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A G E N E R A L
T R E A T I S E
O F
M O R A L I T Y,

Form'd upon the PRINCIPLES of

Natural Reason only.

W I T H

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

By RICHARD FIDDES, D. D.

Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer.



L O N D O N:

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

My LORD,



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

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the

DEDICATION.

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

DEDICATION.

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

DEDICATION.

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

My

DEDICATION

My LORD,

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

DEDICATION.

I am, with all possible Re-
gard,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's

most humble,

and most dutiful

Servant,

RICH. FIDDES.

THE



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OF THE

PREFACE.

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THE



THE

PREFACE.

I.



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

a *secution*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

His

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

use

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

6. Tho' possibly there may be, among other abstract Sciences, a more general Disposition for Metaphysics at present, than formerly discovered itself, yet they are not so far encouraged or introduced, as to give a Writer, who shall form his Reasonings wholly upon them, any great Hopes of Success: I have therefore endeavoured in the following Treatise, so much as possible, to avoid them, and the Use of all nice and intricate Distinctions; tho' a Work of this Nature must
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be very imperfect, or rather wholly deficient, as to the principal Design of it, wherein no metaphysical Arguments are employed. But to adapt myself more to the common Taste and Capacity, and to prevent the strong Impressions which are not easily resisted, or suddainly effaced, by those, who read the Treatise of Morality above referred to, with any Degree of Attention, I have declined in prosecuting my present Subject, to look into it; not that I should be ashamed of copying after so very great a Master; but because there is so much Beauty, as well as Strength and Energy in every thing he has written, that it is extremely difficult to consult him, even where he is most abstract and metaphysical, without transcribing from him.

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

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

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

b 2 might

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wicked Men, therefore, if they will argue conſiſtently from their
OWN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Pag. 29.

† Pag. 37.

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

c 2 him,

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

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

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

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

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

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

sional

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

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

* Pag. 41.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Montaign, who perhaps understood the weak and corrupt Side of human Nature, as well as the Author before me; yet had Thoughts, in general, much less derogatory to the Dignity and Honour of it. He supposes tho' Men often act from indirect, yet they may act, upon generous and good Principles. I have observed, saith
 d 2 he,

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

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

gin of moral Virtue, should be thought offensive to Christianity, is not very intelligible and is with all imperfect. The Offence, which Christians may take at his Notions, is not to be considered merely in Respect to them as Christians; but, as the Religion they profess, supposes the Truth of natural Religion, a Law written on the Hearts of Men, accusing, or else excusing them, according to the good or ill Use they make of their Liberty. The positive Laws, in the Gospel, the Laws peculiar to Christianity, are few in Comparison. But if there be no real Distinction of moral Virtue, Christianity is as much the Law of Ordinances, as that given by Moses to the Jews; and the Excellency, therefore of it will not lie in this, that it has abolished
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the ceremonial Law, but that it has instituted a Religion consisting of fewer Ceremonies: For all Laws, that depend upon the mutable Nature of Things, are of equal Excellency, and only oblige by Virtue of their being commanded. His Apology therefore had been more full and adequate to the Offence taken, if he had endeavoured to shew, that no Prejudice could be done or designed, from any thing he had said, to the Cause of natural Religion.

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

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

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

he,

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

e this

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Pag. 36.

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

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

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

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

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

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

And

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The like Answer may be given to his Instance of laying out a Garden, which might be designed in great Variety of Plats; and every Proprietor of the Ground, is at Liberty to make his Choice of them; provided, Regard be had to the Quantity, Situation, and Boundaries of it; for otherwise
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*a Round may neither be so commodious, nor so pleasing to the Eye, as a Square. And when a Garden is actually laid out, in any Form, a Rule of Proportion and Correspondency between the several Parts of it, like that, by Way of Analogy, in moral Subjects, ought necessarily to be observed; otherwise it is not to be computed, according to his own Calculation, among the almost innumerable Ways of laying out a Garden judiciously. The two remaining Exemplifications, which he uses, are not more to his Purpose. The Building of Christian Churches, in Form of a Cross, is founded upon a religious Regard for that Sign, for Reasons known to the Author, and which need not here be repeated: It is therefore no Argument, this Form
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1 P R E F A C E.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is sufficient to establish the Truth of Morality, that Men, in all Ages, have agreed in the general Notion of it. If they have been at any time divided in their Opinion concerning it, when they applied their general Notions of it to particular Subjects, so as to transfer the Name of Virtue to Vice, or of Vice to Virtue; this very Misapplication supposes Virtue and Vice to be two Things really subsisting and distinguished; for what is not cannot be misapplied. As Idolatry therefore proceeded from some erroneous Belief of the
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one true God, and, when traced up to its original, rather supposed his Existence, than a Plurality of Beings, that were by Nature no Gods; so the appropriating the Name of Virtue to certain Vices, does by no means tend to prove, that there is no such thing in reality as Virtue; but only that Men are capable of mistaking the Nature of Things, and of drawing false Consequences from true Principles. This may be done through Ignorance; but, in moral Life, is very often the Effect of some irregular Inclination: For we more easily assent to those Things without Scruple or Examination, the Truth of which we are willing to believe; to which may be added as one Reason, why immoral Practices are sometimes openly introduced; that tho' Men
really

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

12. *His Consequence, therefore, that in Morals there is no greater Certainty, than in these Instances, which are of a very different Consideration from the Subjects of Morality, is, by no means, just or well deduced; Neither will what he urges further to confirm this Proposition, from the Cases of Polygamy and Incest, be of any Use to corroborate it. All that can be inferred from those Cases is, that the Prejudices imbibed in*
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Infancy, the Force of Custom or Example, or, perhaps, some complexional Disposition, may hinder Men from examining moral Subjects, in certain Instances, with that Attention and Impartiality, which are requisite to the Discovery of Truth. How true a Foundation soever any moral Duty has, in the Reason of Things, it does not, therefore, follow, that all Men shall see those Reasons, in the same Light, or argue upon them after the same Manner; because there are many accidental Occasions, as hath been already confessed, of Ignorance or Error, it is very unbecoming a Philosopher to conclude, there is nothing therefore, in the Nature of it, concerning which, we can have any true or certain Knowledge.

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But

But besides this general Answer to the Cases of Polygamy, and Incest; which I propose to treat of distinctly, in another Place, it may here be cursorily observed, that the Subjects of Morality may be considered, as being either of primary, or, according as they have been distinguished by some learned Men, of secondary Obligation: those, under the first Distinction, arise from the immutable Reason and Order of Things, and do not depend even upon the Will of the supreme Legislator, but are founded in those eternal and essential Perfections of his Nature, whereby his Will itself is regulated; and which, in the natural Order of our Ideas, are therefore antecedent to his Will; such Things
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as are not meerly good by Virtue of his Command, or of any Circumstances, wherein Man may accidentally be placed; but such, as are commanded, because they are absolutely good, and, under all Circumstances, in their own Nature. Thus it can never be a Virtue; in Man, who is a reasonable Being, to be proud, as Pride imports an Opinion of himself, above what he ought to think; because it is contrary to Reason; contrary, therefore, to the Nature of Man, as a reasonable Being, that he should be, on any Account, obliged to make a wrong Judgment: Neither can it be lawful for a Man, under any Circumstances, not to love God; to cast off his Dependency on God; to blaspheme or oppose his Will; because the Reasons of loving God, of Dependance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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As to the Case of Polygamy, the same Answer may indifferently serve; only it does not appear, there were ever the same Reasons for it, in order to the Multiplication of Mankind. Had more Women been originally created than Men, the like Necessity might have been alledged for the Practice of it, as being subservient to the End of God, in creating Mankind to replenish the Earth; and, in that Case, perhaps, the Inconveniencies to Society in allowing Polygamy, for sometime, would not have been in equal Proportion to the Benefits, which might have arisen from it: But when Mankind might otherwise be multiplied, in a Method most proper to promote the Happiness of private Families,
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and consequently of larger Societies, by the Marriage of one Man to one Woman; when this was found most agreeable to all the proper Ends of the conjugal State the mutual Comfort and Satisfaction of the married Parties; the Care, Subsistence and Education of Children; the Peace and good Order of Families; the Restraint of a violent Passion; and the Prevention of those Disorders, which are apt to arise from too great an Indulgence of it; and, when no Advantages from Polygamy could ballance all these Inconveniencies from a Toleration of it, then the Law against Plurality of Wives became a Law, if not in the primary Sense unalterable by the supreme Legislator, yet such, as no human Authority could dispense with, or repeal;

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peal;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13. *The Sum of what I have said, is, that the Laws of Communication between Men considered as Members of Society, being established by God, he has a Right, as Sovereign Legislator, and in whom all Power and Propriety is vested, to alter those Laws, or to dispense with them at Pleasure; provided he do nothing which may render the Condition of Men, upon the whole Matter, more miserable, than if they had never been; thus, by a special Command, God may authorize a Father to Sacrifice his Son, or one Nation to destroy or spoil another, without any previous Cause or Declaration of War: But it is contrary to moral Obligation, because contrary to the good and beneficial Ends God had*
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in establishing Society, that any human Government should assume such an arbitrary Power. And therefore Actions of this Nature, tho' not Immoral, under such Circumstances, where the Authority of God does interpose; yet, where it does not, are a notorious Breach and Violation of the moral Law, whatever Mode or Custom might be pleaded in Excuse or Defence of them.

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

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

On Supposition, then, that Man was formed for Society, and is become a Member of it ; we are to consider him, as acting in a
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very different Capacity from that, which was the Rule of his Action in private Life : We shall discover him to be under a great many Engagements, arising from this new Relation, and the Means it affords of promoting his Welfare and Happiness ; Means so obvious and salutary, that a very little Reflection will serve to shew, it was not good for Man to be alone.

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

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

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

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secret

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

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

* Body of Divinity, Vol. 2.

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

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

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

Demon-

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

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comes in Competition with private Interest, or Affection.

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

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

P R E F A C E. LXXXI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But

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

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

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

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

m Man's

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

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

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

m 2 said

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

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

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

reconciled

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For

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

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

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

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

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

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

o Fears ;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learning

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

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

treat it somewhat rhetorically.

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

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

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

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

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

P greater

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

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

un-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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of

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

they

they want an intrinsic Value.

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

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

Besides

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Minds,

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r

Minds,

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

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

“ *established, the Universities*
 “ *are decried, and all Instructi-*
 “ *ons of Youth, in the Principles*
 “ *of the Christian Religion, are*
 “ *exploded, with the greatest*
 “ *Malice and Falsity.*

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

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

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

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





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C H A P. I.

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

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

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

I.



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

nion of particular Persons ; but ariseth from a certain Agreement or Disagreement, Proportion or Disproportion, which natural Reason, when we duly attend to it, will not fail to discover between the Things themselves, about which it is conversant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For

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

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

adds

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

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

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

man

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

B of

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

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

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

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

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



C H A P. II.

*What the proper End of
Man is?*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



C H A P. III.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

or

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

X. Con-

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

Noise of the Senses, Imagination, and Passions.

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

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

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

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



C H A P. IV.

What the Rule of Perfection to Man is ?

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

I. The

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

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

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

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

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

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

towards

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

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



C H A P. V.

Whence an Obligation of conforming to this Rule ariseth.

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

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

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

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

II. And

II. And therefore *Cicero* defines the moral Law, or the Law of Nature, to be “right Reason, agreeable to the natural Constitution of Man, diffused as a common Principle, through all human Race, uniform, and of perpetual Force.” *Vera Ratio, naturæ Congruens, diffusa in omnes, Constantis, perpetua.* De Republ. Consonant to which Definition is that of *Aristotle*, who calls the Law of Nature immutable, and of the same Operation and Effect every where; like that of Fire, saith he, speaking of his native Country, which burns here, and in *Persia*. Τὸ μὲ φύσει ἀκίνητον, καὶ πανταχῶς τὴν οὐρανὸν ἔχει δύναμιν, ὡσπερ τὸ πῦρ, καὶ ἐνθάδε, καὶ ἐν περσαίς, καίει. Christ. Ethe.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

XI. This

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

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Means;

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

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

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



C H A P. VI.

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

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

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

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II. This

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



C H A P.



C H A P. VII.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

wards attaining the great End of Man, *Happiness* in this Life, shall be supplied in a future State.

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

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

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

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

will do, to which it accidentally may expose us.

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

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

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

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

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



C H A P.