and consequently of being happy; what have you to answer these things, these matters of unquestionable fact? You see resolution and faith in these examples raised to that height and strength, which no worldly, no carnal temptation can resist: tell me then, why should the faith of a *Jew* out-do that of a Christian? Were their promises more glorious, and therefore more efficacious than others? Look how far short time is of eternity, corruption of incorruption: so far was their *Canaan* of our

heaven. But suppose they had (as these sure had) a prospect of the same heaven, had they a clearer sight of it and more convincing evidence of the certainty of it than we have? Alas, their *Schechinah*, *Bath-col*, the thunders and lightnings of mount *Sinai*, their pillar of cloud and fire, were not half so clear assurances of God amongst them, as that glory which shone in the face of Jesus Christ, that power communicated from above to his apostles: the resurrection of *Jesus* from the dead, and his ascension into heaven, were a manifest testimony of God asserting and bearing witness to the truth of our religion, and particularly of that fundamental article in it, the resurrection of the body and everlasting life. What then, are our temptations greater than theirs? The confidence of the most sensual sinner dares not arrive at this plea: let the voluptuary, the ambitious, confront his temptations with the enjoyments or the hopes of *Moses*: let the most afflicted, miserable man balance his temptations with *Abraham's* sacrifice of his son, or with the sufferings of those righteous men mentioned in the latter part of this chapter; and he must confess that his temptations are as much weaker than theirs, as is his faith. What then can be said? Nothing, unless plainly this, that our case is not the same with theirs, either in respect of our inclinations, or our assistances: if this were so, then how could these men stand as a cloud of witnesses against us in the last day? which *St. Paul* intimates in the beginning of the following chapter: how natural would it be for us, to
wipe

wipe off any accusation or reproach which their virtue could fasten upon us by this easie answer? 'Tis true, we were foil'd and overthrown by those temptations which those men conquered; and well might this happen; for neither had they our infirmities, nor we their grace; their nature was not so depraved as ours, nor our grace so sufficient as theirs. Were this so, the sinner might be more unfortunate, but not more criminal, than the saint; the different event of things at the last day, were to be imputed to the different dispensation, not different use of grace, *i. e.* to the partiality of God, not the negligence or wilfulness of man; than which nothing can be more impiously or absurdly affirm'd.

And now, let not hereafter a fancied impossibility of virtue discourage the weak, nor a pretended one excuse the wilful: nothing is more evident, than that there is no inclination in man that is incorrigible, nor any temptation incident to our state, which is insuperable: let any man that pretends the contrary, consider what reason has done in some; what custom, what faith in others: let himself try, what reason, what discipline, what faith (from all which I never separate divine assistance) can do in him; and, I am confident, he will not stand in need of any further answer to his objection; his own success, as well as that of others, will be sufficient proof of its weakness. Thus, I think, I have in general given a satisfactory answer to as many, at least, as plead natural incapacity against the possibility of being happy: however, that no discouragement, no scruple may remain, I will give a particular

ticular and clear, though brief answer to each part of this objection.

There are three things supposed by it to render man naturally incapable of virtue and happiness. *First*, violent and invincible inclinations to vice: against this as the most considerable part of the objection, the whole bent and force of the precedent discourse was levelled; and therefore this needs no further answer; only here it will be worth our remarking, that those differences that are in the nature and temper of men, are not essential, but accidental; and consequently they may make the way to happiness more difficult to some than others, but impossible to none. The strongest inclination to virtue (I speak of that which is the result of natural temper) seems to me but a weaker inclination to vice; every man has naturally a propension to pleasure, and consequently the sensitive part of us to sensitive pleasure: how much finer mould our first parents were made of than we are, I know not; but this I find, the desire of pleasure was natural to them even in innocence: this was that which the beauty of the apple did easily enflame; and that was such a degree, that I am not able to discern by the text, to which I should rather impute their sin, and the loss of paradise; to the desire of knowledge, or the desire of pleasure: this tendency of the sensitive part is natural to all; but in some less violent; unless we may say upon one ground, 'tis equal in all: for the difference of tempers discovers it self rather in the different kinds of pleasure we pursue,

pursue, than in the different degrees of our inclination to it: we are all equally allured and drawn, yet not by the same but several objects; so that if lust prevail in one, ambition as much prevails in another, and covetousness in a third, and in others intemperance and sloth: so that the difficulty of virtue seems much the same to all the sons of *Adam*, the strength of temptation consisting especially in our weakness; not in the excellency of the object we are taken with, but in our inclination to it. Hence is it as difficult for one man to overcome his covetousness, as for another to overcome his lust; and restless toilsome ambition is as lascivious and taking with some tempers, as lazy and delicious luxury with others. If this were well-weighed, it would make us more mild and gentle in our censure of others, and not so soft and easie in excusing our selves. 'Tis further worth our observing here, that every man's virtue derives some tincture from his constitution and temper; so that, generally speaking, 'tis not difficult to guess a man's natural constitution by the complexion of his religion: however, virtue ceases not to be virtue; nor will that slight alloy of the natural constitution extinguish its vigour and merit, though it behoves every man to keep a strict and jealous guard upon his inclinations: for nature soon revives, even after it has been some time buried; and labours most after that perfection which does most contradict and oppose the particular vice of his constitution: for it will be otherwise morally impossible to gain a conquest over it, and as impossible to gain a rational peace and security without this conquest.

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A *second* thing, which is supposed in the objection to incapacitate man for happiness, is an unteachable stupidity, consisting in a slow conception and a treacherous memory. 'Tis true indeed, the heathen philosophers did require in their scholars the knowledge of many abstruse and difficult matters, as antecedently necessary to virtue and happiness: skill in the mathematicks fitted a man for the *Platonick* philosophy; and the knowledge of natural things was the foundation on which the *Epicurean*, pretending his divine happiness and virtue was to be built; and *Seneca* reckons the unthinking croud amongst the beasts that perish. All of them did with one consent require three things to compleat a virtuous and happy man; nature, education or instruction, and custom. To the *first*, they attributed the disposition to virtue: to the *second*, the beginning: to the *third*, the easiness and constancy; and to all three together, the perfection to it. And hence it is, that they did distinguish between perfect and imperfect; between political or stoical, and philosophical virtue; and did not deem every nature capable of that virtue which was perfect and philosophical. But our blessed Lord and Master, the author of Christian philosophy, requires no such qualifications in those who will be his disciples: all that he requires, is, an humble and an honest mind, freed from proud prejudices, possess'd with a sincere love of the truth and a sincere resolution of obeying it: accordingly *St. Paul* observes, that such were most wrought

wrought upon by the preaching of the gospel: *Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen,* 1.

Cor. 1. Nor will any one imagine, that acute and eminent parts are necessary to render a man capable of being a Christian, who shall consider the brevity and plainness of the Christian faith and law. Doth it require a deep and penetrating judgment, or a firm and tenacious memory, to enable us to understand or remember that plain and short summary of Christian practice?

The grace of God teacheth us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live righteously, soberly, and godly, in this present world?

Titus 2. Or, that as brief and perspicuous abridgment of the Christian faith, *This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent?* John 17. Or, that excellent abridgment of both by St Paul, *Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?* Acts 20. 'Tis true, all things are now ravelled and entangled; and the faith and virtue of Christianity is not half so conspicuous amongst Christians, as their theological wars, tumults and factions: but this is owing to man, not the gospel; to the pride and superstition of the one, not the obscurity of the other. Nor may any one here with the view of reason object, that

that tho' the substance of the Christian faith and practice is clear, yet the reasons of both are not so: for who can ever imagine such a stupidity of nature as can disable any one to understand the proofs by which the scripture establishes the great fundamental article of our faith, that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, the *Messias*, or *Mediator* between God and man? Or, what stupidity of nature can render it an impossible task to us to comprehend the two fundamental reasons of evangelical righteousness, namely, the subserviency of it to the happiness of this, and of another life, and the holiness of the God we worship? I do not write this, as if I meant hereby to represent industry in search of divine truths, as superfluous and unnecessary; but to assure all, of how mean capacities soever, of the success of it. I am not ignorant how much some applaud themselves on the account of acquir'd knowledge of doubtful and abstruse things; how much others value themselves on a particular sort of politicks, remote enough indeed from virtue; and others, on accomplishments as remote from reason, as the other politicks from virtue; and how much all of them do despise the dulness of those who cannot, and the simplicity of those who strive not to equal them in these attainments: but all this doth not beget in me the least scruple or suspicion of the truth I have before asserted. I know, that our duty is plain, and that the path of duty is the most direct and compendious one to the happiness of this life, and of another: for I know, that nothing is so taking with God, as an humble faith, devout, pure, peaceable and charitable religion.

religion. As worldly happiness, I know, that a man's own virtue, supported by God's spirit, and guided by his truth, is the safest and the plainest guide he can follow in dark and tempestuous times: true policy consists not in that address or subtilty of spirit, which furnishes a man at all times with plausible shifts; but in that integrity and virtue that needs none: and the beauty and life of conversation consists not in artificial faces, phantastick dresses, mechanick motions, shrugs and cringes, much less in mechanick (for so I may call set forms of) chat; but in an humble, diligent, and faithful discharge of the duties we owe to all those several relations we stand in, and the observance of those laws of conversation which true philosophy prescribes. This is that which will make us acceptable to all, and dear to the wise and good: flights, and tricks, and arts may divert and entertain; but virtues do charm and captivate: those may open us the way to men's houses, and their tables; but these to their bosoms, to their hearts. The sum of all is, great endowments of nature seem to be necessary for the attainment of unnecessary accomplishments; common endowments are sufficient to make us capable of virtue and happiness. This *Marcus Antoninus* had well observ'd, and has as well express'd in several places; more fully, *lib. 5. sect. 3.* more briefly, elsewhere thus; *Tho' thou despair'st of being a logician, a naturalist, a mathematician, a courtier, a state-empirick, a talkative bigot, or a mechanical fop* (for these too

"Ὅτι ἐν ἀληθείᾳ κη-
ται τὸ εὐδαίμονος βί-
σαι, ἢ μὴ ὅτι ἀπὸ
πιστὸς διαλεκτικὸς ἢ γε-
ομικὸς ἴσθαι, διὰ τὸ το
ἀπεργῶς ἢ ἐκείνου ἢ
αἰδημάτων, ἢ κωνονικῶ
ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν. Marc.
Ant. Lib. 7. Sect. 41.

pass for accomplishments with some) yet despair not of becoming a wise man and a philosopher: tho' thou hast not abilities big enough to make thy confidence pass for wit and demonstration; though thou hast not the art of wheedling, nor the talent of shifting and deluding; though thou hast no faculty for deep dissimulation, nor slight insinuation; though thy parts lie below all these, and a great many other perfections; yet for all this despair not, thou hast parts sufficient to make thee happy; thou mayst be free (redeemed from the servitude of vice) modest, humble, charitable and obsequious to God; and in these very few things consists τὸ εὐδαιμόνως βίωσαι, the blessedness of life.

A Third thing, wherein the objection supposes natural incapacity to consist, is, such a slightness, levity and inconsistency of temper; as seems to render men neither fit

Likeness and inconsiderateness examined.

for any close application, nor susceptible of any deep and lasting impression: it cannot be denied but that some are of such an airy, volatile, and various temper, that they seem to be designed for nothing serious, nothing great; as if, like flowers, they were the sport, not work of nature, made not for use, but ornament: but I have always observ'd, that nature makes up defects of one kind by advantages of another. Thus it happens here: those constitutions which do most want solidity and strength, do most partake of softness and tenderness: so that they are as much more apt to receive impressions, as they are more unapt to retain them than others; like yielding

ding air, which the gentlest stroke doth as easily divide and part, as it doth easily return and unite itself again. Hence 'tis generally observ'd, that that age and that sex, that are supposed to have least of fixedness and constancy, have most of heat and passion in religion; and those minds, which are worst furnish'd with courage and experience, with judgment and resolution, are most apt and easie to be mov'd and wrought upon by religion, or deluded by superstitious fears, and as apt to be tenderly affected by the representations of divine goodness and compassion; so that, like bodies which have less bulk, but more agility, their motion's nimbler, though their force and strength be less. Now, if this be so, then the disadvantage of this temper is not so great as it is fancied: for tho' their passions last not long, they are easily rais'd; and consequently, if our addresses to such a temper be but a little more frequently repeated, they cannot but prove successful; and such persons, by the frequent returns of holy passions, will grow habitually devout, and their devotion will be as steady, and more elevated than that of a flower and firmer constitution. But, after all, wherever there appears an exuberancy of this humour, this is to be imputed rather to their fortune than their nature: a wanton fortune, and too indulgent an education, is generally attended with a gay, wanton and unfixed mind. And 'tis true, that it is a difficult matter for such minds as these to attain to wisdom and virtue; but 'tis not, because they cannot consider, but because they will not: let such exchange their haunts of

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pleasure for the house of mourning; let them but now and then intermix the conversation of the wise and serious with that of the giddy, fanciful and frolicksome; and they will soon find their humour much corrected, and their minds better fix'd: to all this, if they could be perswaded to add the contemplation of a suffering Saviour, of a holy God, and of a judgment to come; and to this, the devotion of the closet, made up of serious reflection on these subjects, and their own eternity; this would soon reduce their loose and scatter'd desires, it would soon re-call the roving wandring mind, and make it delight to dwell at home in the company of wise, devout and important thoughts.

And now, I think, I have left no part of this objection, founded upon natural incapacity, unconsider'd. Do men complain of their heaviness and stupidity? Acute parts and a tenacious memory are not necessary to make us virtuous or happy. Do they complain of their violent inclinations to sin? I have shewed them reason, custom, faith, curbing the most natural, or the most outrageous and ungovernable appetites of man, Do they complain of the levity and inconstancy of their temper? Let them retire from the flatteries and caresses of a wanton fortune, and a wanton conversation; let them acquaint themselves with the wise, or the afflicted, with divine truths and their closets, and this will soon work a happy change upon them. If they are too soft and delicate for the bitterness and severity of these prescriptions, nothing but the much severer discipline of afflictions and judgments can effect their cure.

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Under this head of natural incapacity that other objection from moral incapacity has been sufficiently answer'd; for custom is at most, but a second nature: and I have at large discoursed of the power of reason and faith over nature: I have at large produced many unquestionable instances, wherein we have seen them overcome our most natural and most necessary appetites; such as are, our aversion to pain, our love of life, and such like. Nor is it possible that any vicious custom should have taken deeper root in us; or united themselves more closely with our very beings, than these; and therefore it were absurd to fancy them more violent, stubborn, or insuperable. That expression of the prophet, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Or the Leopard his spots? then may ye also learn to do good, who are accustomed to do evil,* Jer. 12. is but a pathetick exaggeration (which is usual in a prophetick stile) of the difficulty. not an assertion of the impossibility, of an habitual sinner's change: what has been done, and daily is done, can be done, and 'tis in vain to prove what no man can deny. *St. Paul*, when he had recited a catalogue of such sinners as should not enter into the kingdom of God, doth afterwards add, and *such were some of you; but ye were washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,* 1 Cor. 6. And *Tertullian* does appeal to the power and efficacy of the Christian religion visible in the extirpation of vicious habits wrought by it, as a proof of its divine original:

2. Of moral Incapacity.

nor are such instances as these wanting this day. These, as they do now refute all the idle excuses of sinners, so will they one day be urged in judgment against 'em to convince 'em, that they owe their ruin to their sloth and obstinacy, not their impotence; though these men ought to remember too, that moral impotence is ever derived from a voluntary neglect or contempt of all the means of happiness and virtue. I think, I might now dismiss this objection; having given full satisfaction to all scruples that might disturb or discourage any well-meaning and honest mind; and evidently defeated the pretences of such as would fain shroud and shelter their voluntary sin and folly under the feigned excuses of impotence, incapacity, and insupportable infirmity, or insuperable temptations: for all these are mixed and combined in every part of the former objection, and receive one and the same answer. But I foresee, I shall be thought in this whole discourse to have had too little regard to our original corruption, and divine assistance; and therefore, tho' I endeavour'd to guard it in the beginning against all sinister interpretation, I will here add a brief account of both; especially as far as it shall appear to me to concern my present enquiry.

First, As to the natural corruption of man; if corruption may be called natural, on the account of the tendency of our sensitive inclinations, some things are very plain, some very obscure: what is plain, is this, what the present state of man is with respect to that righteousness which

The corruption of Nature considered.

which the gospel requires: what is obscure is this, what the state of *Adam* before the fall was: without a clear knowledge of which 'tis impossible to determine how much our nature is now degenerated (as is suppos'd) from the primitive purity and excellency of its creation. *Secondly*, how guilt and corruption could be transmitted or derived from *Adam* upon his posterity. *Thirdly*, what can be supposed, properly speaking, to be the demerit, offence, or provocation of original corruption; what punishment can be due to it, divided and separated from voluntary transgressions. These, and a great many things of the like nature, I purposely pass over, as neither of great importance in themselves, or at leastwise of no great use to my present enquiry, and go on to what is plain and necessary; and that is, what the present state and condition of human nature is: for nothing can be more evident, than that the *Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh*, Gal. 5. These two being contrary to one another in their tendencies and inclinations, this conflict or opposition of spirit and body discovers itself the more, the more pure and perfect the law is that we are under: this tendency of the body is so apparent and undeniable, that it was ever acknowledged by all wise heathens. Hence the *Platonicks* frequently impute the dominion of the power and liberty of the soul of man to its conjunction with the body; and hence it was, that some of them whom *St. Austin* refutes, by giving an account of the

Plotinus, Ennead. 1. lib. 1. c. 9 Ennead. 2. lib. 3. c. 15. Ennead. 3. lib. 1. c. 8. Aug. de civ. Dei.

nature of the raised body, rejected the Christian doctrine of the resurrection, judging the restitution of the body, rather a diminution of, than accession to, the happiness of the mind. The *Pythagoreans* looked upon the body as the prison and punishment of the soul: and, in short, the philosophy of the heathens did consist chiefly in this, the subduing the appetites of the body to the reason of the mind: and this appears most plainly to be the drift and scope of Christian philosophy: from whence it follows, that the disorder of human nature (call it original corruption, or what you please) consists in the *φρόνημα σαρκός*, *the lust and concupiscence of the flesh*. This is evident from all the writings of *St. Paul*, especially *Romans* the 7th; and this is the sense of our church, *Art.* the 9th. Nor, indeed, are we capable of imagining any other corruption in man; for if there be a conflict between right reason and carnal appetite; if the tendency of the body and mind be opposite and contradictory, 'tis nonsense to suppose both corrupt and sinful: for then the contradiction and conflict would cease. From hence it follows plainly, that we are born with capacities of, and inclinations to, virtue as well as vice, though nothing be more manifest than that the appetite of the body exerts itself first, grows up to strength and maturity soonest, and doth more powerfully and forcibly move, than the suggestions and persuasions of reason. *Secondly*, it is from hence plain, that the state of righteousness consists in the prevalency of the body over the mind. And from hence appears the necessity of divine grace

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or assistance: for since the dominion of righteousness cannot be established, but in the subjection of the body, and the body doth in power so much overmatch the mind, the appetites of it being both more forward, more violent, more constant, I had almost said, more natural than the dictates of reason; and this power receiving daily increase and augmentation by a sensual education, and by a daily and unavoidable commerce with the world, and those temptations which awaken, gratifie and enflame the appetites of the body; it were morally impossible that the mind should master and overcome the body, if it were not aided by divine grace and assistance. But then it must be remember'd, that 'tis repugnant to the very notion of aid or assistance, that it should make void the necessity of our own endeavours; as the light of revelation doth not extinguish that of reason, but encrease it; so neither does the strength of God's grace render our natural strength useles, but improve and help it. This added to what I have said before, comprises all that is necessary to be known concerning grace; and may be reduced to these three or four heads. *First*, That the grace of God is necessary to enable us to live virtuously and happily; *Secondly*, That grace does not extinguish nature, or cancel our obligation to industry, or a careful use of that natural power God has invested us with; *Thirdly*, That God is most ready and desirous to further and assist all men in their endeavours after virtue and happiness; and *Lastly*, That the grace of God is sufficient for us, or that we receive

*Divine Assistance,
or Grace considered.*

by it as great an addition of strength or spiritual aid, as, being joyned with our sincere endeavours, is necessary to make us virtuous and happy. If we deny the first of these, we subvert the foundation of prayer to, and dependence upon God; we can give no tolerable account of, at least, one third part of the gospel of Christ; and we unavoidably discourage mankind from all hopes of happiness: If we deny the second, we destroy the very nature of man, render all laws, exhortations, admonitions, rewards and punishments useless, silly and impertinent; and make divine grace the very foundation of carnal security, of desperate and destructive negligence and sloth: If we deny the third or fourth, we must unavoidably affirm, either that the happiness of man does no way depend upon the grace of God, or that his misery is fatal and unavoidable. All which are absurdities gross and palpable to all minds which lie not under the thickest darkness of blind superstition and prejudice. Whoever will now reflect upon all that has been said, will easily be able to conclude, that we have no enemy without us, none within us, that can necessitate and compel us to be miserable: misery may be our choice or punishment, it can never be our fate: our natural corruption may invite and incline us, but can never force and compel us to be wicked: for there is no temptation, no inclination, which God's grace and our industry, are not able to resist and overcome: so that now there remains at last no other incapacity of happiness, than what is *Penal*, which is the next thing to be spoken to.

Penal

Penal incapacity consists in God's final and immutable rejection of man from grace and pardon. The matter of this objection shall be fully handled, *Vol. 4.* where I shall be obliged to treat of the troubles of the mind, and their cure. In the mean time, all that is necessary to be observed here, is, *first*, That this state of final rejection from grace and pardon, is *Penal*; a state to which nothing but mens voluntary transgressions can betray 'em, and those too transgressions of the deepest guilt, and most crying aggravations: for surely nothing less can provoke a God, *who delights to exercise Loving-kindness and Mercy*, a God of infinite long-suffering and patience, to pass a sentence, an irreverfible sentence of eternal ruin and damnation upon any of his creatures. *Secondly*, That no mistaken fancies of the unpardonableness of our state may either tempt us desperately to renounce God our Saviour, and virtue, it behoves us to consider, what ought to be the proper influence of this persuasion, that there is such a *Penal state* on this side the grave.

Of Penal Incapacity.

First, If they who believe such a state, will act consonant to their own opinion, they must not allow themselves in a course of wilful sin, lest they be insensibly betray'd into that dreadful state.

Secondly, Since impenitence and hardness of heart is a necessary and inseparable consequence of that dreadful sentence, which excludes men from grace and pardon; therefore no man can rationally conclude himself in this state till he has

has made all possible attempts to recover himself from his sin, and that without success: and because,

Lastly, No man can conclude his endeavour unsuccessful, till death surprize him in an obdurate and impenitent state: for habitual sinners have become eminent saints; and lapsed Christians, nay apostates, have not only recovered their former state, but redeemed their crimes by more than ordinary degrees of repentance, devotion and charity, and, by undeniable consequence, have been restored to God's favour; for grace is in order to pardon, sanctification in order to justification, virtue in order to glory: therefore no man must give over his attempts of appeasing God, and subduing his corruptions, while God continues him in the land of the living. These rules, if observed, will, I question not, render the persuasion of such a *penal state*, as the objection supposes, very profitable and useful to some, and not pernicious to the eternal interest of any: for he, who by the dread of such a state, is deterred from bold and provoking sins, and from an habitual course of wilful impiety, reaps an unspeakable advantage by it; and he who adheres to religion and virtue, and continues to his life's end, sincerely endeavouring to please God, and obtain his pardon, shall never suffer any prejudice in another life by his melancholy and mistaken fancies in this.

Having thus cleared my assertion, that happiness is attained here, from such objections as seem to derive any countenance or strength from
from

from reason, there remains but two more that I think of; the one whereof presses hard upon me, under a pretended authority of revelation; the other urges the experience of mankind against me. I will begin with the former; and consider, with what aspect revelation regards the happiness of this present life; and whether there be any thing in it that forbids the hopes, or obstructs the attainments of it.

C H A P. VII.

Religion no enemy to our present happiness.

Happiness the fruit of religion, proved by plain texts, and the natural influence of faith and virtue. The doctrine of the cross not inconsistent with happiness; nor that of mortification.

IF men were not very ingenious in framing excuses of their folly, and in the contrivance and pursuit of ruin, it would seem very strange, that the gospel, which was design'd to be the great instrument of our happiness, should be alledged to discourage, and damp our endeavours after it; that the gospel, whose great end is to fill our minds with joy, peace and hope, should be traduced as an enemy to our pleasure. But so it is; and therefore resolving to leave no obstacle unremoved, nor despise any objection, that

that has the least colour or appearance of an argument in it, I will examine this fancy.

Religion ever had, and always must have, the character of its author visibly stamp'd upon it; nothing that is not infinitely kind, and infinitely wise, can be found in any part of revelation truly divine: from whence we may rationally conclude, that the great aim of God in the establishing religion, is to advance the happiness of man, and to advance it in a method consonant to those natural principles he has implanted in him: nor did any one inspired author think otherwise. *He that keepeth the law (saith Solomon) happy is he, Prov. 29. Great peace have they that love thy law; and nothing shall offend them, Psal. 119. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding, Prov. 3.* That this was to be understood of actual and present happiness in this life, is apparent from what follows a little after; *Length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those that lay hold upon her.* And though the gospel, as a higher and more perfect dispensation, doth propose to us as our great and chief end, life and immortality; yet doth it by no means exclude us from happiness here; but rather doth establish it upon proper and firm foundations; and fences it about with impregnable bulwarks. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled,*

troubled, neither let it be afraid, Joh. 24, 27. Now the fruit of the spirit is joy, love, &c. Gal. 5. 22. Now the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, and make you abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, Rom. 15. Godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8.

Nor can I indeed conceive how the state of a righteous and holy soul should be other than a happy and blessed one: the belief and confident expectation of a heaven, must needs be more transporting and ravishing, than the richest fancy of a sinner; and that security, both in respect of this and a future life, which a good man enjoys in the protection of God, and the assurance of his favour, who is almighty, immutable, &c. must infinitely exceed any thing that a sinner can attain to; and must exclude those uneasy fears which do frequently interrupt the sinner's enjoyment, and over-cast his hopes. He that loves God and virtue, cannot but be happy in the daily practice and enjoyment of what he most delights in. And he, lastly, that hath subdued his passions, and overcome the world, cannot choose but reap the daily fruits of so glorious a conquest, and be constantly entertain'd with pleasing reflections and delightful prospects; and yet, if he should enjoy nothing else, that sovereignty, liberty, magnanimity, and divine charity, and enlargement of soul, which he thereby gains, were an abundant reward of this victory. The sum of all is this; a good man has the best title to the blessings of

of this life; and the glories of another; he enjoys this world with as great security; as wisdom and moderation; and has an assured hope of a far better when he quits this; the anticipations of which by faith; love, and hope, do at once facilitate and confirm his conquest over all unworthy lusts, and entertain him with unexpressible satisfaction and pleasure.

For this reason I do in this chapter discourse of happiness, without that immediate regard to another life which might be expected; not judging myself obliged either to prove the certainty of it, or to demonstrate the reasonableness of embracing misery during the space of this short life, in expectation of that perfect and eternal happiness which is promised hereafter; since I saw well enough, that in the ordinary course of providence, the happiness of this life and the other were not incompatible; but, on the contrary, that that wherein the life and being of true happiness in this world doth consist, was but a necessary introduction to, or qualification of us for the happiness of another; which doth in some measure already appear, and will much more in the progress of the following discourses.

But what becomes now of the doctrine of the cross? This is a very soft and mild commentary upon that of our Saviour,

The doctrine of the cross no obstruction of this life's happiness.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow

me, Matth. 16. 24. But this is not so formidable an objection, as it may at first sight seem:

'tis

'tis true, suffering through all the progress and stages of evils, even to the last, that is, death itself, was a common, nay almost an universal duty in the beginning of Christianity; being indispensably necessary to the propagation of the gospel: but, blessed be God, the obligation of that duty has long ago ceased; and all that I can think necessary to be said here, in pursuance of my design, is, that the pleasures of those confessors and martyrs did far out-weigh their sufferings whilst they lived; that when they suffer'd death itself, the time was come when they must exchange temporal for eternal happiness. Nor doth this at all infringe the truth of my proposition; which doth not vainly assert an eternal duration of happiness in this life, but only teaches the possibility of attaining it. And, I think, the death of the martyrs and confessors, is rather a great confirmation than confutation of this opinion: teaching us plainly, that in despite of all calamities, 'tis not only possible to live, but to die happily; which last is no small accession to temporal happiness. From this little I have said on this occasion, 'tis easy to shape an answer to what is objected from St. Paul, *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.* 'Tis confessedly and indisputably true, that had those Christians been destitute of that hope which was their support, they had sunk under the weight of such sufferings, and so had been most miserable of all men: but since their hopes did not only support them under their afflictions, but also

that

that it may render them somewhat more than conquerors; all that can follow hence is, that the resurrection and eternal life are unquestionable truths, and that he, who believes 'em as firmly as confessors and martyrs did, may, like them, be *happy*, though a thousand seas of calamities and troubles should break in upon him.

As to mortification, which is a duty of perpetual obligation (for the purity of religion is still the same, tho' its fortune in the world be alter'd) this did at first signify the renunciation and extirpation of

Mortification recommended by the light of nature as subservient to our present happiness.

Jewish and *Pagan* lusts, according to that of St. Paul, *Mortify your members which are upon earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry,* Col. 3. 5. And it still signifies the same thing; and whatever difficulty we are to encounter in the performance of this duty, it must be vanquish'd; for 'tis impossible to be wicked and happy: a man wicked is his own *hell*; and every passion, every lust is a fiend, a fury that doth outrage and torment him; and all this the heathens themselves did not only constantly acknowledge, but also paint out with as lively eloquence as any Christians could ever do: their experience (over whom sin had an uncontrouled dominion) most effectually convincing them of the outrages, tyranny, and unspeakable mischiefs of wicked and abominable passion: nay, so manifest is it that the subduing these irregular passions is necessary to
our

our happiness, that even *Epicureans* themselves (notwithstanding their confining the happiness of man to this short life, and by a probable consequence resolving ultimately into the enjoyments of the body) did yet look upon themselves as extremely injured by *Tully*, and others, when they represented them as revolted from, and enemies to virtue. 'Tis not my business here to examine what foundation for virtue their philosophy could leave, or what rank and place they could assign it; 'tis enough that they could not but acknowledge it as necessary to happiness.

'Tis true, mortification, in the gospel-sense, requires us not only to restrain these irregular lusts; but also not to over-rate and over-value this world, and the things of it; not to look upon this life as our only or chief portion, and doat upon it with fondness and passion: and I cannot think that this is any thing more than what is implied and included in the former notion of mortification; this moderation of our inclinations to the world, being a proper and necessary foundation of the former abstinence; it being very improbable that he, who values and doats upon the world above all things, should refrain from irregular pursuits and enjoyments of it. Now, even this degree of mortification, and the necessity of it in order to happiness, was clearly taught by the wise men among the heathens, as by our Saviour and his apostles; by those conducted by the light of nature, as by these conducted by the light of revelation; and that together with

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the discipline which promotes it, I mean the observation of great abstinence from sensual pleasures. No monk or anchoret can speak with a more glorious contempt of the world than a stoick; but their flights, who would allow the body, the world, and the things of it, no place nor degree in the number of good things, are too daring and bold to lay any stress upon: but the opinion of other philosophers, who allow'd these their proper place and value, ought to be of weight with us; because they shew us plainly, that mortification was ever thought by the light of nature, subservient to our true happiness. *Hierocles*, in the beginning of his divine comments, gives us a short, but full account of the *Pythagorean* (and I may add *Platonick*) philosophy in this point: the substance of which is, *The business*

Φιλοσοφία ἐστὶ ζωὴς ἀνθρωπίνης καθαρῆς, καὶ τελειότης μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλικης ἀλλογιᾶς, καὶ τῆ ὀντοσύνης σωματικῆς· τελειότης δὲ τῆς οὐκίας ἐξαιτίας ἀνάγκης, πρὸς τὴν θείαν ὁμοίωσιν ἐπανάγωσα· ταῦτα δὲ περικεῖν ἀρετῆ καὶ ἀληθινὰ κάλλιστα ἀπεργάζεσθαι· ἢ γὰρ τὴν ἀμικτρίαν τῶν παθῶν ἐξορίζουσα· ἢ δὲ πρὸ θείου εἶδος, ἐνυῶν ἔχουσα, προσκτωμένιν.

of philosophy is to purify the soul of man from sensual lusts and inordinate passions, and to transform it into the likeness and image of God: this is that which it pursues, by discovering to us excellent truths, and by recommending to us the practice of excellent virtues. And this was that

philosophy which the best and acutest of the heathens looked upon as the only way to happiness; so far were they from judging it inconsistent and incompatible with it: nay, they deemed this very state of virtue a state of more exalted happiness, and an image of the divine life.

life. Hence is that little less than inspired heat or rapture of *Tully*; *When the soul, having discover'd and entertain'd virtue, has extinguish'd its fondness for, and indulgence of the body, and stifled lust as the reproach and stain of its honour and beauty, and hath put off all dread of death and ruin, &c. What can be said, or as much as fancied, more blessed than the state of such a man?* Nay, after all, the greatest patrons and abettors of pleasure did ever acknowledge this moderation in our passions and enjoyments indispensably necessary to our happiness.

Cum animus cognitibus perceptisque virtutibus à corporis obsequio, indulgentiaque discesserit, voluptatemque sicut labem decoris oppresserit, omnemque mortis dolorisque timorem effugerit, societatemque charitatis coierit cum suis, omnesque natura conjunctos suos duxerit, cultumque deorum & puram religionem susceperit, & exacerit illum, ut oculorum sic ingenii aciem ad bona diligenda & rejicienda contraria. Quid eò dici aut excogitari poterit beatius? *L. 2. de Leg.*

*Nil admirari prope res est una Numici,
Solaque quæ possit facere ac servare beatos.*

Horat.

*Nought to admire's the thing alone that can
Cause and preserve the happiness of man.*

And 'tis well known, how much the followers of *Epicurus* gloried in his abstinence; that these voluptuaries should prescribe and practise the doctrine of mortification! but this they were compelled to by the irresistible force of reason: for how can he, who doats upon the world, and melts in soft and sensual pleasures, be able to secure the repose of his mind against

those melancholy alterations which may daily, and some time or other will certainly, befall himself and his enjoyments? On what foundation can the peace or liberty of his mind be establish'd? Or can he be happy, who is distress'd by every change of weather, and is divided and distracted between numerous contrary passions, and a slave to each?

To come to a conclusion; the scripture is so far from denying, that it does affirm the possibility of attaining happiness: nor are the sufferings of confessors and martyrs, or the doctrine of mortification, any prejudice to this assertion: for neither affliction nor mortification are inconsistent with the true happiness of man. That affliction is not, the example of those very martyrs and confessors triumphing over it does sufficiently evince: that mortification is not, is unanimously confess'd by the suffrages of such as were conducted by the light of nature; and of such too, as were entirely devoted to the pleasures of this life, and that upon undeniable grounds. I have now spoke to all those objections which seem to oppose and assault my position of the possibility of attaining happiness, with any shew of reason, or pretence of divine authority. It is now high time I should proceed to answer those, who against this assertion oppose, not reasons and arguments, but observation and experience.

C H A P.

CHAP. VIII.

Of matter of fact and experience.

The state of the poor. The gay and silly. The busy. Princes. The learned; whether happy. The happiness of the devout questioned, and demonstrated by instances.

AFTER all the pains I have taken in the first section to demonstrate, that the pursuit and search after happiness is a rational undertaking, an employment becoming the nature and state of man: and, after all that I have taken in this second, to demonstrate the possibility of attaining it, and to disperse all objections to the contrary; there remains still one objection, which, if true, were sufficient to discourage the endeavours, and chill the heat of the most virtuous and resolved ambition; which is this:

'Tis true, happiness may be found in speculation; but rarely, if ever, in possession and fruition. The number of the fortunate and happy is extremely small; and most men, if not all, when they have worn life to its last period, may give that account of it which the aged (and as others, no doubt, thought happy) patriarch did of his to *Pharaoh, Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, Gen. 27.* But it moves me not so much to hear this from the mouth of a shepherd, who

from his youth led a laborious and unsettled life : but when I read the mournful poems of *Job*, the discontents and melancholy of *Solomon*, men no less eminent for wisdom and philosophy, than for their worldly glory and prosperity ; when I read them bewailing the lot of mankind, unable to reflect upon it without a mixture of indignation, contempt, and womanish sorrow ; I cannot but acknowledge, that I am shrewdly tempted to despair of happiness, as of something too great and divine to make its abode upon earth ; and to look upon all the fine discourses that men make of it, only as so many flights of a bold fancy. Happiness ! What is it ? or where is it ? In what distant coasts or unknown regions does it dwell ? Who, and where are the fortunate ? Who, and where are the darlings of heaven, to whose lot it happens ? Shall we, like *Bajazet*, in a melancholy humour, think poor, silly, leazy peasants happy ? *O happy shepherd, who hadst neither Sebestia nor Orthobales to lose.* (*Knowle's Turkish Hist.*) As if secure

*Poor, whether
happy.*

beggary and slothful want were happiness : happy thus might I call the man born

blind ; he has no eyes to lose.

Or, shall we call the gaudy swarm, which (like flies and insects in gleams of sun-shine) do buz and flutter in the rays and warmth

*The gay and silly,
whether happy.*

of greatness and prosperity ? Shall we call these happy ? Ah ! these are they that furnish theatres and poets with tragick stories.

Amongst

Amongst these, restless passions, contemptible levity, ungovernable insolence, wither'd and meagre envy, wandering lust, empty pride, loud and senseless confidence, and, finally, shameful and fearful sins, have their abode: and can we call those happy, who are infested with such legions of evils? *Miserere tu felicitium*; they are their own burthen, whilst they are others envy.

Shall we then call the busy trading world happy? Alas! these would have thought it a happiness, not to have needed to trade or toil; they love wealth, but most admire

The busy, whether happy.

Res non parata labore, sed relicta. Mart.

*Not gold they lab'ring dig themselves in mines,
But what the toiling ancestor resigns
To his more happy issue.*

If this be so, one would think I might boldly present you with the envy'd glory of mighty princes, as an unquestionable instance of happiness. But, alas! the wisest of the heathen Gods prefer'd the happiness of *Aglaus Sophydius* before that of *Gyges*! And the wisest of men (in his times at least) preferred the happiness of *Tellus* before that of *Cræsus*! And this sentence seems not only to deny those particular princes happy, but also to pronounce the very state of royalty incapable of happiness, or at least less capable than that

Princes, whether happy.

of a plough-man. Indeed this state, when active and glorious, is full of fears, and cares, and hazards; when sluggish and unactive, full of shame: what can be the happiness of a state to dig for friendship, or for pleasure? For love is the business and enjoyment of equals; obedience is all subjects can offer, or indeed monarchs can receive: all higher and nearer approaches to the throne, are but intrusions of ambition and design: nor can I possibly discern what satisfaction the great mortal can take in any expressions of duty or affection, which he can never distinguish from the fawning and flattery of those who in their hearts despise and hate him: how shall he know that any truly love him, when none dare slight him? Or how shall he discern who serves him out of duty, where every man even obtrudes himself upon his commands out of interest? In a word, the passions of a prince are so much greater than other mens, as is his mind and fortune; his conversation is not with the minds of men, but with faces, or rather masks and disguises. And as to his pleasures, his gust of them is very flat, being cloy'd and surfeited by his affluence: and whereas all other men, as the ambitious and vain-glorious, the covetous, the lover, seem to ascend, and rise above themselves in the acquisitions of those pleasures they aspire to; the monarch debases himself, descends, and stoops below his fortune, to meet *his*. And yet I am not of *Apollis*'s nor *Solon*'s mind; I cannot think there is any great happiness in the ignorance and
 quietness

quietness of a labouring cottager, such as *Tellus* or *Aglaus Sophydus*: I love security, but not that which contempt breeds; I would have my security owing, not to the littleness of my fortune, but the greatness of my mind: I love a quiet, but a philosophical life: I would have my tranquillity spring not from the ignorance, but reason of my mind; from the right government of my passions, not from the meanness of my education or fortune. For the same reason I do not call men happy, whose slow and easy temper, like the waters of the dead sea, is not to be moved, even by wind and storm. I do not call stupidity a calm; the soul, that is insensible of trouble, is so of joy too: whoever is capable of any deep impression, is so of any serious reflection too; and what is the state of such a man? I would not have my life pass by like a dream, whilst fleeting or imperfect images of things do scarce awake, and too slightly affect my drowsy and dazzled sense. In a word, the happiness I seek after, is such a one, which is owing neither to natural constitution nor to fortune: for then it would not be in our power.

Whom then shall we call happy? Surely, if any, the knowing and learned: these are the souls that converse with heaven, that dwell continually in the pure light, and feed upon the bread, the joys of angels. But, alas! if happiness were the inseparable companion of learning, how came the stoick's adored *Cato* to be led by pride, and humour, and vain-glory.

The learned, whether happy.

glory, through burning sands and dreadful deserts? How came he, in a mood of desperate discontent, to die his own murderer? Whence was it that the learned and eloquent *Tully*, after so many brave discourses of the contempt of death and pain, and, briefly, all human evils, did sink so poorly under the weight of his misfortunes? Whence was it, that after he had taught the soul's immortality, and its translation, into some glorious star, he should at last be so unwilling to let it leave this vile clod of earth, and the decay'd, melancholy, and darksome mansion of the body? If learning did put men in possession of happiness, why was our *Raleigh* so uneasy, so unfortunate, not more toss'd by a restless fortune, than a restless mind? Why was our *Verulam* so utterly a stranger to happiness in both fortunes, as unable to govern and enjoy prosperity aright, as to bear up under adversity? If learning were so sovereign an antidote against misery; if philosophy were such a paradise, and speculations were such luscious meals, the very fruits of the garden; why do the learned leave their sacred shades to haunt the houses of great ones, or the courts of princes? Why do they fawn and cringe, and with all imaginable assiduity and artifice labour to insinuate themselves into such men, whose esteem for them is a just scandal to them, and their favours but so many publick marks of reproach? O vilest sort of servitude! Can it consist with the grandeur of a philosopher, with the true liberty of a Christian spirit, to lacquey some favourite of
fortunes,

fortunes, and for many years together with an obstinate stupidity digest the caprices of his humour; and not only dissemble his vices, but magnify even his vanity and folly? And not this only, but there are slavish arts of insinuation to be practised upon every one that's near him: O glorious merit! When the same thing recommends the philosopher, that doth the *Valet de Chambre*, or the footman! And yet, after all, even this equals not the baseness, the slavery of those who prostitute philosophy and themselves to the multitude, and make an ignorant and insolent herd the arbitrary sovereigns of their principles, their liberty, their happiness; for this depends upon their popularity. O how far should I prefer the humble, contented, and independent drudgery of an honest mind, before this unmanly servitude! How far should I prefer the generous and undefining freedom and unconcernment of a poet (whatever ignorance or contempt of interest it may be traduced for) before the former sort of servile philosophick progers!

And now there remains no place where happiness can as much as be suspected to dwell, unless amongst the devout and religious. These, sure, live in raptures and transfigurations on the mount; these sure have their conversation in heaven, and from thence derive glory, and liberty, and joy, and peace, and hope; these are partakers of divine nature, how can they therefore be destitute of a divine happiness! But, alas! behold the blessed

The happiness of the devout questioned.

fed Jesus, and we shall find him, as the psalmist and the prophets represent him, *A man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief.* Here again the most zealous and the most elevated of our divine master's disciples, *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable,* 1 Cor. 15. 19.

O happiness!

*Thou blessed state, or rather pleasing sound,
Thou always sought, and never to be found!
In what grot do'st thou, or what cell,
Or in what court or temple dwell?*

*Where, and what art thou? Art thou merely
name;*

*No otherwise known, than by reports and
fame?*

Art a reality? Or, art thou just

*Like publick good and publick trust,
A solemn, sacred, but deceitful notion?*

But to return from this revery. This is, after all, but a slight and popular objection; which, from the evil consequences which attend the sins and follies of the multitude, and from those complaints which human infirmity has sometime wrung from the wise and virtuous, would unsoundly and illogically infer, that there is no such thing as happiness here below. Besides, the sufferings of martyrs, and the words of *St. Paul*, have been consider'd in the foregoing chapter: and in the second chapter of this section, the reader may find some instances of
happy

happy men ; which is a punctual answer to this objection : but you will say, 'tis a very short one, to an objection of so great weight, and of such general credit, and spun out by me myself to a very great length. I acknowledge, it deserves a fuller answer ; and therefore, after I have told you that I have made a shew of hunting after happiness in several conditions of life, only to rally and expose their folly, who suppose it may be found in a lucky juncture of circumstances, I will give you one.

The men then, whom I call happy, are such who are possessed of true and solid goods ; and those such which fortune cannot give nor take away ; such were Christ and his apostles ; and such are all those at this day, as are transformed into the glory and image of the divine nature, by the mighty energy of the divine spirit and divine truths. Let us consider what the state of Christ and his apostles was in this life. I will not take notice of those ecstasick pleasures, which they felt when they did those Godlike works, which we call miracles. What triumph could be equal to theirs, who saw diseases, devils and death, subject to their commands ? What joy could be equal to theirs, when they gave life to the dead, sight to the blind, strength to the lame, &c ? To what a height was wonder and delight raised in each of these performances ? For nothing could be more wonderful than the power, or delightful than the charity conspicuous in them : but this I pass over, because

cause this power is not to be attained by us. Let us come to that which is; I mean, the virtues of Christ and his apostles. *He had not a hole where to lay his head*: 'Tis true; but how truly great was he within himself? How much above the mean and unmanly desires of ambition, covetousness, or lust? He indulged himself in no sensual carnal pleasures, 'tis true; but how calm that soul, which no angry or envious passion disturb'd, where nothing but sacred love dwelt? The love of God, the love of man, and the rational and wise love of himself? How happy that soul which was illuminated with divine knowledge, supported by an unshaken faith, and filled with joyful reflections and glorious hopes? That soul, which in the silence of the night, and the retirements of the mount, did pour forth it self in prayers and hallelujah's? That soul, which, full of God and full of heaven, had no room for uneasy cares or afflicting sorrows? 'Tis true, our saviour met death with pale looks and melancholy pangs of soul; but 'tis as true that his faith surmounted his fears; his agony endured but for a little while; an undisturb'd peace, and a well-settled serenity of mind immediately follow'd it; and his trouble and pain in death, like the eclipse that attended it, did but overcast and darken the joy, the light within, not extinguish it: who could finish the last act of life with more humble majesty, or with more settled peace? In the life and death of our dear Lord we behold that of his disciples; for they were all followers of him, as they desired we should

should be of them: what can be happier than their state here was? Their life was regular and philosophical; their joy steady and rational; their love of God vigorous; their charity to man fervent and diffused; their desires, as to the world, modest; their minds resolved and brave in afflictions, chearful and composed in death it self.

Let it stand then as an unshaken truth, that happiness may be attain'd in this life: for what the followers of our Lord and Master attain'd to, that may we; their natural passions and infirmities were the same with ours; our trials and temptations are far less than theirs; we serve the same God, we are guided by the same truths, supported by the same power, elevated by the same hopes; we have the same peace bequeath'd us, the same spirit, the same heaven promised us, and we march under the conduct of the same captain of our salvation, who *by his death has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light*. Nor ought this to seem to us an over-daring or presumptuous position, since the possibility of happiness is a notion consonant to the common sense of all mankind: for 'tis happiness which laws, enacted for the government of the multitude, and philosophical rules, prescrib'd for the government of our passions, do aim at; all law-givers have ever promised the people wealth, and peace, and glory, and security, as the fruits of their obedience: and all philosophers have ever promised tranquillity of mind and rational pleasures to their followers, as the
rewards

rewards of conformity to their precepts. And as it cannot surely be denied, but that the kingdom is most happy, which by just laws and a well-temper'd authority, is freed from those fears and distractions, from those mischiefs and confusions to which others are exposed by anarchy or tyranny, by the insolence of the multitude or the impotence of the prince: so it cannot be denied, but that the man is most happy, whose well-settled peace is established upon solid grounds of true wisdom; being neither oppressed by the tyranny of superstition, nor vexed and disquieted by the insolence of unruly passions, to which the weakness of reason subjects men. As to religion, which is a third governing principle; this only proposes a more perfect happiness, and a more plain and direct way to it, than nature of it self could: it only relieves and recruits our natural power by that of grace, and increases the light of reason by a participation of new rays of revelation. If then happiness be the great end which law and philosophy, revelation and reason, God and man, do unanimously propose to us; how absurd and palpable a contradiction were it to all those, to deny the attainment of it possible

The conclusion of this second section.

To look back now upon this whole section, and sum up the substance and force of it, 'tis this: God, who made us, made us on purpose to be happy: for what other design could infinite

finite love propose to it self in our creation? And proposing to himself this end, he endow'd us with faculties and capacities that might fit us for the contemplation and enjoyment of himself and his works: the world, provided by him for our entertainment, he filled with all things that could minister either to our necessities or delights. Here God has planted us, not as inhabitants, but sojourners: for this is but our state of probation; angels had their times of trial, so have men; here he would have us aspire after, as near as we can, that life angels lead in heaven; for we are one day to be equal to them: here he would have us learn and practise those virtues which fit us for the society and enjoyment of that kingdom wherein dwells righteousness, for that is the blessed end and consummation of all our endeavours, desires, and hopes: but when we make heaven the abode, the seat of perfect happiness, we do not thereby suppose, that it is banished from the earth; but rather on the contrary, if that state be the consummation of all things, 'tis necessary to be concluded, that every step we advance nearer to it, we mount and ascend higher, in brighter, calmer, and purer regions. Heaven is like the glorious building, whose access is full of delight and beauty: for as that youth, which precedes our manhood, has its sweetness, its beauty, its natural perfection and pleasure; so has this moral state, which precedes our angelical, its proper degree of perfection and blessedness: and this is no small one neither; for, as we are created

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but

but a little lower than the angels, in respect to the dignity of our nature; so surely our happiness begins nearly to approach and resemble theirs, when our mind, filled with divine truths, charity and hopes, becomes free, generous, resolv'd, constant, chearful, meek, gentle, devout, heavenly; when it has so accustomed it self to virtue, and familiarly acquainted it self with heaven, that the sins and pleasures of the sensual part of the world look like the manners and entertainments, not only of a foreign, but barbarous and impoverish'd country; and when, lastly, by its frequent retirements from the body, and daily commerce with rational and spiritual pleasures, it not only asserts its sovereignty over it, but begins to live so independent of it, that at the last, when it shall in death mount up upon the wings of pure flame to heaven, it shall not suffer as if the body needed to be torn from it; but shall let it fall as *Elijah* did his mantle. Those complaints therefore which we make against our present state, and those reproaches with which we out-rage and vilify our nature, are false and unjust; for we are by God created and design'd for happiness, and this happiness God hath been pleas'd to put in our own power, to place within our reach. There is no fate, but what God has made us our selves arbiters of; we lie under no necessity, no fatality, but what our own vices betray us to: nor do we stand in need of the indulgences of fortune; the tranquillity and pleasure of a virtuous man is an image of
God's

God's own; it springs from within, not from without. 'Tis true, there are difficulties which obstruct our progress to happiness; but they are such as all wise and good men have conquer'd: 'tis true, nature labours under its infirmities, that is, sensual propensions and inclinations; but it is strengthened and supported by reason, by revelation, by grace. We may fall ('tis true) a sacrifice to God's wrath; but it must be after we have lived long in contempt of his mercy, and obstinate defiance of his grace. Methinks these considerations should raise and exalt the mind of man; they should inspire us with desires and hopes worthy of rational and immortal souls; like the *Israelites* when they march'd out of *Egypt*, we should dream of nothing, but triumph, glory and happiness.

S E C T. III.

The causes and remedies of man's unsuccessfulness in his pursuit after happiness.

C H A P. I.

The general cause of ill success. Deviation from reason, the general cause of man's ill success. The effects of which are, 1. The proposal of false ends; 2. Coldness in pursuit of our true ends.

WERE the happy, like * *Tully's* wise man, a mere idea, something no where to be found but in the characters and descrip-

* *Quem adhuc nos quidem vidimus neminem, sed philosophorum sententiis qualis futurus sit, si modò aliquando fuerit, exponitur. Tusc. Quest. l. 2.*

tions which philosophers give us of him, this were an unconquerable discouragement: no briskness of wit, no charms of fancy, no force of eloquence, no height of spirit, or height of confidence, were sufficient to remove it, and to engage men in such a desperate and unaccountable enterprize, as this supposition would render the pursuit of happiness: for how fond and groundless a presumption were it, to pursue that which all mankind had ever as unsuccessfully as earnestly and indefatigably attempted? I have therefore endeavour'd with all my might in the former chapter to free mens minds from any suspicion of fears of this kind, answering all objections that might seem to represent misery fatal, or happiness unattainable, and by undeniable proofs confirming the opposite truth. But if this be true, that happiness is attainable; and if it be as true, as certainly 'tis, that there needs no eloquence to enkindle in any man the desires of happiness, or to incite and spur him on to endeavour its attainment, all mankind being carried on towards it by natural, and therefore constant and passionate inclinations; will it not be natural to demand, whence is it that so few are happy? Whence is it, that misery and trouble, affliction and sorrow fill almost every bosom? Not only no kingdom or city; but no town, no village, no family, I might almost add, no one particular person, being exempt or free; no place or person is privileg'd against grief and trouble; it invades the tribunal of judges, the thrones of princes; and,

and, what is almost as sacred as either, the retirements and closets of the devout and learned ; nay, scarcely is the church and the altar a secure sanctuary against it.

This will not be difficult to comprehend, if we do thoroughly weigh, and soberly consider the true causes of man's misery ; but the particular and distinct discussion of each of these will fall in its proper place in the following treatises ; and therefore I shall discourse of them here only generally and briefly, as the nature of an introduction requires.

Many are the particular causes of human misery ; but they may be all reduc'd to this universal and immediate one, namely, *That we do not live conformable to our reason.*

Deviation from reason the general cause of misery.

—*quid enim ratione timemus aut cupimus*—

When do our affections spring from, or when are they governed by reason? When are our desires or fears, our joys or sorrows wise, and just, and rational, and holy? How frequently are our actions nothing else but the brutish and blind sallies of foolish passions, and our lives are generally nothing else but the wandrings and rambles of deluded imaginations? How commonly do we act what we our selves do condemn? And how commonly doth the whole course of our lives displease our selves as much as others; and yet we live on in contradiction to our reason, and sometimes to our inclinations too? How un-

like are we in our conversation, to our selves in retirement? How unlike are we in the devotions of our closets, to our selves in the employment of our several professions? How calm, sedate, wise, holy, and resolv'd in the one? How anxious and uneasy; how foolish, earthy, and inconstant in the other? But in nothing does our deviation from reason more evidently appear, than in two things.

First, In our proposing to our selves false and irrational ends of life; and

This deviation discovers it self.

Secondly, In our insincerity in pursuing the true and rational

one, that is, happiness. As to the *First*, who

1. *In false ends.*

sees not how the life of man is perverted, the force and

tendency of nature crook'd and bow'd to designs utterly unsuitable to the capacities and faculties of a rational mind, and to the great end of our creation? Who can look into the life of man, and not easily conclude, that his chief aim is wealth and greatness, not happiness? Or, which is something sillier, that his design is some unnecessary accomplishment, not virtue and goodness; or a vain esteem and popular applause, not the peace and wisdom of his mind? Who sees not how greedily men pursue those sensual satisfactions, which naturally tend to enslave the soul, and to extinguish the rational pleasure and vigour of our minds? In a word, wealth, and honour, and power, and pleasure, are the idols of mankind: these are the things for which they live, for which they love and value life: these are the glorious

rious possessions which enflame our emulations and our industry: these are the things which the unfortunate man envies, and the fortunate honours: these are the things which distinguish and discriminate mankind into their several ranks and degrees, the contempt or esteem of the world; the respects and affronts; the love and hate of mankind being ever proportion'd to the degrees of wealth and power, which they fancy others possessed of. To these noble ends the sage and experienc'd parent trains up his young ones, instilling daily into them all the suitable maxims of covetousness and ambition; and judging of their proficiency and hopefulnes, by the progress they make towards these ends; that is, the more enslav'd they are, the more hopeful, the more promising is their youth.

Nor are men more zealous in pursuing the false, than cold and insincere in pursuing the true ends of life, 2. Coldness in pursuit of our true end. virtue and happiness. This is too too evident to any one who shall consider how fond we are of our diseases and our errors, how impatient of that instruction or reproof, which tends to cure, undeceive, and disabuse us; how sluggish we are in the study of important truths, how listless and remiss in the use of those means which conduce to virtue, to the freeing of our minds, and to the confirming our resolutions. And therefore, lastly, how light, wavering, and unconstant we are in the practice of those things which right reason convinces us to be our duty.

C H A P. II.

The particular and immediate cause of
ill success.

Three more particular and immediate causes of ill success assigned. 1. The frame and contexture of human nature. 2. Vicious education. 3. Vicious conversation; the natural effects of which are; 1. Inconsiderateness; 2. False notions; 3. Ungovernableness and impotency of will; 4. Insincerity; 5. Levity and inconstancy. The whole exemplified.

ALL this that I have said in the former chapter, is plain and evident: we see and feel it, and bemoan it; but yet we live on in the same manner still: whence therefore is this infatuation of our understanding, that enslaves us to false and irrational ends? Whence is that impotence of mind? Whence is that insincerity that deludes our desires, and produces nothing but feeble and unsuccessful endeavours? Neither is this a difficult matter to discover: that we live and act irrationally, proceeds evidently from three causes. *First*, The contexture and frame of our nature. *Secondly*, A vicious education. *Thirdly*, Vicious conversation,

The

The first spring or source of irrational desires and actions, is the contrivance and composition of our nature: our sensual and brutish appetites have their foundation in our natural constitution, as well as our rational affections: for we are made up of body as well as soul. Hence is it that there is in man a doubtful fluctuation and indetermination to different objects; the reason of the mind, and the appetite of the body distracting and dividing him by their different proposals; the impressions of sense and representations of reason successively awakening in him very different, and generally very contrary desires; whereas angels by the perfection, and beasts by the imperfection of their nature, are determin'd and confin'd to their proper and necessary objects: man is left to a strange uncertainty, undetermin'd by the reasons of the mind, or the instinct or appetite of the body; mov'd indeed successively by each, perfectly govern'd and over-rul'd by neither. But it were well for man, that the inclinations of these two different principles were so justly pois'd, that he were naturally left in a true liberty and pure indifference, equally able to follow the dictates of reason and the appetites of flesh and blood: but, alas! how impetuous are the lusts of the body! how irresistible are those passions which the objects of sense, aided by a carnal imagination, raise in us! on the other side, how cold are the representations of reason, when we most need its assistance and authority! how faint and feeble the natural

The contexture of nature the first cause of an irrational life.

ral inclination of the soul to what is truly good and great! how remote and distant the rewards of virtue; and consequently how weak and cold their influence, and how faint and imperfect is the pleasure that attends it, abstracted from future rewards in all other minds besides those who are arriv'd in some sort at perfection! 'Tis true, at some seasons and upon some occasions, the remonstrances of conscience are so sharp, its reproaches so bitter, the disdain and confusion of the mind so unsufferable, that they render that which is a pleasure to the sense, a torment to the soul; and its agreeableness to our imagination cannot make amends for its harshness and contradiction to our reason. But, alas! these are but short-liv'd fits which soon pass over; for business diverts, pleasure enchants, and repeated violence offer'd to our reason, stupifies and deadens the natural conscience; and what is worse than all this, a silly and vicious education does generally so corrupt our judgments, and prepossess us with vain and foolish affections, that the checks of conscience are extremely seldom, and extremely faint, unless the commission of some gross sin do awaken it by a deep and deadly wound. This is,

2. A second cause of that general apostacy and defection from reason so notorious in the world, *A silly and vicious education.* How

Education a second cause of man's misery.

well does it fare with children, when they derive only their original corruption from their parents? Ah! how often are their weak dispositions to vice nurs'd and cherish'd by their
parents

parents into an absolute, uncontrollable, and settled tyranny? nay, what is worse yet, how often are the seeds of virtue, those towardly dispositions which many bring into the world with them, choaked and stifled; not only by the neglect, not only by the indulgence, but even by the example and authority of parents?

— *Velocius & citius nos*
Corrumpunt vitiorum exempla domestica, magnis
Cum subeant animos auctoribus —

Juv. Sat. 14.

Ah, with what speed must the infection spread,
When youth by parents crimes are warranted,
And tempted on to sin! —

When corrupt inclination is ripened into a second nature, when our innate weaknesses and follies are confirmed by those false principles, and that vicious confidence which we derive from education; then we are sent into the world, left to our own disposal, abandon'd to our own government: poor creatures! not only exposed unarm'd, unguarded to temptations; but, like *Sampson* to the *Philistines*, tied and bound too. Ah! could we so easily burst our bonds as he did his! But whence should we recover our lost liberty?

Conversation, instead of being an assistance to us in our endeavours after happiness, doth generally tend *Conversation a third.* to promote our misery. Philosophy is not now the business of conversation; nor is friendship any

any way useful or serviceable to the great end of life: the ligament of society is riot and revelling, or fordid profit and interest, or, peradventure, folly, trifling and impertinence: these are the ties and bonds of our confederacies; so that whatever authority our friends and acquaintance have over us, whatever influence they have upon us, is employ'd to no other purpose, but to recommend and endear vice to us, to render it, if not beautiful and lovely to us, at leastwise less deformed and ugly than it is. Hence it is, that retirement is so generally recommended to those who design to make any progress in true wisdom; and such as are truly virtuous do so passionately complain of the disadvantages they suffer by conversing with the world: for the truth is, wisdom and goodness are such unfashionable themes of discourse, such unusual, nay, I may add, unwelcome subjects of entertainment, that the company deserves now to be praised, which is only barren and unprofitable, not hurtful, and wherein we suffer no greater loss than that of our time.

It is now easy to imagine, what fruit a corrupt nature must bring forth, when not only left destitute of necessary cultivation, but de-
The effect of these three. prayed yet more by a vicious education, and vicious conversation. What can all these together bring forth, but a loathsome brood of diseases and vices; such as these, rashness, precipitancy, heedlessness, and unthoughtfulness; false notions, ungovernableness and impotence
of

of will ; insincerity, levity, and inconstancy ; which are the plagues of human life, and the fatal obstacles of our tranquillity ? For either they obstruct our true happiness, by preventing our search after it ; or delude our search, by corrupting and perverting our understanding ; or else they frustrate and defeat the influence of its discovery, by obstinate reluctances in the body, and an unhappy impotence in the mind : all this is manifest upon the most transient glance we can take of these particulars. To begin with want of consideration : this is a necessary effect of that corruption and depravation which I ascribed to nature, education and conversation ; the body, unaccustomed to obey, is impatient of deliberation when its pleasure is in view ; and a taking imagination overrules whatever weak plea reason makes : nay, what is worse, the very disuse of reason in men abandon'd to the conduct of custom, and sway'd by the enticement of inclination, and authority of example, bereaves them almost of the faculty itself : so that their life and actions are not the effects of judgment and deliberation ; but injudicious, unweigh'd custom ; or more rash, heedless, and precipitant passion. And can any man think, that when the meanest art or profession is not learned without right instruction or just diligence ; wisdom, the great art of living happily, should be attained without as much as just consideration ? When a man cannot grow rich or prosperous, without contrivance and industry, is it probable
 he

he should grow happy by inadvertency and chance? It is impossible.

For innumerable will be the false and pernicious notions which such a one, corrupted and depraved, rash and unadvised, must be betray'd into, and confirm'd in; there is no principle so false, no practice so absurd, which such do not readily entertain. Hence 'tis that men do so generally live by rote; that mens principles are the fashionable ones of the neighbourhood or nation; that their manner of life takes that shape which their rank and quality, and the chance of their conversation gives it; and their very religion itself is a native commodity of the soil they are planted in. Hence 'tis, finally, that men are unrighteous and wicked, careless and unconcern'd, notwithstanding all the calls and invitations, all the rewards and menaces of the gospel, convictions of conscience, impulses of grace, mercies, threats, and judgments of God: and covetousness, luxury, uncleanness, prophaneness, ambition are as constantly practis'd, in court and city, as condemn'd in the pulpit and press: nor is it to be expected otherwise; for false notions give countenance and authority to our follies, and fortify us in our wretched miscarriages against the assaults of law and reason, of conscience and God himself: no condition is so desperately forlorn as that of sin and folly, backed and authorized by inveterate principles! These render our very industry not only useless and unserviceable, but even fatal and destructive to our happiness:
these

these defeat the very tendency of our nature towards happiness; and, turning it into a wrong channel, make it run with violence toward our misery.

These help to render our passions both numerous and ungovernable, by presenting some things as evils which are not, and by augmenting real evils beyond their natural proportion: and herein consist the very essence and being of human misery, or, at least, a part of it; when our own folly encreases both the number and weight of evils, and our numberless passions do exceed all just and natural bounds. And this is a constant truth, the less understanding there is in any man, the more violent is his passion; the passion of a fool being like the zeal of a bigot, the more blind, the more furious. All this makes good the observation of the poet:

*Ungovernableness and
impotence of will.*

*Non qui Sidonio contendere callidus Ostro,
Nescit Aquinatem potentia veller a fucum,
Certius accipiet damnum, propiusque medullis,
Quam qui non poterit vero distinguere falsum.*

Horat. Lib. 1. Ep. 10.

*Not the deluded trader, who doth buy
Counterfeit Aquin for the Tyrian dye;
His folly shall more surely or dearly rue,
Than he who does false notions take for true.*

Insincerity is another fruit of the corruption of our nature, and the deprivation of education and con-

Insincerity.

versation.

verſation. This is that which makes us lazy in our ſearch after truth, and partial in the examination of our opinions and actions: for when the bent of our nature runs towards carnal pleaſures, and this is confirmed by education and falſe notices of things, we ſhall be apt to take up and careſs ourſelves with preſent, eaſy, and ready entertainments. We ſhall not extend our care or proſpect very far, but be content to enjoy the ſweet in every preſent circumſtance and event, without regard to their future tendency, which was the happineſs, if my memory deceive me not, of the *Cyrenaiicks*. The ſame diſtemper prevailing, we ſhall be apt to think every thing healthful that is pleaſant, and eaſily admit thoſe principles moſt true, which are moſt grateful to our appetites. 'Tis not therefore to be wonder'd at, if the ſame humour which makes us greedy of embracing, makes us obſtinate in defending errors: for the ſame fondneſs and partiality renders us incapable of inſtruction, and impatient of advice, though deſign'd by the moſt faithful affection, and manag'd with the moſt prudent tenderneſs.

*Fidis offendar medicis, irascat amicus,
Cur me funeſto properant arcere veterno?
Quæ nocuere ſequar, fugiam quæ profore credam*

Horat. Lib. 1. Ep. 8.

*The plainneſs of phyſicians, and of friends,
Tho' by affection mov'd, and truth, offends;
Can't I enjoy my fatal reſt for you?
Let me alone my ruin to purſue,
And fly my happineſs.—*

It

It is easy now to judge what must be the state of that man who is insincere and false to himself in all his deliberations, and obstinate in the defence of his errors; who is partial in all his own reflections, and impatient of the faithful reflections of others: how is it probable, that that man should attain any rational happiness, who is incapable of using his own reason aright, or enjoying the benefit of others?

But 'tis not the only mischief we suffer by these diseases of the mind, that they render us incapable of discovering true happiness; they do also disable us to pursue it, when discover'd, with that earnestness and vigour which the importance of the thing requires: for they must needs beget in us a slothful remissness in our endeavours, and an unhappy levity and inconstancy in all our designs and purposes. 'Tis very improbable that we should be steady and immoveable in those purposes which are not founded upon clear and solid reason; or zealous in such as are encounter'd with violent opposition from ourselves. * Hence 'tis, that the scenes of man's life are so various, so frequently changed, that every man does so often shift his person, and appear a very different actor on the stage. Thus we meet with epi-

Levity and inconstancy.

* Quidam alternis Vatinii, alternis Catones; & modò parùm illis Severus est Curius, parùm pauper Fabricius, parùm frugi & contentus vili Tubero. Modò Licinium divitiis Apicium Cœnis, Mecænatem deliciis provocant. Maximum judicium est mentis fluctuatio, & inter simulationem virtutum, amoremque virtutum, assidua jactatio. *Sen. Epist. 120.*

curean and stoick, clergyman and merchant, devoto and statesman, enthusiast and parasite, all acted in their turn by the self-same man; who is toss'd to and fro by the sudden fallies or gusts of various desires and passions. Nor is it any man's wit or sagacity that turns him into all these different shapes, but his vice and folly: for, being ignorant of the true good, the true happiness of man, he catches at fleeting shadows, and courts thin airy dreams, and uncertain apparitions; and therefore daily sets up new projects, and those too repugnant to the old: and thus man wearieth out himself by vain and unsuccessful, because unconstant vanishing attempts. This were tolerable, did it befall us only in temporal things, whose emptiness makes our success itself frustration and disappointment: But, alas! we suffer the same thing in the weighty concern of virtue and happiness: our religious purposes do generally die strangled in the birth; and all our glorious designs dash and break themselves to pieces against the next difficulty or temptation; and yet, relaps'd into a state of folly, and sin, and danger, we would again return to that narrow path, whose steep and rough ascent discouraged us: wandring in night and fog, and storm, fain would we reach the happy region where calm light and chearful day does ever dwell: plainly, and without a metaphor, when we resolve to be good and virtuous, we are kept from it by the seeming ease and pleasure of sin, and the hardships necessary to be undergone in the attainments of virtue:

virtue: and yet the remorse and danger, and dissatisfaction, which do always accompany a negligent and sinful life, makes us wish for the peace and comfort, the security and rewards of virtue. But, oh! how seldom do we proceed farther than wishes, or some attempts more lazy or dispirited than our wishes? The reason's plain, virtue is more rational, vice is more grateful; the understanding is convinced, but the will is enslaved; *the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.* A sinner cannot purchase the pleasures of the body, without the checks and reproaches of the mind; and this makes him unsteady and irresolute in all his purposes. Would you see an instance of the whole matter? You feel it better than I can describe it; and yet 'tis not difficult to make a tolerable representation of that, which I have in myself often proved, and often bewailed. Nor can I see, why I should blush to own those frailties which are so incident to human nature, that the greatest glory and happiness of mortal man is, not to have been never subject to them, but to have conquered them.

The whole exemplified.

One while, moved by the gaze and wonder, the respect and reverence with which the world treats greatness, and by those opportunities of pleasure which I saw wealth and power put into mens hands; I resolv'd to rouse all the strength, to employ all the force and power of mind and body for the attainment of wealth and greatness. I flatter'd my self, I knew how

to merit ; nor did I think my self incapable of practising all the subtle humble arts of candidates and dependents, could I once prevail with my self to stoop to them : but when the toil and difficulty, and meanness too of this attempt had given me a little disgust ; and the pleasures of friendship and fortune (by neither of which have I ever been utterly deserted) encountered my natural inclinations to ease and softness, I soon exchang'd my former notion of happiness for a more calm and quiet one ; I began to think it wise to live to day, and to prefer my present blessings in possession, before the uncertain future ones of opinion and expectation. I wished for an opportunity to retire from every thing that might awaken my ambition, or interrupt my quiet ; and thought, that in a lazy shade and obscure retreat I might with most freedom and truest contentment enjoy my self, a cheap pleasure, and an humble friend, and laugh at the ambitious restless part of mankind.

Sometimes springing a thought of light, and lost in the pleasure of a speculation, I have resolved to devote my self entirely to a studious life ; I ador'd the memory of those great souls, whose works have given them an immortality here below ; I looked upon the learned (as *Epicurus* words it) as gods amongst men ; I did not question but the contemplation, which once seemed to me to be the business of angels, must needs be the joy and delight of man ; but, alas ! that I must say it, all that learning which is purchased with toil and difficulty, is but a
vain

vain and uncertain amusement of the mind ; it has much of pomp and ostentation in it, but is of very little use : I would it were not true, that those parts of learning, which are of most use, have least of certainty and demonstration ; and those, which can justly pretend to no certainty, make men the worst return of their studies, and are of least use. I have observed accordingly, that the most learned are not always the most serviceable to the world not only for this reason, but also thoughtfulness and retirement rendering men very commonly as unfit for as averse to business, bereaving them of that sufficiency and skill, that address and presence of mind, which is not to be gained but by conversation and experience : and it was easy for me to remark, that the active and busy man was not only more skilful, but more eloquent too than the contemplative, as having a much clearer insight into the humours and passions of men, and the secret springs and interests by which they are moved, and being able to manage them with a more popular dexterity, and more cleanly, genteel insinuation. And now I began to esteem of learning as a pretty ornament of life, but not fit to be the support of it ; I thought it might serve to fill the void and empty spaces, but not to be the business and employment of it.

I have been sometimes ravished with the beauty of a noble action, and resolved to lead a life severe and virtuous, spent not in private ease and lazy diversions, but in the honour and pleasure of doing good. But, good God !

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how

how weak is nature! How slight are such impressions! How numerous the temptations! How prevalent the inclinations which carry us another way!

This has been a long time my state, tossed on uncertain seas, and hoysing sail to every wind that blew; and, I find, that neither greatness of mind nor fortune doth raise men above this inconstancy: for I meet with my own reflections, my own passions in the excellent *Seneca* (*de tranquillitate animi*;) only the character of himself he there presents us with, is express'd with more life and briskness, and exalted above this of mine, as was the nature and station of that great man above mine. I cannot say, that I have yet made my port; but I have discover'd it; and I sail, though slowly, yet in a direct line, having my happiness, my haven, all along in ken.

C H A P.

CHAPTER III.

The cure of the former maladies.

Conformity to reason the general cure. This conformity must appear in two things; 1. In the proposal, or right and true ends; 2. In the pursuit of them with zeal and constancy. Inferred from all how we are to treat the body. What our education. What our conversation ought to be.

FROM this account of the rise and progress of man's misery, 'tis easy to infer what it is wherein the happiness of this present life consists, or, at least, what the universal and immediate cause of it is; namely, a conformity of our minds and lives to true reason and sound philosophy. This is a state of light and knowledge, of peace and security, of lasting and rational delight: this invests the understanding in its just sovereignty and dominion, and restores the will to its true liberty; this makes our prospect of the future taking and inviting, and our reflection on the time past easy and comfortable; this lays a solid foundation for our reliance on the merits and intercession of our mediator, and raises our hope as high as heaven; this prevents our misfortunes and calamities, or, what is more happy, enables us to conquer 'em: in a word,

The nature or universal and immediate cause of happiness inferred.

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this

this makes us great in life, but much more great and venerable in death, righteousness, and goodness; revealing its beauty and glory most then, when all things else do shrink and fade.

We see the happiness that springs from our conformity and subjection to reason; and 'tis easy from those two things, wherein, especially, I have declared the sinners deviation from reason to consist, to infer, what we must do, if we will live rationally. First, *We must propose to ourselves a wise and rational end of life.* Secondly, *We must pursue this end with life, and spirit, and constancy.* These I lay down as the most comprehensive rules for the attainment of happiness: I will therefore say something of each, but briefly, and in general terms, as the nature of this treatise requires.

First, We must propose to ourselves a rational and wise end of life; that is, the true happiness of a rational creature: when we have done this, when our understandings are fully convinced and persuaded of the excellence and necessity of it, and when we have possessed our minds with a sacred reverence, a firm and devout love for it; this, like the eastern star, the *Magi*, will lead us through all the windings and turnings of this life to *Bethlehem* and happiness: this will soon disengage us from that labyrinth of contradictory desires and wild opinions in which the fool and sinner is endlessly entangled. When we have done this, we shall find every place a school, every one we converse with a tutor, and every passage

Two general rules for attaining happiness inferred.

passage of our life, or another's, full of instruction: not a look, whether chearful or melancholy; not a word, whether wise or foolish; not a sigh, that an oppressed heart vents; not a joy, that smiles in the face, but will teach us philosophy, shew us the use and beauty of divine truth and divine virtue: for in the vicious we shall see what false and fading pleasures, what idle fears, what vain sorrows, false principles, and the tyranny of sin fills their minds with: in the good we shall see what true peace virtue creates in the mind, what constancy and majesty in the life, what courage and hopes it inspires in affliction, what magnanimity and humility in prosperity, and, in a word, what light, what serenity it diffuses thro' the whole man: we shall see in many instances every day what the mischief or irrational desires and ungovernable passions are; and, on the contrary, how great the advantages, how charming the beauty of truth and virtue, of wisdom, and due government, and regulation of our passions: nor is the instruction and illumination of our understanding promoted by every accident which falls under our observation, and by all sorts of people with whom we converse: the only advantage which we shall reap from the prefixing ourselves a rational end of life, and the possessing our souls with the love of it (for when we have done this, we shall be actually freed from the greater part at least of the troubles and calamities of life;) we shall be raised above all senseless, silly desires, and consequently above all senseless, silly vexations and
griefs,

griefs, and unmanly complaints: for when we have set our hearts upon true and rational happiness, how unnecessary, nay how despicable, will most of these things appear which we now admire and covet: we shall not then think it reasonable to sigh and toil for this house, or that land, for this preferment or that trade, this honour or that beauty; for these are no essential, no necessary ingredients of a rational happiness. Nor is this all; thy joys and pleasures will grow and encrease upon thee; for by approaching every day nearer and nearer to thy great end, thou wilt be wonderfully surprized with fresh delight, whilst thou dost behold the fruit of thy travel, the advantage of thy philosophy, and the daily increase of thy wealth: thou wilt see thyself, like a thriving plant, grow up daily more strong and beautiful: the toil of other sorts to no happy end. The covetous man grows not richer by heaping up, nor the ambitious man greater by rising higher; or, at least, neither grows happier by being either richer or greater: but thou wilt every day grow wiser by study, more virtuous by practice, and calmer and happier by both. O! to what a height and perfection will thy pleasure rise, when thy store shall grow big enough to feast and entertain, not thyself only, but all men else; when the thirsty shall come and drink at thy streams, and the scorched shall refresh themselves under thy shade; when thou, led by the same spirit with our great Lord and Master, shalt open the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf, shalt cast out devils,

devils, and strengthen the feet of the lame; I mean, when thou shalt teach the foolish wisdom; when thou shalt persuade and charm the obstinate; when thou shalt deliver the unclean and passionate from the evil spirits, the vices that possessed them; and when thou shalt teach the enslaved and impotent sinner how to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil; thou wilt then indeed, as thou art the image, so do the works of God; thou wilt be a heavenly and titular, tho' mortal, angel amongst men; and where-ever thou dost, there wisdom, virtue, and happiness will dwell too. But to attain to this state, 'tis not only necessary to prefix ourselves a rational end of life: but also,

Secondly, We must pursue this end with life, and spirit, and constancy. It is not a good fit, or a devout passion, that will make us either virtuous or happy; there must go more than this to conquer an ill habit, or implant a good one: 'tis not one brisk rally, or one warm charge, that will subdue the world and flesh, and put us into an entire possession of victory and security; no, when warmth and passion have made a prosperous impression on the enemy, a sober patience must make good the ground we have gained; a steady and resolved courage must urge and press the advantage to an issue: without vigour, patience and constancy, to carry us still forwards, the warmth and passion with which we begin the course of virtue, will stand us in little stead. Ah! how many have march'd out of *Egypt*, and perish'd in the wilderness! How many have wrecked within

within sight of shore? How many have lost their reward of repentance by their relapse and revolt? How many have fallen by negligence, security, and sloth, into that wretched state, out of which they had once deliver'd themselves by courage, resolution, and self-denial? Nor is the necessity of vigour, patience, and constancy, in our pursuit of happiness, the only motive to it; the certainty of success, and the greatness and eminence of the advantages which attend it, are sufficient to animate and encourage any man that seriously considers it. The labour and hope of the husbandman is lost, unless the fruitful earth and fruitful seed be bless'd with fruitful seasons too: the trade of the merchant is properly but adventuring, and his increase depends as much on the winds and waves, and other as uncertain chances, as on his own skill and diligence: fortune must assist the courage and the conduct of the soldier, or else poverty and dishonour will be the only purchase of his blood and hazard; but it fares not thus with man in his pursuit of happiness. The traffick of the philosopher depends not upon winds nor tide; the seeds of virtue, if the ground be well cultivated, will thrive in any weather, and sometimes better in storms than sun-shine; and, finally, the success of our conflicts against sin and misery depends not on our fortune, but our courage and our industry. How unspeakable a pleasure is it now to think that we cannot be disappointed in our travels, nor defeated in our hopes, while we labour for virtue and happiness; if our endeavours be sincere

cere and persevering, our success is certain and unquestionable: but what an accession doth this pleasure receive, when we consider, what will be the glorious fruit of this success, tranquillity, carefulness, greatness, and enlargement of soul; indolence, pleasure, life, immortality, security, and, in one word, happiness. O glorious reward of our conflict, and our victories! What neither wealth, nor greatness, nor honour, nor crowns; what neither blood, nor toil, nor cunning, nor fortune, can give! That rational and sincere endeavours after wisdom and virtue, will give the meanest man upon earth, that is, happiness! O blessed issue of philosophical, that is, truly christian travel! The rich, the great, the honourable, the mighty, may complain even of their success, and repent them of the purchase they have made at too dear a rate; but the philosopher, the Christian, can never repent of the success of his study, his self-denial, his patience, his prayers: for how is it possible to complain of being happy, or repent of being wise and virtuous? There is nothing empty, nothing evil, nothing mean, nothing uncertain in true wisdom, in rational happiness.

This brief and general account of happiness, and of the way to it, does naturally instruct us how we are to treat the body, and what it is that a rational education and wise conversation ought to design and aim at. If our conformity to reason be either the happiness of this present life, or the immediate cause of it (for I will not trouble myself with nice and subtle distinctions

distinctions in moral discourses) then 'tis plain that we are oblig'd to such a kind of discipline and government of our selves, as may render the body most obsequious to the mind, and may exalt and establish the power and dominion of reason : for whatever tends to obscure our understanding, to enfeeble the will, to cherish our sensual inclinations, and augment their force and violence, doth so far necessarily tend to deprave the nature of man, and to subvert and overthrow his happiness : and from hence it appears, that the excellence of education consists in possessing the minds of youth with these principles, with true notions of good and evil ; and informing and moulding their minds into an esteem and veneration for wisdom and virtue. The first virtue I conceive a child capable of, is obedience, and this is indeed the foundation of all virtue : to this, let him be inur'd and train'd up betimes : he that finds it easy to obey another's reason, will not find it difficult to obey his own ; for when the judgment comes to be form'd and ripen'd, when it comes to exercise its authority, it will find a body not us'd to give, but receive commands. From this virtue of obedience, he is to be led gently on to a rational and voluntary choice of what is good ; he must be taught gradually, not only his plain duty, but the motives to it ; for it is as necessary to his happiness that he should love, as that he should know his duty. But this we strive in vain to instil by art and instruction, if we do not instil
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it by the influence and authority of wise and excellent examples too.

As to conversation, 'tis plain, that it ought to be the practice of those virtues which a pious education instill'd; and that we ought to have no less reverence for our reason, when we are at our own disposal, and under our own government, than we had for the authority of our parents, when we were under theirs. What ought to be the tie and ligaments of friendship, what the rules of conversation, and what the great ends of society, is abundantly manifest from the nature of that happiness which it behoves us to propose as the great end of life: what is the great end of man, ought to be the design of society; and therefore 'tis plain, that wisdom and virtue ought to be the foundation and bond of those friendships which we enter into, voluntary and of choice; that conversation should be so regulated, that we may grow by it more wise and virtuous; or at least, that our discourse, if it be not profitable, should be innocent; and that we should do and say nothing in company, which we should have reason to blush at, or repent of in private.

I have now finished this discourse, which I design'd only as an introduction, or preparative for those which are to follow: I do not think that 'tis now necessary for me in a pathetick conclusion, to persuade men to endeavour to be happy. The desires of happiness are inseparable from all beings; at leastwise, 'tis impossible to be rational, and not desire to
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be happy. If I have therefore sufficiently prov'd, that 'tis impossible to be happy : and if I have shew'd that a diligent enquiry, a vigorous and persevering industry is necessary to the attainment of it ; if I have pointed out the general causes of human misery, and together with them their general cure and remedy ; I have done enough to enkindle those desires, and beget those resolutions in my reader, which, if they do not make him actually happy, will at least dispose and prepare him for a further enquiry after happiness ; which was the utmost design of these papers. I have therefore nothing more to put him in mind of now, but this, That as I do all along suppose the grace of God necessary to second and enforce our reason ; so I would ever be understood to urge and press the necessity of our prayers, as much as that of our endeavours ; the fervency of the one, as much as the sincerity of the other.

F I N I S.

HUMAN LIFE:

BEING A

SECOND PART

OF THE

ENQUIRY

AFTER

HAPPINESS.

BY

RICHARD LUCAS, D. D.

Late Prebendary of *Westminster*.

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HUMAN

HUMAN LIFE:

OR, A

SECOND PART

OF THE

Enquiry after Happiness.

The INTRODUCTION.

I AM not ignorant, that dedications and prefaces, if they have in them a genius of eloquence ; if they sparkle with wit and fancy ; if they be enrich'd with sense, and animated by moving and vital language ; are like graceful accesses, and beautiful fronts to buildings ; which, while they raise in the beholder a secret delight, do prepossess him with favourable opinions of them : but this being only a continuation of a
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2 The INTRODUCTION.

former treatise; and having little encouragement, either from my humour or talents, to any attempt of that kind, I shall never suffer myself to be unnecessarily engag'd in it. I will therefore in this place only give a short account of what I have performed in the first volume, and design in this. In the *first section* I shew'd, that happiness was neither so great and divine a possession, as to be above the ambition of man; nor so inconsiderable, as not to deserve it: and next, that it was not to be expected from time or chance, fancy or inclination; but from reason and industry, virtue and religion. In the *second*, having first briefly stated the notion of happiness, I endeavour'd to demonstrate the possibility of obtaining it, and to rescue so important a truth from the prejudices and objections that might stifle and oppress it. In the *third*, I just pointed out the causes of human misery, or of unsuccessfulness in this enquiry, and the remedies of it.

Having thus remov'd whatever might discourage or frustrate our endeavours
after

The INTRODUCTION. 3

after happiness, I am now to proceed to a more strict and particular examination of the nature of it, and the ways and methods that lead to it. In which I am oblig'd, according to the general design or scheme laid down in the former volume, to treat of *Life, Perfection, Indolence, and Fruition*: accordingly I here begin with *Life*; and, dividing this book into *three sections*, I will, in the *first*, discourse of the true Notion of Human Life; in the *second*, of the right conduct or regulation of two different kinds of life, active and contemplative; in the *third*, of the right husbanding of human life, by prolonging and improving it.

 S E C T. I.

 Of the true Notion of Life.

C H A P. I.

Life a great Blessing in itself. Proves a great Evil to some, and why? Happiness perfect only in Heaven.

THough life renders us capable of pain as well as pleasure, yet has it ever been valued as the richest blessing; the love of it is the earliest and the strongest principle in us: it moves the infant before he knows how to rate the pleasures of life, or can apprehend any evil in death: it grows up to strength and maturity in man, and is the sovereign passion in him, to which all the rest pay homage: *Skin for Skin, and all that a Man has will he give for his Life*: age does very little diminish it, and misery it self cannot extinguish it. Nor does this passion want the suffrage of the wisest and the greatest men, or the approbation of God: for one chief design of society and government, of laws and arms, is the protection of life: and God, who best understood the bent of human nature, has propos'd, as the big-
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6 *Of the true Notion*

gest blessing and powerfullest motive to obedience, a long life (I examine not now what it farther prefigur'd) under the Old Testament, and an eternal one under the New. And for all this there is plain reason: for life, if it be not, when rightly understood, happiness it self, yet is it surely the foundation of it; and the foundation in a building, if it be not as beautiful as upper stories, yet is ever as necessary. I wonder not therefore, that the sentence of death shook the piety of *Hezekiah*, and the courage of *Saul*; so that the one *wept sore*, and the other *fell to the ground*.

But to all this will it not be objected: Alas! How many are there, who all their days are no more sensible of the good of life, than of the pleasures and repasts of a dream; who being come to threescore years and ten, that is, to die, do not yet understand what it is to live? Ah! How many, which is yet worse, to whom life is a burden, and yet death a terror: who, when they are to give back the breath of life, have just reason to wish they had never receiv'd it, and to curse the day that they were born? And do not *Elijah*, *Job*, *Solomon*, *Jeremy*, *Esdras*, and many others, great and good men, talk of life at a different rate from what I here do; and represent it to us under another notion, and quite contrary character? *Better is the day of death, than the day of one's birth. Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was said, there is a man-child conceived.* The reflection of *Esdras* on the common misery of mankind, has as much weight

weight and sense, as *Job's* on his own has passion: *for what profit is it for men now in this present time to live in heaviness, and after death to look for punishment?* These, and such like passages, we meet with every-where; which seem to give us no very taking idea of life. To this I answer; 'tis with life, as with all other blessings; the right use of it is our happiness, the abuse of it our misery. There is nothing in the nature of the thing that implies evil or trouble; nor has it any necessary and inevitable tendency to it. We must not therefore estimate a blessing by the mischief it occasions to such as pervert and abuse it; nor by the complaints, which human frailty sometimes forces from wise and good men in a melancholy fit; or finally, by the reflections they sometimes make, not on the intrinsic worth, or natural tendency of life, but on the evils which flow from the corruption or depravation of it. 'Tis true, when all is said, heaven is the proper region of happiness; there it dwells in its glory and majesty, in all its fulness and excellence; but what then? Because perfection does properly belong to heaven, is there no virtue upon earth? Because all things are in their maturity and consummation there, shall we deny that there is any sweetness or beauty here? Just so must we think of the happiness of this, in comparison of that of another world: it is here in its infancy; we do slumber, and are scarcely ever fully awake: we see little, penetrate and comprehend less; and we move very feebly and unsteadily: but all this while we grow up to strength, we ad-

vance towards perfection, our joynts grow firmer, our stature increaseth, our understanding dawns towards day, and our affections are gradually animated with a more generous and lasting heat: so that all this while this infant state of happiness is pleasant and promising; and every step in the whole progress towards perfection, presents us with fresh beauties and delights; but I know no body so fantastick, as to despise the present life, because it is not equal to that above: And he that thinks there is none above, sets the more value on this, because he has nothing more or farther to expect. I will not therefore spend any more time in endeavouring to prove life a valuable blessing; but rather proceed to shew how every man may really make it such to himself; which, I think, I cannot more compendiously do, than by stating the true notion of human life: for as our misery flows from the abuse, and our happiness from the right use of life; so does the abuse from false, and the right use from true notions of it.

C H A P.

CHAP. II.

Life, what in a natural sense, what in a moral. Life, Perfection, and Enjoyment, inseparably united. More particularly, life consists not in flesh, sensuality, worldliness, devilishness; but in the regulation of all our actions according to right reason.

LIFE may be consider'd, either in a natural or moral sense : in the former acceptation, what it is, is an enquiry very abstruse and intricate, like the *Egyptian Nile*, though its streams be visible to every eye, its source or fountain is concealed; or, like grace, though we feel its energy, and taste its fruits, yet we cannot discover and define its essence: but to carry our discovery thus far, is accuracy enough in moral discourses, whose end is not speculation, but happiness.

Life then, whatever it be in the fountain and essence, as far as we can discern it, is nothing else but that force and vigour which moves and acts the man: and to live, speaking in a natural sense, is to exert the powers and faculties of nature: according to which account of life, 'tis capable of as many notions, as are the different offices it performs: 'tis sense and motion in the body; 'tis perception and fancy in the imagination; 'tis knowledge in the understanding; and love and hate, with all their train or retinue of passions, in the heart or soul.

Now

10 *Of the true Notion*

Now, because all morality consists in the right use of those blessings which our great and bountiful author confers upon us; therefore in a moral sense, the true life of man is nothing else but the right use of our whole nature; an active employing it in its due functions and offices, a vigorous exercise of all our powers and faculties, in a manner suitable to the dignity and design, frame and constitution of our beings. To live then, in a moral sense, is to know and contemplate, to love and pursue that which is the true good of man; this is the life of the understanding, will, affections, and of the whole man: and whatever acts of ours are not some way or other conversant about truth and goodness, are not properly acts of human life, but deviations from it.

And here I cannot chuse but pause a little, to admire and magnify the infinite wisdom and goodness of the almighty Architect, who has contriv'd an inseparable connection and necessary dependence between life, perfection and fruition; every rational act, every right use or exertion of our natural powers and faculties, as it is of the essence of moral life, so does it contribute to the improvement and perfection of our beings, and to the pleasure and felicity of our state: for perfection is the result of such repeated acts, and pleasure of our entertaining our selves with proper and agreeable objects. Happy man! to whom to live, improve and enjoy, is the same thing; who cannot defeat God's goodness and his own happiness, but by perverting his nature, and depraving his faculties;

of HUMAN LIFE. II

ties; but by making an ill use, or none at all, of the favours and bounties of God.

If we examine this notion of life more closely and distinctly, and resolve this general account of it into several particulars, we shall easily arrive at a fuller and clearer comprehension of it.

First, 'tis evident from this account of life, that it does not consist in *stob*, in the mere marriage or cohabitation of soul and body; in mere duration or continuance in this world. *Solomon*, indeed, out of a natural abhorrence of death, tells us, *Truly light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun*, Eccl. 27. Something it is; if we must call it pleasure, 'tis but a faint and low one, such as all the irrational creatures, but bats, and owls, and moles, are capable of; but according to my philosophy, it can never deserve the name of life: he that possesses vital powers and faculties, is in a capacity of life; but he only that exerts them, lives. To live, is not to spend or waste our time, but to employ it: 'tis a lamentable history of life, when it can all be summed up in the few syllables of a funeral ring; he liv'd to, or rather, as it is wont to be expressed, he died such a day of the month, such a year of his age: for indeed he lived not at all. Life is a mere dream; not only on the account of its shortness, but also of its night and lethargy, when stupid ignorance confines and dims the prospect, and sluggishness enfeebles all the powers of the mind: vigour and activity, fruition and enjoyment, make up life; without these,

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these, life is but an imperfect embryo, a mingled twilight, that never will be day; the images, which the slothful form of things, are faint and obscure, like pictures drawn in watery colours, and weak and imperfect strokes; and vanish as easie as those half sounds and imperfect forms which we take in between sleep and waking; all their passions move drowsily and heavily, and all their entertainments have no more relish than abortive fruit, which can never be ripened into sweetness or beauty. When I have observed any one thus wasting away a whole life, without ever being once well awake in it, passing through the world, like a heedless traveller, without making any reflections or observations, without any design or purpose befitting a man; ah! thought I, Is this that creature for which this great theatre the world was made; for which it was so adorned and so enriched? Is this the creature that is the epitome of the world, the top and glory of the visible creation, a little inferiour to angels, and allied to God? Is this machine acted by a moving flame and by a wise and immortal Spirit? ah! How much is this poor useles stupid thing sunk beneath the dignity and design of its nature! How far short is it fallen of the glory to which God had destin'd it! Shall this contemptible thing ever be admitted to eternal life, who has so wretchedly fooled away this temporal one? or, Can crowns and kingdoms be reserved for one, who has been so ill a steward of all these talents God has committed to him? No surely; I could upon the first
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thought imagine, his sluggish soul would vanish like those of brutes; or, as the *Stoicks* fancy, those of fools: I could easily imagine, that it could sleep, not as some fancy all souls do, to the resurrection, but to all eternity. But upon better consideration, I find this ignorant and incogitant life, is not so innocent as to deserve no worse a fate: for is it a small crime to live barren and unfruitful, endowed with so many talents? to frustrate the design of our creation? to choak and stifle all the seed of a divine life and perfection? to quench the grace and spirit of God? In a word, is it a small crime to be false and perfidious to God, unjust and injurious to man? No, it cannot be; and therefore in a parable of our Saviour, wherein the last audit, or day of accompts is represented, the slothful and wicked servant signify one and the same thing, and must undergo one and the same sentence.

Secondly, Life cannot consist in sensuality; that is, in the mere caressing our senses, or the gratification of our carnal appetites. The reasons of this assertion are evident from the general notion of life. For first, this is not the exercise of the whole nature, but a part of it, and that the inferiour and ignobler too. Secondly, it is not an imployment suitable to the dignity of our nature.

First, Sensuality employs only the meaner part of us, *St. Paul* makes mention of the outward and the inward man, and seems to make up the whole man of spirit, soul and body: and some, both divines and philosophers,
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of no small note, both modern and ancient, have taught, that there are two distinct souls in man, a sensitive and a rational one. If this be so, the sensualist, though he seem fond of life, does foolishly contemn the better half of it; and as much a slave to pleasure as he is, he chuses to drink only the dregs, and lets the pure streams of sprightly and delicious life pass by untasted: for, if there be a sensitive and a rational soul, there must be a sensitive and a rational life too, distinct and different from one another, and one as much elevated above the other, as are the principles they flow from. But whether this be so or no, does not import much: for it is plain, that life, whatever it be, is like seed, which, according to the different soil it is sown in, produces fruit more or less rich and succulent, more or less luscious and beautiful: here it sprouts forth like the seven, poor and lean; there like the seven, plump and rich, ears of corn in *Pharaoh's* dream: and should it by way of fiction be suppos'd, that one and the same soul did communicate life to men, beasts, and vegetables; however life in each would be equal in the dignity of its original, it would vastly differ in its effects and operations: so, whether life in man flow from one or two distinct principles, it is evident, that its price and dignity varies according to the different powers and faculties which it moves and animates; and by consequence, that life, which displays it self in the acts of our rational part, will be as different from that which consists in sensation, and the motions of
bodily

bodily appetites, as is the light that glitters in a diamond, from that which faintly imitates it in a pebble; the more numerous and the more exquisite our faculties, the vaster is the empire of life, and the more delicate and charming all its functions and operations. How evident is this in all the organs and senses of the body? let darkness invade the eye, and deafness the ear, and then within what narrow and scanty bounds is the bodily life reduc'd? How few and ignoble are the vital acts and operations of the body? how vile and contemptible are all the fruits or instances of a sensitive life? If then there be no sense or organ of the body superfluous, can we think the rational soul it self can be so? if there be no power, no capacity of a sensitive soul, by which life is not enlarged or enriched, must we not needs conclude, that to extinguish the immortal spirit within us, and, as it were, to discard all its powers and faculties, must needs be, to impoverish, mutilate, and stifle it? since I have a soul as well as a body; since the one is capable of conversing with God and heaven, with truth and moral goodness and perfection, as the other is of conversing with this world of visible objects; I cannot but conclude, that to be destitute of knowledge and faith, of hope and love, is more injurious to the life of man, than to be deaf or blind; that stupidity or lethargy in the soul, such as renders it altogether incapable of rational pleasure, is as inconsistent with the true life of man, as lethargy or a dead palsy in the body can be; and to be excluded from commerce with the invisible world,

world, is as fatal to it, as to be debarred the visible one. From all this 'tis evident, that whether we consider life with respect to its excellence and dignity, or to its enlargement and extension, sensuality is extremely injurious to it in both respects: so far doth it debase and contract it, that I may boldly conclude, to place life in sensuality, is to renounce the much more valuable and delightful part of it, to banish our selves the much better world, and to rob our selves of a thousand joys and pleasures which we might reap from the rational powers and faculties, that is, the noblest capacities and endowments of our nature. Tho' this be abundantly enough to evince, that life consists not in sensuality; yet this being of the highest importance to human happiness, I will proceed to the second argument against it; that is,

Secondly, It is not consonant to the dignity of human nature, or, which is all one, to the design of our beings, conspicuous in our frame and constitution. Who, that ever consider'd what sensuality was, how narrow the extent of sense, how mean and brutish the pleasure that terminates in it, what a corruption and degeneracy it ends in; who, I say, that has ever considered these, and a thousand things more, can believe that sensuality is an employment worthy of a man? Is this the business of a vast and comprehensive mind? Is this consistent with ambitious desires of immortality, with unquenchable thirst of truth, with a capacity of discovering spiritual excellencies, and

and moral beauties and perfections? Was it for this we were endow'd with propensions to worship and adore a Deity? What can be as much as fancied, the use of wisdom, magnanimity, conscience, sagacity, caution, fear, foresight, and anxious enquiries into future things and times, if sensuality had been the only employment design'd man? How much more fit had we been form'd for this end, if there had been in us no reason to check and controul us, no conscience that could fill us with regret for the past, or fear for the future; no wisdom that could teach us, that there were any thing above us. nor greatness of mind that could reproach us for stooping to any thing below us?

Thirdly, 'Tis almost superfluous here to add, that life consists not in *worldliness* or *devilishness*: as to the former of these, by which I mean the cares and pursuits of the world, 'tis plain, that to employ our time and faculties in this alone, is not to live, but at best to provide for life. Necessity may sometimes subject us to the drudgery and slavery of the world; but a voluntary choice never should. I know no other difference between a mean fortune and a great one, than this; that the great one sets a man above those cares and toils, which the mean one forces him to submit to; that the one puts the fortunate man into the immediate possession of all the means and instruments of life, improvement and fruition, and of leisure and opportunity to make use of them; but the latter obliges the less fortunate man to purchase these advantages with toil and sweat,

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felicitude and care : 'tis therefore an unpardonable wilfulness or blindness, whenever that vast falage, which is the infelicity of the mean man, is the choice of the rich and fortunate one. Nor is it a more pardonable error in any, who continue the drudgery and care when the Necessity is over ; and voluntarily suffer all the disadvantages of a narrow fortune, even when they have attain'd to a plentiful one ; who never think it time to begin to live, or to enjoy the success of their cares and diligence : this is an absurdity as gross as his, who, after he has plow'd and sow'd, should refuse to reap ; or his, who having, with much cost and labour, furnish'd out a plentiful table, should not at length find in his heart to fall to and eat.

Life then consists not in the abundance of the things which a man possesses ; much less in the vexation or toil of acquiring, securing, or increasing them, which is that I intend by *worldliness* : but least of all can life consist in *devilishness* : that is, wrath, strife, revenge, pride and such like. This cannot be call'd the vigour and activity, but storm and agony of our nature : this is a state, wherein the understanding is cover'd with a darkness of hell, that is, ignorance of good and evil ; and the passions are but furies unchain'd, and let loose.

Fourthly, Having thus, by resolving particularly concerning life, that it consists not either in *sloth* or *sensuality*, *worldliness* or *devilishness*, pointed out those fatal errors which mis-lead and seduce men from the paths of peace and happiness ; 'tis now time to shew in the last

last place, what it is, wherein life does more immediately and particularly consist; that is, *in a vigorous and active employment of the whole man, according to the rules and dictates of right reason.* When I make reason the director and guide of human life, when I constitute it dictator over all the powers and passions of man, I do no more mean to exclude the aid of revelation, and the spirit of God, than when I affirm the eye to be the guide of the body, I intend to deny the necessity of light to good eyes, or of spectacles and collyriums to dim or disturbed ones. The proposition thus guarded, will appear indisputable to any who shall consider the frame and make of man. That we are rational creatures, is a truth never hitherto controverted; and that reason is the sovereign faculty in us, appears from the universal appeal of all sides and all sects, to its tribunal. Not the virtuous and wise only, but the loose and the vicious plead the authority of reason in defence of their choice and actions; and in all the numberless disputes that are in the world, though only one side can have the warrant and countenance of reason; yet all do pretend to it: so that though there be no power or authority which in reality is more frequently opposed and violated, there is also none which is more unanimously owned, and universally acknowledged; as therefore it is plain, from what has been discoursed before, that life consists not in vital powers and faculties, but in the exercise and employment of them; so is it as plain, that in this we are not to follow the conduct of fancy and

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imagination, of lust and passion, but of reason. This is the right use of our natural gifts, which distinguishes man from beasts, and men from one another; the hero from the caitiff and villain, the philosopher from the fool, and the saint from the sinner: in this consists the order and dignity of human nature, in this the beauty and tranquillity of human life; and in this the inward joy and peace of the mind of man. This will be yet more manifest to whosoever will take the pains to enquire what the office of reason is: 'tis this which teaches us what rank we hold among the creatures of God, what station we fill in the world, what our relations and dependencies are, what the duty and what the hopes, what the benefit and what the pleasure that result from each: 'tis this which prescribes all our powers and passions, their order, place, and work; 'tis this which distinguishes truth and falsehood, good and evil; 'tis this which fills us with the knowledge, and enflames us with the love of our sovereign happiness, and judges of the means and ways that lead to it; and finally, 'tis this which teaches us to set a true rate and value upon all inferiour things, in proportion to their tendency, either to promote or obstruct our sovereign good. Happy therefore is that life where reason is the sovereign arbitrator of all our actions, and where the imagination and passions, all the powers of the soul, are yet servants and instruments of reason. Happy this life; for it can neither want pleasure to entertain it, nor business to employ it: happy the soul which thus lives;
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for it shall never want comfort to support it, hopes to encourage it, nor crowns to reward it : For as it grows in wisdom and goodness, so must it in favour with God and man ; and its peace and tranquillity, its joys and expectations, must receive a proportionable increase too.

C H A P. III.

Inferences drawn from the former chapter.

First, *To cultivate our reason. The use of which is more particularly insisted on with respect to three things, that is, the employing our faculties, the bearing evils and enjoying good. Secondly, To renounce every thing that opposes it, as fancy, passion, example, custom. Thirdly, That 'tis possible to be happy in every state. Fourthly, That a long life is a great blessing, consider'd either in it self, or with respect to the life to come.*

FROM the notion of life thus stated, 'tis evident, *first*, That our business is to cultivate and improve reason : for this, as you have seen, is to be the guide and superintendant of all our powers and faculties, and the arbiter and judge of all our actions : *If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness ?* Matth. vi. 22. Vigour and activity, if reason do not steer them, will but prove mischievous and fatal to us ; diligence and industry themselves will only serve to corrupt our nature,

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and embroil our life ; every deviation from reason, is a deviation from our true perfection and happiness ; the fool and the sinner do, in the language of the scripture, signify the same thing, and so do sin and misery. This is the true original of all those mischiefs which infest the world, the neglect or contempt of right reason : 'tis this which makes our complaints so numerous and so bitter ; 'tis this that makes us so weak and soft in adversity, so restless and little satisfy'd, even in prosperity it self ; 'tis this creates all those disasters and disappointments, which make us often quarrel at providence, and curse our fortune : *the folly of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against God*, Prov. xix. 3. Well therefore did the wise man advise, *Prov. iv. 7. Wisdom is the the principal thing, therefore get wisdom ; and with all thy getting, get understanding.* The necessity of this does easily appear from the slightest reflection upon the work or office of reason, of which I have given a brief and general account before, much more from the use of it, in three great points ; the employing our faculties, the enjoyment of good, and the bearing of evil.

First, The employing, &c. The soul of man, like a fertile field, seems alike apt to produce either herbs or weeds ; the faculties of it are capable of being the instruments of the greatest evil or the greatest good ; the greatest good, if regulated and conducted by reason ; the greatest evil, if blindly and rashly led by any other principle. What is the imagination
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of a fool, but a shop of toys and trinkets, not the laboratory of a philosopher, where a thousand vain triflings and empty ideas flutter confusedly up and down? What is his memory, but a receptacle and sink of sins and follies, of mean and shameful things and actions; not a treasury of excellent truths, laid up like ammunition and provision for time both of peace and war? What his heart, but the rendezvous of a thousand mutinous, violent and dishonourable lusts, which rend and tear him, worse than the devil in the gospel the man possess'd? Nay, what is even fancy and wit it self, if destitute of sound judgment and true reason, but I know not what sort of flashes, which dazzle, but do not guide, serve for amusement, rather than nourishment or delight? and therefore the author is very well paid, if he be praised and starved, which is generally his fate. In a word, neither business nor diversion can have in them any thing truly useful or truly pleasing, if they be not regulated and conducted by right reason; and all the dispositions and faculties of our nature will be, but either lost upon Fooleries, or abused to our ruin.

Secondly, The use of reason is conspicuous in the fruition of good. Knowledge is like light shed upon the face of the world, which discovers all its various beauties and wondrous wealth; which, while darkness cover'd them, were as tho' they had not been. Without reason we shall not be able to discern nor value our own happiness, nor be sensible of our blessings and goods, even tho' they croud and throng upon

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us; without this, our very enjoyments will prove fatal to our repose, and we shall meet gall and wormwood in the bottom of our draughts of pleasure: *for the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them*, Prov. 1. 32. It requires no small philosophy, either to render business pleasant, or pleasure innocent; either to discharge those duties which a great birth or eminent station call men to, or to employ that time which an ample fortune makes them entirely masters of: and to husband a life of ease and enjoyment to the best, and fill it with virtue and honour. Ah! how often have I seen the vigour of nature dissolv'd by pleasure, the edge and fineness of its parts blunted by sloth and softness? how often have I seen men render'd mean and contemptible by success and prosperity, for which they were not big enough? whereas had the mind been well cultivated and enrich'd with true wisdom, pleasure and diversion themselves had refin'd and recruited nature; and power, honour and plenty had only plac'd worth and greatness in a better light: This is true in its proportion from the lowest to the highest station: It requires sense and reason to govern and enjoy prosperity; an obscure and narrow fortune is most convenient both to conceal and preserve a fool; for plenty and power, dignity and preferment, do but expose him to scorn and danger; and it were well if the poor creature could perish, or suffer alone: but the mischief is, like a false and sandy foundation, he overthrows the designs and interest

terests that are built upon him, and miserably betrays the confidence reposed in him. But how great soever the use of reason be, as to the goods, it is no less in relation to the evils of this world : for,

Thirdly, reason is the pilot of human life, and steers it steddily through wild and tempestuous seas, amidst the rocks and shelves of lust and fancy, fortune and folly, ignorance, error and a thousand cheats and impostures. 'Tis this alone that enables man to despise imaginary evils, and vanquish real ones ; it arms the mind with true and lasting magnanimity, furnishes it with solid comforts, and teaches it to extract life and health, virtue and wisdom, out of the madness and mutability of men and fortune, like antidotes and cordials out of things poisonous and baneful in themselves. It is not now to be wonder'd at, after this account, how imperfect soever it be, of the use of reason (which sufficiently shews, how essential it is to the being, the ornament and felicity of human life) if I have resolv'd it to be the great business of man to improve and cultivate it ; surely all the great men of the world, and all the inspir'd ones, have been of my opinion : for their chief, if not only design, ever was, either to obtain wisdom themselves, or to propagate it amongst others : and 'tis evident, that God himself has ever carried on this one design of advancing wisdom amongst the sons of men. This is the pre-eminence of his law above those of men, that these restrain the actions, but those enlighten the mind ; these punish offences and crimes, but

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but those, by informing the judgment, and strengthening the reason of man, prevent the commission of them, and direct and instigate him to the practice of virtue. This then is the great work that God and man invite us to, that we should make daily progress and proficiency in knowledge and understanding; *that we should encline our ears to wisdom, and apply our hearts to understanding; that we shall seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures*: and this is that which our nature and state invite us to: for our perfection and our pleasure, our success and our security, our repose and tranquillity, and in one word, our true happiness depends upon it.

Secondly, It easily follows from the right notion of life, that we are to bid open Defiance to all those things which directly oppose or secretly undermine the authority of reason, or any way obstruct the free exercise of its power and sovereignty; for 'tis to no purpose to travail and labour to advance reason, if afterwards we refuse to be governed and conducted by it: Reason, if we do not live by it, will serve only to increase our shame and guilt. *St. Peter thinks it better never to have known the way of righteousness, than after the knowledge of it to turn from the holy commandments delivered unto us, 2 Pet. ii. 21.* To stifle the sparks of reason by negligence and sloth, to choak the seeds of wisdom and perfection by a lazy and vicious education, is a great crime; but to desert and betray our reason, grown up to some maturity, to hold it in captivity and

and fetters, to defile and prostitute it, by compelling it to serve and flatter abominable passions ; this sure must be a far greater degree of wickedness and prophaneness, and consequently must needs expose the man to the scorn or pity of the wise and rational part of mankind, to the reproaches and confusion of his own conscience, and to the wrath and indignation of God : Or, if none of these mischiefs should attend the contempt and prophanation of knowledge, yet there is one more of it self sufficient to make man miserable ; it precipitates him into all the irregularities and wildnesses imaginable, nothing being so insolent and ungovernable, so savage and untameable, as those passions which are accustomed to over-power and master reason. 'Tis from all this manifest, that who ever loves life, and would experience it a real blessing, must with all his power set himself to remove and defeat whatever may hinder his ready and entire submission to the dictates of reason. Now the things which enfeeble the strength of our reason, and baffle its authority, are such as these, *fancy, passion, example, custom* : these we must ever combat, till we have reduc'd them within their bounds : fancy surprises, passion over-powers, custom and example betray our reason : we must therefore always oppose the giddiness of fancy, and the violence of passion, and guard our minds against the insinuation of custom and example : and to do this well, to do it successfully, is of greater importance, than any work of our secular calling, than any attendance upon trade, or a temporal

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poral interest ; this can only make us great, but that will make us wise ; this can make us rich, but that will make us happy : this therefore must be the next great business of life, to assert the majesty and sovereignty of reason, and never suffer it to be held captive and enthralled by any vicious principle or impotent lust. Happy the man who succeeds in this ! his sincerity shall be to him as good as infallibility ; his conscience shall never reproach him, nor God condemn him ; and tho' he may not always hit the next way, he shall never wholly miss the right way to *happiness* : therefore from this notion of life,

Thirdly, We may infer the possibility of *human happiness* in every state : for since to live, is but to act regularly, to use and employ our powers and faculties rationally ; and since life, perfection, and fruition, are one and the same thing, or else inseparably and intimately united, it is evident that no circumstances can destroy our happiness, unless they destroy our reason ; no condition can render us miserable, but that which can render it impossible for us to act rationally ; that which obstructs our attainment of knowledge, or our liberty of acting conformable to it. But what circumstances can these be ? what condition can we fancy, wherein it shall be impossible for a Christian to know his sovereign good, and pursue it ; to learn his duty, and to practise it ? wherein it shall be impossible for him to search and contemplate truth, to love and follow after righteousness and goodness, and to be meek and humble, modest and
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magnanimous, just and charitable, pure and devout? Wherein, in one word, it shall be impossible for him to live by faith, or, which is the same thing in my sense, by reason? *Solomon* long since observed, *that wisdom uttereth her voice in the streets, and in the meetings of the high ways.* This is more eminently true now, since the reason of mankind has been refined and defecated by revelation; and true philosophy has been diffused and published through the world; the fountains of truth and wisdom lie open to all who thirst after them, and God no more denies any his grace than his revelation. All which being so, 'tis evident, that as God has put it in the power of every man to act rationally, so has he put it in every man's power to be happy; that *human happiness* is not precarious, or dependent on fortune, but our selves: for life consists not in the abundance of things which a man possesses, but in the right use of them; and *better is a poor and a wise child, than an old and a foolish king,* Eccl. iv. 13. For the good estate of the mind consists not in foreign, but domestick possessions: not in the riches of fortune, but of grace and virtue; and fruition cannot consist, either in the abuse of temporal things, or the depravation of our nature, but in the true cultivation and improvement of the one, and the right use of the other.

Fourthly, From hence lastly, it easily appears, on what account length of days is a great blessing, whether consider'd in *it self*, or with *respect* to a future life. First, in *it self*: If life did

did consist in earthiness, that is, the scraping and raking together fums of money, 'tis plain, that life must ebb and flow with our fortune ; and whenever the revolutions of times or trades should put a stop to the career of our success, and give a check to all our further hopes and projects, we should have nothing else to do, but to break off the thread of life: For what use could we make of the remains of our miserable days! or, if life did consist in sensuality, we should have little reason to desire to survive our youth and strength; and length of days would be rather a burden than a blessing: for we should soon out-live our pleasures, and shrink and wither into dull, impotent and contemptible things. But if my notion of life be true, the pleasures and joys of it must encrease and multiply with our years, since reason ought day by day to advance to more perfect maturity, and more absolute authority: *with the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding, Job xii 12. And the paths of the righteous are like the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day.* A thorough experience of the emptiness and uncertainty of this world, with a longer and more intimate acquaintance with another, should possess the soul of this man with a magnanimity that nothing could shake, with a tranquillity that nothing could disturb: the custom of doing good, together with the peace and delight that spring from the reflections on it, should make the current of his actions run smooth and calm; his observations on the changes and turns
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of human affairs, the rise and declension of parties and causes, the secret springs and wheels of the passions of the mind of man, together with all the various arts of managing them, do fill him with a sort of a divine fore-knowledge, and entertain him with a wondrous prospect : and how happy must this man be in himself ! and how much honour'd and rever'd by others ! consulted as an oracle, propos'd as an original of goodness, the absolute master of this world, and the immediate heir of another ! which is the second thing.

Secondly, This is the only notion of life, which can render it a blessing in reference to its influence upon another : none but rational pleasures, which are the antepast of heaven, can enkindle our thirst, or qualify us for the enjoyment of those above ; nothing but the wise and rational employment of our faculties can prepare us for a heaven, or entitle us to it. Nay, further, if life had not this influence upon another world, length of days would be an injury, not advantage to us : it would only keep us from our heaven, delay and put off our happiness. But now, when, according to this notion of life, every act of life does perfect our nature, enlarge our capacity, and increase our appetite of glory : when every day that is added to life, by the production of some new fruit, does add new stars to our crowns of righteousness, and new treasures to our heavenly inheritance ; it is evident, that a long life is a great blessing, not only on its own account, but also of that life which we expect hereafter. Blessed God ! how conspi-

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conspicuous is thy goodness in this whole contrivance! how closely and inseparably hast thou united virtue and happiness! and how natural is the ascent from a rational life here, to a glorious life hereafter!

S E C T. II.

Of the different kinds of Life.

THEY who handle morals nicely and abstractedly, seem to me to forget the nature of their subject; which requires to be handled after its own way, that is, practically, and, if I might so say, grossly and coporeally: for the mixture and variety, the complication and confusion, the mutability and inconstancy of human affairs and actions, which are the matter of morals, are not subject to rules of art and speculative exactness: and therefore, though I will follow the receiv'd division of life into active and contemplative, as squaring exactly with my Notion of it; yet I would not be understood to design under these heads to treat of all the various kinds or states of life. I touch not the military, the sacerdotal, the scholastick life; nor do I here use the words *active* and *contemplative* strictly and nicely: but by the first I understand any sort of publick life, and any sort of private one by the last: nor do I much concern my self, whether the life of a trader or artisan be logically reducible under the one or the other; or whether it ought to constitute a dif-

a distinct and particular kind of life by it self: But accommodating my self to the nature of things, and pursuing my own design, without any scrupulous regard to words or forms, I will discourse *first*, of a civil; *secondly*, of a trading and negotiating; and *thirdly*, of a private and retir'd life: having *first*, in a preliminary chapter said something in general, of the difference of an active and contemplative life, and the reasons or grounds which ought to prevail, and determine man in his election of the one or the other.

CHAP. I.

The conveniencies and the inconveniencies of the active and contemplative life. The active more necessary. The several grounds on which men determine their choice, that is, interest, providence, inclination, &c.

THE felicity, or infelicity of man, depending not a little upon the choice he makes of his course of life, it is worth the considering, which of these two kinds, the active or contemplative, is to be preferr'd. If they be compar'd in themselves, the active seems to have more in it of glory, and also more of hazard; it seems more serviceable to others, but not so easie to a man's self: he therefore, that would render each state perfect, and remove the inconveniencies of each, must study how to relieve the toil, and obviate the hazard of the

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active, and to prevent the barrenness and ingloriousness of the contemplative life.

But which soever of these two be the more excellent in it self, 'tis certain the active life is the more necessary and indispensable to the well-being of human society. Such is the nature of mankind, that being liable to various necessities, it requires the various relief of manifold assistances, to which every man is bound to contribute his share : we have minds that must be cultivated, bodies that must be provided for. The state either of war or peace hath its several wants, all which call for several arts to wage the one, and enrich and adorn the other : without these we should find no defence in war, nor pleasure in peace ; without these, human life would grow wild and savage, and human nature would be uncultivated and unsociable ; without these, our houses had still been caves and grotts, our food acorns and water, our clothing the spoils of beasts. Finally, without these, the speculative man would soon suffer those necessities, which would convince him that he liv'd in a world, and in a body, which requir'd more at his hands than their musing and thinking ; and would soon force him to give over his speculations, for the more necessary enquiries of food and rayment : or, if he could be content with that provision, which nature, untainted by art and industry, would yield him and the beasts of the field, yet would he not be able to promise himself the continuance of this mighty blessing : without laws and arms, the undisciplin'd rabble would disturb his musings,

sings, avarice and violence would invade his walk, and drive him from his little cottage and brook, where he had chose his retreat. For these, and a great many other reasons, the world hath enroll'd the authors and inventors of laws and arts amongst their gods, and has gratefully record-ed the memories of all such as have any way contributed to the conveniencies or ornaments of human life, as the benefactors of mankind: and holy writ it self has not been wanting to do honour to all such: for it has registred the names of such as have excell'd in any thing beneficial to the Publick.

But however this be, whatever be the excellence and advantage of an active above a contemplative life, either consider'd in it self, or with respect to its serviceableness and usefulness to the world, 'tis certain that men, generally speaking, are not determin'd to the one or to the other, by these considerations, but by such particular circumstances, as often render that which is less excellent in it self, more fit and proper for them: thus sometimes education trains men up (shall I say) or condemns them to a particular kind of life, and the choice of others prevents the liberty of our own: sometimes the sollicitation of friends carries us against the very bent and inclination of nature, and sometimes a lucky and unexpected providence frees us from the trouble of perplexed deliberation, and leads us on in methods which human prudence could not have contriv'd; but most commonly of all, we take counsel from the nature of our state, and the necessities of our for-

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tune: how much is to be deferr'd to each of these, is a matter not easie to be decided: against necessity we cannot dispute; against the invitations of providence we ought not, if we have but good proofs of the one or the other. But 'tis too, too often, that weakness of judgment or courage makes us call that necessity which is not; and the flattery of our hopes makes us interpret our dreams or fancies divine auguries or presages. As to friends and interest, I confess, with the ingenious Sir *Henry Wotton*, that an expert man does more easily get up into the saddle by the help of a Stirrup, than a much stronger by mere Force: Yet it ought to be consider'd, that a man who is unequal to the designs of his friends, renders their patronage very difficult, but his own life more. As to the bent or inclination of nature, so mutable are the tempers, or at least, the fancies of mankind, that this is a discovery not soon to be presum'd upon; or else I should as soon advise to give up one's self to this, as to any other Guide. The truth is, the truest measures in this enquiry, are to be taken from a thorough knowledge of our selves, and of the different courses of life about which we deliberate. But alas! they are but few, whom a propitious providence has left at liberty to enter into this deliberation, and fewer that are capable of forming a true resolution upon it. I am sure, there is no enquiry of human life, wherein there is more need of an infallible guide; and therefore I would counsel the young to consult God in the first place, and next, the most sage and experienced

enced they can find out : for they stand in a place where many ways meet ; and if they take the wrong, they will certainly wander far, and, it may be, never recover the right. And as to others, who have struggled long against wind and tide, who have floated long upon the billows of vulgar errors of their own private lusts and fancies, they will be happy, I think, if, after long experience of their folly, they make with all speed for land, and take the first harbour where they can ride in safety.

CHAP. II.

Of the civil life, or the active life of a gentleman.

Sect. 1. *The gentleman's obligations to an active life, from the consideration of what he owes to God, to his country, to himself. The active life not injurious to the gentleman's pre-eminence, liberty, pleasure.*

Sect. 2. *The regulation of the civil life, i. e. The knowledge and virtues necessary to this sort of life. The constancy required throughout the whole course of the gentleman's life. Some vacations from business necessary, and to what ends.*

BEfore I go about to set down those rules which may render men of rank and fortune belov'd, eminent, and happy in their station, I think it necessary to convince such of the

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obligations they lie under to be some way or other useful and serviceable to the world; for 'tis in vain to talk of the knowledge and virtue necessary to support and adorn a civil life, to such as persuade themselves that they are born only to follow their own humour and fancy; and that it is the prerogative of their birth and fortune, to be idle, ignorant and loose.

Sett. 1. This then is the first thing I would fain make gentlemen sensible of, that they cannot, without unpardonable guilt and reproach, waste and fool away their life and fortune; and I think, this would not be very hard to effect, if they would please to make but a very slight reflection upon the arguments I here address to them. You owe more to God and to your country, not to add to your selves, tho' that be true too in a proper sense, than any others do. To God—to his providence you owe it, that you were born to those fortunes which others toil for; that you are the masters of that time, which others are forc'd to devote to their wants and necessities; and that you are placed at first in those advantageous heights, which others climb to by slow and tedious steps: your guilt therefore is greater than the mean man is capable of, while you invade the honour of that God, from whom alone you derive yours; while you dethrone *Him* who has rais'd you, and employ all your power and treasure against that Being from whom you received them; no ingratitude, no treachery or baseness like that of a favourite and confident. And as you owe to God, so do you to your country, more than other men; you

you are they who should be the support and ornament of it ; you are placed in higher orbs, not that, like meteors, your ominous blaze should be the gaze and terror of the multitude ; but that, like stars, you might lighten and beautifie, animate and impregnate the inferior world : for you, like them, should have an enlarged prospect, a swift and constant motion, a bountiful and benign influence. If your virtues do not more distinguish you from the crowd than your fortunes, you are exposed, not honoured, by the eminence of your station ; and you debauch and betray your poor country by your sin and folly, which your example, your wisdom, your courage, and your bounty, with all those other great virtues which persons of your rank should shine with, should protect and enrich, and raise to the highest reputation of virtue and power. Miserable must that kingdom be, whose rich and great ones are as much more impudently wicked, as they are more fortunate than other men ; when they, whose example should awe the vicious, contribute not a little to corrupt the virtuous part of it, and to debauch the very genius and spirit of the nation : when they, who should be the patriots of their country, instead of being men of travel and reading, of abilities and experience, of honour and activity, are versed only in essences and perukes, game-houses and stews ; and have so far lost the qualities of a gentleman, that they are meaner, falser, and cowardlier than the lowest of the people : those must indeed be

strange courts, councils, parliaments, armies,

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which are filled and influenced by such as these ; that must be a wretched state, where men make their court by debauchery, and know no other politicks, than what an inveterate aversion to the national government and constitution, or a more inveterate one to religion and virtue, suggest.

But if your country move you not, consider yet what you owe your selves : Idleness is both a reproach and burden ; for what can be more dishonourable, than to be good for nothing ; or irksome to an active nature, such as man's is, than to have nothing to employ it ? what can be more shameful, than for a wealthy, or well born man, to be the pity or sport of his country, or the inward scorn even of his domesticks and neighbours ? and what can be a greater plague, than for one, who is master of his whole time and of an ample fortune, not to know how to employ the one or the other, but in such courses as tend to the disgrace of his family, the ruin of his country, and the damnation of his soul ? *You* ought to remember, that great fortunes do generally mark men out for great troubles as well as great enjoyments ! and were there no other motive to a vigorous and active life, but this one, that it did fortifie the courage, and harden the temper, this should be sufficient to any man, who will but consider to how many changes and revolutions, how many disasters and mischiefs a great fortune renders men obnoxious : so that when men had not yet entertained the opinion of the unlawfulness of self-murder (poison, as appears from *Livy's* reflection on *Masanissa's* present to his
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his mistress) was a part of the domestick provision of the families of the great; and a poison-bearer seems to have been almost as natural an office as a cup-bearer.

The sum of all is, gifts of fortune, like those of grace or nature, as they capacitate and qualify, so do they design and oblige men to suitable duties; and Christianity expects increase proportionable to mens talents. Not idleness and luxury, not ignorance and debauchery; but knowledge and virtue, and a more eminent degree of service to God and man, ought to be the distinctive character of the rich and great (for how should that be the privilege of an illustrious birth and ample fortune, which is a reproach and dishonour to human nature?) these are the abilities that constitute gentlemen truly great, that make them the props of a sinking state, or the stars and glories of a flourishing one; this is that, which the safety and glory of your country, and your own happiness and posterity, demand at your hands; and happy were it, if the laws and customs of our country, as once those of the best constituted kingdoms and commonwealths, did exact virtue and industry with the greatest rigour, and punish idleness and riot with infamy, banishment and death.

Nor has any one reason to complain, that to oblige the gentleman to an active and industrious life, is to debase his quality; or to invade his liberty, much less to rob him of all the pleasures and advantages he is born to. On the quite contrary, an active virtue is the honour
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of a gentleman; this is the only solid foundation the love and esteem of his country can be built on; all other advantages of fortune do but adorn him as a pageant, to be the sport and gaze of the crowd; and all that have sense enough to distinguish between merit and fortune, will inwardly despise the fool and sluggard, whatever courtship and complement they may make to the esquire and landlord. And as business can be no diminution of his honour, so neither can it be of his liberty: for not to insist upon that great truth, that the service of virtue is the only freedom or liberty of man; not to mind you, that the business of men of wealth and birth is always a matter of choice, not necessity, they being ever in a condition to retire when they shall judge their privacy and leisure more valuable than their employments: This one single consideration cannot but silence this suggestion, that no man is less master of himself and time, than the man that has an ample fortune and no business; for he is always exposed to the forms and impertinences, to the humours and sottishness of a number of people as idle and ignorant as himself: and, I think, there can be no servitude so wretched, as that to luxury and vanity; nor any confinement or attendance so tedious, as a compliance with the folly, with the trifling and looseness of the world; but business is at all times a comely excuse, and never fails of putting a man handsomely in possession of his liberty, and the disposal of his own time and actions.

But

But of all the aspersions with which addressees of this kind are wont to be assaulted, there is none more palpably injurious than this, that to condemn a gentleman to business, is to rob him of his pleasures: for the truth is, 'tis business and employment that gives gust and relish to pleasure; 'tis this that prevents the disease of pleasure, surfeit and satiety; and makes diversion always new, and nature always vigorous: 'tis true indeed, a rational and manly employment, so raises and fortifies the mind, that it is above being a slave to sensual pleasure; and so entertains it, that it needs not make vicious and sinful pleasure a refuge against the dulness and nauseousness of life: but after all, tho' all this be true, there is one consideration more important still, which is, that the business of a gentleman, if discharged as it ought to be, is always attended with pleasure, and that a more brisk and sensible one, than he can find in any thing else: for whether he protect the oppressed, or oppose the violent and the unjust, by his power: whether he steer the ignorant and the simple to their harbour, by his wisdom; or relieve the necessity of the poor, by his wealth: whether he support a sinking friend, or raise a deserving creature: whether he assert the authority of laws, and maintain the rights of his country: in a word, whether he assist the publick or the private by his fortunes, his abilities or virtues; all these works have something in them so great, so generous, that I cannot but think the opportunities and capacities of these the highest privileges and prerogatives of
of

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of a fortunate birth. It was the sabbath, the rest of God, when he beheld all his works, that they were exceeding good: nor can I believe God took more pleasure in the the creation, than he does in the preservation and government of the world. How pleasing then must be the reflections upon these God-like works? for tho' this be not to create a new world, it is certainly to imbellish, govern, and support the old. There is little reason to imagine why the work of virtue should procure their authors less pleasure than those of fancy, wit, and learning do theirs. Why the poet should feel a bigger joy rise from a witty poem, the painter from a well-finished piece, the architect from a well-contrived building, the scholar from a just and regular discourse, than a gentleman should from the happy and honourable effects of wisdom, courage, bounty and magnanimity: these sure are the greater excellencies, and as the original is more noble, so is the issue too: for certainly to preserve the lives and fortunes of men, is much more than to make them seem to live in imagery; to raise a family, is much more than to contrive and build a house; to feed the hungry, cloath the naked, and actually disperse the clouds and sorrows of the afflicted, by a present and vigorous remedy, is much more than to treat the fancy of the soft and vain; and, in one word actually to compose the divisions, allay the heats, govern the impetuosities, and restrain the exorbitant passions of men by the force of laws, by the influence of example, and that authority and ascendant which the fortunes and abilities of the

the great ones give them over their inferiors, is, in my judgment, a much more signal service to God and man, than it can ever be to debate a controversy with the most distinguishing judgment, or write an exhortation with warmth and briskness.

Having thus demonstrated that persons of rank and fortune lie under many and strong obligations to activity in their sphere, and confuted those objections which are commonly opposed against it; I will proceed to lay before them, with all due respect, such rules as may guard them against that envy and danger, that toil and discontent, which usually accompany the motion of the great, as dirt, or dust, or heat, that of their chariots; and which, on the other side, may render their activity a great instrument of their felicity: for I would not that such as are the common patrons and benefactors of mankind, should meet with no other recompence but trouble and hazard; as if, like clouds, they could not refresh and impregnate the earth, unless they were themselves dissolved and wasted into showers: I would have every worthy action be an accession to their greatness, and every honourable performance carry with it a reward, which should not depend upon the humour of the prince, or levity of the people.

SECT. 2. Rules to be observed by the gentleman in a publick station, or in order to the happiness of a civil life.

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1. He must be endow'd with *knowledge*.
2. With *virtues* proper and necessary to his rank and station.
3. He ought to be constant, resolved, and vigorous throughout the whole conduct and course of his life and affairs.
4. His time ought not to be so wholly taken up in business, as not to leave vacancies for *religion, meditation, friendship* and *diversion*.

First, Of the gentleman's *knowledge*. There is no fortune that *knowledge* better becomes, or that stands more in need of it, than a gentleman's; without it, an estate is rather cumbersome than useful; and the ignorant owner must be the tool or instrument of another's ambition or interest, the prey of a menial servant, or the property of an imperious wife or wanton child, or, which is worse, of some crafty retainer, who grows impudent with the favour, rich with the spoils, both of the honour and fortune of his master: the best that can befall such a one, is, if he have the good luck to light into good hands, and join himself with a right party, he may be the appendage of some other's fortune, the shade and umbra of another, who intercepts the smiles and thanks due to him; he may, in a word, talk and act by the sense and reason of his party. This is a poor and contemptible condition to a man of birth and fortune, to be incapable of imploying the advantages he is born to, and to be only the prey or tool of the cunning, avarice, ambition, and
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impotent passions of others; or, at best, the instrument of a wiser man; for the wise is born to rule the fool.

Nor is this all; the gentleman's ignorance is so much the more worthy of reproach, because he appears to be born to greater opportunities of knowledge, as he that stands upon a more eminent height does naturally enjoy a more free and open prospect.

But what is worse than all this, a patrician fortune, join'd with a plebeian understanding, renders a man not more liable to suffer mischief, than apt to commit it: for if the man have much passion, and no understanding; as wealth is apt to inspire men with pride and wilfulness, tho' it cannot with wisdom; what can be expected from such a person, who hath power enough to execute his passions, and no reason to restrain them! who looks upon it a contumely to be opposed; and tho' he hath no sense himself, is too big to hear it from another! What can such a man be, but a plague to himself and others! and what can his wealth and interest be, but resistless instruments of evil! it is then indispensably necessary, as well for the avoiding evil, as doing good, that the great man be endow'd with a *good understanding*.

The first thing he ought to be well acquainted with, is *religion*, as the only source of solid wisdom, and the main ground of a just and lasting reputation: nor indeed can I see how a man can be considerable without it: for tho' base ends require base instruments in all other cases, I see not how either prince or people can

can trust those men who are false to God and themselves. 'Tis scarce to be expected, that he who sacrifices his religion and his reason, that is, himself, to any lust or passion, should be nice and scrupulous of giving up a remoter interest or obligation to it. But when, I say, the gentleman should be acquainted with religion, I do not mean, that he should perplex and amuse himself with the disputes that have debauch'd, or subtilties and niceties which have dispirited or enervated Christianity: I would have him have so much illumination, as to be able to distinguish between natural religion and the politicks, reveal'd religion and the phantasies and whimsies of man: I would have him thoroughly instructed in the reasons and grounds of our common Christianity; and study and ruminate them, till he feel the power of them, and find himself form'd and impress'd by them. He understands religion well, who learns from it what it is to be just, and derives from it courage enough to dare to be so. I should think it a necessary part of this knowledge, or at least, a good accomplishment in a gentleman, to be so far acquainted with ecclesiastical story, as not to be ignorant what influence religion, or the pretences of it, has upon the world; and what use cunning men have ever made of it; by what degrees or what arts the maxims of the world have been incorporated into religion, and the church hath wounded and insinuated it self into the state. Thus you will discern what the true measures of religion are: you will have a just regard for wise constitutions without bigotry; you

you will free your selves from all those doubts and scruples which usher in atheism and prophaneness; and, in a word, you will find religion the true standard of wisdom and discretion, the effectual instrument of private and publick good, and the infallible guide to honour and happiness.

Next to the *knowledge* of religion, follows the *knowledge* of the world, which may be divided into the knowledge of matters and men; which is so necessary in every part, in every act of life, but especially of a publick one, that I cannot but wonder at the vanity of such as can fantasie it possible to maintain a solid reputation in their country, and fill any station honourably or happily without it. The confidence of an empirick, or other such wretched projectors and undertakers, seems to me modesty and virtue, compar'd to the shamelesness and wickedness of such men as obtrude themselves upon affairs of a publick nature, unstudy'd, unvers'd in things or men, that is, totally unqualify'd; which, whoever considers the difficulty of managing them well, or the mischievous consequences of miscarrying in them, must confess. Let the gentleman therefore study the laws and constitutions of the realm, its changes and revolutions in their causes, progress, and effects, its natural and political strengths and weaknesses, defects and excellencies, together with its foreign interests, relation and dependencies: nor let him be wholly ignorant of the frame and policy of other kingdoms, tho' he ought to be best vers'd in his own; he must travel abroad, but

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dwell at home: for I would have him have a veneration, not superstition, for the laws and customs of his own country: for I doubt, the wisdom of our own nation is not great enough to justify the neglect, much less contempt of that of foreign ones: and because what they call the law of nature, is only the law of right reason, in those great precepts of it which seem immutable and inviolable, and the same in all times and places; he ought not to be a stranger to this, lest being ignorant of the grounds of human society, and of the nature and obligation of particular laws, every new emergency, change or deviation from the common road, discover his insufficiency: for 'tis a miserable thing to see, how, through the simplicity and weakness of some, and the subtilty and cunning of others, laws which should be the fences and bulwarks of the people, are often made only their chains and fetters; and those publick and solemn ties which were design'd to strengthen and fortifie the constitution, become the most fatal engines of undermining and subverting it. I have observ'd many, who would be excellent persons in a regular and calm state of affairs, that are miserably perplex'd, and at a loss, or wretchedly abused or impos'd upon in a disorder'd and unsettled one; like a person of my acquaintance, who rides well in enclos'd and narrow roads; but her brains begin to swim, and her heart to fail her, on downs and plains.

After all, that I may not seem to be treating rather of speculation than action, and to have propos'd such an extension of knowledge, as if

I were

I were recommending rather a life of study than of Business, I must put you in mind, that the design of this sort of learning ought to be to make men wise, not subtil; judicious, not disputative: that curiosity or diligence in matters minute, or subtil, has more in it of amusement than use; and that to lay the foundation too deep and broad, does seldom quit the cost: and, in a word, it seems to me, to be in policy, as in religion; he is the most prudent, who best understands the particular laws or precepts of his particular station; as he is the most religious who is best learned; not in the universal scheme of theology; but the regulation of his own affections, and the conduct of his own life.

But in vain does he study things, who knows not men: for man is the instrument of power and policy; and whoever knows how to manage and gain an ascendant over him, is the most considerable in his country, and able to do the greatest mischief or the greatest good: but when I talk of knowing men, I mean not only such a *knowledge* of particular persons, as may instruct you what to hope, or what to fear from them; what employments or trusts they are fit or unfit for; and, in a word, who are proper or improper instruments in different affairs, times and circumstances; who are fit to be the partners of your pleasures and diversions, who of your confidences and secrets, and such like; but also the knowledge of human nature: to be thoroughly read in all the springs and resorts of human actions, in all the various passions and diseases of the mind of man, with all their

ther causes and cures ; and to be able to distinguish the genuine and natural, from the acquir'd and artificial person ; and because not single persons only, but times and ages, nations, cities, and lesser bodies and societies, have their particular temper and genius, these must not be neglected neither. This is the knowledge, which, together with a dexterous use and application of it, is the very life and soul of worldly prudence, and makes up the beginning, middle and end of true policy. But after all, both with respect to the publick, and a man's own good, that ought to be a rule for the man of business, which *St. Paul* prescribes for a bishop, *Let him first learn to rule his own house well.* He that will be truly wise, should know himself first, e'er he goes about to know the world ; and begin the practice of his politicks in his own family, and in the settlement and due administration of his domestick affairs ; in which, if he cannot succeed, I must confess, I cannot see what encouragement either prince or people can have to confide in such a one : for the disorders or dissipations of a private fortune are very ominous presages of a mal-administration of publick trust. Nor can I see what can induce such a man to undertake it, but the mere hopes of repairing his private dilapidations with the stones and timber of the publick.

But after all, how necessary soever I account knowledge in a gentleman engag'd in an active station ; yet I cannot but observe, that whether we regard the publick or the private, wickedness has ever been more fatal and dishonourable

nourable to both, than ignorance; and all trusts have suffered more in the hands of the false and the base, than of the unfit and insufficient: therefore,

Secondly, The gentleman ought to be enriched with virtues, especially those which become his rank and station. Knowledge is but the seed of virtue, and like that, it only rots and putrefies, if it grow not up into excellent habits, and bring not forth the fruits of virtuous actions. There is scarce any station which does not require a particular virtue, either to discharge or adorn it; one patience, another courage, a third vigilance, and so on; there being scarce any office or business which is not liable to some particular inconveniencies and temptations: but it being impossible for me to prosecute all these, I will only insist on two or three which are essential to all true greatness and honour; and, if I am not much mistaken, to a happy and prosperous dispatch of all affairs; I am sure to the security and felicity of the publick and private: these are, *integrity, magnanimity, humanity.*

First, *Integrity*. By Integrity I mean two things, justice and truth: the first, to regulate our actions; the second, our words. Nor do I take justice in a beggarly barreting sense, as if the gentleman had acquitted himself of a due well enough, if there were any plausible pretence to excuse the violation or omission of it; as if he were to regard more what the law could compel, than what honour did oblige him to, I mean, the testimony of his own conscience,

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both concerning his diligent and impartial enquiries after the right, and sincerity in pursuing it: for I would not have him appear to do right, rather out of the fear of infamy, than love of virtue. The word of a gentleman ought to be fixed and unmoveable as fate, sacred and inviolable as the altar. Contracts, and evidences, and seals, and oaths, were devised to tie fools and knaves, and cowards: honour and conscience are the more firm and sacred ties of gentlemen. Nor must this honour extend only to private dealings, but much more to publick; in which, good God! how comely, how noble is it to see integrity triumphing over interest and passion? to see a great man preferring truth and justice to the favour or menaces of princes; and readily quitting all interest, and all parties, to support the publick safety and honour, or fall with it. But as heroick as I would have the gentleman, I would not have him vain; I would not have him led or imposed upon by empty noise and names; I would have him love a good name, but much more a good conscience: for I would have him as judicious as resolved; as bright and luminous, as brave and inflexible: for I admire not an integrity that bids defiance to prudence and right reason: I love a steady faith and unmovable justice, but not romance and fancy; I would have a great man not insensible of a difference between loyalty and slavery, between tyranny and anarchy; and in the same manner he must be able to distinguish between a serpentine subtilty, and a stupid insufficiency, and want of necessary address and dexte-

dexterity : without such a competency of knowledge, all will be but folly, not integrity ; vanity, not constancy. As there is an integrity in action, so is there in speech too ; it seems to me, not to consist in bare truth only, but also in an ingenuous openness and freedom : cloudiness and ambiguity, seem to me rather fit to disguise ignorance or design, than to pourtray or express the sentiments of a wise or an upright mind : yet in words, as well as deeds, there is an extream ; tho' frankness and openness in conversation, like a free and a generous air, become a gentleman, I would not have freedom violate discretion, nor simplicity and openness lessen greatness ; too many and wide apertures, if they add beauty, do certainly diminish the strength of a building.

Secondly, The next virtue befitting a gentleman, is *Magnanimity* : by which I do not mean an empty tumour, but solid greatness of mind, which ought to discover it self in every instance of his life : I say, in every instance ; for I count it not enough to bear disappointments with moderation, unless he bear his success so too : I count it not enough to encounter dangers with courage, unless he encounter his pleasures with as great ; and in a word, there ought to be something even in his diversions and entertainments, as well as in his business and employment, that may speak the strength, and wealth, and self-sufficiency of his mind. You'll easily conclude this with me, if you allow these two or three things to be essential to true greatness of mind ; an invincible courage and resolu-

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tion; a rational and generous activity; and an enlarged and publick spirit; which you cannot but allow, unless you think that the coward and slave, the sluggard or sot, the fordid and selfish, may be reckoned among the magnanimous. But what principle, what foundation, is able to support so mighty a weight? natural courage may make a man brave danger, or if that will not, ambition may; while it presents him with a more formidable evil, if he turn his back upon the other; but what shall make the man modest and humble in his triumphs, who was gallant and daring in fight? passion and revenge may make men firm and fierce in their contests and oppositions; but what can make a man forgive, when he is in a condition to revenge an injury? the lust of power, and honour, and wealth, that is, self-love, may render a man active and industrious; but what is it that can prevail with him to sacrifice his own interest and his family's to publick good? honour has been generally thought the most likely principle to do all this. I must confess, a breast inflamed with the love of honour, seems to me incapable of any mean or base impression; but then the notion of honour ought to be justly stated: for if by this, we understand the smiles and courtships of the great, or the praises or acclamations of the people, it had need be in settled times, a wise court, and a modest people. I doubt there is not judgment enough in the people, nor plainness and simplicity enough in courts, to give men and actions a true value: and therefore, if a man would propose honour

honour as the reward of his actions, it ought to be that which consists in the approbation of such who are able and disinterested judges : a mistake in this point is often of very ill consequence, and perverts the whole course of human life, betraying either into factious opposition, or sordid and unworthy compliance. Nor is this the only inconvenience that the love of honour is obnoxious to, that men may be misled and abus'd by false and mistaken notions of it ; but it also often happens, that envy and emulation in particular men, or the violence of a prevailing faction, or the iniquity of times may stifle and oppress the merit, or traduce and blast the integrity of the most excellent actions ; in which cases, I doubt, the secret opinion of two or three virtuous men, or an expectation of greater justice from future times, will be too weak a cordial to support an injur'd virtue, if its only nourishment and sustenance be honour. I think therefore religion is the only basis on which magnanimity can stand ; by which I mean, a love of rational and virtuous actions upon wise and solid grounds, a secret delight and complacency in the performance of them, accompanied with the peace and serenity of mind that springs from reflection upon them, and the joy which a firm persuasion that God will be our rewarder, breeds in us : this, as it will secure us against the errors, so will it against the inconstancy and injustice of the world ; this will minister sufficient motives to generous actions, when we meet nothing but discouragements from all things else ;
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this, if it will not make a publick employment honourable, will always make it safe; this, if it cannot render great places profitable, will ever render retirement pleasant, and in all the changes of times and humours, will preserve a man steady and calm in himself.

But whilst I recommend magnanimity, I must not forget that there are follies and vices which often are wont to usurp its name. I never thought that the love of our country did imply a neglect, much less a contempt of our private fortune; that a vain confidence or presumption in provoking and irritating dangers ought to pass for courage: for this were to make fortitude and prudence incompatible. Nor do I think, that a violent intrusion into business, or an indiscreet intrangling a man's self in much, or engaging in any that is foreign or impertinent, deserves the name of industry or activity; or pride, stiffness and savageness, the name of firmness and constancy: for, in a word, I would have magnanimity rather lovely than haughty, rather rever'd than dreaded. Therefore,

Thirdly, Humanity is the next virtue to be aim'd at. Nothing can be more fitly joined with magnanimity than compassion, with courage than tenderness; nor with the felicity of a great fortune, than charity or bounty. I cannot think that there is a truer character of greatness, than to be a sanctuary to the injur'd, a patron to virtue and merit, a counsellor to those that err, and a support to the afflicted, the needy and defenceless. In these things consist the life and substance of humanity; the orna-
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mental part of it is *affability or courteousness*; the art of behaviour lies in a narrow compass, the whole skill of it consisting in obliging; which he shall never miss, who has once possess'd his soul with tenderness and goodness: for then every word, every action, together with the whole air of deportment, will be animated with a restless sweetness, and will be nothing else but the pourtraiture and expression of those excellent dispositions: by this means too, the deportment will be natural, not artificial; and tho' it be generally kind, it will be more particularly so, where it meets with a more moving occasion: to which if it be added, that the carriage of a gentleman ought to be humble, but not popular; courteous, but not cheap or prostitute, you will decline in all the considerable errors, to which affability is obnoxious.

It was the custom of the antients to deliver their instruction in short and plain sentences, without a labour'd exhortation, or passionate enforcement. And certainly there is such a commanding authority in the dictates of truth and wisdom, such a divinity, majesty and loveliness in solid virtues, that did the simplicity and probity obtain in these, which is suppos'd to have done in those times, advice of this sort would easily make its way to the hearts of men, without the assistance of any motives. But I dare not be either so confident of my own performance, or of the times, as not to think it necessary to close the advice of these paragraphs, with some arguments and motives to these virtues,

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Shall I make use here of the topicks of religion? Shall I invite you to integrity and magnanimity, from the consideration of the omniscience and providence of God? Shall I put you in mind how little sordidness, falshood and fear; how little pride and insolence, can become the principles and persuasions of a christian, concerning the emptiness and vanity of this world, or the true happiness and lasting glory of another? Shall I press you to humanity, to meekness and humility, by calling to your remembrance the life of Jesus, your frailty and mortality, and, what is worse, your sins and follies? Shall I shew you how mutable and inconstant your fortune is; and, if it were not, how accidental, fantastick and inconsiderable a distinction this makes between you and persons of a lower rank? and, that they stand at least, upon the same level with you, in respect of the substantial and solid interests of human nature; that is, the favour of God, virtue, grace and glory? Alas! I am afraid, you have generally but little relish or gust of this sort of arguments.

But have you as little value for your country, as religion? are you as little moved by the ruin of this, as the corruption of that? Behold your country once formidable abroad, and well compact within Ah! now what reproach and contumelies does it not suffer abroad? what convulsions at home? Its wealth has neither service nor defence in it. Its numbers are without courage, and its forces have nothing of strength or terror in them. Why all this?

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It bleeds in your factions and divisions; it reels and staggers under your softness and luxury; 'tis betray'd by your falshood and cowardice: ah! that its reformation might begin where its degeneracy has, and that it might recover by your virtues, the honour it has lost and forfeited by your vices! Pardon me, I do not here suppose that there are none exempt from this accusation; that in the body of the nobility and gentry there are not, even in this degenerate age, some bright instances of a true *English* courage and integrity: I only wish, that there were more; that there were enough to atone for the rest, and to prop up this declining *state*. Nor is it a petulant humour, but a zeal for your honour particularly, as well as that of the nation, that now acts me: for, give me leave to put you in mind at length,

That your honour, your interest, and your happiness depend upon your integrity, magnanimity, and humanity; nor is it possible that the one should survive the other. *First*, your *Honour*. The whole world is possess'd in favour of these virtues: and however it hath fared with some other, these have ever been in vogue, not amongst the best only, but the worst of mankind. I have indeed understood, that there are some who have openly profess'd, and defended *Intemperance* and *Incontinence*; but, I think, none ever yet have in earnest undertook the patronage of *cowardice*, *perfidiousness*, *inhumanity*, or *insolence*. I have never yet met with any who have not thought it scandalous and reproachful to find less *faith*,
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his honour, less goodness, or, if you please, more shifting cowardice, falsehood, and forwardness, in his lordship, or his worship, than in a groom or lacquey. Nor did I ever find, that lands and 'scutcheons, wealthy relations and honourable ancestors, were ever look'd upon as apologies or mitigations, but rather aggravations of such baseness and degeneracy: nor could any man ever think it a commendation to be the heirs and sewers of a noble family, the ruins of an ancient and once stately pile, or the lees and dregs of a rich liquor long since drawn off, and evaporated. Nor does your Honour only, but secondly, your Interest, depend on these virtues. If you want these; I see not what you can possess, that can either gain you the favour of the prince, or esteem of the people. This sure, is the reason why these virtues have ever been in such credit in the world; because their influence is so necessary, so universally serviceable, whether to the publick, or to friends and dependents. Now that integrity which can give others ground confidently to rely upon you; that generosity and magnanimity which raises their hopes and expectations, does naturally give you an authority and ascendant over them, and you become the masters of their lives and fortunes, whilst they promise themselves the protection or improvement of them from your virtues. To these then you must owe the patronage and confidence of those above you; the dependence, love, and esteem of those below you; without which, what can you effect, what can you enjoy

enjoy truly great or considerable? you are impotent and contemptible as plowmen and sailors, when solitary and abandon'd; your retinue and dependance, your friends and admirers make you powerful, In short, a Man of birth and fortune that is perfidious, cowardly, selfish and proud, has not, in my judgment, or deserves not to have, half the interest an honest yeoman, or plain-dealing tradesman has in city or country: for what confidence can be plac'd in such a one? will he be tender of the honour of his country, or his friend, who has no sense of his own? or, will he ever be either a good patron or friend, who is ready to sacrifice all to his private avarice? nor is it a matter of small importance, that reputation, founded in virtue, surmounts all sorts of difficulties, and crowns all undertakings with success. And since men are naturally backward, when they are jealous and distrustful, but prompt and forward, where they are secure and confident; it has ever been observ'd, that integrity (if not destitute of competent prudence) has in dispatch of affairs, ever out-stripp'd craft and subtilty. But the weightiest consideration of all, is, that these virtues, if they be not the surest foundation of greatness, are, doubtless, of happiness: for they will make a man find a tranquillity in his mind, when he cannot in his fortune: the conscience of a man's own uprightness will alleviate the toil of business, and sweeten the harshness of ill success and disappointments, and give him an humble confidence before God, when the ingratitude
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of man, or the iniquity of times rob him of all other reward.

Having thus given an account of these two things, wherein consist the sufficiency of a man of business, that is, *knowledge* and *virtue*; I will proceed to the consideration of the third rule.

Thirdly, The gentleman ought to be constant, resolved, and vigorous in his motion. *Constancy* and *vigour*, whether in the acquisition of knowledge, or improvement of virtue, or management of affairs, are of the greatest moment and importance. I ever prefer a strong before a fine edge; industry and resolution, before wit and parts: he that makes a daily progress, how slow soever it be, will in time reach his stage: vast bodies and mighty armies, by constant marches, have travelled through those unknown regions, which a single person would almost despair of compassing in his lifetime. To what a height does the tree raise its head, though its root fix in the heart of the earth? because though it grow slowly, and even imperceptibly, yet it grows constantly, and receives some accession every moment. Thus rule, as I insinuated before, is applicable to knowledge, virtue, and business. To *knowledge*. To what would not an ingenious person, furnished with all aids of science, advance his prospect, if he used but moderate industry, and proceeded regularly? what could there be in any science, which were either of any use, or any certainty, that could escape him? and other things ought not to stop him. They may be his diversion, but ought

ought not to be his study. I believe, there are few natures but are capable, if not of eminent accomplishment, yet of such improvement, as may render them considerable and useful enough, if they would apply themselves to the study of knowledge with any tolerable vigour, or exert their vigour with any regularity and uniformity. 'Tis owing to laziness and wantonness, that the slow and heavy attain not so much abilities as might suffice to set them off, and to make them shew tolerably well: and 'tis to the same that the quick and witty owe their want of all solidity and judgment, while they discover only enough to make the world justly condemn them, as wanting to themselves and their country, being bad stewards of a naturally rich and improvable estate, careless and ill masters of good parts.

Nor is constancy less serviceable in the pursuit of virtue than of knowledge. Virtue, when acquir'd, is confessed by all to be easie and delightful, because natural and rational; but to acquire it, this is the difficulty; but 'tis such a one as constancy and courage would easily vanquish: 'tis generally thought, there is in most at first some sort of *Impetus* towards good, which if it were constantly cherished, would soon turn into habit and nature; but fits and heats of religion, broken and interrupted essays and attempts, do only keep up so much gust for virtue, as makes us a little disgust the enjoyments of sin; and preserves so much of conscience, as serves to disturb and perplex us. But be it how it will, let us suppose man infected

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infected in his nature, and, what is worse, over-run by vitious habits; yet even then, the same care, watchfulness, and discipline, that cures a chronical distemper of the body, would heal an habitual disease of the mind; and one may reform and enrich a degenerate mind with as little pains as it will cost to recover a decayed and ruined estate.

But let me return to my main subject, that is, the conduct of *civil business*. Here, I am sure, an uniform constancy and regular vigour is exacted by all: I have seldom observ'd men of great abilities do great things without great diligence and resolution; I am sure, I have seen them miscarry foully, when persons of lower talents have succeeded very well: nay, the truth is, vigour and resolution are such noble characters, that whoever appears endowed with them, can never himself miscarry, tho' his designs sometimes may: he can never be a loser in honour and reputation, but generally appears a great man, even in the most unfortunate accidents, and makes even ill success it self attest his sufficiency. But commonly difficulties give way to the diligence and resolution of great men; and if to day will not, to morrow will, smile upon their enterprizes: there are lucky minutes in business, when what before had wind and tide against it, moves with the stream: whither will not he then carry his point, who never lets slip the lucky moment through negligence, and never fails through cowardice or laziness, to urge and push on his good success?

But

But how much soever *vigour* and *constancy* be commended as most serviceable to success in business, as one of the greatest perfections that man is capable of, and the best instrument of attaining all others; yet we must not forget, that the strength of our nature is soon broken, if it be always strained, and the finest parts are soon tired and dispirited, if they be incessantly employed: that man has a design to carry on far nobler and more important than this, of *civil business*, and that so far at least the pleasures of life are to be mingled with its toils and troubles, as to enable us the better to undergo them: therefore,

Fourthly, The gentleman's time ought not to be so wholly taken up in business, as not to leave vacancies for *religion*, *meditation*, *friendship*, and *diversion*. They are two extremes fatal to happiness, to have no business at all, or so much as leaves no room for books or friends, for *meditation* or necessary *diversion*: for this makes life very barren and very dull; it makes business meer drudgery, and places the great man in a more toilsome condition than the mean one, and makes him wish for the ease of his tenants and servants. Nor is this the only evil of an uninterrupted pursuit of worldly business; but, what is worse, it extinguishes all gust of virtue, all relish of heavenly things; and, instead of the courage and peace, with which religion inspires men, it leaves them without any rational support or comfort, either consuming with perplexed and anxious

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thoughts about the event of things; or, hardened into a neglect, if not contempt of religion, proposing to themselves no other or higher end of life, than the acquitting themselves well in the station they are, and ascribing the issue of affairs to no other providence, than such as they are daily wont to employ about them, and to such other accidents as they have observ'd them ever and anon subject to.

When I demand a vacant time for religion, it must not be supposed that I do not look upon religion as the first and greatest business of human life; it being in vain to gain the whole world for him who loses his soul; or to be intent in preserving or advancing the peace or welfare of the publick, for him whose mind is filled with disorder and guilt: I do therefore suppose all the actions of the day so conducted, as to become instances of Christian virtue: I suppose justice and integrity, courage and bounty, patience and gentleness, mingling themselves in the discharge of every *civil business*. And then the religion for which I demand some vacant moments, is that of *publick* and *private devotion*; without which 'tis impossible for the great man either to preserve reputation without, or peace within. *Publick devotion* is not only an act of worship due to God, but, in a gentleman, a testimony of the honour which he has for the community he is of, and an expression of charity towards those who are influenc'd by this example.

Nor

Nor is *private devotion* less necessary than *publick*; not only because *publick* without *private* degenerates into formality, into a mere shew, without the power of godliness; nor yet because every man's reputation flows first from his domesticks, who can have no veneration for him, who appears to have none for his God; tho' even these reasons ought not to be contemned; but especially because every man has particular wants, and particular obligations, and none more than the great one; and therefore must offer up to God his particular petitions and prayers. I cannot therefore tell how to think, that he, who does not begin and close the day with prayers to God, can believe there is one: He, that does not invoke providence, seems to despise it; and he, who sacrificeth not to God, seems to me to sacrifice only to his nets.

As to *meditation*, 'tis so essential a part of religion, and so indispensable a preparative for *devotion*, that I should not have plac'd it here by it self, did I not extend its design something further. *Meditation* is that *act*, which, of all others, does most delight and nourish the mind; which, of all others, is most fit to raise and to strengthen it. In other actions we seem to move mechanically; in this alone, rationally. In all other, our reason seems confin'd and fetter'd by I know not what prescriptions, customs, and circumstances; in this alone it seems to enjoy its native freedom and liberty, rambling with an uncontroul'd *Impetus*, and with delight stretching and dilating it self. In all other things, the mind seems to be impress'd and

moulded by the matter and business about which it is conversant; but in this, it gives what forms and circumstances it pleases, to both; in this, it has a kind of creative or productive power, and I know not what sort of despotick sovereignty. In a word, he, who is ignorant of the force of *meditation*, is a stranger to the truest pleasure of human life, to the most useful, talking and natural act of the human soul. But I forgot what I mainly intended, which was, to tell you, that the use of *meditation* consists either in reflection or preparation, as regarding alike yesterday and to morrow: 'Tis highly necessary, that he looks back upon his day past, who lies under so many temptations to waste it, that he whose actions are of so much greater importance than those of private men, and fall unavoidably under a more general and severe censure, do the more carefully scan them over. Nor is preparation less necessary than reflection: for this gives order to your affairs, and forms the mind into a fit and just *disposition*; it prevents surprizes, removes difficulties, and gives beauty and steadiness to your whole conduct.

As to *friendship* and *diversion*, I shall treat of them fully in their proper places; and therefore shall speak but a word of them here. 'Tis a hard matter, it may be, for great men to have sincere friends; but this being a purchase of so great a value, deserves they should lay out all their art and interest upon it: for besides the advantage of *friendship* in every condition, that it clears our notions, corrects our errors, confirms our virtues, enlarges our joys, and lessens our troubles;

troubles; it is to men in an eminent station more peculiarly necessary, both as the ornament and support of their fortune.

As to *diversion*, it ever must be such as may consist with the dignity of the person, or the urgency of his employment; such as may not lessen his character, or waste his time; such as may refresh and recruit nature, and from which he may return to his business with new vigour and new appetite: and it were very well, if diversions were so wisely contrived, that they might at once delight and improve the mind. I should therefore think, that physick or husbandry, the principles of any curious mechanick performances, musick, architecture, and such like, might be proper entertainments of vacant hours: but if the health of the body, as well as pleasure of the mind, be aim'd at in *diversion*, it were well to have always ready some wise friends, by whose help and conversation, the time you bestow upon the health of the body, may not be utterly lost to the mind. I am sensible, I have been guilty in this discourse of the same fault which all, who write morals with any spirit, do generally fall into; that is, proposing a greater perfection than is commonly attainable; and of forming my models and ideas rather by speculation than the practice of mankind: but this will be easily pardon'd by such as remember that the copy will ever fall short of the original; and that men will easily of themselves bend and accommodate the exactest rule to the frailties and imperfections of human life.

Nor do I again forget, when I prefs Gentlemen to the nobleſt heights of virtue, that they are expoſed to more numerous and more violent ſolicitations to vice than other men, I know it: but at the ſame time I remember too, that they always pretend to a higher ſpirit, and a more refined education: that their virtue always ſhines with a double luſtre; its own, and that of their fortune: ſo that moderate attainments in them make a greater ſhew, than the more perfect and accompliſh'd in men of a lower ſphere: and finally, that thoſe advantages and prerogatives which they enjoy by their birth and ſtation, do put them in a better condition than other men, to defend their true liberty, and to purſue thoſe methods which reaſon and virtue dictate.

C H A P.

CHAP. III.

Of the trading or negotiating life.

SECT. 1. *Rules relating to success in trade. First, That the trader be industrious. Secondly, That he be not above his profession.*

SECT. 2. *Rules relating to his religion. First, The trade must be a lawful one. Secondly, It must be manag'd with justice, truth and charity. Thirdly, It must not interfere with religion. Fourthly, The trader ought to propose to himself wise and rational ends such as are a competency for himself and family: the charitable assistance of others: a timely retirement or retreat from the bustle and distractions of too much business.*

MY latter years have been spent mostly among the trading part of mankind; and I have receiv'd many obligations from them; and I think my self bound to do them this right, to let the world know, that I have found more *honour and gratitude, more clearness and integrity* amongst this sort of men, than I ever could amongst others, whose quality and education rais'd my expectations higher: it will be therefore no small satisfaction to me, if any endeavours of mine can render them any considerable service.

There is no condition of life free from temptations and difficulties, apt to embroil our happiness, and infect our innocence, and therefore
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neither this of *traders*; the evils they are subject to may be reduced to two heads, their miscarrying in *trade*, or in *religion*. I will therefore begin with such rules as may serve to prevent the former, and then proceed to such as concern the latter.

If we trace the ruin of such, as fail or break, back to its original, we shall find it generally to be either *idleness* or *pride*. *Idleness* the parent of all sottish vices; *pride*, the parent of expensive follies and ruinous projects. I will therefore lay down these two rules as the foundations of the *trader's* secular prosperity. *First*, that he must be diligent and industrious. *Secondly*, that he must not be above his profession.

1. He must be *diligent* and *industrious*. You seem born for *industry*; and though some pretend to be sent into the world only to enjoy a fortune, 'tis plain you are first to raise one: and tho' there may be some fortunate men in the world, that seem to thrive rather by chance than virtue, and owe more to the care of others than their own; yet, I am sure, in the ordinary methods of *providence*, *diligence* and *industry* are the high-way to *wealth* and *plenty*, *virtue* and *sobriety* to wise and secure enjoyments. And I know not with what confidence men can promise themselves the blessing and favour of God on any other terms. He has made nothing on purpose to be idle and useless: the heavenly bodies never cease to yield their light and influence, nor the terrestrial ones their fruit. We our selves do subsist by a continu-
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al motion; and should our blood and spirits grow dull and sluggish, our life must needs expire with their activity; *man is born to labour, as the sparks fly upward*; our capacities and endowments destine and urge us to it; the necessities and want of this needy beggarly state, (in which nature, how kind soever it was to the golden age, does not furnish us with any thing, without *art* and *industry*) exact and demand it; and the laws of human society oblige us to it: for it is but fit that every one should contribute his shot for the entertainment of the publick; and that he should not, like a drone, be feasted and maintained by the labour and travel of others. And so far, lastly, is Christianity from abrogating this law of nature, that it earnestly inforces it: *let ours learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful*; that is, that they be not a shame and burden to themselves and families, to the commonwealth or Christian profession. Propose not then, I address my self here to apprentices and beginners; propose not to exempt your selves from that universal law of labour and travel to which the whole creation is subjected; you especially, who lie under more immediate and particular obligations to it. 'Tis an unaccountable folly for one, who is to make his fortune in the world, to apply himself to *trade*, rather as a *diversion* than business, and to design it only as a support and fund for sloth and luxury: 'tis madness and phrensie in any one to propose to be master of his time ere he be master of his *trade*; and to indulge his pleasures, before he has made provision

provision to defray the expence of them; and yet this, I doubt, is too general a practice: whereas would young men consider the matter aright, they would find that they do but prevent their pleasures, by gathering of them before they be ripe; and do but make their troubles and vexations endless, by indulging their ease and laziness too soon. Contradictious projects! to propose at once to live idly, and yet to thrive! to live pleasurable, and grow rich! 'tis true, there are many *traders*, who live in much ease and plenty, and make a very handsome figure in the world, and 'tis but fit there should be such: *trade* is the support and ornament of kingdoms; and no man of sense will any more envy the man of *trade* his wealth than the man of the sword his honour, or the man of letters and abilities his places and preferments: but if I could, I would have men grow up to all these by labour and industry, by an apprenticeship of sobriety and virtue: I would have enjoyment be the reward of merit: I would not have ease and pleasure be ravished by the loose and unworthy; but regularly possessed by such as have taken pains to purchase both, and have sense, experience, and virtue enough to enjoy them.

Secondly, The *trader* must not be above his calling. Pride and vanity are generally sworn enemies, both to the content and prosperity of traders; but then it must be remembered, some are but lightly tinged; others, more thoroughly and deeply died with these vices: in some they produce only little comical affections, and almost

most innocent excursions; but in others, very fatal disorders and irregularities There is no gracefulness in any motion that is not natural; a man of low stature may add something to his height, but nothing to his comeliness, by strutting upon stilts. Nor is there only an ungracefulness, but an uneasiness in all affected motions; we are all a little purblind and dim-sighted in this world; and therefore walk more securely in the ways we are acquainted with: but for my part, when an error is only comical, and exposes men no further than to a little raillery and censure, 'tis scarce worth my while to prescribe to it; and I cannot tell whether it be worth every man's while to be at the charge of correcting a humour, which if it do a little expose him, does yet please him too: the pride and ambition which I would extirpate, is such a one as I have observed fatal to the *tradesman's* fortune and repose; such as tempts him to despise and neglect his trade, or puts him upon expences which it cannot maintain, or engages him in bold or hazardous projects: this is an error which I would fain reform, and methinks a few sober reflections should here prevail: what? can it be sense to make a shew abroad at the expence of your content and peace at home? what? is it not much better to be modest and safe, to be humble and at ease, than to suffer daily anxieties and perplexities, and to have your mind always upon the rack, how to answer and satisfy the importunities of pride and vanity? 'tis worse yet when a short piece of pageantry ends in perpetual infamy; when this important hu-

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mour is nourished by robbery and injustice, by fraud and cheat, committed upon widows and orphans, acquaintance and friends, and the nearest relations. I must confess, I am amazed to think, that any one's pride should be tickled by a false and fatal grandeur, upheld only by wrong and injustice, and resolving in a moment into indelible shame and irretrievable ruin. For my part, I should in this case look upon bravery, not as the marks of greatness, but ornaments of a sacrifice; not as the pomp of a triumph, but a funeral; and my luscious morsels, how pleasing soever to my palate, would be ready to rise and recoil in my stomach. As to those who seem to scorn their profession, I have but this to say, Let 'em find out a more thriving one before they leave the old one, before they desert the profession they were bred to, for its meanness; let them make sure of a more honourable employment; or else the scorn they load their trade with, will be want of sense, not greatness of spirit; a lazy pride, not a generous ambition; and if so, I am sure, there is no profession so mean as that of sloth and looseness.

Sect. 2. The second sort of rules are such as concern the *religion* of the *trader* or *artisan*: for 'tis to little purpose that he thrive in his secular, if he run out in his Christian calling; for this is but to be fortunate, and yet miserable. Therefore,

1st, He must be sure that his calling be lawful.

Secondly, That it be carried on with truth, justice, and charity.

Thirdly,

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Thirdly, That his attendance on the business of this world do not extinguish his concern for a better; and his *trade* devour his *religion*, as *Pharaoh's* lean kine did the fat ones.

Fourthly, That he propose to himself *proper* and *rational ends* of *trading*.

First, He must be sure that his calling be lawful; that is, such as is neither forbidden by any law of God or the magistrate, nor does in its own nature minister to vice. But that I may not perplex men's minds with unnecessary scruples, and tempt them to doubt of the lawfulness of all *trades*, that are any way made the instruments of sin and folly; you must know, some things minister to sin directly and necessarily; others only accidentally, and not by the immediate intention of the *artist* or *trader*, but the abuse of others. The former sort of traders are unlawful in themselves, and no pretence can sanctifie the use of them: he that directly and immediately ministers to a sin, communicates in the guilt of it; as he that purveys for the lust of others, partakes of the sin of the adulterer and fornicator: but those which minister not purposely and immediately, but accidentally, are yet in themselves lawful. Nor shall the trader communicate in those abuses to which the lusts and vanities of others prostitute them. Thus taverns are not unlawful, because abused by intemperance; nor are all shops of clothing to be shut, because thence people furnish themselves with such things as inflame their immodesty and pride: the reason

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son is plainly this, because the sin may be separated from the trade; that wine, whose full draughts are by some made use of to the defacing reason and enkindling lust, may as well refresh the weary and delight the moderate; those garments, which adorn the proud and wanton, may be made use of to add a lustre to greatness. The inconvenience would be insufferable, if every profession which did but indirectly and casually administer to vice, were therefore sinful: the courts of justice must be laid aside, because oftentimes the bar and bench have contributed to oppress, injure, and rob in form of law. The pulpit must be for ever silenc'd, because men have sometimes sown the seeds of sedition and slavery from hence. All the *arts*, either of war or peace, have sometimes serv'd the cruelty of the one, and luxury of the other; and by consequence would be banish'd out of all commonwealths. Yet here it must be confess'd, that the more or less tendency any trade hath to the promoting vice, it is in the same proportion the more or less eligible. And that it imports men, who love their *peace* and *happiness* more than gain, not to debauch their callings themselves, by prostituting them to extravagances and exorbitances; and projecting profit from the intemperances and sins, that is, the ruin of others: for 'tis not sufficient to the peace and comfort of a man's mind, that his calling be innocent, if his conduct of it be not so too.

Secondly, Trade ought to be manag'd with *truth, justice* and *charity*: for without these 'tis only a more cleanly art of cheating or oppression;

pression; sins, which, I doubt, can receive but little excuse or mitigation from the custom and practice of them: without these, *trade* cannot be regular and easie, nor gain comfortable and delightful; since no man can have any confidence in the protection of God, when the methods of his thriving are such as merit vengeance, not a blessing. Nor can I see any thing that can betray men into lying and knavery, but the want of true sense, as well as true faith; since tho' many by undue ways have more suddenly enrich'd themselves; yet 'tis evident, that the wealth, which is more regularly purchas'd, is more pleasant, durable, and lasting; and that honest and equitable dealing is the surest, if not the speediest way to wealth. Nor are there, I believe, many instances of men, who, if they understood their business, have ever suffer'd much by their uprightness and integrity in dealing; it being very hard to imagine, that a *trader* should be a loser by those virtues which advance credit and reputation. But however this be, I am not now enquiring after *wealth*, but *happiness*; to the obtainment of which, I am very positive, that the observation of these measures is indispensable, since the contrary must needs pervert the mind, and intangle life: and as they extinguish in the soul all sparks of *honour* and greatness; so must they its courage and confidence, tranquillity and peace, which can result from nothing, but the due moderation of our affections, and the conscience of our integrity.

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Thirdly,

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Thirdly, 'The *trader's* attendance on his calling must not discharge him from his attendance on *religion*. 'Tis true, 'tis commonly said, and generally admitted, that the duty of every one's secular calling is a part of *religion*; but this ought to be well understood, that so neither a veneration for religion breed a neglect of your callings, nor an over-fond opinion of the merit of industry in your calling (as if all virtue were comprised in it) breed a contempt of religion: 'Tis fit therefore to put you in mind, that arts and trades have not in themselves any direct and immediate tendency, either to the improvement of reason, or the production of virtue; they minister to the necessities of this world, not the glories of another; nor are they so much the works of a rational and spiritual, as of a mortal and indigent being: from whence it follows, that tho' they are necessary to the present state of things, yet can they deserve to employ you no longer than either the publick benefit or private convenience require it; and that you are then only wisely taken up about these, when neither your endowments nor fortunes capacitate you for a life more immediately and directly serviceable to the purposes of reason and revelation: and finally, that the works of a secular profession are then only acceptable sacrifices to God, when consecrated by wise principles and virtues cleaving to and mingling with them. Do not therefore think, that a pretence of business can cancel your obligations to the duties of Christianity. If a man could fancy, which

I never can, business and religion incompatible; 'tis evident which were to be prefer'd; since, if the will of God were so, it is much better to be starv'd than to be damn'd. But without carrying the matter so far, 'tis plain that *virtue* and *religion*, with a competency; render men abundantly more happy than wealth can do, if attended with the neglect or contempt of either: 'Tis the riches of the mind make men great and happy; the ignorant and irreligious can never be either. Let no man therefore think that he suffers any damage, if he be forc'd to maintain his *virtue* and *religion* by the diminution of his *trade*; tho' I cannot comprehend that there can be a necessity of this: for I have never yet observ'd any man so oppress'd and overcharg'd with business, as not to find time for pleasure, when he has pretended he could find none for religion. In a word, the neglect of religion is capable of no excuse; not only because your future, but present happiness depends upon it. Modesty or moderation, to curb a vain and ambitious thirst of wealth; faith or confidence in the providence of God, to restrain you from mean, base and unlawful courses; self-resignation to prevent anxiety, and those fears, to which the uncertainties, changes and revolutions of times and trade make men subject, seem to me as necessary to the peace and happiness of a *trader*, as a competent stock, industry or skill, can be to his worldly success or prosperity: and tho' men, who allow themselves no time, either for attendance upon publick religion,

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or private meditation, may talk finely of these virtues by way of notion and speculation, it is impossible they should be really possess'd of them. *How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks?* which the author of *Ecclesiasticus*, by a parity of reason, extends further to all *traders and artificers*, who are in like manner wholly taken up in their art. I could therefore wish, that those words of our Saviour, *what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul*, were writ in capital letters in the most conspicuous place of the compting-house, and the shop, that you might ever and anon be put in mind, that there is one thing more necessary, even than the diligent and prosperous management of your trade, namely, religion. For to what purpose is it, that your books are well kept, that there is order and regularity in the whole conduct of your trades, if at the same time your neglected hearts lie, like the field of the sluggard, waste, and open, and over-grown with briars, and thorns, and weeds; or like a confus'd and intangled stock of an unskilful trader, which wastes and decays each day? to what purpose is it, that you be punctual dealers towards men, if you be bankrupts towards God? to what purpose is it that you have credit and honour upon the *Change*, if you be poor and beggarly, shameful and sneaking in your selves within, having your souls destitute of any true
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peace, wealth or courage ; and you shift the accusations and importunities of conscience, as much as a wretched debtor would a severe and inexorable creditor ? ah ! while you pursue the world, forget not that there is a heaven ; and while you make provision for time, make some too for eternity : let your stating your accompts with men, put you in mind of clearing your accompts with God ; and let these two things never be out of your thoughts ; first, that it is God who gives man power to get wealth ; and next, that 'tis not a clear estate, but a clear soul, that makes man happy ; I mean, a soul freed from silly and vile affections, and enrich'd with a knowledge and love of God and goodness.

Fourthly, The *trader* must propose to himself proper and rational ends of *trading* : for whoever proposes to himself vain and false ones, will entangle his life in manifold troubles and temptations, and lose his *reason, religion* and *tranquillity*, in the windings and mazes of wretched fancies and unaccountable projects. These ends of *trading* I take to be these three : *First*, a competent and honest support of your selves and families. *Secondly*, A charitable succour and relief of others. *Thirdly*, A timely retreat from a secular calling, to a contemplative life.

First, A competent and honest support of your selves and families. This end is pointed out by the apostle, *Tit. iii. 14.* and called *necessary uses, i. e.* We must design in *trade* the support of the necessities, not lusts of na-

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ture. And were not all *trades* over-stock'd, and consequently the observation superfluous, I should tell you, that publick as well as private necessities were here to be understood. Nor is your care here limited to your own necessities only, but those also of you children and posterity demand their share in it; but then, lest under this pretence you extend your desires beyond all bounds, you are to remember, that in resolving the measures of this provision, you are not to take counsel of your own ambition, or the wanton expectations of your children; that provision for them is wisest, which lays a sufficient foundation for their industry to build on, and leaves them under an obligation to business and employment. And is not this enough? to what purpose should men toil, cark, and pinch, to make their families rich and great, that is, lazy and wanton, to leave them an estate which their own example proves more than necessary; for most of those that do so, have made little use of it themselves? Mistake me not; I do not think it unlawful to be rich, or to leave one's family so; but I think it foolish and sinful too, to sacrifice the peace of one's mind, and the ease of one's life, to the lust of riches: I think it silly and vicious to raise a family by meanness and fordidness, or to lay the foundation of children's greatness in one's infamy. In short, 'tis not wealth, but an inordinate passion for it, which I condemn: prosperity is the gift of God, a common reward of Christian virtues: for Christianity is said to *have the promises of this life, and that*

that which is to come. Wealth then may be receiv'd, but it must not be design'd as your first and chief end. Thus *fame, honour, power,* are great blessings and favours of heaven; but whoever immoderately thirsts after the one or the other, is ambitious and vain-glorious. You may receive temporal good things with gratitude, and enjoy them with moderation; but if you dote upon them, you violate the vow of your baptism, and virtually renounce your faith: for would not this be to forget that heaven were your kingdom and country, and earth the place of your *exile*, or at best, pilgrimage? This is a lesson can never be too often inculcated, not only on the account of that violent opposition 'tis almost every where encountered with; but also the vast importance 'tis of, to the quiet and contentment of a *trading life*: this one thing is the philosophy the *trader* should be ever studying, the wisdom he should be daily pursuing; that is, a true and just moderation of his desires of wealth. Did man know how to bound his desires by the necessities or conveniences of human life; could he regulate his appetites by the modesty and moderation of Christianity, not by custom and fancy; I am confident, this one thing alone would rescue him from the far greater part of evils and incumbrances which infest human life: vanity and ambition, envy and emulation, wantonness and fancy, create most of these difficulties and necessities which strain the beauty, disturb the peace and order, and destroy the pleasure of life. When men's desires and aims are

too big for their callings, they are unavoidably plunged into discontent and doubtful projects; and if they sink not finally into ruin, they cannot be held up but by such an anxious and restless persecution of the world, as looks rather like hurry or distraction, than *trade* or employment. I can therefore never think a *tradesman* happy, till he has modesty enough to find content in the revenue of a moderate and easie trade; till he understands what are the bounds his nature, and his station sets him; and tho' he know how to enjoy a great fortune, does never want one; has sense enough to use it, and virtue enough not to let his happiness depend upon it.

Secondly. A charitable succour and relief of others. 'Tis confessed by all; that men are born, not for themselves only, but for others too; and God, the dispenser of temporal wealth, commands such as are rich in this world, to be rich in good works too: but it is always to be provided, that justice do first take place, and then charity. This direction therefore supposes the *trader's* accounts to stand fair; it supposes him to have discharged the duties which he owes to his relatives and dependants, or else to have none. I will not insist on the obligation or pleasure of charity; I will not press you to it by the interest of your present, and future *happiness*: For the truth is, to do right to the trading world, there is no rank or order of men in the kingdom, that is more sensible of the duty of charity, or more inclined and disposed to it; none that give more eminent proofs of it while living, or leave more glorious

ous monuments of it behind them. One thing only I will take upon me to recommend to you; that is, the advice of *Solomon*; *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest*: That is, whatever good you design to do, do it speedily, and, as much as in you lies, be your own executors. How often are excellent purposes strangled in the birth by an unexpected death! How frequently are they perverted by the corruption and negligence of those to whose inspection they are committed! Besides, this way you shall reap the fruit of your own plantations; you will enjoy the pleasure and satisfaction resulting from the perfection, beauty, and good contrivance of the foundations you have laid; or you will be able to supply the defects, or correct the errors of your model, and prevent those future miscarriages which such designs are liable to. Tho' all this be very much, yet it is but the least part of what you will reap from being your selves the executors of your own bounty; you will be sure that you dedicate it to charity, not to vanity; that you are building alms-houses for the living, not tombs and pyramids for the dead; you will escape the common cheat and imposture the rich put upon themselves, while they entangle themselves in covetousness all their lives, under pretence of designing mighty things after death.

Thirdly, The *tradesman* ought to propose to himself a timely retreat, *i. e.* if the necessities
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of this indigent state will give way to it; which seems to me natural, to finish business e're we finish life; to lay down our burden e're we tire and fall under the weight of it; and quit troublesome employments, before our bungling discharge of them proclaim the decay of our parts and strength, and the increase of our avarice and ambition: Nay, the very continuance of the same cares for the world, which look'd before like prudence, will in old age be reckon'd sin and folly: To *trade*, is but to make provision for life; and therefore since common sense will tell us, that we must not be always providing for life, and never live; 'tis plain, men ought, if they may at length break off their trade, or at least so contract it, that it may be rather diversion than travail; as *Solomon* tends us to the ants to learn industry, so might he to learn wisdom too; the enjoyment of their treasure in the winter, being no less an instance of the one, than their labour in laying it up in the summer, of the other. Besides, in ripe years the advice of the prophet seems to be address'd to every man, *See thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live; i. e.* settle your accounts settle your fortune, compose the differences of your family, and fix your children, so that you may be able to discern what course they will steer when you are gone, and to correct any error they are apt to fall into, while you live, which may otherwise, when you are dead, prove incorrigible and destructive. If these motives, taken from decency, prudence and mortality, seem too light, there is another of more weight and moment

ment behind; that is, the consideration of your eternal interest. 'Tis highly necessary to leave the world before you be torn from it, and to acquaint your selves more familiarly with another world, before you pass into it to make your abode in it for ever. Certainly it requires some time to prepare the soul for death and judgment; and that man will be very unfit for either, who is carry'd from the compter to the grave, and from the intanglements of secular cares to the tribunal of God. But besides the benefits which you will find in retirement, the prospect and proposal of it has many in it; the hopes of a sabbatick year in life, will ease the weight and travail of those that precede it; and a design of retreating from trade and business, will be apt to induce men to pass their first years with more moderation and abstinence, that they may the sooner provide the means of an easie or honourable retirement.

These rules well observ'd, would free the negotiating life from all the great evils and inconveniences it is subject to. Business, as it was in the time of innocence, would be, not the curse, but the blessing of mankind; and trade would be as easie and innocent, if not as pleasant, as *Adam's* husbandry in his garden: for thus industry would be without drudgery, and care without anxiety; commerce would be carry'd on without any mean or ill artifice, without impatient and tormenting designs, or tiresome and vexatious disappointments. What need would there be of shifts and equivocations, of fraud and circumvention, if a man

man had faith enough to believe, that God's blessing upon his industry were the only way to grow truly rich; I mean, to get, if not so much as he would, yet as much as would be good for him? what temptation would men lie under to bondage and drudgery, or to perplexity and anxiety, if he could contain his desires within those narrow bounds which nature and his station have prescribed him? what fears could disquiet the mind, which were form'd into an intire resignation to, and dependence upon God? or, how could the world insnare that soul, which allots a proper time for publick religion, and private meditation? in a word, these rules being follow'd, men would not only avoid the common rocks on which the happiness and fortune of the *trader* generally dashes, but also attain the end of this sort of active life; they would get estates in their younger years, and enjoy them in their riper: nay, no portion of life would want its proper and seasonable enjoyments; they would in the midst of business preserve their innocence, and when they did retire from it, they would perfect that religion which they could before but begin; and enrich, and adorn, and entertain the soul, which they could but guard and defend before, and scarcely maintain in life; I mean, spiritual life.

C H A P. IV.

Of a contemplative life:

For whom this chapter is design'd; what kind of life is to be understood by a contemplative one. Sect. 1. The ends or reasons warranting the choice of such a life: First, Enjoyment: Secondly, Self-preservation from the assaults of temptation: Thirdly, The better serving the world: Fourthly, A more intire dedication of one's self to God. Sect. 2. The conditions, or qualifications necessary to a contemplative life: First, A plentiful fortune: Secondly, A peaceable and humble disposition: Thirdly, A good understanding. Sect. 3. The regulation of a contemplative life; with respect, First, To time: Secondly, To place: Thirdly, To the exercise or employment of a retir'd life: The conclusion, containing the pleasure and happiness of a contemplative life.

THE first thing that offer'd it self to my thoughts, taking a view of this subject, was the collegiative life of scholars in the universities: but besides, that here they do not so much design to retire from the world, as to prepare themselves for it, I had reason to think, whatever service I could propose to do the publick, by any advice I could here offer, my zeal could never be able to atone for my presumption; since these seminaries of learning are under the conduct

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conduct and direction of the ablest, not of this age only, but of those past: I do not therefore calculate this discourse for these, but for persons of another education, and under no direction but their own; for such who make their retreat from the world, tir'd and fated with it; for such, whose inclination or fortune casts them upon a quiet, private, and unactive life. To these, I offer my self a companion: I would enter with them into their privacies, and assist them to pass their hours with true pleasure and innocence. I would inspire them, if I could, with wise and excellent thoughts; I would engage them in the most necessary and most delightful business of human life, and guard them against those evils and follies, which are apt to insinuate themselves into the most solitary life.

I must here, in the next place, repeat an observation, which, I think, I have somewhere before made, that the life of man must neither be wholly contemplative, nor wholly active: for as action and business, without any meditation, is apt to alienate the mind from God and virtue, to corrupt all that is great and generous, and truly wise in it, and wed it wholly to the world; so I doubt, a life spent wholly in contemplation, without any mixture of action, will prove fruitless and unprofitable; and men condemn'd to utter solitude, like the trees and shrubs of the wilderness, would grow wild and savage, luxuriant in leaves, but their fruit, if they brought forth any, sour and small. They forget the nature and
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the duty of man; and talk not feraphically, but fantastically, whoever perswade him to give up himself entirely to contemplation. Man is yet a mixt and compound being; when he becomes all spirit, let him be all thought: he is yet a citizen of this world, tho' he be destined for another: let him not forget, that there are virtues becoming him as such: let him live by intuition, when he comes into the perfect light, and enters into the beatifick presence: let him live by raptures, when he is come into a world where wants and frailties, pains and evils, cannot enter. In the mean time, let man content himself with human virtue, and in this low probationary state, not dream of the flights which only angels take. Having thus taken care, first to raise no expectation in my reader, which might afterwards be frustrated; and next, prevented his being betray'd into any extravagance, by projecting a more abstracted life than the nature of man and the world will admit, I will now proceed to discourse of these three things:

First, The reasons and ends of a contemplative Life.

Secondly, The necessary qualifications for it.
And, Thirdly, the due regulations of it.

First, Of the reasons, &c. Some propose to themselves ease and enjoyment, as the great end and design of their retirement: now, tho' this be a mean and low project, little becoming the excellence of our Christian profession,
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yet I cannot but acknowledge, that it seems to me an absurd and irrational thing, to wear out life in a continual hurry or drudgery ; and I cannot but think it reasonable, that men should one time or other allow ease to the body, and quiet to the mind ; would set both free from their servitude to the world, and enjoy the wealth which they have got together, and eat the fruit of their travail and care. But tho' this be true, yet if men do quit the business, only to give themselves up to the pleasures of the world ; if they exchange their anxiety and toil for luxury and sensuality, and instead of being industrious, plodding, and thriving traders, become idle, or, which is worse, loose and riotous country-gentlemen ; this, I must confess, is but a miserable change ; this is but to prophane retirement, abuse plenty, and waste that precious time which God has made them masters of : this, in a word, is not for a man to quit his slavery, but to exchange his masters ; for as to the interest of another life, and the true end of this, 'tis much the same thing, whether a man be a servant to pleasure and sloth, or to covetousness and ambition. The sum of this matter is plainly this ; 'tis undoubtedly lawful for such as have been long toiled in the pursuit of the world, to retire and enjoy themselves and their friends ; nay, further, I count them happy, who seem born not to struggle and contend with the world, but to enjoy it. But if by *enjoyment* be here understood, only the gratification of the humour by outward, tho' innocent pleasures, I must affirm, that this is too mean, too
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low, to be the chief end, either of the one's entrance into the world, or the other's retreat from it: but if, which is worse, by *Enjoyment* be here meant growing fat with good eating and drinking, or, as it were, rank and rotten through ease and sloth; I deny this to be the *enjoyment* of a man, much less of a philosopher or Christian: the *enjoyment* of a private life or philosophical recess, ought to consist in peace and order, in harmony and exaltation, in a holy calm and serenity; in which, as in a clear day, from the top of some advantageous height, we *enjoy* an enlarg'd and delightful prospect. When we look backwards, we behold a wide sea covered with a vast number of all sorts of vessels, tossed up and down at the mercy of winds and waves; some few seem to make out with a steady course, but are immediately encounter'd with cross winds and storms; a very few indeed, to return in triumph homewards, and of these, some miscarrying almost in sight of port; of all the rest a great part, with much toil and difficulty, do scarcely live in stress of seas and weather; but the far greater part do suffer wreck, and scatter their miserable ruins on every coast: but when we look forward, we discover a rich and secure country, thinly inhabited indeed, but fill'd with all the marks of joy and victory. But whither will my imagination lead me? the enjoyment of the retired, is to consist in the pleasant reflections they make on their escape out of a tempestuous world; in the commerce and intercourse they maintain with that above; in a calm and leisurely survey of all the various and wondrous works

of God, the works of grace and nature; and lastly, in a very intimate and familiar acquaintance with themselves, and the daily habitual practice of pleasing perfect virtues.

Secondly, one true end of *retirement* may be self-defence, or preservation. An active life is a state of war, and the world is an hostile country: snares and ambushes are laid every-where for us; and ever and anon temptations, worldly and fleshly lusts, which St. *Peter* tells us, do *war against the soul*, do endeavour either to court and betray us, or to drive and force us into death and ruin: therefore, if we be conscious to ourselves of our own weakness, we have reason not to expose our selves to dangers, which we have not courage nor strength enough to vanquish; and to chuse retirement, not as a state of perfection, but safety. The measures of grace, the strengths of reason, and the inclinations of nature, are very different in different men: whoever therefore, upon the best survey he can make of his own forces, and after some not insincere triaks, finds himself no match for the world, unable to countermine its policies, and oppose its power; such a one, if he can, may, nay, I believe, ought to retire from the world, as from the face of too potent an enemy: for tho' war be fuller of glory, peace is fuller of security; and tho' an active and busie life be in itself more serviceable to the good of mankind, and the honour of God, yet in this case, a poor Christian may prefer a contemplative one as the securer; and this is not to decline the service of God and man, but sin and danger;

ger; 'tis not to prefer ease and security before spiritual industry and glory, but before a rash presumption, and a fatal defeat or overthrow.

Thirdly, Another end of *retirement* may be, to render us more beneficial to the world. The different talents of different persons do seem to mark them out and destine them to different sorts of life. There are, if I may so speak, active and contemplative gifts; and 'tis a great felicity for any one to be able to know himself so well, as to discern what the God of nature has design'd him for. Some, who are a disgrace to a publick station, would be an ornament to a private one: many, who act but awkwardly, think and meditate very wisely and accurately; and some, who do but expose themselves in business, would pass very well in retirement, and prove excellent examples of innocence and virtue, and wonderfully oblige by their good nature, sweetness and clarity, all such as should live within the reach of their influence. None are wont more earnestly to covet retirement, than such who are naturally addicted to learning; men too plain, or too great for a crafty and subtil world; too generous, tender, and easie, for a bustling, vexatious, and stingy one: these are the men, who, when they are masters of their wishes, seem more particularly oblig'd to dedicate themselves to some eminent service of the publick: these must not bury their talents, but ripen them in quiet and retirement; like guardian-angels, they should procure the honour and happiness of the places, which they seldom or never appear to; and

withdrawing only, not to avoid the service, but the foolery of the world, they must ever maintain an active charity and compassion for those they leave behind, caught and entangled in it; and must out of gratitude travel to obtain some blessing or other upon that government, to whose protection they owe the comforts and security of their retreat. But tho' this direction do more immediately concern such as these, that is, men of parts; yet sure, there are none utterly exempt from this obligation of procuring the publick good in their proportion. Who is there so destitute of the gifts of grace, nature, or fortune, as to have no mite to cast into the publick treasury? He, that dares not pretend to attempt the enlightning or reforming the world, can yet advise and comfort his ignorant or afflicted neighbour: he, who cannot give advice at all, may yet give alms, which very often is as solid and substantial a benefit: and he, that cannot do this, can yet never be excused from offering up daily prayers for the peace and welfare of his country, for the preservation and edification of the church, for the conversion of sinners, &c. Nay, he may proceed to what particularities he shall see fit or necessary, both in his petitions and thanksgivings; and from these intercessions, both the publick and private may, for what I know, reap more true and valuable benefit, than from the works and labours of the learned, or from the alms and bounty of the rich. To conclude; he, that leads the most private and sequestred life, and is too of the poorest endowments, can yet

yet never be supposed utterly incapable of rendering any the least service to others; since the single example of virtue and integrity, and the warmth of a pious and edifying conversation, is of the greatest use. Some way or other therefore, the most solitary life ought to serve the publick, that so retirement may not minister to wantonness and sloth, but piety and virtue; and the world may not lose a member, but enjoy its service in its proper place, and most effectual manner.

Fourthly, The main end of retirement from the world, should be, I think, to dedicate ourselves more entirely to God. The philosopher thought indeed a contemplative life the most happy one, but thought it too a blessing too great for mortal man, too high for this frail nature, and above the state and condition of this world: he had a great deal of reason on his side; yet must we press on towards that perfection which we cannot attain; and it is a sufficient reason for our doing so, that we shall thus approach nearer to it: tho' therefore what some monkish authors have writ of a solitary life, equalling almost the duties and pleasures of it, to those of an angelical one; tho' this, I say, may seem rather holy romance and enthusiasm, than grave and sound doctrine, yet sure it cannot be denied, but that the prophets, the *Nazarites*, and the *Essenes* amongst the *Jews*, and many devout and excellent persons amongst the Christians, as well in the purest as corruptest ages of the church, have chose and coveted solitude and desarts; I mean not uninhabited pla-

ces (for that, if it were so, was an excess and extravagance) but calm and silent retreats from the noise and impertinence, from the hurry and distraction of much business and much acquaintance: and since they did so, their examples seem to teach us, that this state may be made eminently useful to our own good, and God's glory: here a man seems to have little else to do, but to praise God and improve himself; to expiate the errors of his past life, and to correct and subdue whatever he feels amiss in himself at present; to perfect and augment his graces, and to dress and adorn his soul for the festival solemnities and triumph of another world: now he seems to have nothing to do, but to begin his hallelujahs, to advance into the borders and confines of heaven, by faith and devotion; and from the heights of meditation, to survey, as from the next advantageous hill, the riches and pleasures of that *Canaan* which he shall in a moment enter into: and by this method, no doubt of it, as he shall enlarge his appetite and capacity of happiness, so shall he enlarge his share in it: by this method he shall adorn religion, and represent it to the world as most lovely and useful; he shall experiment it to be unspeakably delightful in it self; he shall render the world more easie to him, and heaven more desirable; and when he comes to the banks of *Jordan*, that is, of death, which parts this world from the other, he shall find the streams of it divided to make him way; that is, the troubles and terrors of it dissipated, and he shall pass through it full of humble gratitude for the blessings

blessings of this past life, and ravishing hopes and desires of those of the future.

These are the proper and rational ends of withdrawing from the world; tho' I am not ignorant, that there may be several other inducements to it; such are the digesting a discontent or disgrace, the curing some passion, which would be otherwise nourish'd by conversing with its object, and the mere escaping from the troubles and noise of the world: and as some men are forc'd out of their retreats into the world, not without great service to the publick; so are there others, who, if they had sense enough to know themselves, or modesty enough to hear the advice of their friends, should betake themselves to a private life, to prevent the mischiefs in which they are like to involve themselves and others in a publick one: such are men of bold and enterprizing tempers, without sufficiency; men of zeal and activity, without understanding. But I design'd not here so much to consider what might induce men to embrace a quiet silent life, as what ends they were to propose to themselves when they were in it; which having done, I will pass on to the second thing.

Sett. 2. The *Qualifications* which fit men for a *retired Life*: and these are, I think, three.

First, A plentiful, or, at least, competent fortune.

Secondly, A mild and humble disposition, or, at least, a quiet and composed mind.

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Thirdly,

Thirdly, A good understanding.

First, A plentiful fortune. 'Tis true, that a competency is sufficient to render a retired life easie; and when any one betakes himself to it as a refuge or sanctuary, against the hostilities and persecution of temptations, this is abundantly enough: but where a contemplative life is a matter of choice, not necessity, a plentiful fortune is of great use, and a great ornament; it will make the example of a man's virtue shine with a clearer lustre and greater authority; it will enable him to do many works of charity, which shall have much delight in them, without toil or disturbance; it will furnish him with all useful means of publick and private devotion, and with whatever is necessary to enable him to pass his time both delightfully and rationally. I think, I have expressed my thoughts clearly; but to prevent all mistakes, I will add, by a plentiful fortune, I do not mean a great one: this is more commonly burdensome, than useful to a private life; and more apt to incumber it, than promote the true ends of it. In my retirement, I would have decency and order, but not state and shew; I would have comely plenty, but not a toilsome affluence: for the business of solitude is to raise the mind, not to entangle and enslave it: but the measures of this wealth must finally be determined by every man's own bosom: for it ought to be proportioned to the temper and genius, to the capacities and abilities of the person who retires, and to the more
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immediate design and ends of his retirement. And after all, there is no greater stress to be laid upon this qualification than this: it is convenient, but not essential; tho' a wise man may make an excellent use of it, it is not so absolutely and indispensably necessary, but that he may be happy without it, both in publick and private. For,

Secondly, The pleasure and success of retirement depend much more upon a man's temper and genius, that it be calm and quiet, that it be meek and humble; and if it be not naturally so, it must be made so: for a proud and ambitious, a restless and turbulent person, will in vain seek for that rest and repose in sequestering himself from the world, which is to be found only in the subduing his passions, and reforming his nature. He that is fond of opinion and esteem; he that is at the disposal of fancy and humour, and is not able to shake off the yoke of fashions and customs, will find much to torment him, but nothing to improve or delight him in his retirement: but on the other hand, the meek and humble man will find his garden a paradise, and his solitude a conversing with God and Heaven; will enjoy the present without any further prospect or ambition; meditate without any distraction; worship and praise God, as if he had no other business, or design; and do all the good he can in his little sphere, as if it were the only pleasure and entertainment of the life he had chose. 'Tis one of the great privileges of retirement, to be able to neglect fantastick
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and imaginary good, and pursue after that only which is solid and substantial; to be the masters of our own time and actions, and to model life by our own reason and inclinations, not the fancies and humours of others. 'Tis the great advantage of retirement, that a man has all the pleasure his soul desires within his own reach, that all of the world that is grateful to him, is to be found within the verge of his private abode: he therefore, whose mind gads abroad, and hankers after foreign pleasures, who is tainted with envy or emulation, who hunts after esteem and is discomposed by the fancy and censures of others, muddies the pure stream, corrupts and adulterates the true taste and relish of a retired life: this therefore ought to be the first endeavour of him who seeks happiness in a retreat; to free his mind from all those busie or ambitious passions, which will disturb his repose, and corrupt his taste; and to reduce it to its native purity and simplicity, in which it will be able to relish the blessing of true liberty, of easie and innocent pleasures, of true and artless friendship, of regular and undisturbed devotion; and finally, of calm and elevated meditation.

Thirdly, A good understanding is a necessary qualification for retirement. It requires no little prudence to guard our selves against those evils or impertinencies which will be apt to invade, or insinuate themselves into our solitude; decently to decline business, acquaintance, ceremonies, diversions; I mean superfluous and unnecessary, which will rob us of our time
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and liberty, and obstruct us in all the wise ends we propose to our selves; is a matter of no ordinary dexterity and address. Nor does it require less understanding to preserve the peace and order of a private family: and yet 'tis in vain to shun the infection that is abroad, if more fatal and stubborn maladies reign at home. Nay, further, the family of the contemplative man, ought not only to give him no disturbances; but, if possible, it ought to be moulded and composed to his own humour, and animated by inclinations, somewhat at least, a-kin to his. Nay, after all, let us suppose the man so intirely sequestred, as to be utterly diengaged from all other interests but his own, to have no other dependence upon any other's motion, to have none but himself to regard, no other to please, no other to improve: even here I cannot tell whether so absolute a liberty do not need the greater wisdom to moderate and govern it; and whether it do not require a larger capacity to find a proper and wise employment, for one whose fortune has tied him to none at all: they are no ordinary endowments which will enable one loose and free from all business, to spend his time profitably and pleasantly; and yet, if he do not, he will be liable to the worst of evils; he will dissolve and petrify in sloth, or else turn sower and savage, churlish and brutish, through ignorance, disgust, and discontent; nauseated with a life that affords him nothing new, nothing taking. But the book of nature lies open to him! 'Tis true; but he cannot read it; 'tis not every vulgar eye that discerns the delicate touches

touches of a skilful pencil; the curious and subtil mixtures of light and shade in a well-drawn piece; 'tis not every spectator can judge of the beauty, strength, and convenience of a well contriv'd building. But his cabinet may be well furnish'd, 'tis true; but if the man have nothing bookish in him, if he have no genius for eloquence, no ear for the musick of wit and fancy, no judgment for history, no comprehension for arts or sciences; what is a cabinet to him, tho' furnish'd ever so well, either for use or rarity? 'Tis only fit to be shewn, or to sleep in: for after all the cost and skill laid out upon it, the couch is the best furniture in it. But there is friendship! There is; the name indeed there is, but the thing is too divine: a low and groveling soul, a dull and impenetrable temper, cannot discern the charms, nor taste the sweets of friendship. What is that familiarity, which is incapable of tenderness or passion? What is that conversation, which is incapable of variety, or depth of wit or judgment? But there is religion, there is devotion; a boundless field of profit and delight! 'Tis true; and the principles of this are plain and strong, able to move the man of lowest capacity to decline evil, follow his calling, and do good in proportion to his sense and ability: but as to seraphick contemplative religion, for this to be the life and business of man, it requires a vast capacity, rais'd and refin'd notion, and little less than real enthusiasm; I mean, a truly divine *Impetus* or ardour impress'd or enkindl'd in the soul, by the exuberant influxes of the blessed Spirit. In a word,

word, he who in his retreat is entirely master of himself and time, had need have talents to employ and divert him to find him business and pleasure, and to enable him to reap benefit from the one, and to preserve his innocence in the other: and without this degree of understanding, a solitary life must be very dull and barren: nor can I think of any cure for this, but to increase a man's task and business in proportion to the defect of his understanding; that so imployment may fill those vacuities which contemplation never can. This puts me in mind to advance on to the third thing propos'd.

Sect. 3. The regulations of a *Contemplative Life*, which regards either, *First*, the time; *Secondly*, the place; or, *Thirdly*, the exercise and imployment of *Retirement*.

First, as to time. Though *Contemplation*, more or less, ought to enter into every part of our lives; yet the most seasonable time of giving ourselves more entirely up to it, is the evening of life, the declension of our age: we have then had our fill of the world, and shall not be like to hanker after it; we have seen the emptiness of it, and shall be more like to fix upon solid good; we shall value our peace and calm the more, after we have been long toss'd by storms: besides, we shall set our selves more seriously to the meditation of death and judgment, when we are come within ken of them, and shall be apt to examine the intrinsic good and evil of things with more impartiality, when the
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heats of youth, and the boilings of our passions are cool'd and slack'd: and finally, this is a reasonable time to correct and repair the errors of the past life, and to state our accompts for the last audit. But tho' I thus prefer age, as most fit for a retir'd life, I do not dissuade the younger from it; provided it be virtue, not softness; the love of another world, not a cowardly declining the duties of this, which prompts them to it: otherwise, it were, sure, much better, that the younger sort, through the vigorous season of life, should be engaged and taken up by business; nay, should contend even with the cares, troubles, and difficulties of the world, rather than make choice of retirement to be the scene of a voluptuous, lazy, and unprofitable life: for in the one case something is every day learnt, something done; in the other, nothing; in the one, the man lives neither dishonourable to himself, nor unuseful to his country; but in the other, he rots and consumes away ingloriously and unprofitably.

Secondly, as to place. Solitude has ever been deem'd a friend to meditation, and a retirement from the world very serviceable to a conversation with heaven: and this opinion is much strengthened by the practice of the *Nazarites*, prophets, and devout persons in the best times. 'Tis remarked of *Isaac*, that when he would meditate, he went out into the field; and when *Moses* met God, it was in the desert. Without question, a private retreat affords us many conveniences and advantages to a contemplative life; leisure and silence settle and compose the thoughts;

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thoughts; and the mind augments its strength and vigour by rest, complacency, and collection within it self; and in this state of serenity it is most fit to reflect upon it self, or enter into a survey of the rest and peace of glorified spirits, and examine the grounds of its own hopes: by retirement we at least, in a great measure, free and disengage our selves from those things which are apt either to soften or disturb us, and to breed in us either vanity or vexation. And I cannot tell, but the fineness of the air, the openness of prospect, and regularity and moderation of diet, rest, and exercise, may have that influence upon our bodies, as to dispose and prepare them to be the fitter instruments of the mind. To all this we may add, That the variety, beauty and use of all the works of nature, do insensibly and almost unawares, raise in us an admiration of the divine wisdom, and invite us to adore his power and goodness. But all this notwithstanding, it must ever be remembered, that retirement does not so much consist in solitude of place, as in freedom from secular business and troubles; from the allurements, distractions and vexations of the world: if we put these off, we may find retirement enough in the most populous city; but if we carry these with us into the country, we shall reap little benefit from change of place or air; and under the name of retirement, we shall be persecuted with all the evils and mischiefs with which vanity, disorder, and distraction are wont to disquiet an active and busie life.

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This being rightly understood, the nature of our circumstances ought to govern us in chusing the place of our retreat; but especially a regard to such duties, wherein we propose to spend the bigger portion of our time.

Thirdly, The exercise and employment of a contemplative life is now to be considered: and here these several things offer themselves immediately to my thoughts; *Business, Diversion, Friendship, Meditation*; as comprizing all the several acts of a contemplative life, and measuring out the several periods of the Ascetick's time.

First, of Business. I have before said, That a life of mere contemplation is above the nature and state of man; and when I consider how few are capable of any long or regular contemplations, I am apt to think, that the wisest way for most is, not to discharge and free themselves from all temporal engagements, but only from such as will disturb the peace and order of a retired life; and yet I could wish, that their growth and improvement in knowledge and goodness might be their main business and employment. So many indeed are our errors and sins, so frail, tender, and weak our virtue, that to correct the one, and confirm the other, is business enough, and may of it self easily take up the whole of life: if we pursue diligently all the methods of the improvement and advancement of life, we shall need no other arts or employments to spend or divert our time; he that, besides a constant attendance upon publick devotion, sacraments and sermons, bestows some time each day on bewailing his
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sins, and blessing God for his mercies ; on examining his present state, and establishing his future hopes : he that spends each day but a few thoughts on God and Jesus Christ his Redeemer, on the vanity and uncertainty of all things in this world, but religion and virtue ; or finally, on death and judgment ; and withal on the various arts by which sin and folly is wont to cheat and surprize him, to tempt or deceive him ; will, I believe, find but few hours to waste ; especially when 'tis considered, how much time the necessities of nature, and the indispensable duties we owe to some relatives or other, take up. And this calls to my mind the vigilance and industry we owe to the happiness of others, as well as to our own : there are a great many offices of charity, to which humanity and our Christian profession (if we understand the nature of church-membership) do oblige us ; the peace of the neighbourhood, the preservation of laws, the promoting publick piety, the instruction of the ignorant, the relief of the needy, the comfort of the afflicted, the protection of the injur'd. These, and such like occasions, will never be wanting to rouse our zeal and employ our charity ; and these are works which will turn to as good, if not a better account in the life to come, than solitary virtue : and certainly they turn to excellent account in this : for when the retir'd man doth cultivate the neighbourhood, and sow it with his charity, he seems but to plant and water his own garden, or plough and sow his own fields ; and while he renders them more

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rich, gay, and fertile, himself reaps the pleasure and the profit, enjoys the prospect, and feasts on the fruit. Just so it is in this piece of spiritual husbandry; he, who imparts wisdom and instruction to another, purifies and exalts his own mind; he, that scatters the expressions of his bounty and charity, feels his soul warm and delighted, and finds his virtue and his joy enlarged: for 'tis with grace as 'tis with nature, the exercise of each breeds both strength and pleasure: To all which you may add, that no man consults more effectually the interest and the pleasure of his retirement, than he who most zealously studies the support and improvement of his neighbourhood. Here's business enough, and I could point out to you more.

But why should I take pains to contrive and cut out work for the contemplative man? peradventure I should do him more service, could I teach him an art to decline it. Alas! business will hunt and follow us, it will intrude and press upon us, whether we will or no: And such is the natural vanity, such the curiosity of our minds, that we are too often apt to make our selves work, and to intangle our selves in a thousand trifles and impertinences. I doubt therefore, that it is here very needful, to put those I am discoursing to in mind to take care, that whilst they shun the trouble and business of the world, they suffer not themselves to be entangled in impertinences of their own creating; that they mind and pursue the main end, that is, growth and increase in virtue, and be at all times ready to sacrifice trifles and matters

ters of less moment to this their great interest; lest fancy and humour, or something worse, usurp the place of reason, as it does too often happen in a life of absolute and uncontrollable liberty.

Secondly, Diversion. This is not to be excluded from a solitary life; they adulterate religion, who make it sour or melancholy; it condemns nothing, but what infects the purity, or breaks the force and vigour of the mind. We are not immortal and incorruptible beings; the soul and body both (for it were vain to contradict universal experience) sink under the weight of constant labour: It will be hard, if not impossible, to preserve the vigour of the mind, if we destroy the health of the body. God in another world designs us spiritual bodies, as the most proper instruments of these active minds: let us not therefore make them here crazy and sickly. I would never have my religion be the effect of a broken body, but an enlighten'd mind: I would never have it proceed from discontent conceiv'd against this world; but from the firm belief, love and admiration of a better: whatever therefore diversion recreates my mind without ensnaring it; whatever repairs my body without impairing my virtue, I embrace with open arms: I'll not only taste, but drink my fill of pleasure, if it exalt, not debase my nature; I shall never complain that my mind is too chearful, or my body too vigorous. Let the priests of *Baal* cut themselves with knives and lancets; I'll keep my blood and spirits, if I can, to support my zeal,

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and enrich my fancy; and, in one word, to serve God with life. No body can here mistake me, unless they do it wilfully; and therefore 'tis not worth the while to anticipate any wild objections: I patronize not the lust, but the vigour of the body; I invite not to the sensuality of a polluted fancy, but to the virtuous recreation of the mind; and while I think not a dejected and discontented mind, and a decay'd body, the most acceptable sacrifice to God, I do by no means deny a penitent contrite spirit, a purify'd and obsequious body to be so.

Thirdly, As to Friendship. The distinction between acquaintance and friends is ever good, but never more proper or necessary than here: for retirement, as it signifies sequestering our selves from company, is to be understood with discretion; and the plain rule here, as in all other cases, is to avoid extremes; as a croud, so solitariness, seems not to minister, either to the virtue or improvement of the mind, or to the peace and calm of life; the one robs us of our time, the other leaves us so much, that to very many it becomes burdensome: The one makes us vain, trifling, or, it may be worse, sensual; the other, dull and slow, or, it may be, morose and savage. The skill of a contemplative man is, not to decline all company, but provide himself of good. The prophets themselves had their collegues; and they in the first times, who left the cities for the desert, did yet associate themselves with one another. Indeed, as I take it, in this kind of life we have the fullest enjoyment, and the

the best service of our friends; the purest delight, and the truest edification, being best promoted in the contemplative life by friendship: and therefore friendship is no more to be banished from the gardens and retirements of the contemplative, than from the tables and enjoyments of the active.

Fourthly, Devotion. Participation of the Lord's Supper, and meditation, are the remaining part of the ascetick life; and indeed, these ought to be his great employment. A life in the world may be a life of business; but a retir'd one ought to be a life of prayer, eucharist and meditation: nor indeed can it well be otherwise, unless we have propos'd to our selves some false ends of retirement: for these are not only the duties, but the pleasures of the ascetick life: in these the soul is enlighten'd, enlarg'd, rais'd, ravish'd; in these it soars up to heaven, and looks down upon earth; in these it possesses stability and security, peace and rest, in the midst of a frail instable nature, and a restless and tumultuous world; in these all the passions of the soul are exercis'd with a most tender sensible delight, sorrow, fear or reverence: hate and indignation do here express themselves to the height, not only without any disorder or torture, but also with great contentment and satisfaction of our nature; love, hope, joy, reign here without either check or satiety. But I forgot, that these subjects are so rich and inexhaustible, they would engage me endlessly: I forgot, that they have been treated of so often and so excellently: I will therefore contract my

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sails ; and yet, I think, I have said nothing of them, but as they have a particular aspect upon the subject of this chapter ; and I cannot pass over meditation, without making some few reflections upon it. I know 'tis a worn subject ; and therefore, that I may the more easily find pardon, I'll take care that this superfluous impertinence, if it be one, shall be a very short one. I will therefore take the liberty to crowd my thoughts, without method, together ; lest order and connection should take up more paper than the things themselves. *A good beginning is more than half the work*, is a proverb nowhere truer than here : for meditation will be like to end very unprofitably, if we enter not upon it in a good disposition and devout frame ; and if we do, it seldom succeeds ill.

The soul therefore ought to be sedate, calm, untouch'd by any worldly concern, pure and unfully'd by any carnal Image, fill'd with the desire of spiritual influence, possess'd with the awe of the divine Majesty.

Yet may sudden and extraordinary acts of meditation be ingrafted upon the stock of our natural passions, however first rais'd : thus a troubled mind betaking it self to reflect upon the vanity of the world, or upon the errors of life and corruption of nature, may enlarge it self in a great many very fine, affecting and edifying thoughts, till the storm dissolve into a soft and fruitful shower. Thus the mind, a little gay with satisfaction and joy, will easily overflow into hallelujahs, if it enter into the meditation of the joys of heaven, the love and beauty of God, the triumphs of the resurrection, &c.

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In all meditation we ought to have more regard to edification, than learning; to charity, than knowledge; to devout passions, than fancy or curiosity.

Let none despise pious heats and transports, because those short passions, often repeated, will grow into habitual holiness, and steady devotion.

Those arguments, which we find most effectual to the repressing an inordinate affection, or to the cherishing a weak and pining virtue, are to be often ruminated; not only that they may be always ready, but also because they are generally more successful than others; which may yet be in themselves of greater strength and force: for sins, like the slaves in *Justin*, are often more easily defeated by whips and scourges, than by swords.

The principles which do the great work of religion, are few, clear, and irresistible; but a vast body of sentences, notions, arguments, untried, undigested, are like the armour of *Saul* upon *David*, unmanageable and cumbersome.

Disputable or intricate points do yield little or no nourishment; wit and fancy are also for ornament, not food

Yet weak stomachs must be fed with easie and digestible diet; and this may be made too as pleasant and inviting as it can. God in the works of nature has mingled beauty with use, pleasure with profit; why should we think this unlawful in the kingdom of grace? variety also may be called in to prevent languor and drowsiness; nay, if the genius of the man be such,

that his mind is apt to be exalted, and as it were, purified by them, I know not why notional and thin, or mysterious and deep speculations, should be forbidden him; only in these, and such like instances, two errors are to be avoided: *First*, that we do not study more for delight and entertainment, than for edification in faith and virtue. *Secondly*, that we do not obtrude our fancies as oracles, our dreams as articles of faith, upon the world. If I cannot indulge or abound in both, give me the luxury of love, rather than that of fancy, and let me excel in humility and modesty, rather than knowledge and notion.

St. Peter, in those few words, 1 *Epist.* ii. 2. *As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby,* seems to have excellently summ'd up the whole doctrine of contemplation, comprizing at once the matter, design, and end of it, together with the frame and disposition of mind, qualifying us for it.

Writing may serve to marshal and preserve our thoughts, and by this means we may be stock'd with notions which may always be ready matter and argument for us to expatiate on; but we ought to take care, that first or last we be moved or affected by what we write; or else this will be rather an exercise of our invention than devotion; and all the products of it will be rather essays of wit and fancy, than of holy meditation; and we shall be rather apt to be pleased with our parts, than improved by this practice.

They, who are unable to start proper matter for contemplation, or to carry it on regularly and cohe-

coherently, and by consequence can reap little fruit by this kind of exercise, may supply these defects by reading, and such reflections and applications of it as are most easily and obviously made. For example; *Mat. 5. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying; O blessed Jesus! thou, the true doctor and teacher, whose words are life and light, spirit and truth, I will leave the multitude, I quit the world, and, in the quality of a disciple, I approach near thee; O do thou open thy mouth, and speak to me; I desire not to hear the voice of the world, or of the flesh, or of the devil; speak thou only to me, speak thou to my heart, and to my conscience, and let me hear and feel that voice that spoke purity to the leprous, and life to the dead. Blessed is the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven, this is a blessedness indeed! the kingdoms of the earth dazle and astonish me; my fancy cannot comprehend, my ambition cannot aspire after their grandeur and glory. Ah! what then must the kingdom of heaven be! but, O my Lord, am I of the number of these poor! if I be not, make me so; Let me be never so contemptible to the world, so I be approved and acceptable to thee; let me have no ambitious thoughts, but for thy favour, and for the crown of righteousness; let me covet no riches, no honour, no power here; if thy kingdom be but mine in reversion, it is abundantly enough! thus without straining or pumping, persons*

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sons of the lowest talents, if they have any tincture of religion in them, may be easily supply'd with variety of argument, and with most passionate and piercing thoughts.

O blessed! O voluptuous life! wherein, sequester'd from the world, I enjoy all that it has in it of pure, of true, or natural. Ah! that I could once break loose from those troubles and obligations that hang upon me, and enter into thy peace and tranquillity! I would plunge my self into all thy rational delights; I would lose my self to this contemptible world; and forgetting those shadows and appearances, and, at best, but faint and weak reflections of good, which flutter here about me; I would abandon my self intirely to the joys of the spirit, and the elevations of contemplation: let others enjoy honour, and wealth, and power; let me enjoy my self, truth, and God: let others enjoy the flatteries of sense, and the cheats of fancy; give me the health of a sprightly mind, the calm and serenity of a silent retreat, with the pleasure and security which the divine presence breeds in it: let others, finally, depend on fortune; me only on my self.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

Of the right husbanding or prolonging life.

HAVING in the two former sections, first, prov'd life to be in its own nature a solid good, a considerable blessing of heaven; and next, endeavour'd to prevent the abuses and mischiefs to which it is liable, by stating the true notion of life, and by prescribing rules for the right conduct of the *active, trading,* and *contemplative life*: the next thing that naturally falls under consideration, is, the shortness and uncertainty of this blessing. This is that that puzzles the wit, and baffles the courage of man; the rock against which all the attempts of human philosophy have dash'd and split themselves: for, to say truth, whatever complaints men make against the troubles, yet have they ever made more and sharper, against the shortness and uncertainty of life.

'Tis true, no cure has ever yet been found of our mortality: yet, as wise men have ever thought it reasonable to make the most of an enjoyment, tho' it would not come up to all that they could wish or fantasie; so, were there no other life, it would behove us to do with this, to nourish and keep in the flame as long as we can, tho' we know it must go out at last.

Now life, like enjoyment, is capable of accession or increase two ways; that is, either
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in its continuance, or perfection; either by lengthening its duration, or by raising, improving, or, as it were, ripening the joys and fruits of life, or life it self. I will speak first of *prolonging life*: and here I will, *First*, demonstrate, that *life* may be prolong'd. *Secondly*, I will treat of the ways of prolonging it.

But before I do either, it may be no very wide digression from my purpose, to take notice of the little artifices and impostures, by which many endeavour to evade the strokes of time, and flatter themselves with a sort of imaginary immortality.

CHAP. I.

The usual arts of preventing or retarding the decays of nature, and lessening the fears of death, exploded, and better substituted in their room. Physick, instead of which, courage and contempt of death. Paint, &c. instead of which, the beauties of the mind. Children, instead of which, good works, and so forth. Surviving honour not wholly rejected, but a true immortality prefer'd.

SOME take sanctuary in physick; for which they expect, at least, the preservation of the health and vigour of nature, if not the lengthening the date of life. I'll not dispute whether this art has deserv'd so well of mankind

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as to justify the *Gentiles* in enrolling the first authors of it amongst the gods, or some Christians in attributing its original to guardian-angels. I'll not examine the possibility of that *elixir* by which *Artesius* is reported by the *adepts* to have lived a thousand years; nor, what is more to the purpose, who have liv'd longest whether they who have made most, or they who have made least use of physick: or however these questions be resolv'd, I am sure our time is better spent in labouring to contemn, than to prevent death; and, that those excellent principles which fortifie the mind, contribute more to the comfort and pleasure of human life, than the most sovereign cordials that fortifie the spirits

Some, being willing to conceal those decays which they could not prevent, and cannot remedy, have devised many ways to counterfeit and supply that youth and beauty which time and various accidents have wash'd and worn away. But alas! to what purpose is it to deck and varnish withered nature, and paint the spring upon the face of winter? to what purpose is it, when the evil is incurable, to suffer one's self to be flatter'd and impos'd upon; and try in vain to hide a broken fortune, not only from the world, but from one's self; alas! we must feel what we will not see; nature droops and decays as fast within, as it doth without; and we lose the life and briskness of our blood, as fast as we do the elegancy of feature, or the floridness of complexion. In a word, as to this perishing body, physick, washes, and fucus's are in vain; you but paint and patch
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a ruinous fabrick, which can never be made strong and beautiful till death hath taken it quite down to the ground, and a resurrection build it up quite anew. If therefore you would take my advice, you should lay in a stock of sprightly generous pleasures, which may be ever ready at hand to entertain you, when youth and strength are past; you should take pains to enrich and adorn the mind, whose beauties will more than supply the loss of those of the body; wisdom, magnanimity, bounty, modesty, sweetness, humility, are charms able to recommend a deformed or a decrepit body; and, I am confident, may be purchas'd at a much cheaper rate, than false or counterfeit beauties are by those who are solicitous about them: let then the morning and noon of your life be spent in acquiring virtue, honour, knowledge, and good humour; and in your evening you'll have no reason to complain of the loss of youth and beauty: these will be solid riches, and most amiable charms, that will provide you both delight and support at home, and command both love and reverence abroad; and time will do you no other injury than it does a tree, when it changes its blossoms into fruit: or than it does statues, medals and pictures, whose price and value is enchanced by their antiquity.

Convinced that the decays of nature cannot be long concealed or propt up, some please themselves with an opinion of surviving in their posterity; as if man by generation did but multiply himself; and life did not, like a flame, end with its fuel, but were conveyed and transmitted

mitted from father to son, grand-child, and so on; like a stream that's still the the same, tho' it pass'd through numerous pipes. Well, for my part, I cannot fool my self with a vain gingle of words; I cannot flatter my self that I shall live in him, who probably will in a little time forget me, however he owe his being and fortune to me; nay, it may be, proud and ungrateful, will wish that others forgot me too; like a stream running, as soon as it enlarges it self, as far as it can from its little fountain; and labouring, as it were, by its circlings and wandrings, to conceal the meanness of its rise: I cannot flatter my self that I can live in them whose hopes and fears, desires and joys, will differ, it may be, no less from mine, whatever they now be, than the dead do from the living. Fools that we are, to talk so wildly, as if when dead, we liv'd in our children; do we, when living, share in their distant joys? Or do our pulses beat by their passions? I would not be mistaken, as if I design'd to oppose or extinguish nature: I know the great author of it, for wise and excellent purposes, has implanted in us kind inclinations towards posterity; but then these are for the sake of others, not my self; they ripen into actions that serve the turn of others, not my own: I only bear the fruit which others must gather. And whatever pleasure I may now feel in a promising prospect of the honour and virtue of my posterity, 'tis such a one as that of *Moses* beholding *Canaan* at a distance; but such a distance, that he must never enter into it.

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To conclude; whatever men promise themselves, I think them tolerably fortunate, if, instead of reaping any benefit, when dead, from their children, their lives be not stain'd and disturb'd by them; extremely fortunate, if they can make them fit to be their friends and favourites, worthy to share their pleasures, and able to give them some ease in their troubles: tho', after all, I cannot but think, 'tis infinitely more eligible, to be the father of many good works, than many children; to have a philosophical friend or two, than a numerous offspring; and to spend my time nobly in cultivating my mind, than in intangling my life with cares for those who often will take none for themselves.

Some have entertain'd vain projects of an imaginary immortality; an immortality, which they must owe neither to God nor nature, but to historians and poets, painters and statuaries, and to the dying echo's of a surviving memory; I mean, that which men seek in posthumous fame, in pictures, and statues, and tombs, and embalming carcases: all these seem to carry in them some fading shadows of being an existence. But ah! how imaginary a life is this; something that does infinitely less resemble life and being, than a dream does enjoyment? ah! vain support of human frailty! ah! vain relief of death! if there be any thing in honour, if it be body or substance enough to be seen, or felt, or tasted; if it be reality enough to be any way enjoyed, let me possess it while I live; it comes too late, if it serves only to increase the pomps of my funeral,

neral, or to dress and set off my sepulchre, or to silence the groans, or to wipe off the tears of my orphans, or my friends, tho' this be something: I cannot feel any pleasure in the foresight of that glory, which, while I strain to gaze upon at a distance, the fogs and mists of death thicken the sky: the voice that will speak me great, will speak me too gone and vanish'd; the statues and marbles, which adorn my memory, will adorn my grave too; and, while they express my image or my actions, will proclaim, that all that is now left of me, is rottenness and ashes. All this I talk, abstracting from the considerations of a future life: for how far the reputation I leave behind, may concern my soul in its state of separation from the body; whether the echo's of those praises and honours bestow'd upon my memory here, will reach and please mine ears in another world, I know not, nor do I much desire to know: for, supposing such a life, my soul must needs have nobler employment, and nobler pleasure than this can ever give it. I must confess, if the reflections of my light, when I am set and gone, would be of any use to direct or inflame posterity, I should now take some pleasure in that, which, 'tis hard to persuade me I should take any in hereafter: nor would it be a trifling satisfaction to me, while I liv'd, if I could believe, that my relations or my friends, could receive any honour or patronage from me when dead: and since some sort of character I must leave behind; since I must in this manner, amongst some at least, and for a

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little time, survive, I had much rather leave behind me perfume than stench; I had rather live in panegyrick and commendations, than in satyrs and invectives. But, after all, how lean and miserable a comfort is this, that when I am dead, it will be said, I once liv'd? and a promiscuous croud will talk of me, and of my actions what they please; some things good, some things bad, some things true, some things false? and what is worse yet, I must suffer all the revolutions of humours and parties in following ages: these must give my abilities and performances their character, and the prevailing faction must stamp what estimate they please upon my memory.

But by all this, I do not mean, utterly to condemn the love of honour; nay, 'tis really to be cherish'd when it operates rightly, and spurs men on to generous and handsome actions. I love a charity that is universal and boundless, and extends it self to following ages: and certainly there is not a nobler charity, than to furnish the world with an example that may adorn its own times, and enkindle the emulation of posterity. Nay, farther, I am willing to believe, that a gracious God will sum up, amongst the accompts of my life, the influence it has upon the world when I am dead; and to raise the estimate of my virtue, will consider it, not simply in it self, but with all the happy effects which it may any way be the occasion of in successive ages. Let me then do good, and, if I can, great actions, upon any motive, provided it be just and allowable;
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since this will be the blessed fruit of it. But yet it shall be my business to make sure of my own immortality; if that of my *name* will follow, let it: it shall be my business to gain the approbation of God and angels; and if the praises of this lower world joyn their harmony and consent with that above, this cannot disoblige me: I will with all my power make sure of my salvation, and not despise fame: great and good men have ever felt some natural desires of this sort of immortality. Since then this seems to be an inclination of God's own planting, 'tis not to be extirpated, but rather carefully cherish'd and cultivated, and duly prun'd and regulated.

Having exploded those mistaken fancies, by which men support themselves against the shortness of life; I will now proceed to treat of the only two ways by which this evil may be in some measure remedy'd; that is, by prolonging the date, and by improving and perfecting the nature and essence of life, so that a man may live much in a little time.

C H A P. II.

Of Lengthening Life.

SECT. 1. *The Fatality of the period of life refuted. And objections from scripture, from astrological predictions, from divine prescience, answered. A sort of fate admitted.* SECT. 2. *Of the ways of prolonging life. First, Cheerfulness of mind. Secondly, Health of body. Thirdly, The protection of God and man.* SECT. 3. *Objections against this last assertion, from such texts as assert the promiscuous events of things, and from the early death sometimes of the righteous, answer'd.*

UNDER this article I design to prosecute these three things :

First, To refute the opinion of a *fatal* period of human life. A fancy which has possess'd the multitude, and with which the minds, even of such as would seem above it, are not seldom assaulted.

Secondly, I will consider what ways the date of life may be lengthen'd.

Thirdly, I will remove those objections with which this advice is encounter'd, either from the promiscuous events happening alike to good or bad ; or from the early and immature death of some righteous persons. To begin with the first of these.

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First, It has been too generally taught and believ'd, that the date of human life cannot be protracted; that every particular man has a fix'd and immutable period decreed him, beyond which he cannot go. But this opinion directly defeats the force of all motives and arguments to virtue, deriv'd from temporal considerations; and undermines our dependance upon God, and ridicules our addresses to him, as far as they concern this life, and the things of it: and how plain a step is this to the refutation and overthrow of *Judaism*, which was built upon temporal promises, and consequently to the overthrow of Christianity it self, the authority of the New Testament depending in so great a measure upon that of the Old, I'll leave every one to guess. And were there no other reasons to reject this opinion, besides these alone; these, I should think, were abundantly sufficient, since it is impossible that any thing should be consonant to truth, which is so repugnant to the interest and authority of religion; but there are so many more, that I must be forc'd to croud them together, that I may avoid tediousness and redundancy. This persuasion then is repugnant to all the instincts of our nature; to what purpose is the love of life implanted in us by our great Creator? why is self-preservation the first dictate and law of nature, if all our care and diligence can contribute nothing towards it? Vain and impertinent is that law, whose observation can procure us no good, nor its violation any evil. This is a persuasion that flatly contradicts the experience and ob-

servation of mankind in general: how can the period of life be fix'd and unalterable, which we see every day, either lengthen'd out by care and moderation, or shorten'd by excess and negligence; unless we can resolve, to the utter overthrow of religion, not only that life and death, but also that vice and virtue, wisdom and folly, which lead to the one and the other, are alike pre-determin'd, necessary and fatal? Nor is this opinion less contrary to the sense and reason of the wise and prudent, than to the experience of the multitude; self-preservation is the first and chief end of civil societies and human law; but how foppish and ridiculous a thing it were for the grave and sagacious part of mankind to enter into deep consultation, to frame solemn laws, and devise the strongest obligations to fence and secure that life which can neither be invaded one minute before its fatal hour, nor prolong'd one minute beyond it: nor has man only, but God himself, endeavour'd to secure this temporal life by the strictest and most solemn laws; nor this only, but he has made life and death the reward of obedience, and punishment of sin. This opinion therefore is a manifest calumny against the wisdom and sincerity of God; against his wisdom if he raise up the pallisado's and bulwarks of laws to guard and defend that life, which can neither be violated before, nor extended beyond its minute: his sincerity; for his promises would be ludicrous and insignificant; and so would his threats too, if neither the obedience of the virtuous could lengthen, nor the disobedience

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of the sinner could shorten life. And, in a word, to what purpose does the spirit in 1 *Pet.* iii. 10, 11. invite and encourage men to religion by the proposal of life and prosperity, if in the bottom and truth, life and prosperity depend, not on our behaviour, but our fate; and be not dispensed according to the open proposals, but the secret and unconditional, the rigid and inflexible decrees of the Almighty? I would not stop here, but heap together a multitude of other arguments against this error, did I not remark, that as it has prevail'd too much to be despis'd, so has it too little to be laboriously refuted; and that it has so weak a foundation, that few of those that defend it, do believe it; or at leastwise, so heartily, as to suffer it to have any influence upon their counsels or actions: turks, astrolögers, and the most superstitious assertors of fate, being no more free from the fears of death, or a concern for life, than the rest of mortals.

The truth of this proposition being thus made out by unanswerable reasons, we are not to suffer our selves to be mov'd by any superstitious Imaginations, by any obscure or subtil objections, or by any mere colours or appearances of reason: for what is once clear and evident, ought to remain firm and unshaken, tho' we cannot unravel every objection against it. Therefore tho' I should not be able to reconcile this doctrine with some obscure texts of scripture, with a certainty of God's prescience, and with some particular predictions of men, who have pretended to read the

fatal periods of human life in the schemes of heaven; yet ought its authority to be preserv'd, as built upon plain texts and solid reasons, and attested by the suffrages of the prudent and wise, and by the daily observation of the multitude. But the truth is, there is nothing objected here, but what is capable of a very easie answer: the scriptures, which speak an appointed time for man upon earth, are not to be understood of any particular personal fate, but of a general law or rule of nature; not of the extent of every particular person's life, but of the duration of man in general, or of the mortality of our frame and constitution, and the shortness of man's residence here upon earth; and imply no more than that man, as well as all other species of animals, and indeed of the vegetables (for so far *Job* extends the comparison) hath his time appointed, the bounds of his life or abode here set him, beyond which he cannot pass. *Psal.* xc. 10. *The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and tho' men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.* As to astrological predictions, if the accomplishment of any of them be attested by unquestionable authority, and they be not like the prophecies of poets, made or mended after the event; yet methinks, were not the minds of men very prone to superstition, a thousand errors should be sufficient to discredit and disparage one good guess; and no man of sense should have a value for a pretended science, whose

whose grounds and principles are evidently uncertain and precarious ; no man of any religion should be fond of that, which, to say no worse of it, seems to stand condemn'd by God in scripture : for tho' I must not dissemble this truth, that the idolatry which was ever blended with it, seems especially to have drawn down a severe sentence upon it ; yet can it not be denied, but that *Isaiab* xlvii. *Jeremiah* x. and other places of holy writ, seem to look upon it with no very favourable or benign aspect.

As to the prescience of God, I see not how the denial of a fatal period of human life classifies with this ; on the quite contrary, he seems to me injuriously to limit and restrain the knowledge of God, who thinks he foreknows nothing ; but because he peremptorily pre-determin'd it. This, if we will speak sense, is to magnifie his power, but to reduce and confine his knowledge, or at leastwise to depress and debase it : for thus it would not be a primary and essential perfection, but would result from, or depend upon an arbitrary will, and unguided power. For my part, I cannot think it necessary, if I could not reconcile God's foreknowledge with contingency in events ; therefore, with the *Socinian*, to deny the one ; or, with the *fatalist*, the other : 'tis enough to me that I learn from scripture, that is, from God, who cannot err, that prescience belongs to the Creator, and contingency to the creature ; the measures and bounds of these, if there be any, let who will seek, 'tis not my business now.

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But yet, after all this, if any man will contend for such a kind of fate as is not rigid and inflexible, but submits to the interposal of the divine prerogative; and leaves sufficient encouragement for the labour, virtue, and prayers of man, I oppose it not: nature has its laws; but such, as God, whenever he pleases, over-rules. The government of man is not without order and method; much less the government of God: We are born into the world with different constitutions; but yet the unhealthy one may be rectified and mended by virtue, the healthy corrupted by vice and irreligion. Such a sort of fate or destiny as this that is flexible, and accommodated to the interest of religion, in which the evil may be corrected, or the good perverted; such a fate as this, tho' the word be improper, I readily admit; but no other. No other, I say, in the general: for as to those particular exceptions and reservations, which at any time God may, and often does make, from any general rule or law, for causes always weighty and important, and generally hidden and inscrutable; these I meddle not with.

Having thus evinc'd, that the period of human life is not fatally fix'd; that no peremptory and unconditional degree, no insuperable connection or concatenation of causes, does supersede our vigilance and industry for the preservation of this blessing: I will now proceed to the second thing propos'd, and consider which way the date of life may be lengthen'd.

Sect.

SECT. 2. *Of the ways of prolonging life.*

'Tis obvious and manifest to every one, that life depends upon these three things; the cheerfulness of the mind, the health of the body, and a favourable providence of God; by which, as none will deny, who admit of providence, we may at least be protected from violence and unlucky accidents, such as human prudence cannot foresee. And to these three, may, for ought I know, be added, the good will of man, whose ministry and service is very often of excellent use to us in this point.

First, The first thing then I am now to enquire into, is briefly, what cheerfulness of mind does contribute to the preservation of life; and then more fully, how we may possess our selves of it.

'Tis true, the morose and sour, the stoward, the passionate and the fullen, those stains and blots of human nature, do often prolong their lives to a great age; as if nature were renew'd and repair'd by this kind of fermentation; or the blood and spirits kept sweet, like water, by a perpetual agitation: But 'tis as true, that the loose and debauch'd, the intemperate and incontinent, do sometimes, tho' rarely, live long, and descend into the grave, rather oppress'd by their years than their excesses: and if from such extraordinary instances as these, we shall take the liberty to form rules of life, and to contradict known and receiv'd truths, we shall ever live at the mercy of fancy, and never find any

any sure and firm footing to rest upon. I will not therefore doubt, notwithstanding these rare instances, but that the chearfulness of the mind has a very propitious, its discontent a very malign influence upon the life of man: the contentment of the mind preserves the balsam of the blood, and the pleasure of it enlarges the heart, raises the spirits, actuates and invigorates all our powers; so that when the mind shines serene and bright, it seems to impart a new warmth and new life to the body, a new spring and new verdure to this earth. On the contrary, a diseas'd mind does, as it were, scatter its contagion through the body; discontent and melancholy, sour the blood and clog the spirits; envy pines away, and passion frets and wears out our strength and life. In few words, there is an intimate conjunction between the mind and body; and so close is the dependence of the latter upon the former, that the face of inferiour nature does evidently vary, wither or flourish, according to that variety of weather it makes in the sky above it, as the mind smiles or lowres upon it: and accordingly, if we appeal to experience and observation, I believe, we may safely pronounce, that generally, such live longest, who either think very little, or whose thoughts are always calm and chearful; such who are stupid, and have no passions; or are wise and good, and have none but such as are regular and delightful: to this purpose, in part, is that of *Solomon*, *The spirit of man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?*

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All this, I think, is not contested; and all the difficulty lies in possessing our selves of this satisfaction and contentment of mind: men seek it in every thing; and even those things that are diametrically opposite to one another, do each pretend to be infallible guides to it: atheism and religion, philosophy and ignorance, worldly prudence or policy, and an affected contempt of it, which I know no name for, do all promise to teach us the art of satisfaction: but it will not be a very difficult task, when we have examin'd the pretences of each, which we are to follow.

Ignorance, lust and fancy, are too blind, rash, and violent for us to abandon our selves to their conduct: nor are they more giddy and inconstant in themselves, than weak and subject to all changes and odd accidents of the world: so that should they lead us on to pleasure, we have reason to apprehend pain the next moment; and at best they leave us not in a condition, either rationally to approve our enjoyments, or to fortifie our selves against the los of them.

Wordly policy is built wholly upon mistakes; it proposes to us things under the notion of great and good; which, when we have examined, we find not worth our seeking; and of these, it can give us no assurance, whether we respect their acquisition or possession; and the ways it prescribes to put us in possession of all that satisfaction which results from these things, have something in them so mean, so laborious, so uncertain, so vexatious, that no success can
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compensate that trouble and shame, which the canvassing for them puts us to.

Atheism pretends indeed to extinguish our guilt and fears; but it does also deface all the beauty and loveliness of human actions: it pretends indeed to let loose the reins to pleasure; but withal, it leaves us no support under evil: it takes off indeed many restraints; but withal, it unchains and lets loose our passions: in a word, it leaves us nothing truly great or lovely to enjoy in this world, or hope for in another; and if its tenets were useful to us, yet have they no certainty, no foundation: it derives all its credit from the confidence, not reason of men; who, under colour of a free and impartial philosophy, advance the interest of those lusts to which they are intirely enslav'd.

Religion then only remains to be follow'd: this rectifies our opinions and dispels our errors, and routs those armies of imaginary evils which terrifie and torment the world, much more than spirits and ghosts do; this discovers to us objects worthy of all the love and admiration of our souls; this expiates our guilt, and extinguishes our fear; this shews us the happiness of our present condition, and opens us a glorious prospect of our future one; this discovers to us the happy tendency of temporal evils, and the glorious reward of them; and, in one word, teaches us both to enjoy and suffer; it moderates our desires of things uncertain, and out of our power, and fixes them upon those things for which we can be responsible; it raises the mind, clears the reason, and finally forms us into such an united

ted, settled and compacted state of strength, that neither the judgment is easily shaken, nor the affections hurry'd by any violent transport or emotion: but do I not here imitate physicians, who attend only to the most dangerous symptoms, and neglect others? whether I do or no, they, who read such general directions, are wont to do so in their application of them; and most are apt to look upon religion as design'd only to redress substantial and formidable evils. And yet 'tis with the mind as with the body; tho' fevers, imposthumes, defluxions, &c. kill, the anger of a puffle, the pain of a tooth, do strangely disorder and disturb: and thus, tho' pain and death, and such like evils, overthrow and overwhelm the mind; yet are there a croud of slight and trifling evils which disquiet and discompose it: and this is a matter not to be contemn'd, especially by me, in the prosecution of the design I am here upon; since I perswade my self, that the great and formidable evils, guilt, pain, poverty, sickness, death, or the thoughts and apprehensions of them, do but very rarely afflict the life of man: but there are other evils of a slighter nature, which, like pirates, are perpetually cruising on our coasts; and tho' they cannot invade and destroy, do much disturb and annoy us. Nay, what is yet more, 'tis very usual to see men acquit themselves very honourably under true and substantial evils, who come off very poorly from the encounter of slight and despicable ones: how common is it for one who maintains bravely his courage and judgment amidst swords and bullets, to lose all patience, prudence and government, when attack'd by a
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rude jest, a brisk, or, it may be, a bold and senseless reflection? to see a man that hears very calmly the loss of a ship, or a considerable sum of money, transported into strange indecency upon the breaking of a glass, or the spoiling of a dish of meat; and he who sits very tamely and unconcernedly down under a disgraceful character, sweats and raves, if robb'd but of a cabbage or an apricock. These and such like remarks, one may make every day, and almost in every company: and, what is the worst of all, our fears and sorrows, our hate and anger, are as violent and uneasy, when they spring from causes of the least, as of the highest moment. We bewail fantastick and true misfortunes with the same sighs and tears; and resent imaginary and substantial injuries with the same disorder'd pulse and deform'd looks. When I have reflected on all this, I have often thought that it was as necessary to the tranquillity of human life, to guard my self against dust and flies, as against storms and tempests; to arm my self against the stings of a swarm of vexatious accidents, as against pestilence and war, and poverty and blindness, or deafness. And to this end, these three or four following rules have often been of great use to me. *First,* Of the evils of life I never take more to my share than are really my own. I never travel abroad to find out foreign mischiefs to torment my self, as if there were not enough of the native growth of my country; my own mind, my own body, my own house, are provinces wide enough for me, and a little too fruitful too; nay I
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am not ashamed to confess, I decline, if I can, an evil, even lying in my way, as I do a buffle or a fray, by passing on the other side of the street. I'll never split upon a shelf or rock, if I have sea-room enough. And as a little distance of place, so a little distance of time, serves my turn to make me reckon such evils as none of mine: I'll no more distract or disturb my self with the evils that are fancy'd teeming in the womb of time, than with those that are now in being in *Peru* or *Mexico*. This is the very lecture religion reads me: for sure, to incorporate distant evils, or to anticipate future ones, were far from *studying to be quiet, and doing one's own business*; or from thinking with our Saviour, *sufficient for the day, is the evil thereof*; and were indeed to suffer as *busy bodies, fearful and unbelievers*. If any man will impute this to me as brutality and uncharitableness, I cannot help it: I thank God, that I have sense enough to practise caution without fear, care without anxiety, and charity without distress or agony of mind. *Secondly*, As to those evils (I speak still of slight and daily ones) which do really fall to my share, and I cannot avoid; my next care is to weaken their force, to disarm them of their sting, their teeth and venom, if they have any: I take from them all the terror that fancy and opinion have given them; and will no more, if I can help it, suffer my imagination, than my taste or feeling, to be abused or impos'd upon. In the next place, I carefully fortifie and strengthen my self; see that my state be healthy, and my nature

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firm ; lest I should complain of the meat, when the fault is in my stomach ; or think the bed ill made, when the cause of my uneasiness is in the body. And lastly, when I have reduc'd the evil to its own natural size, generally 'tis of such a Pigmy, dwarfish growth, that I can securely slight it ; I can master it with very little trouble and industry, or at worst, with a very little patience ; and, that I may not be wanting here, I look upon it as a task I am born to, as an inconvenience that I can no more shun, than any natural defects in my body or my mind ; or than I can the cares and fatigues of my calling. *Thirdly*, I labour above all things, to fill my soul with great and ravishing pleasures, to inflame it with a generous ambition, and, in a word, to possess it with that habitual poverty of spirit, meekness, purity, charity, commended to his disciples by our Lord and Master ; that I am generally above the buzz and fluttering of these, rather impertinences, than evils of human life ; and do often suffer them without being sensible of them ; but I can never often enough put the world in mind of the vast difference there is between the fits and habits of these virtues. What we could do in a pious humour, that we should always do, were but the weak impression once converted into nature, the short-liv'd passion chang'd into steady habit : but 'tis high time to pursue my design ; I am almost afraid, I dwell so long upon a head, that the most pertinent parts of my discourse may now and then look like digression. The next thing to be consider'd, after the *cheerfulness of the mind is,*
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Secondly, The health of the body. Life does so apparently depend on this, that in the vulgar notion it signifies much the same thing. 'Tis notorious, life decays and expires with the health and strength of the body; and when it is protracted after these are gone, it scarce deserves the name of life, any more than the noise of an ill-strung and ill-tun'd instrument does that of musick. But I need not teach any body the value of health, or press them to the preservation of the body; I should be sufficiently obliging to the world, if I could teach it any art by which they might be restor'd to that blessing which it enjoy'd before the flood, a long life of many hundreds of years. But I know no art that can raise nature above its own laws, or retrieve its youth, if it be now in its decrepitude: one thing I know, that we too commonly debauch and corrupt nature first, and then load her with our reproaches and aculations; we should undoubtedly live much longer, and this life would be more healthy and verdant, that is, more vital than it is, did we but observe the dictates of religion, the laws of virtue, and not prefer before them those of lust and fancy. How much soever men complain of the shortness of life, 'tis little to be doubted, but that most men do notwithstanding shorten it themselves, by some crime or error or other. If we could consult the sickly, crazy part of mankind, I mean, such as are so in the middle, or almost beginning of their years, and demand of them, what blatted their beauty, and impair'd their strength; what thus violated, and contaminated their nature?

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ture? we should soon be resolv'd to what original their diseases were owing, if at least their shame and blushes would give them leave to inform us: and if we should endeavour to trace the deaths of most of those who are gone hence before their time back to their first cause, I do not think, but that our search would soon end in some vice or folly or other: this man drank too much, the other too much indulged his appetite; one was devoted to his lust, and another putrified in his sloth; all of them, in our common phrase, *did live too fast*; but in truth, and propriety of speech, *died too fast*; for since life is nothing else but acting by reason, every deviation from it, is an approach towards death. But to proceed: 'tis not unusual to see pride kill one, passion another, avarice and ambition a third; while to gratifie these affections, the body is either expos'd to dangers, or worn out by labour. Now, if we can generally find the causes of most early deaths in men's vices, when so little of other men's lives comes to our knowledge; what think you, should we not be able to discover, if we could enter into the retirements, and penetrate all the secrets of mankind? how many hidden passions do gnaw the heart? how many secret sins do waste and consume the strength? where not only concealment excludes the eye, but a shew of probity, nay, a real and eminent practice of some particular virtue, excludes even suspicion and jealousy? if then immorality do often contract the term of life, 'tis evident what is to be prescribed for the prolonging it; religion

religion or virtue is the best physick: it has often mended an ill constitution, but never spoiled a good one. When did ever chastity impoverish the body, or deflower the face? when did ever temperance inflame the blood, or oppress the spirits? when did ever industry or vigilance sour the humours, and enfeeble the nerves? no crudities, no plethories, no obstructions, no acidities, no stagnations, extravasations, and I know not what hard names, and harder things, derive themselves from virtue or religion. 'Tis true, a man may be righteous over-much, he may entitle his folly, his melancholy, his particular fancy, or his particular complexion or constitution, to religion; and this may prove mischievous to him, to his health, to his strength; but then this is not the fault of religion, but the man; and to speak properly, this is not righteousness nor religion, tho' it be called so; but it is fancy and folly, or an ill constitution disguised under the garb and the mien of religion. Virtue then is the most probable way to a long life; or if not so, at least, to a more comfortable and honourable death: for where an early death is the result of a providence, not a crime; we must needs meet it with less amazement our selves, and our friends behold it with less regret and affliction.

Thirdly, The third way of prolonging life, is to engage the providence of God in its preservation. If all the promises God has made the virtuous, of a long life, did really signify nothing, I cannot see how we could put up any request to God, relating to tempo-

ral protection, with faith or fervour, or as much as sincerity; but if they signifie any thing, then surely they must signifie, that his providence is actively employ'd for the preservation of virtuous men: and how great security is this? what can be impossible to him who is the Governour and Creator of the world, in whose disposal all created *means* are, and in whose power it is, if these be insufficient, to create new ones? to him whose unerring laws can never miss of those ends he aims at? or if they could, his power is ever at hand to supply their defects, and accommodate and attemper them to particular emergencies; and his prerogative is under no ties, no limitations, but those of his divine wisdom: well might the *Psalmist* say, *I laid me down and slept, for 'tis thou, Lord, makest me dwell in safety.* Every good man might say the same as far as he has a divine warrant; not in peace and health only, but in sickness, in a tempest whether by sea or land; in a plague, in a battle, in a siege, in a storm: to believe our selves under the patronage and protection of God, seems to me nothing less than to believe, that he will make those things we are concern'd in, flow with a smooth and gentle stream; that he will place us in a state or condition of life, safe and agreeable; or if not, that in distresses and dangers he will contrive the methods of our rescue, and where the ordinary are insufficient, find out extraordinary; that he will concur and co-operate with the natural course of things; or, if he see it fit, that he will exert a super-

supernatural force, and vouchsafe an extraordinary succour. Plainly thus, tho' I know not the unsearchable methods of divine providence, yet from God's concerning himself for my good, I may boldly infer, that in my sickness I may hope for that from God, which I cannot from the skill of my physician; that in troublesome times I may expect that from providence, which I cannot from the wisdom, justice, or power of the magistrate; that in necessitous, involv'd and intricate circumstances, I may promise myself that issue from his favour, which I cannot from the prudence and integrity, or bounty of my friends: and, in a word, that in all cases I can hope for that from my prayers, which I otherwise could not from human power or policy. The sum of all is; all the natural means of our security and life, are in the hands of God; and if these should be deficient, nothing can restrain him from exerting a supernatural force and virtue for our preservation; his fix'd and universal laws are infinitely wise: but if at any time our affairs should require his immediate interposal, I know not why I should fancy his prerogative so bounded, that he cannot or will not interpose: and tho' his pavillion be thick clouds, and he walk upon the wings of the wind; tho' his providence be a great abyss, and the swiftness and secrecy of his actings elude our search, and baffle our inquiries, so that we cannot discern when he acts by prerogative, when by law; yet, I doubt not; but that he does frequently exert a miraculous and extraordinary power.

This being so, 'tis plain that our great business is to engage the providence of God on our behalf, that we may have an unerring guide of this dubious and floating life, a firm support of this mortal corruptible nature; and, I think, I need not prove, that religion is the effectual way to oblige God. If this be the great message that we have received of the Son of God, *that God is light*; then St. *Jahn's* inference must needs be good, that he only who walks in the light, can maintain a communion with him, that is, be dear and acceptable to him; a spiritual and rational worship must be the only method to endear our selves to a God, who is a wise Spirit. Nay, tho' all the precepts of religion should not be necessarily founded in their consonancy and agreeableness to the divine nature; yet still, since they are the precepts of God, we need search for no other reason for the acceptableness of our obedience: 'tis true, all the heights of purity, to which the gospel invites us, are not necessary to the health and strength of the body; yet are they serviceable to the perfection and improvement of our nature: they are not all indispensable to the happy conduct of our temporal affairs; but they are useful to the felicity and glory of our eternal; and therefore the more religious we are, the more we shall please God. But I will insist no longer on so uncontested a point; nature it self dictates, that an imitation of their virtues is the strongest obligation we can lay upon the wise or good; and obedience the most effectual recommendation of us to the sovereign powers: whether

whether therefore we consider God as the *best*, or the *greatest*, the characters under which the light of nature did ever represent him, religion, that is, imitation and obedience, are the only ways by which we may ever come to pretend to his favour.

Nor is virtue less apt to procure the favour and amity of man, than that of God; it fences us about with the arms and succours of mankind, it guards us with all their eyes, and with all their prayers: for their love and reverence make them both active and wakeful in our service.

How directly repugnant to all this, are the effects of irreligion? it leaves us no other safeguard than that of our own strength and vigilance; which, to speak properly, is to deliver us up into the hands of our folly and fear, our weakness and cowardice: for alas, what were my single reason or force, when I have neither God nor man to second me! how much less, when the indignation of the one, and the secret aversion or open enmity of the other, scare and intimidate me! how can a man hold out against dangers, if he be betray'd by his own guilt within; and his reason, overthrown by ominous fears do not lessen, but multiply his terrors: hence is that of *Solomon*, *The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are as bold as a lion*: abandoned by God and man, he seems at last abandoned by himself too.

The sum of what I have said under this article, amounts to this; first, I have proved that the date of human life is not fatal and unalterable; from whence I thought it necessarily follow'd,

follow'd, that it was capable of being prolonged or protracted: therefore I proceeded, secondly, to consider by what means it might be prolong'd: and here, supposing that nothing could be more conducive to this, than *a chearful mind, a healthful body, and a propitious providence*; I have made it evident, that these are to be sought in the practice of religion and virtue; which is nothing else than what inspir'd authors have frequently taught; *Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in its season.* A blessed and perfect religion! at once the guard and joy of life! at once the support and delight of human nature!

Sect. 3. *Two objections against the design of the former paragraphs, answered.*

But against this whole discourse it will be objected, *first*, How is this that you contend for? how are those texts which make length of days the reward of obedience to the divine laws, reconcilable with those other, which, as far as concerns their temporal effects, seem to equal wisdom and folly, and level righteousness with wickedness, asserting the promiscuousness of all events to the virtuous and vicious? *All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked, to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and*

and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath, Eccles. ix. 7. And this is extended as far as death it self; *How dieth the wise man? as the fool, Eccles. ii. 16.* Innumerable are the answers to this objection; but one only fits my purpose, which is plainly this, that these are rhetorical exaggerations of human vanity: wise and good men, as well as others, have their natural passions; and therefore divine writings have their figures, as well as those that are purely human: these therefore, and the like speeches, design not to derogate from the efficacy of virtue, or weaken the force of the divine promises, but to humble the vanity of man, and convert his fondness for this world, into a greater for a better; and are not therefore to be understood in such a general and unlimited sense, as if there were no difference between the righteous and the wicked, with respect to temporal good and evil, life and death; but only thus, that the righteous are not so universally exempt from temporal evils, but that some or other of them, in all ages, are liable to them, even to an untimely death it self: but what then? Such extraordinary instances of an inscrutable Providence ought no more to derogate from the excellence of wisdom and virtue, or the veracity of God, than some few shipwrecks ought to discredit navigation; or, the failing of some few traders, disparage art and industry: 'tis enough that the experienc'd and skilful, the careful and diligent, do generally sail and trade successfully. And this may in part suffice for an answer to another objection

jection of the same nature with this; only that this relates to all events in general, but the objection following, to a particular one.

If long life be a great blessing at present, and recommends men to greater afterwards; and if religion and virtue be on both these accounts entitled to it, whence is it that an immature death snatches away sometimes the best of men, that it stops them in the very progress of their virtue, and in a full career towards perfection and glory! I answer,

7. The providence of God is a great deep, *his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out.*

Secondly, I cannot believe that this early death, which intercepts the fruits of a growing virtue, shall bereave the virtuous of any degree of that future glory to which such fruits would have entitled them; I should rather think with the author of the book of *Wisdom*, that having compleated their perfection in a little time, they had in a little time finish'd their course; and by what they did do, gave such plain proofs of what they would do, that God rewards their purposes as he does the actions of others, and therefore hasteneth to take them to himself. But however this matter be, I am content to believe,

Thirdly, That as God orders all the particular events of life to the good of those that love him, so much more must he dispose this biggest event that befalls a mortal man, that is, death, to their interest and benefit; and therefore this immature death is, doubtless, to the righteous

righteous, better than life, tho' we should not be able to discern why.

They die in their perfections, their glory yet unfully'd, their felicity unstain'd; no vile temptation, no misfortune having yet triumph'd over them; an advantage which we much admire, when we see great and good men surpriz'd or over-power'd by weakness and calamities: for then we cannot but acknowledge, that if death had come sooner, it had been much kinder; for they had been gather'd into the store-house of the dead, like corn into the granary before unseasonable or immoderate rain had corrupted it, or any malignant vapours blasted it.

Lastly, I know not how heaven has dealt with these its favourites: peradventure 'tis in the moral as in the political world; some are born to that greatness which others acquire with labour: he never dies too soon, who dies ripe and perfect; and if these divine souls came into the world enrich'd with more light and beauty, with more impetuous inclinations to virtue, than those of other men: if their short life were so innocent, so bright, that out of a particular grace God thought fit to exempt them from the miseries of this life; or that upon the account of a particular pre-eminence, they need not pass through the trial, the discipline and purgations of it: On either of these supposals, we ought not to commiserate, but revere their fate.

CHAP. III.

Of improving life, or living much in a little time.

What is to be understood by improving or exalting life, and the advantage of this notion. Three ways of improving life. Sect. 1. By perfecting nature. Man and life mean things, till wisdom and virtue stamp a value on them. This particularly exemplified with respect to knowledge, and the due regulation of the affections. Sect. 2. By beginning to live betimes, or at least immediately. No objection against becoming presently wise and happy, but the difficulty of becoming so. An exhortation, addressed, First, To the young. Secondly, To those advanced in years. Closed with a reflection on the day of judgment. Sect. 3. By avoiding all those things that are injurious to life, as sloth, impertinence, remissness or coldness in religion: levity and inconstancy. Some other directions deferr'd to the following treatises.

TO understand aright what it is I here aim at, what I mean by the *improvement* or *exaltation of life*, 'tis necessary to call to mind the true notion of life laid down in the beginning, That it is the right use of all our powers and faculties, the rational exercise, the wise employment of our whole nature. Now, if this be so,

'tis plain that we live just as much as we act and enjoy, I mean, always rationally ; that as we advance and grow up towards a perfection of nature, the more is life also rais'd and refin'd. Thus if the life of the understanding be to think, to discover and contemplate truth and goodness, then surely its life is enlarg'd with its knowledge ; if the life of the soul of man, I mean his will and affections, be to choose and pursue, admire and love true good ; then certainly our life is perfected with our virtue, and augmented with our religion. In a word, if the life of man do not consist in the motion of animal spirits, but the exercise of his rational powers and faculties ; if the true health of man be not to be judg'd by the regularity of his pulse, but the harmony of his affections ; if, finally, the thing call'd *life*, be not to be measur'd by hours, and days, and months, and years, but by activity and enjoyment, by the rational acts of a rational nature ; then sure I may boldly conclude, that the more regularly and constantly we pursue the proper business of our nature, the more actively and vigorously we are carry'd on towards that which is our proper good ; so much the more we *live*, so much the more rich and racy, the more true, natural and pure is life : and all this is no other philosophy, than what the wise man has long ago advanc'd : *for honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measur'd by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age*, Wisd. iv. 9. This indeed is a truth of too vast an importance

tance to be a new one: for were it but once thoroughly imbib'd, it would relieve all the pressures, and redress all the grievances of human life. We complain of life that is dull and nauseous; we impeach it of vanity and vexation, of shortness and uncertainty: how would this one notion, well pursued, soon silence all these complaints? he would never think life too short, who were ripe for death; he would never complain that life were uncertain, who were always ready to die; he would not accuse life of dullness and nauseousness, who were daily advancing his discovery of truth, and enlarging his possession of good, nor would he ever charge it with vanity and vexation, were his actions still wise and rational: for thus every act of life would be an act of fruition too; being both agreeable to nature, and attended by a delightful approbation and complacency of conscience.

By this time 'tis plain what the design of this chapter is, namely, to compensate the shortness, by the excellence of life; and redress the vanity and vexation of it by its perfection: a design, I confess, worthy of a more comprehensive mind, and a more elevated fancy than mine; a design, demanding all the wisdom and experience of an active, and all the thought and learning of a contemplative life; a design, in a word, that requires at once the prudence of old age, and the vigour of blooming Years. That I am willing to contribute the little I can towards it, proceeds from a sense of its being a duty I owe my self and mankind: let me not therefore be oppress'd

press'd by the grandeur of my subject, and the expectation of my reader: I promote the good of mankind in my way, and as I am able; it were a crime if I did not, and it will be injustice to expect more from me. Besides, I purpose not here to lay out my whole strength, tho' this be little; having destin'd an entire volume to *human perfection*: and therefore shall here discourse but very briefly, and in very general terms, of the improvement of life.

All the advice I shall offer here, may be reduc'd to these three heads:

First, That we endeavour to perfect and exalt our nature.

Secondly, That we begin to live betimes; or, if we cannot now do that, our years being far spent, that we begin to live immediately.

Thirdly, That we avoid all those things that are enemies to our true life.

Seet. 1. We must endeavour to perfect and exalt our nature. The necessity of this will be very conspicuous to any one who shall consider that the perfection of our acts depends upon the perfection of our faculties and powers, just as the pleasure of seeing does on the goodness of the eye, or that of hearing on the perfection of the ear; so much, and much more, does the beauty of human action, and the gust of all our enjoyments depend upon the clearness of the judgment, the rectitude of the will, and the vigour of our passions. To render this argument

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yet more visible and palpable, let us consider how mean a thing man were, and how contemptible life, without cultivation or improvement: the body is but a heap of dust, something there needs to stamp a value upon it; something there must be to give sweetness to the eye, charm to the tongue, and grace to motion: 'tis a mere machine alike capable of being made the instrument of cruelty or mercy, of lust or chastity, of avarice or charity; 'tis religion must purge and sanctify it; 'tis wisdom must conduct and guide it, and make it the happy instrument of great and glorious actions. The spirit within us is a volatile, mutable, unsteady thing, capable of all sorts of impressions, suspended, as it were, between heaven and earth, floating between the different shores of good and evil: knowledge and virtue form it into an angel, stamp a sort of divinity upon it (for we are not born, but made, great;) 'tis wisdom that imprints it with bright ideas, that impregnates it with noble passions, and determines its tendency towards its true good and supreme felicity: our conversation with the world is naturally nothing else but a dull intercourse of forms, and ceremonies, and civilities, a nauseous circulation of the same tasteless and superficial entertainments, a tedious and repeated pursuit of vain mistaken ends, and often baffled designs; 'tis virtue and knowledge that give gust and relish to our enjoyments, and life and spirit to all our actions; that lead us on towards excellent ends, and inspire us with immortal hopes: our fortune and condition in the world

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is naturally a fluctuating unstable agitation, made up of a confused and motly variety of events; knowledge and virtue fix the floating island, and give light and beauty to the *Chaos*.

I can never carry this argument too far; and therefore I will yet a little more particularly consider, what accession or increase of *life* we derive from *perfecting* our natures. Does life consist in the exercise of our faculties? true life then is the portion of the active and industrious; the dull and heavy motion of the sluggard is but a faint imitation or resemblance of it; 'tis a diseas'd languishing thing, a compound or mixture wherein there seems to be more of death than life. Does life consist in fruition? how dark and dismal are those of the wicked, compar'd to the calm and bright days of the good? for what can there be like enjoyment, to that man, who dares make no reflexions on the past, nor can entertain any just hopes of the future; and whose mind concurs not with his present passions, and refuses to join in the senseless designs he is upon? Does life, lastly, consist, as I have proved it does, in the knowledge of truth and love of goodness? how scanty, narrow and beggarly is the life of the fool and sinner, compared to that of the wise and virtuous? *Tully* said, *One virtuous day was to be preferred before a sinful immortality.*

This is true in the present sense and notion of life: error and ignorance are, as it were, a disease or state of insensibleness and death to the understanding; the mind that is utterly ignorant of objects worthy of it, has nothing to

employ it self upon, or at least, nothing that gives it any solid satisfaction; but the mind, which is fill'd with the knowledge of excellent things, has a great variety of scenes to entertain it, and never wants some fresh occasion of delight and wonder. But it will be said, does not the fool behold the visible world as well as the philosopher? he does; but just as he reads a poem, without discovering the artfulness of its contrivance, the richness of the fancy, or variety of the incidents. The sinner hears talk too of an invisible world, of moral perfections here, and of divine joys hereafter; but he hears it, unmov'd, unaffected; which shews he has no lively notion, no distinct perception of any thing of this kind; the glass is dull'd and sullied; beauty it self would lose all charm, reflected thus. But human perfection consists not in knowledge alone, but also in the purity of the heart, in the regulation of the affections, in love and true liberty; that is, the heart must be set upon objects worthy of it, and we must pursue our true good with vigour and constancy; and this is that which renders life truly delightful and uniform: without objects to engage our affections, we can scarcely be said to live; we shall be becalm'd, and scarce be sensible of the breath we draw; and unless these objects be worthy and agreeable, all is but storm and tempest, cheat and torment; and our faculties are not rationally employ'd, but abus'd, deluded, depriv'd, tortur'd. Could we but comprehend what all this did amount to; or at least, could we feel and experience it, we should soon discern

discern that the wise and good, and they only, did truly live: for these only know God and themselves; these only admire, and love and rejoice, and hope rationally; and these only are not confin'd nor limited in their knowledge or their affections: for the objects of both are infinite; their minds can never travel so far in the contemplation of God and the most important truths, but that there is still a new world to be further discover'd; nor can their admiration or love, their joy or hope, so enlarge themselves, as ever to equal the objects of these passions, and reach the utmost that is in them. But 'tis probable, after all, the fool and sinner will pretend to engross the goods of the earth; as if they alone were to possess and enjoy them; as if they were the heirs of this world, the righteous, of the other; but this is a vain fancy, and has been often baffled. Who can hasten more to enjoy, than he who knows the true value and right use of all things? and who can enjoy more in any thing, than he who at once gratifies his reason and his appetite, and pleases his inclination, without forfeiting his true liberty? If to be fool'd and cheated, if to be ensnar'd and tormented, by these things of this world, be a pleasure, in this the Christian must indeed give place to the infidel, the righteous man to the sinner.

The sum then of this whole matter is, life in the foolish, mean, and vicious soul, seems like a little rill of water, confined within narrow and scanty bounds, or, like the light of a candle inclos'd within the narrow compass of a

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dark lantern; but in the wise and understanding 'tis like a mighty stream which swells above its banks, and spreads it self over a vast plain; or like light unconfin'd, which diffuses and darts it self over all the face of nature. Ah! therefore how much does it import me to fill my understanding with bright and lovely images, with pleasing and important notions, with all the truths that can serve either to delight or guide, to nourish or adorn, to support or fortifie me in this world, or advance my title to the joys of another? how much does it import me, to fill my soul with love, love of all that's good or great; love of all that's pure or sacred; love of all that's beautiful or delightful? and, lastly, that my body may be a fit instrument of such a mind, it does not a little import me, that this be strong and healthy, vigorous and vivacious.

Seet. 2. The second way to improve life, is to begin to live betimes; or at least, if your years be far spent, to begin to live immediately, which is all we can do. Life, in my notion of it, dawns with our reason, and grows up to ripeness and perfection with the virtue, liberty, and tranquillity of the soul. To be wise, and to be religious, this is to live: for in this consists fruition and enjoyment; in this the health and vigour of our faculties; in this the harmony and beauty of the whole frame of our nature; and this, and no other, is a rational and agreeable exercise of all our powers and capacities. Whoever therefore will improve life, ought to begin next moment to as-
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fert his liberty, and to give up himself to true philosophy: 'tis strange to see how men put off this, or attempt it only superficially, and by the bye; they prefer, I will not say, trades and husbandry, and various sorts of knowledge, foreign and remote from the service and conduct of human life, (ah! that time were but so well spent in general;) but they prefer, even dressing, painting, drinking, gaming, and all, not only the most silly and trifling, but the most vile and infamous ways of consuming time, before true wisdom and philosophy: nay, amongst those that make profession of wisdom, and pretend to have dedicated themselves to the doctrine of Jesus, 'tis common to see great numbers hearing, talking, reading, disputing, without ever making any use of those truths they study and contend for, or feeling any warmth or influence of them; like those wise ones in temporals, who are laying up provision and treasure all their life long, which they will never use, never enjoy. Ah wretched consumption of life! how soon will the last minute expire? and the unhappy man will not have liv'd one year, one month, one day, but will have wasted a precious treasure of time, and he must go immediately and account for it. Well, let the world live after its own fashion, I plainly see the point I am to make; no day, no hour shall pass me unemploy'd; every moment, if I can, I will grow wiser and better; 'tis not how long I last, but how much I live; I will *know*, I will *act*, I will *enjoy* to day, and then I am sure, I have liv'd a day: this most propose to do, some time or

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other, but not to day: and why not to day? why not presently? is there any evil in being immediately wise, immediately free, immediately rational, immediately happy? it cannot be, if the state I am in, be really good; if the pleasures I enjoy, be really such as my reason can share in, and my conscience can approve: I then indeed live: There's no need of change and reformation, but continuance and perseverance; but if they be not, why will I not exchange false for true, and irrational for rational pleasures? if I am in the right, if my condition be truly good and safe, 'tis well; there's nothing further to be done, but to maintain my ground: but if I am in the wrong, if the foundation be unsound and rotten, and whilst I dream not of it, my health and fortune, I mean, my imaginary happiness, consume inwardly, waste and decay insensibly; why am I fond of the cheat? why am I unwilling to be undeceiv'd and disabus'd? and why not presently? the reason is plain; they acknowledge the representation I have made to them of a virtuous and rational life, is very pleasant and taking; but to be born into this new state, to come forth into this moral light, is as troublesome, as the infants being born into the natural. They love the ease and wealth of a prosperous trader, but not the hardships of his apprenticeship, the thrift and confinement of his beginnings: they love lawrels and triumphal arches, the glory and the pleasure of victory; but cannot endure the toils and hazards of war. Or plainly thus, they admire liberty, of mind, serenity and rational

tional joy, but it will cost them much labour and pains to purchase it. Thus the wretched man, fearing the regimen of physick, wears out a miserable life in the pains of a disease; and one that has a cancer or gangreen, chooses to waste and rot in pain by piecemeal, rather than undergo the short pain of amputation or abscision. Nay, what is worse than all this, men are fond of their diseases; love the things that increase and nourish them, as the gross and corpulent do rest, the lethargick sleep, and hydropick drink.

This is the state, the deplorable state, of the far greater part of mankind; a state of disease and death, a state of bondage and captivity, a state of infatuation and enchantment; and I very much fear, that whatever motives can be extracted out of the subject I am now upon, will be too weak and feeble: for what can all the discourses in the world about rational pleasure and the satisfactions of a regular and virtuous life amount to, with men wholly given up to sensuality, and incapable of relishing any pure and sacred delights? If I have succeeded so far, as to possess them with an opinion that a life of reason and religion, is a life of pleasure, tho' they have not any true gust, or clear and lively notion of this pleasure, 'tis the utmost I can hope for: but to persuade these men to embrace this life, there is need of all the arguments that either reason or religion can administer; and these too, pointed with all the life and spirit, with all the edge and flame that wit or judgment can give them; a task too hard for me. O God! thou lover of mankind,

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kind, that thou wouldst aid me by the spirit, while I strive to prevail with young and old, to seek thy glory and their own happiness, to pursue virtue and true pleasure. I will first address my self to the young, and then to those more advanc'd in years.

1. To the younger. You are now in your bloom: what glorious fruit may you bring forth what honour may you do God! what service may you render your relations and your country! and what joys and blessings may you not heap on your selves! time and tide seem to wait on you; even the providence and grace of God, with reverence be it said, seem to attend and court you. But ah! remember, they will not do so for ever; these smiles and invitations of heaven and nature will not last continually; your infidelity or ingratitude, your folly and sensuality, will soon blast and wither all these fair hopes, turn all your pleasures into gall and wormwood, and all your blessed advantages into the instruments of your ruin, and aggravations of it too: grace will soon retire, nature degenerate, time grow old, the world despise you, the God of it frown upon you, and conscience, guilty conscience, will be either stupify'd and benumb'd, or fester and rage within you, and death will come, and then judgment: and how soon 'twill come, ah! who knows? sudden and early deaths ought to convince you on what uncertain ground you stand; the scythe of death stays not always till the harvest be ripe; but promiscuously mows down the young and old. Ah! begin, begin then to live; feize

seize upon pleasure and happiness, while they stand courting and inviting you; pursue virtue and glory immediately, while the difficulties are fewer, your strengths and aids greater; your judgments being not yet corrupted by the maxims, or rather the fancies of the world; nor your wills yet disabled and enslav'd by a custom of sin. Ah! venture not to devote your youth to vanity and folly, on presumption of devoting your age to repentance and religion: for if this were a rational and just design in it self, yet is it to you a very unsafe and doubtful one: for which way can you insure life, or on what ground can you confide on the morrow? *Boast not thy self of to morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth, Prov. xxvii. 1.*

I know what opposition will be raised against this kind of exhortation, and with what rude reflexions they will be treated. Come, say they, *This is our spring, let us enjoy our selves whilst we have time and vigour; religion looks too grave and formal for these years: we shall have time enough to be dull and melancholy: come on then, let us enjoy our selves, as becomes our youth: this is our portion, and our lot is this; and whatever they, who have now out-liv'd themselves, whose blood is sour, and spirits low, may gravely talk against these things; they too, when time was, admired what they now would have us despise as vanity; and committed themselves what they now condemn in us.* In answer to this, let us pass over the briskness and the flourish, and examine

amine the sense and reason of this sort of talk : the substance of it may be reduc'd to three heads.

First, Youth is the season of pleasure, *i. e.* sin and folly : inclination and opportunity conspire to invite you to it ; therefore you indulge it. What a strange argument is this ? is there any period of our life, from our cradle almost to our coffin, I mean, from the moment we arrive at the use of reason, to our grave, wherein some sin or other is not in season. May not manhood defend ambition, and old age covetousness, by the same argument by which you do your sinful pleasures ? if inclination to a folly would justify our commission of it, in what part of life should we begin to be wise and virtuous ? 'twill be hard to find the time wherein we shall have no inclination to any sin or folly : or rather, if this be so, who can be guilty ? The adulterer will impute his uncleanness to the *impetus* of his lust ; the murderer his bloodshed to the violence of his rage, *i. e.* each of them their sins to the strength of their inclinations : and if your argument be good, they will be innocent. But do not deceive your selves ; then is your obedience, as most acceptable to God, so most indispensable in it self, when you lie under temptations to sin : and heaven is propos'd as a reward, not of following, but conquering your inclinations. The second part of the objection is, that religion doth not look very graceful in young years. This I could never well understand : if you be so foolish, as to think religion consists in four faces ; or an affected moroseness and fullness, or in stupidity and melancholy, I must confess, you

you have little reason to be fond of it : for this becomes no age, and much less the more verdant one. But if by religion, you understand devotion towards God, reverence towards your parents and superiours, temperance and chastity in your selves, and such like virtues ; I must needs say, nothing can appear to me more great and lovely, than religion in youth: what can better become those who possess the gifts of nature in their perfection, than gratitude to the God of nature? what can be a greater glory to the young, than obedience to parents, and reverence to their elders and superiours? what does more preserve, or better become strength than sobriety and temperance? what is a more charming or more lasting ornament to beauty, than modesty and chastity? After all this, 'tis a vain thing to comfort your selves with saying, that the grave and wise, when they had the same inclinations you now have, did as you do, indulge and gratifie them : for, *First*, This is not generally true ; and, *Secondly*, The less they did it, the more were they honour'd and lov'd: But, *Thirdly*, If they did, 'tis certain, that they have bitterly condemn'd it, and repented of it. And is it not strangely absurd, that you should propose to your selves nothing in the lives of the wise and virtuous, but their frailties and errors for your example; that you should pitch upon that only for your imitation, which all the wise and good detest and bemoan, as their sin and shame, and think it their highest wisdom to do so.

To conclude this address to the younger sort, unless

unless there be any who are possess'd with a spirit of infidelity, against which I will not now enter the lists, all the pretences you can possibly form, for your deferring to devote your selves instantly to wisdom and religion, are founded in two suppositions; of which the one is false, and the other absurd. The false one is, that sin is a state of pleasure; virtue, of trouble and uneasiness: the contrary of which, is, I think, sufficiently demonstrated through this whole treatise: and would you but be prevail'd with to taste the pleasures of a sincere virtue, your experience would soon confute this fancy. What madness then is it to be afraid of becoming happy too soon! Ah! how differently are we affected under the maladies of the mind and of the body! did the lame or blind, the lepers, the lunaticks, or demoniacks, ever entreat our Lord to defer their cure, and give them leave to enjoy their miseries, diseases, and devils, a little longer? The other supposition is absurd; which is, that you will repent hereafter. Must you then repent hereafter? Must this be the fruit of all your sinful pleasures, guilt and remorse, grief and fear, distress and agony of soul? do revelation and reason, death and judgment; do all your sober and retir'd thoughts preach you this one lesson, *repentance*? and yet can you resolve to plunge your selves in that filthiness which must be wash'd off with tears? can you resolve to indulge those cheating and deceitful lusts which will one day fill your soul with shame and sorrow, with distraction, horror and amazement? Ah infatuation! Ah bewitchery!

chery! that ever a rational creature should live in such an open defiance and hostility against his reason! and yet, if *repentance*, after many years, and innumerable sins, would be more easie; if your sins would be more easily conquer'd, or more easily aton'd; this frenzy would not want some little colour: but how contrary is this to truth? which puts me in mind of another sort of readers, to whom I am now to apply my self, namely,

Secondly, To those who are advanc'd in years. 'Tis observ'd of *Cæsar*, by *Suetonius*, that lighting upon the statue of *Alexander the Great* in the temple of *Hercules* at *Gades*, and reflecting on himself, that he had yet done nothing remarkable at those years, wherein that (in *Cæsar's* notion of gallantry) brave and gallant man had over-run all the *east*, he did sweat and blush under the keen reproaches of his own mind, and groan'd under the uneasie conscience of his sloth, and presently desir'd to be dismiss'd from his questorship, that he might pursue glory and immortality, fame and dominion. Had you but one spark, I will not say, of the zeal of a Christian, but of this generosity of a pagan, you would blush at the soul, to think that you have not yet buckled on the armour of light, at an age in which many others have been cover'd with laurels; that you have not yet started forth at those years, in which some others have finish'd, tho' not their race, yet all the difficulties of it: the miserable account that you will give of thirty, forty, peradventure of fifty years! I will not say, that you have liv'd to no purpose,

pose, but to the worst imaginable; ignorant, enslav'd to lust, oppress'd by guilt! all that you have done, is, *You have treasur'd up wrath against the day of wrath*: for this to be the product of so many years! shame and confusion! but greater, infinitely greater, to go on thus. Sin may to some seem the misfortune of youth; but 'tis unquestionably the reproach of age: unhappy nature, and unhappy education bear a share of the imputation in youth; but in these years, your own obstinacy and choice engross the whole guilt. Young people are like weak barks, which in boisterous seas and winds, carry too much sail, and too little ballast; their judgment is weak and unresolv'd, and their passions light and violent as hurricanes; but ripper years do, or should, bring on naturally wiser and stancher thoughts, cooler, sedater tempers; and therefore certainly sin in these carries a deeper guilt and shame in it: the raw, unexperienc'd sinner perisheth whilst he but tastes and gazes; the virgin-soul coming into a strange world, is desflour'd, whilst it gratifies its curiosity and fancy; like *Dinab*, when she went forth only to see the daughters of the land: but the full-grown sinner sins against, not only the preacher's instruction, but his own experience too; he repeats those sins which he has often confess'd to be his folly and his shame; and returns, like foolish mariners, to those treacherous seas where they were shipwreck'd but the other day. If this be not to outrage conscience, defie reason, and dare God, what is? no, you'll say, you too, do resolve to repent hereafter: Hereafter?

Hereafter? How ill does this word sound in one who does begin to bow already under the weight of years? Hereafter! how ill does this language become this decaying mouldering body? But suppose the wheels of time would stop, tho' running now down a headlong precipice; suppose your sun would for a while stand still, yet what a work have you to finish! what guilt to expiate! what sins to vanquish! and what a *day of judgment* to prepare for! Are these slight considerations? Will your sins, think you, be easily aton'd; when their number is swoll'n, not only by length of time, but also by an uncontroul'd licentiousness? For a novice in sin is aw'd by modesty, held in by scruples, and discourag'd by regret and remorse; but the veteran sinner is carry'd away by a torrent of debauch'd affections, and repeats his follies with a relentless confidence, and an authority that brooks no opposition. Will it be an easy task to subdue those sins, which have maintain'd a long and undisturb'd dominion, and exercised an absolute sovereignty over you? What shall awaken that sinner, who, like *Solomon's* drunkard, *Prov. 22. 35.* is insensible of stripes and wounds: and alas! when rous'd out of the arms of his *Dalilah*, his locks, like *Sampson's* are cut off, the spirits retir'd, his strength impair'd, and the force of his enemy augmented; and with what will he conquer? Is it, lastly, a trivial thing to appear before the judgment-seat of God, that you should think a moment will serve turn to prepare for it? I will suppose

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pose the Judge of the whole world as merciful as you can desire him, if you will suppose him too, with reverence be it spoken, to have so much sense, as not to be impos'd on; so much integrity, as to expect sincerity, though not perfection; and this alone will make that judgment formidable. I very much fear, that young and old do entertain too mild and favourable a notion of that day, and so elude and baffle the force of the most powerful motive to virtue and religion the gospel has: I shall not therefore wander far from the purpose of this paragraph, if I close this exhortation, *to begin to live immediately*, with a short reflection on that day.

We must first bid adieu to this world, to every thing in it that's dear to us, and die ere we can go and appear before God. What a perfect mortification of all our sensual appetites is necessary, ere we can calmly part with all here below! What a long experience of love and duty is necessary to confirm and assure the soul against all its fears and apprehensions! What a vigorous faith, to carry us through this dark passage into another world! When we are got there, what a strict trial are we to undergo! There all disguises will be taken off, and every thing appear in its naked nature: there all our superstructures of hay and stubble will be burnt up: only pure solid virtue will bear the test: there darling vices will not pass under the disguise of sins of infirmity: there an honest sloth and harmless luxury will not be thought innocent enough to entitle men to heaven:

heaven : there some few good fits will not pass for godly sorrow ; nor some feeble and short-liv'd attempts, for repentance and a change : there the effects of a lucky constitution, will not be crown'd as the works of grace, and fruits of the divine life : there, in a word, talk will not pass for action, nor censure of others, commute for mortification in our selves : finally, nothing shall be rewarded there, but a conquering faith, an active charity, an humble constant zeal, patient persevering hopes, spiritual joys, and pious fears. This needs no application : begin, begin to live before you die ; begin to repent, and reform before you be judged.

Señ. 3. A third way of *improving life*, is to avoid and cut off all those things that are injurious to it : such are sloth that wastes, and impertinence that embroils it ; coldness or remissness in religion, that dispirits and dilutes ; levity and inconstancy, that disorder and confound it : and, finally, all those evils that sour and embitter it. I am sensible that these heads occur often ; and, though it be under different aspects, yet 'tis possible that I may sometimes light upon the same thoughts, nay, peradventure the very same words ; 'tis against my will, if I do : but I want fight to revise my papers ; and am glad to disburden my memory as fast as I can, and therefore charge it with nothing that I have once entrusted to writing : and the toil of recollecting my thoughts, scatter'd up and down, like *Sibyl's*

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oracles, in dispersed leaves, by a hand, which 'tis impossible for me to direct or animate, is most intolerable. If therefore I slip into any error of this kind, which I shall very unwillingly, I cannot but presume of pardon, having so just an excuse. But I proceed.

First, We must avoid idleness. Sloth is the rust of time; sleep is an image of death, and sloth of sleep: the life of the sluggish is but a waking dream, a vacation from all business and true enjoyment too; a cessation and stop, though not of time, which still runs on, yet of the very powers and faculties of the soul; whereas life consists in the exercise of both. How remote then must idleness be from improving or exalting life? It never ploughs nor sows, and therefore never reaps; it never plants nor sets, and therefore never gathers any fruit: nothing great was ever performed by it, nothing great ever enjoy'd by it; and shall the richest fruit that ever grew upon any of the trees of paradise, wisdom and virtue, *i. e.* knowledge and life; be gathered by a sluggish hand? No; tho' no angel, or flaming sword do stop his way; yet are there difficulties in it, too many and too great for this heavy dastardly animal to conquer. *Plato*, as I remember, tells us somewhere, that a god tied pain and pleasure by the tails together: there is no coming at the one, by him who shuns the other. So is the world contriv'd, that even temporal and seeming goods cannot be obtain'd without the travail of the mind, and toil of the body; and yet what lean, starv'd,
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and beggarly blessings are these, compar'd to those I treat of! the rich man may starve for want of true pleasure, in the midst of his glittering heaps; sorrow may sit heavy on the heart of the conqueror, or the bride, even on the days of solemn triumph and festival noise; the prince may be a slave, an *Egyptian* slave, even while he reigns with absolute and uncontrouled power: but life and pleasure, content and happiness, are the inseparable companions of wisdom and virtue; let no man therefore flatter himself with the hopes of such a treasure, who lives idly and at his ease: he must pray, meditate, watch, and exercise himself in industry, sobriety, and purity, who will overcome the corruptions of his nature, and obtain the tranquillity and liberty of a true Christian. Nor let this frighten any man; for those duties, which are a little troublesome in the beginning, do soon grow easy and delightful too. In this sense must we understand that of the author of *Ecclesiasticus*, ch. iv. 17, 18. though render'd a little harshly: *For at the first she* (that is, wisdom) *will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, torment him with her discipline, until she may trust his soul, and try him by her laws. Then will she return the straight way unto him, and comfort him, and shew him her secrets.*

Secondly, Impertinence, or being busied and employed in trifles, is indeed as different from sloth, as motion from rest; but yet such a wretched consumption of time cannot deserve the
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the name of life: for this is not activity of soul, but a poor and mean debasing of it: fancy, and that a silly and extravagant one, may be said to live, but reason cannot. That idleness, which consists in heavy passive dulness, is like a state of sleep without dream or fancy; that which consists in a fluttering and impertinent activity, is nothing else but a giddy ferment of the spirits, and agitation of the fancy, the incoherent disjointed thoughts, the confus'd and fruitless projects and attempts of a dream; and we may almost as properly say of him that dreams, that he eats and drinks, fights or travels, or whatever he fancies himself to do; as we can of this sort of sluggard, that he lives. 'Tis true, could a man be forever impertinent, this sort of idleness would seem to some men to have no great evil in it; but how could such a mind bear the shock of human misfortunes? How could such a soul discharge the great duties of human society? How could it entertain it self with objects agreeable to a rational nature? And if it could do none of these things, 'tis impossible to conceive how it could be other than miserable: for though we could suppose such a creature to be so mere a trifle, as never to be nearly concern'd in any changes of fortune, nor ever call'd upon by that community he belongs to; that is, I should almost say, never to be regarded or minded either by God or man; yet still such a one did no way live up to the excellence of his nature; his business and enjoyment were not manly and rational; and his childish life were therefore

therefore only pretty and pleasing to him, because he had a childish and silly soul.

Nor is the grave much better than the gay *impertinent*; or the man of business, if he neglect the main, the one thing necessary, to be preferr'd before the man of mode: sensuality, 'tis true, softens, and drudgery hardens the mind; but both alike intoxicate it, both wed it to this, and alienate it from the other world: it imports very little to what idol one do sacrifice, whether *Ashtaroth*, *Moloch*, or *Mammon*, if we sacrifice not to the true God. In vain do they pretend to any other art, who are ignorant of the art of living; to plod or drudge, intrigue or trade, canvas and court; 'tis all but solemn impertinence, if virtue and religion be neglected: ah! what phantoms, and clouds, and dreams, do men pursue and hunt after, instead of life and peace, of rest and pleasure!

Thirdly, Remissness or lukewarmness in religion, a sort of neutrality between vice and virtue, is the next thing to be avoided: we can never truly live, unless we be entirely uniform, unless we be wholly given up, and without reserve, to the conduct of reason. There is little pleasure in religion, if there be no ardour and fervency in it: 'tis love makes the duty easy, and the prospect delightful. If there be no strength in faith, no life in devotion, no spirit in duty, no desire in hope; this is religion without a soul, 'tis the carcase of an unanimated virtue: what peace, what assurance, what joy, what transport, can ever be the portion of such a Christian?

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Levity and inconstancy, is the last thing I will now mention, and the most irreconcilable enemy to life: for this does not only interrupt the course of life, or, like sleep or sloth, make a vast chasm or gap in it, but puts us more back than we had advanced forward; an unhappy gust of wind that throws us off to sea again, when we were almost come to shore: if we reap the fruit of victory, we must pursue it; if we will find rest, we must be steadfast and unmoveable; if we will enjoy virtue, we must unite and incorporate it with us; 'tis impossible that the unconstant, unstable proselyte of virtue should either have a pleasant life, or a comfortable death: for if he build to day what he pulled down yesterday; if he practise one hour what he condemns another; 'tis impossible he should please himself, much less his God.

To shun the evils, and make the most of the goods of life, is none of the least important rules conducing to happiness, and might properly enough be insisted on here. But I begin to tire; and since this may better be reduced under the heads of indolence and fruition, I will defer the consideration of it till I come to treat of them, which I may one time or other do, if I see reason for it; if not, I would not willingly be impertinent; if I cannot *serve the world*, I will not trouble it.

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