

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And, XI. If

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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far greater Force: Yet to those, who will attend to the natural Principles of Religion, it must be owned, they do not want their due Weight to persuade; at least, it will be impossible for any Man to shew, that they are, in all Cases, too weak to persuade. Being, confessedly, reasonable in themselves, why should it be impossible for reasonable Agents to be conducted by them? Why should a Man's Reason have the least Power to determine him, where the Decisions of it are the most clear, strong, and incontestable; and where it is his Interest withall that he should be determined? If Men will not attend to these Motives, that is not to be charged to any Want, either of Light, Strength, or Conveniency in them; but to their own
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culpable Neglect: The Effects of which they might, by duly considering them, have prevented; and such a Consideration would readily have discovered to them, that the Motives, I have here mentioned, to moral Virtue, are, in their own Nature, more powerful to persuade to the Practice of it, than any temporal Considerations can be to induce a contrary Practice. And why should not Men, in an Affair of the greatest Concernment to them, and where they are now presumed to act deliberately, with Knowledge and Conviction, be as capable of acting conformably to what Reason and Prudence direct, as in other Cases of far less Consequence to them? Why should they not, in this Case, govern themselves according to that Maxim by which

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* *Quis non clamet stultum esse precepta dare ei cui liberum non est, quod precipitur, facere; & iniquum esse eum damnare, cui non fuit potestas iussa implere. S. August.*

been

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

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



C H A P. XV.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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IV. And

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

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

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

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

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once,

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

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

“pend, more absolutely, upon him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

XII. What

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

XIII. We

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



CHAP.



C H A P. XVI.

Concerning the Nature and Force of moral Habits in general.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

III. As moral Habits are distinguished from such, which we term natural; so it may be convenient to observe the Distinction between

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

much stronger Checks and Conflicts of Mind, than other Persons feel in being corrupted, who are naturally of a Temper less sensible and ingenuous. And yet, even they, whom Nature has formed after such a Manner, may through a good Use of their Liberty, and the Exercise of virtuous Acts, by Degrees, new model themselves, and, at length, acquire not only a Propension to such Things, to which they were before more averse, but a Facility in practising them; which will be attended with much Satisfaction, if not with a sensible and permanent Delight. The Endeavour here, it is true, will be, at the first, and, for some Time, more painful and difficult; but the Glory of the Triumph will be greater, in Proportion, to the

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Obstacles surmounted in the Way to it. It was this Consideration which rendered *Socrates* so much admired in his own, and in succeeding Ages; not simply, because he had acquired a Habit of living according to the Rules of a more pure Morality; there was Nothing here *singular* in a Professor of Philosophy; but because he had been able, by a strict, severe and uniform Course of Life, to overcome a perverse and vicious Temper, which rendered him naturally less capable of virtuous Attainments.

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

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

he hath determined to confer indifferently on all Men, in such Proportion, as may render them capable of attaining the Ends, for which, in his Wisdom and Goodness, he hath created them.

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

VIII. The

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

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

IX. It is visible, for Instance, that when the Body is much debilitated by Sicknefs, or for Want of Nourishment, how desirous soever the Soul may be of putting any Part of it upon a brisk Motion, it cannot always supply, to that End, sufficient Recruits. Whereas a Man, in perfect Health, no sooner wills, his Leg or his Arm should be extended, but there is a visible Inflation of his
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Muscles; which could not be made, except some bodily Particles, whatever those may be, were, in Obedience to the Order of the Will, received into the Muscles. From whence it is concluded, that the Soul exercises her Authority over the Body, by Virtue of certain corpuscular Emissaries, which, from the Life, Activity, and Force of them, are called animal Spirits; and, perhaps, not without good and reasonable Grounds. Now the Brain being the principal Place, where the Notices of the Soul, from external Objects, are received, and her Orders issued out: There is, always, in some Part of it, when it is in a regular State, a sufficient Number of these Spirits or Messengers, to take the Course, and to go directly to the

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Place, for which they are ordered. And the more, the Paths, thro' which they convey themselves, are frequented and beaten, the smoother, and easier, and, consequently, the more pleasant will their Passage be. Nay, after frequent Journies, the Spirits will, by Occasion of any Objects, whereby they have formerly been put in Motion, flow fortuitously, as it were, and of themselves, without waiting for the Orders of the Will, into the Channels wherein they were used to run. This is the Reason, why Habits are not only more easy, in the Practice, but render us more susceptible of such Impressions, as are principally apt to effect us, or have much, and, frequently, affected us formerly; for, by the continual Action of the Spirits, the Way is
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made so plain to them, and all Manner of Obstruction so entirely removed, that Light does not more naturally insinuate its self into any Aperture proper to transmit it, than the Spirits into such Pipes, or Passages of the Body, which lye open to receive them.

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

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

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

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

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

durate Sinners, with a Light and Evidence, that cannot be resisted. I will add, that divine Grace, it self, whether special, or more common, while the Mind is enlightened, or the Heart powerfully moved by it, yet does not work Miracles upon the Body. A Man, who approaches the Throne of divine Grace, with the most holy and sanctified Dispositions; who forms the most lively and strong Resolutions of entering upon a virtuous Course of Life, yet is not to expect, without a Miracle, to be freed from the Power of his evil Habits, but in the same Method, whereby he acquired them; that is, by repeated Acts: But by Acts, which require a Revulsion, and contrary Course of the Spirits. There is no other Way, or natural Means of his Recovery. He
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may as well, hope, immediately, upon his Prayers to God, and without any physical Application, to recover the Use of a Limb, which he has lost, or is mortified; as to expect, that God will give, and, miraculously, continue to him, a different Motion of his Blood, or Spirits, or excite different Sentiments in his Mind by Occasion of them, from those to which he has been accustomed. I repeat it again, God does not convert the Soul of Man, by altering the mechanical Construction of his Body. The Grace of God, indeed gives us those Assurances, whereby we may be enabled to correct our ill Habits, and the Disorder they occasion in the animal Oeconomy; but he does not, by an immediate and positive

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

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

XIV. These Things deserve very well to be considered, in order to restrain us from contracting ill Habits; especially, in our younger Age, when the soft, delicate, and flexible Contexture of the Parts of the Body, render them capable of receiving any Form. And the same Reason, if we have been so unhappy as to contract any ill Habits, and are confirmed in them, at a riper Age, should excite us, immediately, with all the Force we can apply, to set about the Work of our Conversion: A Work so painful and difficult, and distasteful, that to succeed in it
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may, without a forced Expression, in Regard to such Persons, be termed a *new Creation*; a *Putting on the new Man*; a *Renewal of the Spirit of our Minds*. The Organs, whereby the Soul acts, by the Ministry of the animal Spirits, being grown dry, hardened, and stubborn with Age, and unapt, on all these Accounts, to suffer any considerable Change. It is almost, in a human Way of Argument, as natural to put the Question, Can dry *Bones live*, or Can a dead Body be raised to Life again? As, Can an old, habitual, and obdurate Sinner, turn from the Evil of his Way, and superinduce a contrary Habit of Virtue; or bring forth *Fruits meet for Repentance*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

XVIII. And as a Habit cannot be acquired, instantaneously, or by a single Act, neither can it be so
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lost. A temperate Person, who, through Surprize, or, perhaps, on some particular Occasion, drinks, knowingly, to Excess, does not, therefore, wholly forfeit his general Character, of being a Man of Sobriety; much less, doth an intemperate Man, by a single Act of Abstinence, or Self-denial, when an Occasion may be presented of indulging his standing Inclination to Excess, thereby, acquire the Character of a sober Man.

XIX. There is, however, this remarkable Difference to be observed, between virtuous and vicious Habits; that sinful, and sensible Pleasures, for Reasons respecting the present State of Man, which I shall not repeat, affecting the Soul after a more powerful, and lively Manner;
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than the Pleasures, arising from a virtuous Conduct; fewer Acts, and a less intense Endeavour, are requisite to form a Habit of Vice, than a Habit of Virtue. I will not say, but it may, possibly, happen, that even a single Disorder, accompanied with an extraordinary Emotion of the Blood and Spirits, may have the same dangerous Effects, towards corrupting the Heart, as several particular Acts of the like Kind, performed under less aggravating and violent Circumstances: As, to keep to the former Comparison, a greater Force, applied to a new Engine, may supply the Want of that easy Motion, or Lubricity of the Parts, which might, gradually, have been produced, by a more frequent Use of it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



C H A P. XVII.

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

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

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

I. **A**S Habits are acquired, they are also confirmed and augmented by repeated Acts, or rather repeated Acts are, absolutely, necessary to preserve them; for if those Channels, wherein the Spirits, which we suppose the instrumental Cause of their Operation, are either choaked up, or replete with Spirits proper to excite a different Disposition, different

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ent Sentiments in the Soul, will, naturally, follow such a Change in the bodily System. Since the Union of the Soul and Body, a (Truth, frequently, necessary to be repeated, is Nothing but the Correspondency between the Thoughts of the Soul, and the Motions of the Body; not by Virtue of any natural Law of Contact, or Communication between them, but, purely, in Consequence of the Will of God; who has established such an Order between them, that certain Impressions, made upon the Body, shall excite particular Sensations in the Soul. And, therefore, the Authority of *Hypococrates* need not be urged to shew, that the Inclinations of the Soul change at the same Time with the Blood, and Humour; Wine, taken in a moderate Quantity,

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

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

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

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

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

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

IV. Thus

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## C H A P. XVIII.

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

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

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

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

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

II. When we speak, therefore, concerning a Man of Honour, the Lawfulness, and Honesty of his Actions, is always presupposed. And so the Difference between a lawful or honest, and an honourable Action, does not appear to lie so much, in Kind, as in

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

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

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



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

IV. It is upon these Grounds, we found the Distinction between a *righteous*, and a *good* Man; and that certain Duties of moral Life are performed, as having the Force of strict Commands; and others only, as being Counsels of Perfection; wherein there is this material Difference to be observed; that Matters, indeed, of  
strict

strict Duty, oblige at all Times, and in all Places: But Matters, which relate only to the exterior Form or Dignity of the Action, changing under different Circumstances, there is a greater Latitude, or rather Liberty of Discretion, in the Use of them. What is, in the Nature of it, unlawful, can never be done at any Time; but that may be decent, comely, and praise-worthy, at one Time, which, on another, would be very improper, and unbecoming, on all these Accounts, though not, strictly, unlawful.

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

no express Law has restrained them from doing. As to Circumstances of Decency or Fitness, they think themselves under no moral Obligation to regard them; especially, where they run no Hazard of their Reputation, or their temporal Interests. But these are only Rules to Men, to use the softest Terms, of vulgar and mean Spirits; and who are altogether Strangers to the Principles of a more exact and refined Morality. A Person, who has any just Sense of the Dignity of human Nature, the Interests of Religion, the Good of Mankind, and the Honour of God, will restrain himself in a thousand Instances, from doing such Things; which yet, considered, simply, in themselves, might lawfully be done.

VI. Among the Measures, whereby a Man of Honour, by which, according to my Notion of Honour, I understand only a more exalted State of Virtue, arising commonly from a superior Force and Greatness of Mind; I mentioned such Things as are *true*: which, perhaps, may occasion some Scruple in my Readers, as if I supposed *Truth*, not strictly as being of necessary Obligation; but among the Things, wherein that Liberty may be used, which is sometimes necessary to a more *perfect* State of Virtue.

VII. To prevent any Misconstruction of this Kind, I would observe, that *Truth* may be considered, as opposed to *Lying* and Deceit, negatively, or positively. In the latter Sense, it can never  
be

be lawful, under any Circumstances, to assert a downright and, especially, a pernicious Falshood. But it yet may, sometimes, be lawful to disguise or conceal the Truth. And in respect to this negative Acceptation of Truth, a Man, without directly offending against it, may often use a greater Liberty of Discretion. And, accordingly, several great Authorities are cited by *Grotius*\*, to shew, and among the rest, that of *Cicero*, in several Places; that it is lawful, especially, in Persons entrusted with the publick Administration, on many Occasions, to use Artifice in dissembling the Truth. But, however, this Liberty may be contended for, it is more laudable, generous, more a-

\* *De Jur. Bell & Pac. Lib. 3. Cap. 1.*

agreeable to the Dignity of human Nature, and, in all these Respects, to the Rules of *Honour*, that Men should never have Recourse to Diffimulation; that being, confessedly, an Argument of Imbecility, accompanied with Fear and Distrust. And, therefore, *Plato*, who allows the Use of it, in certain Cases, to Men, yet justly acknowledgeth, that God, notwithstanding his sovereign Dominion over Men, cannot make use of such a Refuge; as always implying a tacit Confession of Weakness. So that when *Cicero*, in another Place, asserts, that Fraud and Diffimulation ought to be banished out of human Life, to make him consistent with himself we must suppose, he speaks here agreeably to the Distinction, which occurs so often in his admirable *Book of Offices*;

*Offices*; where he puts a Difference between such Things and Actions as are, simply, lawful, and such as are really laudable. The Necessity of Affairs, in the Commonwealth, may, sometimes, possibly; render it no indirect Breach of moral Honesty, to dissemble the Truth; but still it is more *honourable*, in every State of Life, private or publick, to avoid the very Appearances of Falshood; and to restrain our selves from the Use of a Liberty, which, however, it may be successfully employed, is, at the best, but an ignoble, and inglorious Means of Success.

VIII. And, therefore, *Grotius* having enumerated the several Authorities and Arguments, commonly, used to excuse, or defend, political Lying; to correct the ill Impressions, which Men of

more loose Principles might make from such Concessions, delivers himself like a Casuist, who had a Sense of *Honour*, as well as Justice, in the following Words: “ We know there are some Kinds “ of *Deceit*, which tho’ naturally “ permitted, yet are condemned “ and exploded by several Per- “ sons; not strictly on Account “ of their *Unlawfulness*, but out “ of a certain Grandeur of Mind, “ and sometimes from a secret “ Consciousness of their own “ *Strength*”. Which Opinion he confirms by several remarkable Authorities, especially in respect to Princes, from the best of the ancient Moralists; and his Citations from them deserve very well to be consulted.

IX. Having thus endeavoured to state the true Notion of Honour,  
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my next Business is to shew, what the popular, or *nominal* Idea of it, does, ordinarily, import?

X. And here, there is a proper Occasion of observing, that the most common Terms are often the most confused and ambiguous. Every Man, because they are frequently used in Conversation, or Writing, apprehends, he perfectly understands them; while few annex to them the same Ideas, and others appear to have no certain or distinct Idea of them at all. Among several Words of this Kind, which Use has made current, without impressing any *real* Character upon them; such as Conscience, Liberty, publick Good, and Loyalty; and, in some Cases, Law and Justice itself, I am here, particularly to add, that of *Honour*; than which, if

we consider it in its true Notion, and as inseparable from Honesty, Nothing is more intelligible. But if we consider it in the abusive Sense, wherein wicked Men frequently agree to express it; and even, sometimes, Men who would be thought to conduct themselves by the Rules of Conscience and Religion, Nothing is more irreconcilable to Reason.

XI. It is absurd to suppose, that any voluntary Agreement, or Compact of Men, should oblige them, whatever the Pretence may be, to an unlawful Action; they being already under an antecedent and contrary Obligation to that universal Law of reasonable Beings, which alone ought to be obeyed, absolutely, and without Reserve. No Man can be obliged to an Impossibility;  
 now

now, in a just Way of Reasoning, with respect to moral Agents, what cannot, lawfully, be done, is *impossible* to be done.

XII. And, therefore, all Casuists are agreed, that no Engagements of any Kind, not those confirmed by the most solemn Promises, Oaths, or Affeverations, can be of any Force to oblige against the natural Reason, or Equity of Things. For, otherwise, it would follow, that a Combination of wicked Men, in promoting any unjust Design, might vacate the Laws of the supreme Legislator: And that, in such Cases, it would be reasonable to *hearken unto Men, more than unto God*: Which Principle being admitted, it would, at any Time, depend on superior Force and Numbers, to establish a quite different Scheme  
of

of Morality, from that, which before had really, and, perhaps, in all Ages, obtained; and may, in the Course of a few Years, obtain again, in the very Place, where it was before proscribed. For if the Distinction of Virtue and Vice, of Honour, or Infamy, are only founded in human Compact; the governing Part of the World will have the same Power to vary the Notions of Virtue and Vice, of Praise and Blame, as they will have of making arbitrary Laws, concerning Things that are only founded on mere prudential Considerations. So that Men would be at a continual Loss to know, whether Truth and Justice, Sobriety and Chastity; to which the Idea of Praise and Virtue are now affixed; would not, in some future Time, when the Legislature should

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so enact, justly expose Men to Punishment and Disgrace.

XIII. No Obligation, for these Reasons, can lie upon a Man in Point of Honour, by Virtue of any human Constitution or Authority whatever, to an Action, notoriously, sinful: This can admit no Dispute. But there is another false Notion of Honour, which, sometimes, obtains among Persons of weak, or ill-informed Minds, which ought, also, to be removed. It is common for Men, when they have once, openly, committed some Error or Folly, to think themselves obliged in Honour, and that they may avoid the Reproach of Levity or Inconstancy, to proceed in it. So that though their Hearts secretly accuse them of Temerity, or Indiscretion; yet  
they

they will defend what they have said, or done: And the Defence of their Conduct, frequently, is worse, and exposes them to greater Censure, than the very Fault, wherewith they are charged. As a Person once guilty, or suspected to be guilty, of a Lye; to avoid Detection, often, brings himself under a Necessity of covering it, by a Train of additional Lies, or, perhaps, of horrid Imprecations.

XIV. And if a Notion of Honour cannot oblige against Reasons of Prudence, or in respect to such Things, as have, perhaps, Nothing directly criminal in them; much less can it oblige to any Acts of Injustice, to the Prejudice, or Provocation of other Persons; notwithstanding Custom may, in great Measure, have lessened

lessened the Infamy, wherewith such Acts ought to have been, and would have been, otherwise, attended.

XV. I refer, here, to that false Notion of Honour, which puts Men upon revenging themselves, where any real, or imaginary, Indignity is offered them, by shedding the Blood of the Offender: No less a Sacrifice being thought sufficient to atone for the Injuries they have sustained. I do not, here, inquire, how far, in a State of Nature, and Independency, one Man may have a Power over the Body, or Life, of another, where he is violently attacked, in his Person, or Reputation; and cannot, otherwise, defend either of them, but by repelling his Adversary by Violence. But where Men are incorporated  
into

into regular Societies, and have submitted to be governed by certain Laws, which take Cognizance of all Offences, that may arise among them; to the Decision whereof, the Judgment, concerning such Offences, is referred. In this Case, for a private Person, to take the Power of the Sword into his own Hands, upon any Pretence, is, directly, to make himself a *Ruler*, and a *Judge*; and to transgress the Laws, in the highest Instance of Contempt and Disobedience, that of invading the Right, the proper Right, of the civil Magistrate.

XVI. Now, an Obligation to all human Laws, so far as they are just and equitable, being founded in the Laws of Nature and Reason, they have, consequently, in them the Force of a  

divine



divine Law. And the same Argument, whereby we prove that Nothing, which is contrary to the natural Law, can be agreeable to the Laws of Honour, will invincibly prove, that *Honour* can never oblige us to act in Breach of those human Laws, to which we profess, and owe, Subjection.

XVII. I will add, that even, abstracting from human Laws, and, on Supposition, that a certain Number of Men should meet, or be cast fortuitously, upon any Part of the uninhabited World, where upon their first Congress, no one could pretend to have any Power, or Authority, over another; yet, even here, in Case of any Injury offered, the Party injured could have no Right to demand, or seek, Reparation, except

cept in a reasonable Degree of Proportion to the Injury done to him. For though he is not restrained by any positive Compact, to which they have by Consent submitted; still the common Law of Reason, of Humanity, and Charity; that Law, in particular, of not doing to another what, in a supposed Change of Circumstances, a Man would not have done to himself; a Law, universally, binding in every State and Condition of Life, will oblige him, not to extend his Demands of Satisfaction, beyond the Degree of such Injury, as he hath received. Nay, he will rather, in many Cases of less Concernment, chuse to *suffer Wrong*, and even to recede from those Methods of Retaliation, which he might, in strict Justice, take, than endeavour

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vour to revenge himself, for slight or trival Offences.

XVIII. Would Men, in civil Society, moderate their Passions and Resentments, by these Rules, they would not, so readily, work themselves up, or fly out (especially, when the Injury apprehended, or received, is inconsiderable) into those violent Heats, which Nothing but Blood can allay; and which frequently, therefore, terminate in their own, or their Adversaries Death; and, sometimes, in the Destruction of both; and that upon a vain fantastick Notion, of what they call Honour: Which, saith, *the excellent Gro- tius, upon this Subject*: “ ap-  
 “ pears no less contrary to Rea-  
 “ son, than the Maxims of sound  
 “ Piety. For Honour, import-  
 “ ing an Idea of some Excellency

“ and Merit; he that can put  
 “ up an Affront, discovering a  
 “ Superiority of Mind, as being  
 “ above the Sense of it, rather  
 “ augments his Honour, than  
 “ does any Thing to the Di-  
 “ minution of it. Neither is it  
 “ of any Significancy, that some  
 “ Men, through a corrupt Judg-  
 “ ment, traduce this Virtue with  
 “ false and opprobrious Names.  
 “ For the Errors, or false Judg-  
 “ ments, of weak, or wicked  
 “ Men, do not alter the Nature  
 “ of Things. Neither are they,  
 “ who believe the Christian Re-  
 “ velation, only, of this Opinion;  
 “ but even the Philosophers have  
 “ argued, from a common Prin-  
 “ ciple of natural Reason, that  
 “ it is the Sign of a weak, mean,  
 “ or effeminate Soul in Man,  
 not

“ not to be able to bear Injuries \*.”

XIX. I would not, hereby, insinuate, as if Men could be too cautious in preserving their Honour; provided, this may be done in a just and honourable Way. But Honour, as every Thing else, that is excellent, ought to have some distinct Characteristick, whereby it may be known and ascertained. Now, by what Rule can we so properly try and examine a Quality, wherein some peculiar Perogative of a human Mind is supposed to lie; as by that Reason, whereby human Nature, itself, is dignified and distinguished? that Reason, by acting in Conformity to which, we

\* Grot. *De Jur. Bell. & Pac. Lib. 2. Cap. 1. p. 10.*

alone approach nearer to the Original Source of all Excellency.

XX. Nothing is, therefore, here intended to the Diminution of Honour, in the true, but only in the improper, or abusive, Notion of it. No Character, indeed, is of such Importance, I do not say, toward effecting our more private Designs (an Advantage, by no Means, in itself, contemptible) but towards a happy Conduct, and Execution, of any great, or publick, Enterprize. This is so visible, that let two Persons of equal Fortune, Capacity, or Address, express themselves in the same Terms; give the same Advice; and negotiate the same Affair; yet what they say, or do, shall operate, after a very different Manner; or be attended, with very different Success,

Success, as they are differently *thought* of, or esteemed. If we entertain a good Opinion of any Person, or consider him as a *Man of Honour*, all his Motions are well received; all his Actions supposed to proceed from good Motives, to be conducted by the wisest Means, and to prosecute the best Ends. His Advice, his Persuasions, his very Reproofs, find an easy Access to the Heart. But a Person, who lies under any Calumny, or Suspensions, cannot exert himself to the Benefit of others, even when his Measures are well concerted, his Admonitions just, and his Designs and Actions prudently conducted, without committing some Kind of Violence upon them.

XXI. It is not, therefore, sufficient to a Man, who would ren-

der himself, in any superior Degree, useful, or considerable, in Society, that he should be *negatively* honest, or honourable; that is, conduct himself after such a Manner, as not to offend, directly, or openly, against publick Fame; it is incumbent on him, if he will preserve that Degree of Esteem in the World, which will give him any Weight, or Authority in his Station, not only to *provide Things honest in the Sight of God, and Men*; but to *approve the Things that are excellent.*

XXII. I will here add, that Honour always supposes some Quality, or Action, more peculiarly, relating to Men, considered as Members of Society. And, therefore, the Signification of it is properly restrained to such Instances

stances



stances of our Duty, whereby we promote, in one Kind, or other, the Good of other Men; or discover, at least, a generous Disposition, where we want Power, to that End. A Man of Piety, of Meekness, and Sobriety, will, on account of these Qualities, render himself accepted of God, and approved of Men; but the more proper Subjects of *Honour*, are Acts of Justice, whether commutative, or distributive; and, *especially*, of Beneficence. And the Idea of Honour, indeed, is so restrained to these Subjects, that the Character of it is, in a Manner, by common Use, appropriated to Persons of Distinction in the World; who have larger Abilities, on one Account, or other, and a wider Compass, with more

Occasions of doing Good, in civil Life.

XXIII. From which Consideration, a farther Argument may be formed, to shew, that Honour ought never to be separated from Honesty; as all Persons in Proportion to the Advantages they enjoy, of a more liberal Education, and improved Understanding, are under a stronger Obligation to assert, recommend, and exemplify, a strict Morality.

XXIV. It appears, then, without any long Recapitulation of what has been said upon this Head, that Honour, when distinguished from moral Virtue, is not, in Reality, any Character, really, separable from it, but only imports a different Manner of conceiving moral Virtue, particularly,

larly, in respect to the Branches of it just before mentioned, *Justice*, and *Benevolence*. Honour, therefore, in the Language of wicked Men, who acknowledge not a real Distinction of Virtue and Vice, of lawful, or unlawful, but what arises from common Opinion, seems to be one of the most pernicious Principles, that the human Mind is capable of entertaining. For, in this Way of Reasoning, a Man of Honour, as he is called, can only be obliged to consult his external Reputation. No human Laws, or Compacts, can reach the Heart, or lay any Obligation upon the Conscience. Nothing can do this, but the internal Monitor, which speaks, continually, within us; the silent, and still Voice whereof is heard in our greatest Privacies,  
and

and Retirements. But to one who disowns the Power and Authority of this internal Monitor, He cannot be of the least Use, or Significancy. And, therefore, the Man of Honour, according to his Notion of Honour, may commit, without Shame, or Remorse, the most unjust and abominable Actions, provided he can do it with Security, and in private, that is, without offending against publick Fame, or what the World has agreed, at present, to call Honour; whatever may happen to be called so, in any Time future; for the Opinion of the World, if there be no real Difference in the Nature of Things, cannot affect the Nature of them; so that a Man is at Liberty, provided he can escape the Eye, or Censure, of the World; to act, in such a  
Case,

Case, as private Passion, or Interest, shall direct him. This Opinion, therefore, which destroys all the inward Restraints of Honour, (and it is easy, on a thousand Occasions, to evade the outward) is so *pernicious*, that I do not know, whether it be of more fatal Consequence in moral Life, to say there is no God; than to acknowledge the Being of a God, and to assert, at the same Time, he has given no certain, or stated, Rules; no Rules, but what depend upon the mutable Humour, or Opinions, of Men, for the Conduct of moral Life.

XXV. I do not say, but that some Men have naturally so good and generous Dispositions, that they cannot easily do a base, or unjust Action, without offering  
much

much Violence to themselves. And it must be owned, this Disposition does often carry Men, not otherwise very scrupulous in Matters of Conscience, a great Way, in all the Appearances of Honour. But it is not to be depended upon, especially, in Cases of Extremity, which much affect us, except it be animated and enforced with that internal Principle, of which I have been speaking. We may call Honour, in such Persons, Humour, Fashion, good Nature, Sensibility of Temper, a higher Fermentation of the Blood, or some other occasional Cause, of giving a more violent Agitation to the Spirits, whereby the Soul is powerfully affected. But, Nothing, to conclude, can deserve the Name of

*true*

*true Honour, but what is founded in Reason and Conscience.*

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C H A P. XIX.

Some historical Observations, upon the Progress of moral Philosophy, among the Ancients ; and concerning their Authority.

- I. *The general Principle upon which the Author proceeds.*
- II. *The Morality of Christian Writers the most pure, and perfect.*
- III, IV. *Yet that of Philosophers, in a State of natural Religion, the proper Subject of Inquiry at present.*
- V. *What we owe to them.*
- VI,
VII,

VII, VIII, IX. *Of the Stoicks; particularly, Zeno, Chryfippus, and Seneca.* X, XI, XII. *Of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle,* XIII, XIV, XV, XVI. *And Cicero.*

I. **I** Proceed, every where, upon this Principle; that Reason is the proper Rule of human Judgment, and Action. Reason, whereby a Man endeavours to discover the true Nature of Things, with the several Relations, wherein they stand towards one another; and, thereupon, having formed the Scheme of his Conduct, determines effectually to follow it. To this End, every Man must assert that natural inherent Right of judging for himself, from which no Man, considered as a reasonable Agent, is excluded. But it is very consistent with private Judgment, that

that we should inquire, especially, in more nice and intricate Cases, relating to moral Life, (since the Reason of all Duties is not equally evident) what has been the Opinion of other Men concerning them? especially, of such Men, if they can be found, who have had, for Ages past, an established Reputation throughout the World, for their great Wisdom, and Knowledge.

II. Were I thought worthy to be consulted, by any Person, upon such an Inquiry, I should direct him to several ancient *Christian* Writers; yet not, strictly, under that Character, or as they confirm the moral Truths and Instructions delivered in their Writings, by a divine Authority; but because there is certainly to be discovered in them, without any
 Regard

Regard to divine Authority, a more strict, pure, and perspicuous, a more uniform and consistent Scheme of Morality, than can be found in the moral Tracts of any ancient Heathen Writer whatever: Which Assertion, tho' it be not admitted, neither, in this Place, do I design it should be admitted, as an Argument, to prove the divine Inspiration of the holy Scriptures; yet it is a very strong Argument in Proof of their Excellency and Perfection, as a Rule of moral Life.

III. But since he, who should move the Question, might possibly except against Christian Writers, as being prepossessed with Christian Principles, and, consequently, as less equal, or competent Judges in the Case. I should, in the next Place, propose to lead
him

him into the philosophical World, not to take a minute and distinct Survey of it; that would be an Attempt of more Trouble and Curiosity, than Use; but only to make such transient Discoveries, upon which some general Account might be given, concerning the Temper and Produce of the Country.

IV. And here to quit the Metaphor, and examine the Thing in a plain and natural Manner, it is readily granted, that we find, in the Writings of the Philosophers, many excellent Rules and Precepts, here and there dispersed, for the Conduct of moral Life. And if they did not always resolve those Precepts into their true and proper Grounds, it was not from any invincible Defect in human Reason, but for

Want of particular Attention, in themselves; or, because they did not make that Use, in every Respect, they might have made of those reasoning Powers, wherewith God had endowed them. For human Reason is the same in all Ages: The great Difference lies in the Exercise and Application of it; which, tho' it much depends on the native Strength, or Liberty, of our own Minds; may, yet, produce different Discoveries, in different Ages, relating to Morality, by Means of several accidental Causes, under the Direction of divine Providence.

V. It must, however, be acknowledged, that with all the new Lights, that are now afforded to us in moral Philosophy, we
owe

owe very much to the ancient moral Writers; if not for the Purity and Strictness of their Rules, yet for the lively, beautiful, and natural Manner, wherewith they did so happily embellish, and recommend them.

VI. It seems, indeed, much more difficult to resolve, why the Philosophers have not left us any just, or perfect, System of Morality; than, why many of them, celebrated for their great Wisdom and Learning, so grossly erred, concerning some of the most fundamental, and even common, Duties of moral Life;

The Morality of the Stoicks, more strict, than *pure* or *perfect*, was, particularly, taught by *Zeno* and *Chrysippus*, as two of the *grand Masters*, or Heads of that Sect, if the former was not the original

Founder of it. Yet we are not to expect much Light from him, towards discovering either the true Principles, or the proper Duties of Morality. His Way of reasoning, upon all Subjects, being rather to amuse and perplex, than to establish any Thing, *as* certain. His Business was to take the Field, and fight against all Comers; and if he could not subdue his Adversaries by main Strength, to circumvent them by any Artifice, or Stratagem, that a subtle and ready Wit could supply. When he set himself to confute an Opinion, or baffle an Opponent, all he proposed was to triumph, without Regard to the Truth, to the Probability, or even Possibility of the Matter in Contest: And, upon this Account, *Seneca*, enumerating several absurd

furd Doctrines, advanced by the
 Scepticks, represents none of them
 fo extravagant in his Notions, as
Zeno. Some of them denied the
 Truth of one Thing, some of an-
 other; but, * according to *Zeno*,
 there was no Truth or Certainty
 in any Thing. It cannot be pre-
 tended, this Observation ought to
 be confined to Subjects of natural
 Philosophy; since *Sextus Emperi-
 cus* has proved, both, according to
Zeno, and *Chrysippus*, that there
 is no real, or certain, Difference
 between Virtue and Vice. We
 are not to be surprized, if upon
 such an uncertain and fluctuating
 Scheme, these two Fathers of
 the Stoical Sect, erred very much,
 when they came to explain them-

* *Si Zenoni, ne unum quidem.* Senec. Ep. 88.

selves upon particular moral Duties: That the former of them, for Instance, taught, Men ought to permit, to one another, a promiscuous Use of their Wives; and is violently suspected to have practised, if he did not teach, a Sin which ought not to be named: That the latter of them asserted the Lawfulness of an incestuous Commerce, between Persons in the first Degrees of Consanguinity; and that both of them filled their Writings with such obscene Passages, which could not be read by Persons, who had any Sense of Shame, or Modesty.

VII. The succeeding Stoicks being sensible, that according to the primitive and fundamental Doctrines of that Sect, the Honour of it could not, possibly, be defended,

defended, endeavoured, in some Measure, to reform and soften them; and to bring them nearer to the Principles of a pure Morality: Particularly, about the Time when the Christian Doctrine began to spread, and to enlighten the World. Yet the Notion that all Crimes are equal, as that it was indifferent in the *Nature* and *Reason* of the Thing, whether a Man should murder his Father *, or kill a Cock, did still, generally, obtain among them.

VIII. An Affectation of Subtlety seems, indeed, to have been, no less, the Character of *Chrysispus*, than of *Zeno*; but it, sometimes, engaged him in Difficulties, out of which he could find

* *Tull. pro. Muræna.*

no Way of extricating himself. He would propose Objections with such Force, and in so good a Light, that his Answers were neither, always, so solid, nor so clear, as to oblige an Assent to the contrary Opinion. At other Times, he advanced Notions, not so much unworthy of a Philosopher, as altogether chimerical; as that Virtue and Vice, Arts and Sciences, were corporeal, and rational Animals; which, besides, the Temerity of the Assertion, without Proof, or the least Appearance of Probability, by uniting the Ideas of corporeal, and rational, in the same Subject, Ideas the most foreign, and incompatible in Nature, is, of itself, sufficient to discover to us, that with all his Subtlety, this Philosopher did not propose it as a
 Rule

Rule to himself, always to argue, from clear and distinct Ideas. Most of the Absurdities, indeed, and Paradoxes, objected by *Plutarch*, against the Stoicks, are taken from *Chrysippus*.

IX. Among all the Stoicks, no Person appears to have endeavoured more to recommend Morality in its full Compass and Extent, or to have made greater Improvements in the *Theory* of it, than *Seneca*. Yet, he has rather declaimed, like a Man of Wit and Experience, against Vice, than established moral Virtue, upon its true Foundation. He understood the Strength, and Defects of human Nature; and knew, how to adorn his Subject with all those Ornaments, which were proper to set it off to Advantage; but,

but, designing, if we may judge concerning his Intention, from the Effect of his Writings, rather to surprize and please, than to convince, he seldom went to the Bottom of Things, or reduced the fine and beautiful Reflections, wherewith he abounds, to any true, or certain Standard. This being the Character of a Person, much celebrated for his moral Writings, which are in the Hands of many Christians, and in several Languages, I think my self obliged to confirm it by two Authorities, against which, there will lie no Exception; the first is from *Seneca* himself, as cited by *St. Austin*; who, on Occasion of what he had written, concerning certain impure, and wicked Rites of Pagan Superstition, represents him, saying, that a wise Man will conform

form to those Rites, not on Account of their being acceptable to God, but in Obedience to human Laws*; founding the Obligation of observing them, not in the Law of Nature, but in positive Institution, contrary to the Law of Nature. † The other Authority is that of *Quintilian*, whose Character of this Moralist imports, that tho' he had an excellent Faculty of exposing the Vices of Mankind; yet, he was far from being exact in his Researches, considered, strictly, as a Philosopher.

X. But may we not expect greater Discoveries, in Morality, from those three shining Lights which appeared in the philosophical World, in the same Age;

* *S. Auf. Civ. Dei. L. 6. C. 10.*

† *In Philosophia parum diligens, egregius tamen vitiorum insectator. Inst. L. 10. C. 18.*

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle?
 As to the former, if we consider moral Philosophy, as reduced into a Method for the Conduct of human Life; or as a useful and practical Part of Knowledge; the greatest Improvements, to that End, have been ascribed to him. Before his Time, the Principles of it lay loose and dispersed, in certain short Aphorisms or Sentences, without any regular, much less, any entire Dependence of one Thing upon another. But whatever Improvements this excellent Person made in the moral, and practical Parts of Philosophy, they appear to have been, solely, owing to the Light of his own Mind; for, since he did not travel, as others of his Country Men did, in Search of Knowledge abroad, neither was there any Occasion,
 that

that he should take this Method, in order to inform himself, concerning that, which by attending to the common Principles of natural Reason, he might, at any Time, discover, in his closest Retirements; and the sooner, for being retired. Yet we know little of his Discourses, upon moral, or other Subjects, but what has been transmitted down to us, in the Writings of *Plato*, and *Xenophon*; the former of whom, especially, is supposed to have made him the Author of several * Things which he never said. From whom, however, it appears, how orthodox soever, generally speaking, *Socrates* has been in his Doctrine relating to Morality itself, yet in the Method he took to propagate it, he discovered

* *Aul. Gell. L. 14. C. 3.*

much

much Diffidence, and Uncertainty.

XI. *Plato* improved, upon the Principles of this Philosopher; but, notwithstanding the easy, flow, the happy Cadence, and Beauty of his Expression; he is not, always, perfectly clear in his Sentiments: Concerning which, therefore, we must, sometimes, satisfy our selves, at last, with making the most probable Conjectures. But the Difficulty we are under, of finding out his Meaning, in certain Cases, does not afford so just Matter of Regret, or Complaint, as certain gross and notorious Errors which occur in his Writings. For he not only held, with *Socrates*, a Community of *Wives* lawful; but he delivered it as his Opinion,
that

that Infants might lawfully be destroyed, or exposed to starve. And, herein, he is followed by *Aristotle*, who yet might, *here*, have found a much better, and more just Cause, of contradicting him, than on several other Occasions, which he affects to improve to that End. What seems more unaccountable is, that *Plutarch*, who had, with much Care, examined, and confuted, the Errors of several other moral Writers; yet, speaking concerning the Laws of *Lycurgus*, observes, he found Nothing in them repugnant to the Laws of Justice, or Honesty: And, yet, not only, these two Errors, relating to a Community of Wives, and the Murthering of Infants, if weak or sickly; but Theft, also, was legitimated by those Laws.

XII. *Aristotle* hath, indeed, left us a methodical System of Morality, wherein most of the Duties relating to private, and social, Life, are, according to his Scheme, very well deduced and established; but, besides, that in his *Ethicks*, as in his other Works. He is, sometimes, obscure; if he did not really affect to hide himself, as there is Reason to believe, from the Apology he made to *Alexander*, for the Publication of some of his Books, contrary to the Sentiments of *that* Hero; “ That they were published, and, “ in Effect, not published, because “ not intelligible”. It may be, farther, observed, concerning *Aristotle*, in common with other Philosophers, that he never established the Truths of Morality, upon their true and proper Grounds;

Grounds; or hath shewed the Obligation we are under to practise them, in Conformity to the Will of God; the Reasonableness, and Piety, of imitating him, in all his imitable Perfections; and from a Consideration of future Rewards, and Punishments.

XIII. *Cicero*, himself, was deficient, in not giving these several Sanctions, to the Duties of moral Life. And, therefore, it may be said, concerning those admirable Rules of Virtue, which he hath laid down in his Works, that there is a great deal more Beauty in them, than Strength; that they want that Force, which they would have had, to persuade, had he superstructed upon the true, and sure Foundations of Virtue. Even, in a Court of publick Judicature, where he was

pleading, he endeavoured to expose the Doctrine, concerning a future State of Punishment to wicked Men, as a groundless Fiction*. And, on another Occasion, this grave and learned Orator did not think it inconsistent with his Character, in either Respect, openly, to apologize, for the criminal and impure Liberties, wherewith *M. Celius* was charged: Not, as, it might have been expected, a Philosopher would have attempted, at least to do, from the Nature or Reason of Things; but merely, from the Licentiousness of the Age, and former Custom, and Connivance. Which was, in Effect, to teach, before the greatest Audience, at that Time, in the World; that where Men have

* *Pro Cluentio.*

been

been able, by Means of superior Force, or Numbers, to introduce, or support, any wicked Custom, contrary to natural Order, or the Law of God ; such Custom, and consequently, Men, ought to be obeyed, rather than God.

XIV. We are not to be surprized, if a Person, who did not carry his Researches after moral Virtue, to the true Original of it, and where it is only to be found, was easily retained to plead for a loose Morality ; and that, after all the excellent Rules he hath laid down, for the Conduct of moral Life, he was scarce sure, or positive in any Thing. I shall give a remarkable Instance, of the doubtful, and insecure Grounds, upon which he proceeded in his moral Philosophy, from what I shall, presently, observe, relating to

Carneades. In the mean Time, I have no Design, on any Account, to detract from *Cicero's* Merit, or the Glory, whereof he has been so justly possessed, in all succeeding Ages, and among the best Judges, for the many admirable Maxims, relating to moral Life, which he has interspersed in all his Works; but, whereof, in his *Book of Offices*, he has formed a very regular, and beautiful, Plan; though he has no where, as hath been observed, established Morality upon its true Basis; nor, always, upon the best Principles, which himself has, sometimes, advanced. An Argument, that his Notions were fluctuating, and uncertain; as *those*, of all Men, naturally are, who build either upon false, or more precarious Grounds.

XV. Most

XV. Most of the Arguments, which he employs to establish, and recommend moral Virtue, are taken from the Conveniency of it, with Respect to the Tranquillity of the Mind, or the Health of the Body; to our Ease, our Reputation, or Interest, in the Commerce we maintain with other Men. All these are very proper, and reasonable Topicks of Persuasion, because they, severally, suppose some physical Good; to which moral Good naturally tends, and which it has, indeed, a very powerful Influence to promote. But yet these are Motives, wherewith, as they are founded in Considerations merely prudential and temporary, very wicked Men, even Men, who believe Nothing of a
D d 3 God,

God, or Religion, may be, in certain Cases, much affected.

XVI. That, upon which *Cicero* appears to lay the greatest Strefs, towards securing the Interests of Virtue, is a Sense of Glory. His Sentiments upon this Head were sublime, and agreeable, to his Character, as a *Roman*; but, besides, the Influence which the Genius of his Country, and the Principles of his Education, might be presumed to have upon him, in this Respect; his violent Thirst after Praise seems to have proceeded, in great Measure, from Constitution. It was owing to this Motive, that when he desired *Luceius* to write the History of his Administration, he authorized him, plainly, to neglect the Rules of historical Truth,

Truth, in his Favour. He wrote on the same Occasion, as if there had been Nothing new, or exceptionable in the Request to his Friend *Atticus*. The Account, of this his irregular Ambition, remains; while the History of his Administration, if it was ever written, hath perished.



C H A P. XX.

An Argument of Carneades, relating to the Subject of moral Virtue, particularly, considered.

- I. *A general Character of this Philosopher.* II. *His Argument proposed.* III. *Cicero*
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had too formidable Apprehensions of it. IV, V. What might have been said in Answer to it. VI, VII. The Rights of Nature, and the Law of Nature, distinguished. VIII. IX, X. The Argument of Carneades, in one Branch of it, proves too much. XI, XII. Inconclusive on another Account. XIII. Urged by the Author, with an additional Force, XIV. And answered. XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII. The Design of these historical Remarks; and, in general, concerning, the Measures of Submission to Authority.

I Mention *Carneades*, distinctly, in the last Place, as his Arguments relating to Morality, that great Branch of *Justice*, appeared, so very formidable to *Cicero*, that
 he

he declined to answer them. The general Character of this Philosopher was, that in Reference to the Conduct of *moral* Life, he allowed Nothing but Probabilities; he believed there was, upon that Head of Inquiry, no Certainty, or Evidence, in any Thing *. And, therefore, after the Example of *Socrates*, and *Arcefilas*, his Business was rather to dispute, than prove; to propose and consider Difficulties, than to establish, or ascertain Truth, upon clear and distinct Grounds. When he was sent on an Embassy to *Rome*, with *Critolaus* and *Dio- genes*, to solicit the Mitigation of a Fine, imposed upon the *A- therians*, the Reputation, and

* *Quæ quanquam non perciperentur, tamen quia visum haberent quendam insignem & illustrem, his sapientis vîsâ regeretur.* Cic. de Nat. Deor.

Force,

Force of his Eloquence, was thought so dangerous, that *Cato*, the Censor, advised they should be dismissed, as coming rather, by Means of it, to extort, than, in Form of Supplicants, to solicit a Favour. The *Roman* Youth were moved to a Degree, by his Harangues, as if they had been seized with a Kind of Enthusiasm; which begot in them a sudden, and violent Passion for Philosophy. But his Disputing, alternately, two Days, in publick, for, and against, Justice, did not, appear, altogether, suitable to the Dignity of the *Roman* Senate; or, indeed, to the Character of a solemn Embassy from *Athens*. This was too nice, and tender a Point, to be made a Trial of Wit before the most grave, and august Assembly in the World. And there is
 scarce

scarce a civilized Nation, any where, at this Time, which would not look upon it as ridiculous, either to act, or suffer, such a Part as seems to have passed, upon that potent, and polite People, without any Censure.

II. But, I shall descend to consider, in particular, the Force of that Argument of *Carneades*, against *Justice*, which *Cicero* thought so formidable, that he had not Courage to undertake the Examination of it: Though I humbly conceive, *Lactantius*, in saying the Heathens were incapable of answering it, had not thoroughly considered, what Solution might be given to it, upon clear and natural Principles.

“ If there be such a Thing as
 “ Justice, it must be founded, ei-
 “ ther, upon positive Right, or
 “ natural

“ natural Right. Now it is not
 “ founded upon positive Right;
 “ for that varies with Times and
 “ Places; different People apply-
 “ ing it to their own Profit, or
 “ Interests: Nor is it founded
 “ upon natural Right; which is
 “ no other than a Byass, Nature
 “ has impressed on all Animals,
 “ which leads to a Search after
 “ what is useful to them. And it
 “ cannot be regulated, according
 “ to this Byass, without commit-
 “ ting a thousand Faults, and Vi-
 “ olences; from whence it fol-
 “ lows, that this natural Byass
 “ cannot be the Foundation of
 “ Justice: *Again*, it may be pro-
 “ ved, by a great many Examples,
 “ the Condition of Men is such,
 “ that if they have a Mind to be
 “ just, they must act imprudent-
 “ ly, and foolishly. And if they
 “ have

“ have a Mind to act prudently,
 “ they are unjust; from whence
 “ it is concluded, there is no such
 “ Thing as Justice; for a Virtue,
 “ inseparable from Folly, cannot
 “ be just.

III. This Objection seems to be
 proposed, in a Light sufficiently
 clear; and to be more artfully
 contrived, towards unsettling the
 the Notion of moral Justice, than
 any Argument that has been ad-
 vanced upon the same View, by
 any of our modern sceptical
 Wits. Let us see whether a good
 Answer may not be given to it,
 or if *Cicero* had so great Reason
 to fear it? who, in his Book of
 Laws, where he lays it down as a
 fundamental Principle, that there
 is an inherent Rectitude in certain
 Actions, abstracting from all hu-
 man, or positive Institutions,
 parti-

particularly, begs Quarter from *Arcefilas* and *Carneades*, in Terms of Submission, which shew, as if he, really, apprehended, these two Philosophers, superior to himself, in Force of Argument. “I am an undone Man, *saieth* “*he*, how well soever my Measures “have been concerted, if I be at- “tacked on that Side; I chuse, “therefore, to bespeak their Fa- “vour, rather than to dispute the “Ground with them*”.

IV. And yet, there needs no other Answer, after all, to the Argument, of *Carneades* above recited, which is supposed by *Lactantius*, to have put *Cicero* in such a Fright, but what a Person of much less Capacity, or

* *Placere cupio, submovere non audeo. De Leg. L. I.*

Penetration, than *Cicero*, might easily have been capable of making.

V. He might have argued, that Justice is founded, *both* on positive, and natural, Right; that there is no such Inconsistency between these two Rights, as *Carneades* supposed; but they may fairly stand together; that it can be, therefore, no Argument of Violence, on one Hand, or of Imprudence, on the other; for a Man to conduct himself, according to the Rules of Justice, in both these Respects.

VI. For Proof of this, we need only observe a necessary Distinction, between the Rights of Nature, and the Law of Nature. A Right of Nature is, strictly speaking, no Law of Action to Man; but simply a *Permission*; which

which he has from the Author of Nature, to act: The Law of Nature, on the other Side, which is Nothing but the Law of Reason, does not, always, confer a Right; because it is reasonable, in certain Cases, in order to attain some greater Good, that a Man should recede, even, from such Rights, which Nature had otherwise permitted to him. The Right of Nature, therefore, in general, considered, is a Liberty of doing whatever is pleasing, or agreeable, to our natural Appetites; for Appetites had been given us in vain, if not in order to be gratified, where the Gratification might really tend to our Good, or no particular Reason should intervene, why they ought not to be gratified. We are, therefore, naturally permitted
what:

ever we naturally desire; and it would import, indeed, little less than a Contradiction, to say, any Thing is naturally prohibited to us, towards which our Desires naturally carry us. But though Nature has not, and cannot, properly restrain her own Rights, yet they, being only Rights of *Sufferance*, not of *Obligation*; Reason may direct us upon good and wise Considerations, to restrain them, either by legal Compacts, or by a positive Act of our own Choice. Every Man, for Instance, in a State of Nature, has a natural Right to any Thing, upon which he can first lay his Hands; and some Remains of this Right still subsist in the best regulated Societies in the World; for no Man is any where under a legal Restraint from breathing

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the common Air, or from taking up a common Stone in the Highway. But it being found necessary, when Men were formed into a regular Society, and towards attaining the Protection, and other beneficial Ends of it, which could not be attained in the natural State, that Property should be secured; it became reasonable, and consequently agreeable to the Law of Nature, that what was, before, a common Right to all Men, should be restrained to the more peculiar Use, and Benefit of particular Persons.

VII. We readily, therefore, grant, that the Peace of Mankind, could not be well, or sufficiently, provided for in a mere State of Nature; but we deny, that Justice cannot be regulated, according to the natural Biass, or Appetites,
of

of Man, without committing a thousand Faults, or Violences; for, even, setting aside all human Compacts, Man, in whatever Condition of Life we place him, is to be considered as a reasonable Agent; and, therefore, as regulating his Appetites, and Conduct, by the Law of Reason. Now, Reason will direct every Man, not to do to another, what in a supposed Change of Circumstances, he would not have done to himself; it will, therefore, restrain him from doing any Injury to an innocent Person, or from attempting to deprive him of what he actually has in Possession, merely to gratify his own cruel, or avaricious Temper. For even in the natural State, there are, certain fundamental, and immutable Rules of Justice, which oblige

blige Man every where, and at all Times. Such is that already named, with others, which arise from the common, and natural, Affection of Man, termed *Humanity*; concerning which, *Carneades*, himself, has left us a most excellent, and signal Testimony.

“ If, *saieth he*, you, certainly,
 “ knew, that an Asp lay conceal-
 “ ed in a Place, where another was
 “ going to sit down, by whose
 “ Death you might propose to
 “ your self any extraordinary Ad-
 “ vantage, you would commit
 “ a high Act of Injustice, if you
 “ did not give him Notice of the
 “ Danger; though you might o-

* *Si scires, inquit Carneades, aspidem occulte latere uspiam & velle imprudentem aliquem super eam assidere, cujus mors tibi emolumento futura sit, improbe feceris, nisi monueris ne assideat; sed impune tamen id te constaret fecisse: Quis enim coarguere possit?*

“ mit

“ mit to do it with Impunity, or
 “ any Apprehension of being cal-
 “ led to Account.

VIII. The great Force of the Objection seems to lie against the Notion of Justice, as founded in *positive Right*; because “ it is very
 “ often foolish, and imprudent, to
 “ act, as positive Laws direct; and
 “ the Ideas of Folly, and Injustice,
 “ are incompatible, in the same
 “ Subject.

IX. This Part of the Objection proceeds upon a Supposition, that the Restraints which are laid upon Men, or which they voluntarily agree should be laid upon them, in Society, are Arguments of Folly, and Imprudence, because contrary to their natural Rights. Now if this Argument proves any Thing, it proves there ought to be no Government;

and, therefore, no regular Society in the World; because it is impossible to form any Scheme of Government, or legal Constitution, wherein Men shall not be obliged to depart from their natural Rights, in several Respects. But, setting this Consequence aside, where is the Folly, and Imprudence, in giving up a precarious, vagrant, and indefinite Right, in Consideration of a fixed, and standing, Property? Can any Thing be more agreeable to the standing Maxims, whereby all wise Men have, ever, governed themselves, than, upon the Competition, to postpone a less, to a far greater Advantage? But this Question, indeed, may be determined by a Case incident to Man, even his natural State. Nature has not given to Man any Right
more

more clear and indisputable, than that to the Use of his bodily Members; in particular, of his Hand. But in Case of a Mortification, or Gangrene, which would require that his Hand should be cut off, in order to preserve other Parts of his Body; Reason will, notwithstanding, direct that he ought to suffer the Amputation. Yet, according to *Carneades*, he would act foolishly, and imprudently, should he submit to it, as consenting, hereby, to an Action, evidently repugnant to *natural Right*.

X. The Case is the same, if applied to the body Politick. A Man, who would entitle himself to the Benefits of it, and enjoy that Security from Violence, and Oppression, which is only to be found in it; ought, in Reason, to

part with several Rights, and Conveniencies, to which, otherwise, he might have layed Claim, yet not without much Hazard, and in continual Fear of his Life. It is, in this Case, not an Act of Folly, and Imprudence, but of Wisdom, in Man, to resign his Pretensions to certain former independent Rights of Nature, into the Hands of the civil Magistrate, that he may be admitted to share in the much greater Privileges of a regular and legal Government.

XI. I have omitted Nothing, that may deserve to be considered in this Objection, except, perhaps, where it is said, “ Positive
 “ Right cannot be the Founda-
 “ tion of Justice, because that
 “ varies with Times and Places ;
 “ different People applying it to
 “ their

“ their own Profit, or Interests”.

XII. To which it may be said, the general Rule, or Reason of Justice, is, notwithstanding, still the same; and the Difference, which arises, in different Places, from the different Application of it, only respects such human Sanctions as are made concerning Things, in their own Nature wholly arbitrary; thus one Order of Men, may be appointed, by positive Law, to wear such a particular Habit, wherein, by the same Authority, it may be criminal for other Persons to appear; as in a thousand like Instances, where Nothing is enjoined contrary to natural Equity; but no Law can render it just for a Man to hate, to defame, or to destroy, an innocent Person. In the former Respect, though we grant the
Subject

Subject Matter of moral Justice changes, as to Times, and Persons; yet the Assertion, in general, that positive Right varies with Times and Places, is, notwithstanding, at the best inconclusive, and equivocal; as supposing, positive Right, only in a *partial*, and restrained, Sense, and excluding it in that Sense, which is properly the Subject of the Question.

XIII. I have endeavoured to answer whatever I apprehended material, in this irrefragable Objection, as it appeared to *Cicero*. But, there is so little Reason, for apprehending any Danger to the Cause of Morality, from it; that I shall proceed to give it still greater Force, by a Concession, which the Generality of the Terms, wherein it is expressed, doth not oblige me to make.

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Carneades supposes, if his Argument imports any Thing, that all positive Laws, contrary to the Rights of Nature, are unjust; this crude, and general Assertion, is easily confuted, from the many Benefits Men reap from Society, and which are more than equivalent to the natural Rights, from which they depart, for the Sake of them. But, I will now admit, that it is possible, certain Cases may happen, wherein Men may be exposed to greater Evils; the Loss, for Instance, of Life, or Liberty for many Years, under cruel, and barbarous Usage, greater Evils, than any Advantages of Society can well be supposed to ballance. In this Case, it may seem contrary to the Rules of Prudence, and consequently of strict Justice, that a Man should

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owe any Duties to Society, or positive Laws, which will render him more miserable, than if he had never been a Member of Society.

XIV. I shall endeavour to comprize my Answer, to this Difficulty, having mentioned it on another Occasion, in few Words. If Society be only of human Ordinance, I do not see, how any Man can be obliged, for the Sake of it, to suffer, or expose himself to suffer greater Inconveniencies, than the Benefits, he can propose to reap from Society, will compensate. Because Government being, upon this Scheme, founded, upon popular Consent, no Man can reasonably be presumed, to have consented to the Laws of it, on that Condition. But if Government be the special Ordinance

dinance of God, and it is necessary, to the Ends of it, that Men should expose themselves to Sufferings of this Kind, in Discharge of their Duty to it, this is a solid, and clear Answer to all Objections which may arise, whether in respect to Prudence, or Justice. As God has a Right to command our Obedience, in the most difficult Instances of it; so he can, and will make up all Inconveniences, in Pursuance of his own Institution; and if they are not supplied in this Life, it is a convincing, and clear Argument, that there is another Life, wherein they shall be supplied.

XV. I have had no Design, in these transient Remarks, on several of the most eminent Philosophers, but to shew, how, with all their Excellencies, they had
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had their Defects and Errors; and that without detracting from the Praises, which in all Ages, since they flourished, have been thought due to them, we ought so to consult them, as to make use of our own Reason, or any additional Lights, which the Improvements made by succeeding Ages, may have afforded to us.

XVI. But how then, in this our Enquiry, concerning the Authority of Philosophers, in reference to the Subject of moral Virtue, shall we come to any determinate Resolution? Seeing none of them was free from Error, and many of them were subject to gross Errors. If we say, such wise Men did not always reason justly, it may be asked, how we come to be more enlightened, or how we, certainly know, that
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we are more enlightened. In order to prove that any Person did not reason justly, there must be some certain Test, or Standard of reasoning justly, with which if his Arguments do not agree, what he saith can be of no Authority.

XVII. But does not, then, a greater Difficulty, here occur; and which entangles us in a Circle? The Authority of Philosophers, saith the Reader, is proposed to me as a Guide; and now I am to judge, whether my Guide conduct me in the right Way: Is not this to change Hands, and to invert the natural Order of Things? I am no longer to follow; my Office at present is, to inform, and correct my Guide.

There is no Remedy, but in the following Distinction, between
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an absolute, and a conditional Obedience to my Guide. Out of the Confidence I have in his Skill, or Honesty, I will follow where I do not know, or cannot see my Way; but where I have some imperfect Knowledge of it, or have Cause violently to suspect, that he is going to mislead me; I will rather endeavour to find out the Way my self, than to follow him into a Quagmire; or, perhaps, down a steep and dangerous Precipice, with my Eyes open.

XVIII. The Application is obvious, we ought not to judge of what is reasonable by Authority, but to examine Authority by Reason. Yet, where our own Reason does not afford sufficient Light; in that Case, but in that Case only, Prudence may, sometimes, direct

direct us, to be determined by Authority; *and*, especially, if we are under Circumstances, as we, sometimes, are, that oblige us immediately to act.



The CONCLUSION.

That no just Inference can be drawn, against the Expediency of a divine Revelation, from any Thing that hath been said, concerning the Light of natural Reason.

THERE is one Objection, which I have had continually in View, throughout this Treatise, the Force whereof, it may be here, in the Conclusion of it, very proper for me to consider. It is questioned, if the Principles

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of Morality are really deducible from the Light, and Evidence of natural Reason: What Necessity could there be, that an infinitely wise God, whose Action always bears the Character of his Attributes, and who does Nothing superfluous or in vain, should confirm those Principles to us by an express Revelation? The natural Proofs concerning those Principles, which we might, at any Time, consult, being at Hand, what Need was there of any farther Witnesses; or of a Testimony altogether supernatural?

Without Inquiring at present, whether a divine Revelation concerning the Duties of moral Life, was absolutely necessary to Mankind; we shall sufficiently obviate this Pretence, by saying, there may be great Occasion for the
Use

Use of certain Means, in order to attain an End, which yet might, *possibly*, have been attained without them. There are some Men, who, by the Advantage of an extraordinary Capacity, may make a considerable Progress in several Sciences, without the Instruction of any Master. But no Man will be so weak as to argue, that such Books which teach the Rudiments of those Sciences, which metho-
dize and explain them, *are*, therefore, *superfluous and in vain*: It is still more irrational to argue against a standing Digest of Laws, confirmed by a divine Authority, that Men, by the Use of their natural Powers, might at length have discovered the Reasons, and obligatory Force of those Laws. For the same Argument which proves, that some Persons would,

F f 2 possibly,

possibly, have made such a Discovery, will evidently prove, that the much greater Part of Mankind, would, very probably, not have made such Discovery. And what if God, willing to shew his abundant Love and Compassion, towards more weak and illiterate Persons, less capable of deducing, on all Occasions, the Rules of their Duty, by a Train of just Consequences, hath been pleased to lay down those Rules in so many clear, simple, and distinct Propositions? Or, (since the Duties of *Morality* are not, in all the Instances of them, equally evident and demonstrable) what if God, in Favour to more knowing, and inquisitive, but still fallible, Men, hath referred them to a *Law*, and to a *Testimony*, from which there lies no Appeal; and

and in following the Directions whereof they cannot err? We have observed the great Defects of moral Philosophy, where, from the Character of those who taught and professed it, we might have expected much higher Improvements; but if any one of the Philosophers had really been capable of compiling a perfect System of the moral Law, this could have been no Reason still, why the rest of Mankind should, implicitly, have assented to the Doctrines he taught, or without a particular, and distinct Examination of them. For admitting he had not actually erred, yet the very Supposition of his being fallible, or subject to Error, would have required that Nothing he advanced should be absolutely believed upon his bare Affirmation.

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Whereas, should God interpose by any special Notification, to ascertain the Rules of moral Life, his Authority would admit no Dispute. A Doctrine, plainly revealed from Heaven, needs no other Proof. It is a sufficient Reason for our assenting to such Doctrine, that we see no Reason against it, though we may not, perhaps, be able to discover, in a clear, and distinct View, all the Reasons for it.

By endeavouring, therefore, to establish natural Religion on its proper Grounds, I am far from having any Design, to question the Expediency of a divine Revelation; without considering at present, whether such a Revelation hath been actually made, the Reasons already mentioned, with many other that might be mentioned,

tioned, for a standing decisive Authority, to ascertain a Rule of Life to Mankind, are so evident and strong, that the *Deist* must confess, at least, it is very desirable, very agreeable to the Wisdom, and Goodness of the divine Legislator, that he should interpose, for the common Benefit, and Instruction of Mankind, after such a Manner; whether he hath, hitherto, actually interposed to that End, or not?

The Expediency of divine Revelation, in respect to a standing Rule of moral Life, is the only Thing I am now obliged to consider; it is not here incumbent on me, to prove that such a Revelation hath been actually made. This hath been done so often, and so incontestably, by Christian Writers, ancient and modern,

not to mention the *Jewish*; that one cannot without Astonishment, observe the present Effrontery, and incorrigible Temper of Unbelievers; if after all, they who more openly, in their Writings, espouse the Cause of *Deism*, and would be thought the chief Oracles of it, are really Unbelievers: Or, if it may not rather be suspected, they only affect to be thought so, from a Spirit of Vanity and Opposition, or to the End, they may have an Opportunity of saying very bold and extravagant Things, with some pompous Appearances of Learning: Tho' the most elaborate * Performance in that Way, which hath been lately handed about with much Industry, and Ostentation, contains Nothing, but what any

* A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion.

Person

Person of ordinary Capacity, might easily, in a short Time, have been able to collect, provided the common Languages had been known to him, or the mechanical Rules, to be practised, in a good Library, of becoming learned without Reading or Reflection.

But this is not a proper Place for animadverting upon the pernicious Design of the Book, to which I have referred; the Author of it may, in convenient Time, receive, from a proper Hand, the Treatment he hath deserved, for the Service done by him to the Cause of Infidelity: It appears, in the mean Time, of sufficient Force, to obviate any ill Consequences, that may be drawn from what he hath said, in Prejudice to the Truth of divine Revelation, that in his Way
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of arguing, should God be really supposed to make a Revelation of his Will to Mankind, it would be impossible for Men to produce any certain Proof, that such a Revelation has been actually made; and, consequently, God could have no End worthy of his Wisdom, and Goodness in making it. For in Order to prove the Truth of any Revelation, except God should reveal his Will, by immediate Inspiration, to every particular Person, there appears to be no other Method, but either by the Interposition of a miraculous Power to confirm the Doctrine revealed, or by a Prediction of future, and distant Events, that have no Manner of visible Connection, with the Order of Causes, at the Time of divulging it. But in this Author's
Method

Method of reasoning, if we pursue it in its natural and direct Consequences, no Argument could be drawn from either of these Proofs, to confirm the Truth, I do not say of the *Jewish*, or *Christian*, but of any supposed Revelation whatever; since no Revelation can be conceived, where the Evidences of it, in both these Respects, will appear more strong, than those, upon which the Truth of the *Mosaick*, and *Christian* Faith is founded; so that, whereas, other Unbelievers have argued, in general, against the Reasonableness, and Expediency of divine Revelations; this Writer has, in Effect, denied the very Possibility of the Thing. For it is absolutely impossible, that a wise and good God should do, what he could have

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have no wife, or good End in doing; or, which is the same Thing, that he should reveal his Will to Mankind, and at the same Time, leave them without any certain, or sufficient Proof, that he hath revealed it. Now I aver it again, if the Proofs of the Christian Revelation, in particular, are not certain, and sufficient to this End, it is impossible, without a continued Series of Miracles, in every Age (which no *Deist* will be so weak, as to suppose necessary) that stronger Proofs should be produced for *any* Revelation.

But without descending to examine, particularly, the Grounds, upon which the Truth of our holy Faith is established, I shall only take the Liberty to observe, concerning the Advantages of a
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standing Revelation in general, that, though Morality, in the Reason, and Foundation of it, hath, in all Ages, been the same, and ever will continue the same; though there are some Truths, which the most barbarous, and illiterate Nations see, and of which, perhaps, they feel the Force, as well as the most knowing, and polite; though the Heathens, in general, who have not *the Law*, any written, or revealed Law, are a Law unto themselves, their *own Consciences accusing, or else excusing them*; yet a sure *Word of Prophecy*, which should prescribe to Mankind the exact Measures of their Duty, would certainly appear very desirable to them; both towards preventing those Errors, to which the wisest of Men have been subject,

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in reasoning even upon the primary Articles of natural Religion; and to ascertain many particular Truths, which, however deducible, in a strict Way of Argumentation, yet, we must confess, are not equally clear or evident to all Men.



F I N I S.

