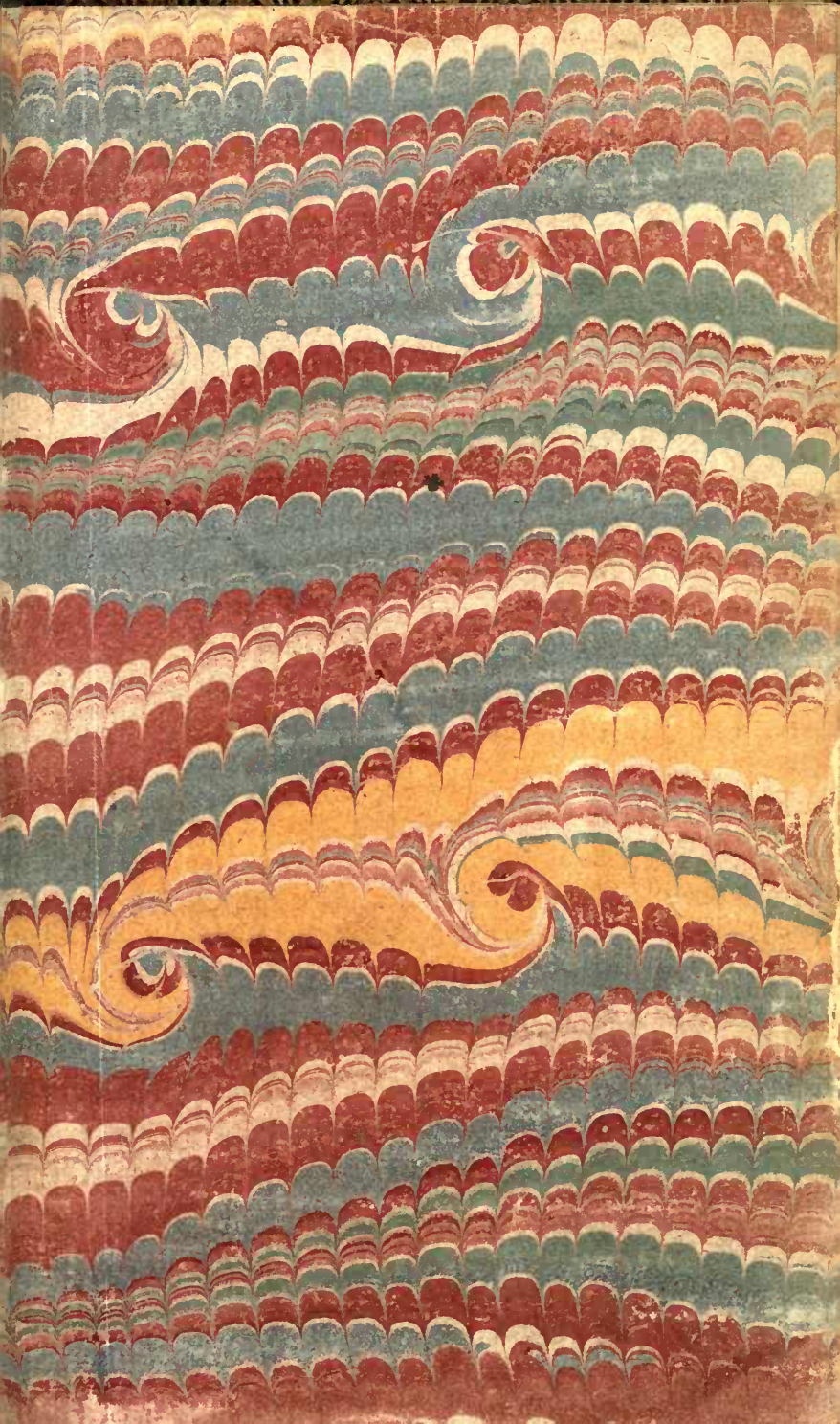






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William Thomson.

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# REFLEXIONS

ON

M A N,

And his Relation to other

B E I N G S.

Design'd to promote

VIRTUE *and* CONTENTMENT.

Occasion'd by some late DISCOURSES.

S H E W I N G,

That we derive our natural Knowledge of Religion and the DEITY from that of our selves, and not from abstract and curious Speculations.

Illustrated by Passages from ancient Authors.

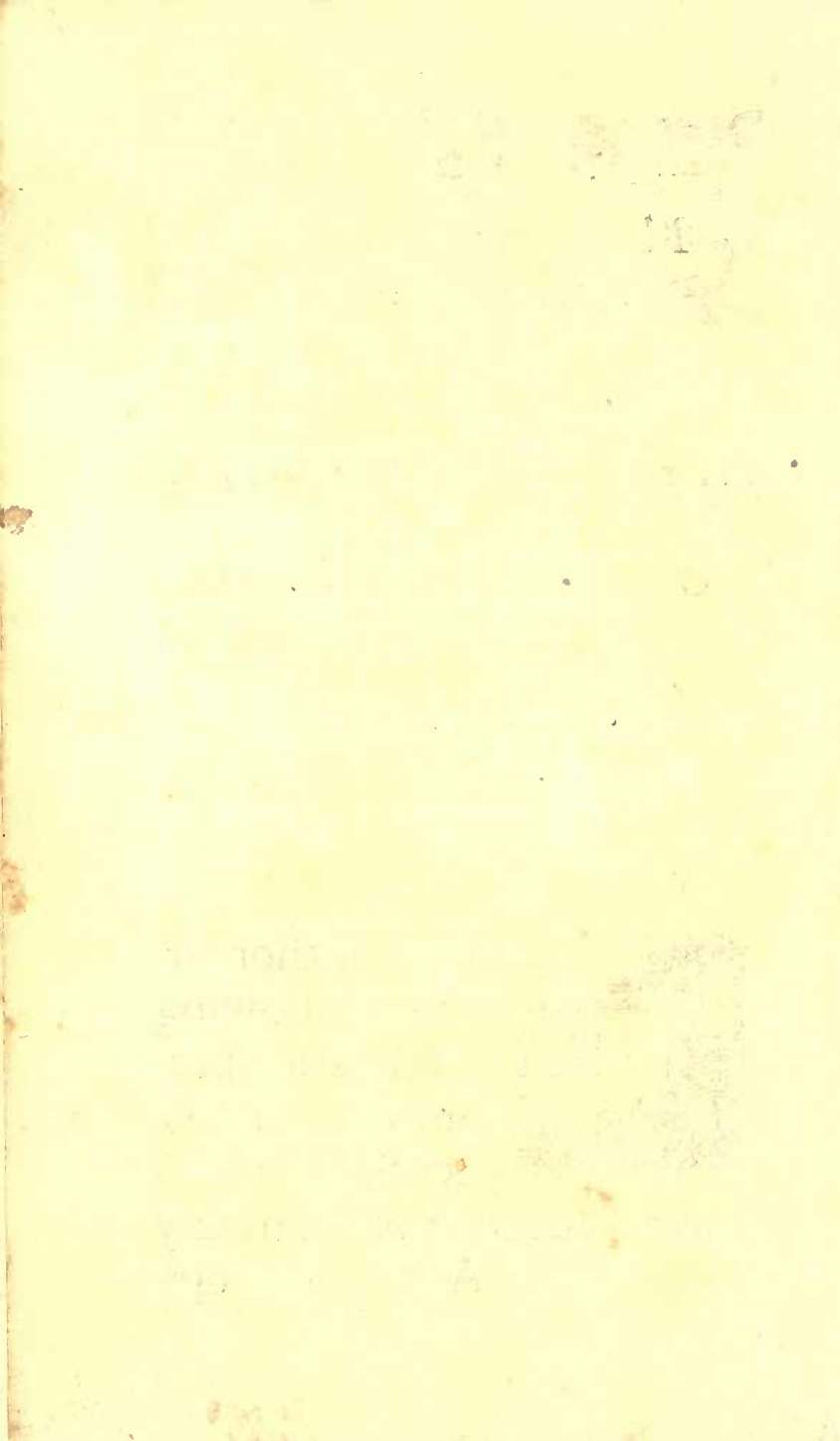
*Socrates mihi videtur, id quod constat inter omnes, primus a rebus occultis & ab ipsa natura involutis, in quibus omnes ante eum philosophi occupati sunt, avocavisse philosophiam & ad vitam communem adduxisse ut de virtutibus & vitiis omninoque de huius rebus & malis quereretur; cælestia autem vel procul esse a nostra cogitatione censet, vel si maxime cognita essent, nihil tamen ad bene vivendum.*

Cicero Academ. lib. 1. p. 18. Edit. Dav.

Τι δε φυλον αλλον η ανθρωποι θεος θεραπωνει; Ποια δε ψυχη της ανθρωπινης ικανωτερα περισυλλατεις η λιμον η διψη η ψυχη η θαληνη η νοσοις επικυρησαι ηρωιμω ασκησαι η προς μαθησιν εκποιησαι η οσα αν εκουση η ιδη η μαθη ικανωτερα εσι διαμεμνησ. Xen. Απμ. p. 64.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WILFORD in St. Paul's Church-yard behind the Chapter-House, 1733. Price 2 s.







THE  
P R E F A C E.

**A** *Some late writers have founded the principles of religion upon difficult speculations of natural philosophy, and others, (as particularly the very learned Doctor Clark,) have pursued the same subject in a manner too metaphysical to be of general use; while a third have advanc'd such principles as destroy our ideas of natural religion. It was thought not improper to shew that all that knowledge of the supreme Being which we do not owe to revealed religion, may be deduced in a more easy and intelligible manner from plain observations upon human nature and the relation of outward objects to our happiness; and at the same time to prove, that the wisest Heathen Writers, (as they seldom or never argue in the metaphysical way,) deriv'd all their notions of the Deity from the same source of observation.*

## The P R E F A C E.

*AS the argument from facts contains all the certainty concerning the unity and goodness of God, which those people are capable who cannot enter into a philosophical proof; so the principle of one supreme goodness is the foundation of all those truths of natural religion, about which the wiser part of mankind have in all ages agreed.*

*THE following Discourse may furnish the reader with a proper argument for the usefulness and necessity of revelation, while it shews not only the universal ignorance and idolatry of the Heathen Vulgar; but the prevailing inclination of some who were wiser either to question a particular providence or to maintain an evil principle, from certain difficult appearances in the condition of good and bad men, which must ever be too hard for mere philosophy. It requires little knowledge in the history of mankind to observe, that tho' there is a natural and sufficient evidence for one Being perfectly good, to the thinking part of the world, from the reason of things; that this belief could not be preserv'd among the Vulgar, but in a way of certainty more adapted to common understanding; I mean by a tradition of facts, to trace which through all the ages of the world, 'till it once terminate in one common source seems to be a more convincing method of confirming the unlearned in those truths on which revelation depends, than that of mere abstracted speculation, which*  
(while



## The P R E F A C E.

*(while the learned are not generally inclin'd to value) the Vulgar cannot possibly understand.*

*NO man's understanding is so much superior to that of others, as not to need their assistance; and where reason is sufficient for its own conduct, and is not able by the means of reading to strike out a new light; there is a satisfaction however to understand what were the sentiments of mankind, who liv'd at different times, concerning a subject in which all men are concern'd, and to be able to prove from their agreement not only in the same way of reasoning but in the same expressions, that they deriv'd their ideas from the same original.*

*THE following Discourse is introduc'd in a very formal manner being once design'd to be the first of some others on the subject of natural religion; but being willing to leave it to the better consideration of the reverend Clergy, he should be glad if one of that character would give us a plain and familiar account of the grounds of religion without any mixture of hard words and abstracted speculations.*

*AS the Author had no opportunity of consulting the English Writers on the same subject, the reader is desir'd to excuse any mistake which might happen in the few References made to such as a slip of memory.*

E R R A T A.

Some errors there are in the *Greek*, which ought to be placed to the printer's account. One fault there is in *p. 33*, which affects the sense, where instead of *universal earthquake*, read *general*.





# REFLEXIONS

ON

## Natural Religion.

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### DISCOURSE I.

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#### INTRODUCTION.



UMANE life is subject to so many hardships and misfortunes, that we need all the assistance of philosophy to bear it with patience. When reason cannot afford relief, we are glad to seek it from the gay objects about us, and flying from ourselves, shun that hated reflexion we cannot make agreeable.

B

WANT

WANT of thought is but a palliating remedy, and the poorest refuge to which a reasonable mind can be reduc'd. Understanding is not only useless to the owner, if it is not employ'd, but a real disadvantage; not to add, that a man must want the best consolation of life, who considers reason as his enemy.

WHATEVER pains people take to lay thinking aside as an unprofitable faculty, the mind of man is so active a principle, that it can very hardly be restrained from exerting itself in some improvement or other. To this natural activity we owe so many valuable discoveries for the good of mankind, so many profound endeavours to explain what the author of nature made uncomprehensible, and, when men are out of humour with themselves and the publick, so many disobliging paradoxes concerning religion and politicks.

NOTHING has been more abus'd than reason, or apply'd to worse purposes; we ought not therefore to neglect its improvement, or be ungrateful to the author; the solid advantages which society and particulars receive from a just use of human understanding, make a large amends for all  
the

the inconveniencies and mischiefs of a wrong application.

WERE man under no obligations but those of self-love, or was mere sensation the source of all our pleasure, we could not employ ourselves so well as in those inventions which extend the sphere of sensible enjoyment. The arts of policy and commerce would be of all others most valuable, and far preferable to the most ingenious speculation of virtue and religion, which would only be an art to be very idle with abundance of pains. But as men of sense in all ages, who yet had no reason to be discontented with life, have been fond of those \* enquiries which recommend the notion and practice of religion; and as those who are least dispos'd to favour it, find some difficulty to extinguish the impressions of a governing mind, and the essential difference of human actions. And others who are unthinking enough to

B 2

frame

\* The improvement of the mind by knowledge, especially that which relates to practice has been generally prefer'd to other accomplishments.

Porphyr. de Vita Pythag. Cant. 1655. Ταύτα παρηνειμαλιστα δαληθευειν, τὸ γὰρ μόνον δυνατὸν τῆς ἀνθρώπου ποιῆν θεῶ παραπλησίως. The same Author, De Abstinent. scil. 44. Καίτοι ταύτα διενοχῆσαι φανέται οσπεδαίῳ τε φαυλῆ, ὅτι ὁ μὲν πανταχῶς τὸν λογισμὸν ἐχει παρεσῶσα καὶ κερδιῶσα καὶ ηνιοχῆσα τὸ ἀλογον, ὁ δὲ πολλὰ πρετίων παειὶς τῷ λογισμῷ, &c.

frame no fix'd and particular ideas of virtue, are yet sensible of its general tendency to publick and particular happiness, a discourse of this kind intended to prove that such sentiments are founded in nature, and agreeable to the common sense of mankind, cannot be consider'd as a meer amusement.

It must be confess'd, that human understanding cannot boast of many discoveries in religion, and that all the advantages which learning can give men are not sufficient to secure them from deception, who are often led aside by the prejudice of others, as well as impos'd on by their own.

BUT the possibility of mistakes can be no peculiar objection to religious enquiry; no man considers the want of infallibility as a reason for not looking into his affairs, and why it should be an argument against the best exercise and improvement of the mind, is not so easy to understand.

\* THE consequences of thinking justly in this or any other affair which concerns the

\* Arrian. Comment. in Epictet. c. x. p. 136. Cant. 1655.  
 Εργον τε φιλοσοφει το μεγαλον η πρωτον δοκιμαζειν τας  
 παθασιας η διακεινεν η μηδεμιαν αδοκιμασον προσφε-  
 ρεσαι.



the enjoyment of ourselves are too considerable to be neglected. Religion may pretend to this character if any other subject can; and was it a mere prejudice, and all the comfort we receive from it a dream of happiness, yet as it affords a great part of the pleasure of a life (phantaſtick enough in all its enjoyments) no man would find it his interest to be undeceiv'd, unless the entertainments of appetite could be a stronger antidote against the sorrows of life than the joys of reflexion, or that pleasure which arises from the prospect of hereafter. Other speculations may be more admir'd, but that knowledge which leads to virtue must ever be thought to deserve the preference, till men can arrive at an indifference about the future, and a neglect of the most important interests of this world.

THE present age is sufficiently dispos'd to enquire and none ever express'd a higher taste of religious liberty \*. It were well the inquisitive humour was always under a due regulation, and governed more by a love of

\* Hierocl. De Prov. p. 173. Lond. 1651.—*η ψυχη εναντιως φερομενη προς το αθεον κ̄ σκολεινον εικη κ̄ ως ε̄λυχε φερομενη ᾱνε της μονης των καλων σαθμης νε κ̄ θεε αποπευστα.*

*Παν ο αμεινονα την ψυχην ποιει τ̄λο ο̄τως αρετη κ̄ φιλοσοφιας νομ̄θ.* Hierocles in Carm. Pythag. p. 101. Lond. 1655.

of truth, than the warmth of interest, or a \* partial inclination to contradict receiv'd opinions. But 'tis not for me to advise the publick : If this discourse is useful either to fix the attention of people to a subject so deserving, or to make others write the same way with more advantage, the author shall have gained his end.

\* Laziness and unreasonable prejudices make the best understanding incapable of a just enquiry, and involves it in a mist.

The reason why people are so apt to mistake in matters of morality and religion, is not any want of understanding, but a fatal byass they receive from irregular passions, which makes them too attentive to the objects of pleasure and business, to mind any thing which might divert them from their favourite pursuits.

Aristotle de cælo, lib. i. c. 11. Francf. 1601. Και γαρ δε διασητας αλλ' εκ αντιδικης της μελλοντας ταλιθες κεινεν εκανως.

Hierocl. in Pyth. Carm. p. 221. Πρωτον δε απολαξαι την εν ημιν αλοσιαν και ραθυμιαν επειτα εως επιβαλεν τη των θεοβερων γνωσει ωσπερ γαρ οφθαλμολημωνι η εκ εκαθαρμενω τα σφωδρα φωτεινα ιδεν εχοιον τε εως και ψυχη μη αρετην κεκλημενη το της αληθειας ενοπλειςαδαι καλλος.

Alcinoi εισαγωγη των δογματων Πλατωνος, Οχοη. 1667. Δει δε και ελευθεριον ειναι τη γνωμη τον μελλουσι φιλοσοφειν, εναντιωτατον γαρ η μικρολογια ψυχη ελλουσι θεωρειν τα θεα και ανθρωπινα.





*Some reflexions to shew the usefulness of such discourses.*

WERE those gentlemen who are most enclined to undervalue speculations of this nature, most conversant in the subject of them, the world would consider their judgment, when they let them know that nothing of this kind deserves any notice with sufficient respect; it would be valued as a discovery which had cost them pains, and a charitable caution to prevent the loss of time. But the case is frequently very much otherwise; not to observe, that an universal dislike of religious enquiries is too undistinguishing to be free from prejudice.

It must be owned, that the bulk of mankind are not capable of nice enquiries about truth; or if they were, a subject which required too much attention would be improper to those who were obliged to be otherwise employ'd. We cannot deny that religion has too often appeared in so unfamiliar a dress, and many speculations

speculations about it have been of so curious and abstracted a kind, so as to place a thing which ought to be of vulgar use, very much above vulgar capacity. But writers on every subject have their defects; nor is this altogether so abstruse, as some, to excuse their neglect, would make it. Those ordinary minds whom nature have not form'd for philosophy, are yet capable to distinguish between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, so far as religion is properly concerned in the difference. Tho' these are not sufficient for a minute examination into the degrees of evidence, nor a very elaborate speculation about it, sense is however too common to let them be ignorant of an obvious appearance; as any man may distinguish between a sign-post and a fine picture, without any skill in painting. The religion of nature, to which the following discourse relates, is of so plain a character, that it requires no depth of genius, or attainments in learning, to understand it. A mind cool and \* unpassionate, without a bias from interest

\* Our affections are frequently concealed under an artful disguise, which makes it difficult in many cases to know whether we are free from passion or not. A man may certainly conclude he is not, when he does not allow an equal consideration to what may be alledged against his interest, or when he condemns, as of no weight, what he has not taken pains to examine. The cause of such prejudices is frequently an overweening opinion of our own, which  
is



interest and dishonest affection, with ordinary abilities, and the same concern to use them well, which every body knows to be his interest in affairs of any concernment; a mind, I say, with such homebred qualifications, may judge with as much certainty of the mere dictates of nature, as a man of letters, I mean so far as is necessary to the conduct of life \*. Whatever direction may be requisite in an enquiry about revealed religion, every man must be a competent judge of natural. Few have an understanding so bad as aversion and prejudice would make it; and scarce any are so much employ'd, as not to allow some attention to matters of little consequence.

As for the learned part of mankind, who spend their time in profound researches, and who neglect such speculations, not because they have too little, but as themselves think, too much understanding, one may justly observe

is always accompanied with a contempt of other people's judgment. Thus it happens while the credulous are seduced by an implicit assent to the learning of others, those who are called *fort esprits* are very frequently deceived by their own, and so become their own dupes.

\* There is little occasion one would think to make discourses on what is sufficiently clear and plain in itself; but indeed this evidence and perspicuity is too often overcast by a studied ignorance, which the vicious derive from interest, and the learned from affectation.

serve of them, that their attention is frequently employ'd about matters more difficult without the same importance to deserve it. The age of the world is a thing no less important to know, than that of a medal, and among all the productions of nature, there is none so beautiful and excellent as the author.

*Plato* \* compares a man destitute of useful knowledge, to a patient without a physician, or a vessel at sea without a pilot to steer her; and very justly observes, that all the advantages of life are insufficient to make a person happy who wants this necessary disposition for the enjoyment of himself. † Another of the antients, whose judgment

\* *Plato Alcibiades 2. pag. 249. Cantab. de Reb. Dion.*  
 Δειάζει και πολιν και ψυχην την μελλουσαν ορθως βιωσθαι ταυτης της επιστημης αβλεπεσθαι ωσπερ αβενηηα ταξην η τιρος κυβερνητη τον ασφαλως μελλουσα πλεον. Without this necessary knowledge of right and wrong, and what relates to it, an extensive learning is of little use in the conduct of life.—ο δη την καλεμενην πολυμαθειαν τε και πολυτεχνιαν κεκτημενος ορθως γαρων της επιστημης, αφορμος δε υπο μια εκαστης των αλλων αρχει το ενηι δικαιοσ πολλωχεμωνι χρησεσθαι ατ οημα απευκυβερνητη διαβελων εν πελαγω χρονον.

† *Aristotle Ethic. cap. xii. l. 6. απευ εν (ουσιαι εξει)*  
 βλαβεροι φαινολται εσαι πλιν εοικε ορθωσθαι οτι ωσπερ σαμαλι ιχυρω απευ οφειωσ κινεμενω συμβαινει σφαλλεθαι ιχυρωσ δε το μη υφιν εχεν ετω και ενανθα.

*Acldmoi Idea Phiclos Plat. Op. 1667. cap. de bonis, speaking of that knowledge which relates to morals—* τον δεχωεισ ταυτης της επιστημης τα νομιζομενα αβατα ταυτα  
 κκετ η-

judgment none ever disparaged, without a reflexion upon his own, very justly observes, that passion, if it is not conducted by knowledge, is like an unweildy body without eye-sight to direct its motion, and prevent a fall. But such comparisons can be of little use to confirm a truth which carries in itself a sufficient evidence.

Few subjects have been more handled, or with greater advantage, than the religion of nature. Schemes of what reason teaches, both in relation to theory and practice, have been rais'd with much art upon a very narrow bottom. The grounds of moral good and evil have been demonstrated by judicious reflexions on human nature, and the origin of political societies. A late excellent author\* has happily traced the several duties of nature to their proper source, and deliver'd a more intelligible account of the ground of such obligations than any perhaps had done before. To these valuable discourses, some reflexions may be added on the same subject, which may not be altogether useless to those who are no wiser than the author of the following,

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without

κεκτημενον και σαμαλος υβριαν και ευρωσιαν και καλλος μη-  
δεν τι μαλλον εναι ενδαιμονα.

Ανθρωπον ποιουν αγαθον αι πολιτικαι αρεται θεοποιουσι  
αι προς την θεαν αρεταν αναγκασται επισημαι. Hierocles.

\* Cumberland, Woolston.

without detracting from the worth of better performances, or being too much obliged to them. There can be no occasion to excuse an endeavour to make the grounds of natural virtue appear reasonable, and to support it by authorities from antient writers. If some have boldness enough to attack the foundations of religion, others ought to be encouraged to defend them as they are able. Whatever evidence accrues to the religion of nature, that of revelation must gain by it, which cannot stand upon another foundation, nor be solidly defended but by those principles which are either common to both, or at least not inconsistent with the certainty of reason. Indeed a person might as well expect to secure a house by destroying the foundation, as to procure any advantages to revelation by an invective against reason: Or, to use another comparison, the defects of the last can no more be remedied, by laying it aside, than a dimness of the eyes can be cured by putting them out.

No discourses, however intended, have a worse tendency than such as contain a general satire upon human understanding, or which unreasonably suppose that reason and christianity are rivals in character. Tho' the last is not more antient than our  
Savi-



Saviour, it stands upon principles which are at least as old as the creation.

WHATEVER uncertainty and ignorance poor mortals labour under (too evident to be denied, and too great to admit of remedy without a revelation) some truths shine upon us with so irresistible a force, that no degree almost either of ignorance or depravity, is enough to destroy their evidence. And however men are inclined, from particular motives, to disparage human understanding, and its capacity, few there are who are not prepossessed in favour of their own; and while they are very active in destroying the speculations of other people, are yet very positive in asserting their own favourite schemes; an argument that scepticism is generally little else than affectation.

OTHERS make too great a complement to human understanding; they talk high of its sufficiency, and, as if they intended to introduce a popery into natural religion itself, they have pleas'd themselves with the notion of infallible judgment. And indeed if nothing more is meant, but that some truths are undoubtedly certain, no man can easily deny it, who supposes that our reason and senses were bestow'd to be of  
some

some use: Tho' if this infallible judgment comes to be examined, it will not be found of sufficient extent to answer all the useful and necessary purposes of human life.

\* A third sort, without any intention to make the gospel appear an unnecessary institution, have perhaps too much flatter'd the natural abilities of men for the discovery of truth; and without a due regard to the circumstances of a heathen, have made an estimate of his capacity by the measure of their own, overlooking those peculiar advantages for seeing more clearly, and to a greater distance, which we owe to the religion of JESUS. \* In this view of human capacity, the creed of nature has been enlarged to so many articles, that *Plato*, or the wisest of philosophers, would not have so easily owned it for theirs; while several truths have been placed in the class of natural, which none ever received for such but a believer of revealed religion.

To

\* Some learned men have made some articles of natural religion to be strictly demonstrable, which it may be do not admit of so high an evidence. What these are may appear afterwards.

\* Several articles of the christian faith, particularly that of the trinity, have been proved from the writings of heathen philosophers.

To avoid this extreme, it would not be very judicious, to reduce all the natural attainments of reason to mere heathenism, which was nothing better than a strange medley of ignorance and superstition. Reason had so little share in the corruptions of idolatry, that it would be very unreasonable to call them the religion of nature. What reason unassisted teaches, is to be learned, not from the practice of a heathen vulgar, or the systems of a christian divine, but can only be collected from the writings of those who escaped the common contagion, and made the best use of their natural abilities, without having any farther advantages. Some there were in all ages of this character, who thought with the wise, while they spoke and acted with the vulgar; whatever compliance interest obliged them to make with the reigning humours of the multitude, their minds were preserv'd untainted: so that tho' their practice was idolatry, their sentiments were the religion of nature, as their genuine writings sufficiently prove.





## CHAP. II.

### *A general account of the subject.*

AS action is the end and proper business of life, a man must live to very little advantage who engages too far in speculations. Human capacity is too contracted a thing to answer very different purposes; so that an uncommon application to what is curious must necessarily divert from the easier and more useful pursuits of knowledge and action. As private interest and publick good are advanc'd not by study but business, a meer Virtuoso makes but an indifferent figure in life, being one, who with uncommon abilities is at great pains to be a very useles member of the publick. From such a consideration as this \* the wise *Socrates* highly con-

Xenoph. Apolog. Lond. 1720. p. 21. concerning *Socrates*, Ουδ'ε γαρ περὶ τῆς τῶν πάντων φύσεως ἢ περὶ τῶν ἀλλῶν πλείστοι διαλεγετο—ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς φρονιζούσας τὰ  
 τῶν

condemn'd the immoderate study of nature, and even too curious a pursuit of that science which of all others has produc'd the most useful discoveries, considering every part of knowledge as amusement and whim which lay out of the road of practice. In the same view \* *Plato*, his disciple, ob-

serves,

τοι αυτα μαρραϊνικησ επεδεικνε. And *Απομ*, p. 278. Το δε μεχει τελεσ Ασενομιαν μαθανειν η ασαθημτος ασε-  
ρεσ γνωναι η τας αποσασεις αυτων απο της γης και τας  
περιοδους απερεπεν. τοδε μεχει δεσσηνιστοι, &c. But tho'  
*Socrates* confin'd his application to the study of morals,  
there are many other branches of knowledge, if not of  
equal value, at least highly useful.

*Marcus Antoninus* advises studious people to banish from their minds the thirst of books, lest they should go discontented to the grave, lib. ii. Την δε βιβλιων διφαν να μη γογυζων αποθανης, which may be understood in a good sense.

\* *Plato's* *Georgias* quoted by *Aul. Gell.* cap. 22. lib. 10. Noctes Attic. φιλοσοφια γαρ τοι εσιν χαιειν αντισ αυτη μελειως αφηται εν τη ηλικια εαν δε περαιτερω δε οηθη ενδιατριφη διασθεσ των ανθρωπων, αν γαρ πανυ δφους η και πορρω της ηλικιασ φιλοσοφη αναγκη παντων απειρον γεγονεναι εσιν, &c. Elsewhere he makes knowledge (I mean that which is curious) to be a hindrance to action, *Alcib.* 2. p. 248. Λυσι τελεσ αρετοισ πολλοισ μητε ειδεναι μητε οι εσθαι ειδεναι ηπερ γε μαλλον προθυμησονται μεν πρεστηεν ταυτα αν ειδωσιν η οηθωσιν ειδεναι.

However, every part of knowledge has its proper usefulness, and therefore one may justly condemn the opinion of the *Essenes*, who, as *Philo* informs, despis'd all enquiries but such as related to the Deity, and the origin of things, *De Vita Contemplativa*. φιλοσοφιασ δε το μεν λογικον ως εκ αναγκαιων εις κτησιν αρετησ λογοθηραισ το δε φυσικον ως μεζον η κατ ανθρωπινην φησιν μετεπεσλευαι απολιποντες πληροσαν αυτε περ υπαρξευσ Θεκ και της υπανηθη γενεσεωσ φιλοσοφεται. Men commonly acquire this contempt of learning by being too much vers'd in disputable points, or by assenting too easily upon reasons,



ſerves, that too great attachment to philoſophy in an age capable of action was the bane of human life, and neceſſarily produc'd an ignorance of what is much more valuable, and that a perſon with this learned itch was more unfit for ſociety than the moſt ignorant part of mankind.

KNOWLEDGE relating to neceſſary truths which ariſe from known and ſelf-evident principles, with which they have a demonſtrable connexion, it may be human underſtanding is not capable of any great attainments which deſerve this name; our ideas are not many, at leaſt, thoſe which are ſo clear and diſtinct, that we can certainly judge of their agreement and diſagreement, and where this immediate evidence is wanting, it is not eaſy in many caſes to diſcover proper medium by which to compare our ideas; and could we eaſily find a common meaſure, the concluſions we arrive at by theſe compariſons, are not always uſeful enough to reward the diſcovery.

which afterwards appear to be falſe, Plato Phædo. p. 133. *επειδαιτις πειρευση λογω τινι αληθει εναι ανδτης πωει της λογυς τεχνης καπειτα ολιγον υερον υερον αυτω διοξη φιδης εναι—ενιοτε ων ενιοτε δε εκ ων και αυδης ετερες και ετερες. Μαλιςα δη οι πειει της απτιολογυς λογυς διαλειφαντες, οιδ οτι τελδτωντες οινται σοφωτατοι γεγογεναι τε και καλανο ηκναι μοιοι οτι ετε των πρσγματων εδεν εδεν υγιες εδεν βεβαιον.* A deſperate ſcepticiſm, which is as abſurd as a boundleſs credulity.

very. Humane life is so short, and the objects of useful knowledge so many, that no enquiry can deserve a very minute attention, which has not a great concernment to recommend it; a traveller must not go out of his way at every turn to please his curiosity; but sure it would be madness to wander from his road merely to overcome the difficulty of travelling in the dirt.

OF all the objects of human understanding, none can exceed the usefulness of religion; and so far as it lies in reducing human actions to a standard, men of all sorts have agreed in their esteem of it; there is not indeed the same consent of judgment concerning those enquiries which are of a more speculative nature. But as actions must be founded in principles of truth, which we call motives, without which there could be no rules of conduct but fancy and inclination, and as these reasons of action cannot be understood without some reflexion, hence arises the usefulness of such disquisitions, which, if human nature is not either flatter'd or disparag'd by them, ought at once to display what knowledge we can attain by an unassisted enquiry; and point out what addition to it may be farther useful or necessary, ought to shew the evidence and obscurity of truth, and

at the same time to satisfy and raise our desire of improvement.

And as men are apt to lose their time in impracticable attempts to enlarge their knowledge beyond the bounds which nature has prescrib'd to them, no discourses are more useful than those which give us a just idea of our own abilities; for by exceeding the boundaries of nature, men, by conversing too much with difficulties, frequently contract an aversion to truth. And as credulity sometimes produces an excessive distrust of men, when our good nature happens to have been often deceiv'd, so a flattering notion of our own understanding after we have had experience enough to be undeceiv'd, generally ends in a groundless contempt of reason and its attainments\*.

NOTHING has expos'd accounts of natural religion to more suspicion, or indeed more defeated the ends of them, than a neglect to mark out the bounds between nature and revelation. Men by a very odd way of judging, have been apt to consider demonstrations of the being and attributes of God, and of all the other truths of natural religion, as an implicit denial of the useful-

\* See that excellent passage of *Plato's Phædo*, p. 133<sup>c</sup> Cant.

usefulness or the least necessity of revelation. Others, who were no friends to revealed religion, have been very fond of such demonstrations of the first as seem'd to make the last an useless institution; so that while the authors really intended to promote by such discourses the common cause of religion and virtue, that of christianity appear'd to some in a very bad light. For as the author of nature never acts without reason, it is not likely they thought that men should be taught by miracles what they knew sufficiently before, or might acquire by ordinary means\*.

THE end of the following reflexions is to describe what religion a man was like to have, who had not seen the Bible. And as this is more a point of fact than reason, and our notions are very apt to receive a tincture from education; 'tis more proper perhaps in the decision of this question to consult those who were meer philosophers, and the constitution of human nature, than our own ideas, or the labour'd discourses of modern writers.

No situation a man can be in is more proper for receiving either what reason or revelation teaches, than a wise distrust of our-

\* The writer of this does not pretend to approve this manner of reasoning.

ourselves ; it may be those who have toil'd hard in what one may call the drudgery of truth, are the only persons too little in love with their own understanding to expect from it any great discovery. Nothing is easier than to talk of demonstration, nor so hard as to arrive at it, and it may be one of the worst effects of conversing too much with our own ideas, is, that we are apt to make them the measure of truth, and a standard to other people, without making proper allowance for their different circumstances of understanding, and unequal advantages for the discovery.

ARGUMENTS for religion which are built upon the nature of things, have this advantage, that they do not depend upon any particular set of notions, nor the arbitrary schemes of the learned ; these are legible by all in the book of the creation, and written by the author in so fair a hand, that the most ignorant may read them ; whereas metaphysical proofs, I mean those which are meerly such, are generally neither so solid, as to convince the learned ; nor so plain, as to be understood by the illiterate part of mankind ; like some ancient writings, the characters are very bad, and the sense, when we have found it, does not reward our pains.

THE



THE religion of nature (to speak strictly) consists in the practice of those duties, which reasonable creatures owe to the supreme being, their neighbours, and themselves, so far as discoverable by the meer light of reason. In a larger sense we may not improperly (as practice must depend upon principles) understand by it all those reasons or motives of virtuous actions which are contain'd in the belief of a Deity, and a particular providence.

ALL truths must have a connexion one with another, whether we perceive it or not; those of religion flow from the existence of GOD, and admit of a greater or lesser degree of evidence, as they are nearer or more remote consequences from this grand principle, or at least as this connexion is more or less evident. These either respect theory or practice, and either belong to what one may call the Creed, or the Law of Nature, and are all contain'd under these propositions:

I. THAT there is some one eternal being of infinite perfection, and but one.

II. THAT

II. THAT the system of nature we call the universe was produc'd by the power and wisdom of this being.

III. THAT the order of things is preserv'd and continued by a particular providence.

IV. THAT there is an unchangeable rule of virtue with which the actions of reasonable beings ought to agree.

V. That men will be distinguish'd in a future state according to the agreement or disagreement of their actions with this rule.





### CHAP. III.

I. *That there is some one eternal being infinitely perfect, and but one.*

**A** TRUTH, which has been demonstrated in so various and convincing a Manner, that it cannot need a particular proof; I shall mainly consider those arguments which prove the unity and goodness of the Deity; as these perfections have been chiefly contradicted as well by the opinions as practice of men.

It may not be improper to observe that the belief of a GOD \* has been the prevailing

\* Cicero, Lib. I. Tusc. Quest. Nulla gens tam fera, nemo omnium tam fuit immanis cujus mentem non imbuerit Deorum opinio mult. de Diis prava sentiunt (omnes enim more vitioso effici solet) omnes enim esse vim & naturam arbitrantur.

Plato had before observed, Lib. X. De Legibus. Πάντες Ἕλληνες καὶ βαρβάρων νομίζουσιν εἶναι Θεός. The same observation we have in *Simplicius's* Comment upon *Epictet.*

vailing sense of mankind in all ages. A consent so extraordinary has made some conclude that the author of nature originally imprinted on the mind certain characters of himself, which were not by any means to be effac'd; others not being able to reconcile the different opinions concerning the Deity with those innate impressions, have more reasonably ascribed this agreement to an invincible evidence of the thing. What has produced this consent is not material to enquire. The fact is undeniable, that no nation almost has been so barbarous or ignorant, as to be without this natural feeling; and however men have entertain'd disagreeing opinions about a supreme being, and his moral character, yet after the tradition of the true God was lost, and the world was overspread with the most stupid idolatry, this notion of a Deity still surviv'd the universal apostacy, and express'd itself in a constant practice  
of

Lugd. 1640. Παιδες γαρ ανθρωποι και Ελληνες και τον  
πειραρον απειραρον χερνον και νυν καν αλλοι καταλλας εν-  
νοιαι νομιζουσιν ειναι Θεον πλην Αρεθαι και ες Θεοι Θεο-  
φειας Θεο αθεος γενομενος υπο της ηης καταπεθηναι και ε-  
στιν τις αλλοι εις η δυν κατα παντα αιωνα ισορηται.

And tho' some modern travellers have given us a strange account of some nations, as if they were intirely destitute of religion; and *Cotta* in *Cicero de Oratore* makes the same observation concerning some very barbarous people, yet these exceptions from the common sense of mankind make no difficulty as to the natural evidence of a Deity.

of religious worship in all the odd appearances of superstition\*.

OR

\* Those few who are mention'd in history under the character of Atheists were not men whose authority could recommend their opinions. *Plato* observes, in his book de Legibus, Lib. X. pag. 198. Ἀσεβῆσαι ἐμπιπτοῦσι νεοῖς. But besides those whom age made thoughtless, there were a few others of a very remarkable singularity in other instances. *Democritus* was the author of that philosophy which pretended to account for the Origin of things without an intelligence or mind, of whom *Aulus Gellius* informs us, that he put out his eyes to help his contemplations, Lib. X. cap. 17. *Luminibus oculorum sua sponte se privasse*. Every body knows the character of *Epicurus*, but it is not so well known that he only built upon a foundation which was laid by *Democritus* (as *Cicero* informs us, *Quid est in physicis Epicuro non a Democrito*). Whatever pains some late writers have taken to vindicate him, the authority of *Cicero* and *Plutarch* is too considerable to suffer us to doubt that he made all happiness consist in meer sensation, and so destroyed the foundation of all virtue *Non verbo solum, says Tully, posuit voluptatem, sed explanavit quid diceret saporem inquit, & corporum compleximi, & ludos atque catus & formas eas quibus oculi jucunde moriantur num frigo num mentior cupio refelli. Diogenes Laertius*, who was willing to justify him, yet confesses that he placed all good and evil in meer sensation. Σηνηθίζει μηδεν ὡς πρὸς ἡμᾶς εἶναι τὸν θάνατον ἔπει πᾶνα σάθον καὶ κακὸν ἐν τῇ αἰσθησει. He likewise fancy'd that there was no virtue or goodness but in opinion, *Arrian* in *Epiict.* Lib. II. cap. 22. However these philosophers, *Epicurus* and *Democritus*, might otherwise agree, they fell into opposite extremes, one asserting that our senses were the only criterions of truth. Κεῖτνηια ἀληθείας εἶναι τὰς αἰσθησεις καὶ εἶναι διηγεμένον αὐτὰς διαλεξαι; *Democritus*, on the contrary, taught that there was no evidence of sense at all. *Sixtus Empiric.* adv. *Mathem.* Lib. VII. pag. 135. Δημοκρεῖτῳ δὲ ὅτι μὲν ἀναίρεν τὰ φαινόμενα ταῖς αἰσθησεσι καὶ τῶν λεγῶν μηδεν γαίνεσθαι κατὰ ἀληθειαν ἀλλὰ μόνον κατὰ δοξάν. Besides those paradoxical philosophers, *Diagoras* was one of the same class, who seems to have owed his Atheism to a particular in-



OR if this consent should admit of a few exceptions, one or two nations being either without the sentiment of a God, or very little affected by it, yet those nations were not more distinguish'd by this singularity of judgment, than by a brutal ignorance and barbarity of manners. These observations, tho' very common, are not less useful to shew that mankind are naturally led by reflexion to the belief of a God,

jury which he had suffer'd, and to avenge it upon the Gods he wrote *Λόγος αποπνερχιζονίας*, i. e. discourses to depose them from their usurpation.

*Protagoras* was another odd person of the same name, whom *Anlus Gellius* calls *insincerus philosophus*; if one could deserve that title whose business was, as the same author observes, *id docere qua nam verborum industria causam firmior fuerit fortior quam verum*, &c. τον ητλον λογον κρειττω ποιειν. Lib. III. cap. 5. *Noctes Attic.*

*Theodorus* was another of the same character. His opinions seem to have been the same with those we find in a late pamphlet which the author calls, *A Philosophical Dissertation on Death*. As for the extraordinary characters of *Vanine* and *Spinoza* one may consult the life of the last writ by *Mr. Colerus*, and for the other we shall learn enough from *La Vie & Sentimens de Vanini*, lately translated into *English*, to know that he was a madman and a rake. And as for *Mr. Hobbes*, whom one may too justly place in the same catalogue, one will find a character of him in *Lord Clarendon's Survey of the Leviathan*; which shews what regard is due to one who express'd an universal contempt of mankind. I shall conclude these remarks with that of *Plato*, that no man ever continued an *Atheist* from his youth till his old age. *De Legib. Lib. X. pag. 189.* Μηδενα ποποτε λαβοντα εκ νεε ταυτην την διοξαν περρ θεων ως εκεισι διατελεσαι παρ' ημεας μεναρτα εν ταυτη τη διωνοσει. *Edit. Cant.*

**G**OD, and though every age has produced some few of another character, people of this strange cast have not been so considerable for learning or virtue as to make their opposition very formidable. Those whom history gives us any account of were such men that it might pass for satyr to describe them in their proper colours; they were no way distinguish'd so much as by an oddity or looseness of manners; were generally men of pleasure or ambition, who found that the prevailing notions of a Deity did not suit with their favourite interests, and were willing to reason others as well as themselves out of this persuasion, that they might carry on their designs with more success. Others being out of humour with life, discontent turn'd their heads to philosophy, and made them vent their spleen for the injuries of fortune in invectives against nature. In a word, some vain Litterati endeavour'd to acquire that reputation by a very remarkable singularity which they had courted to no purpose in a fairer way. Of such particular character were those generally who deserved the name of Atheists. Nothing has recommended their writings so much as novelty and a spirit of opposition; which were a sort of philosophical romances very much admir'd, and perhaps

very

very little understood; and which, after they had been industriously propagated by men of the worst character, had the fate of their authors, to die in oblivion.

THE truth or falshood of an opinion not being immediately concern'd in the good or bad character of those who maintain it, it was not necessary to make these observations; but an Atheist being a creature of so odd a kind, 'tis no wonder, if, like other extraordinary appearances in nature, he should occasion some speculation.

To come nearer to the point, let us make some remarks without enlarging upon those observations which have been often repeated.

I. THAT something must have been eternal and existing of itself is a truth so evident, that it does not need any proof. We are led to this conclusion not by any ideas we immediately frame to ourselves of eternity and self-existence, but by the consciousness we have of our own being, and an easy reflexion upon the works of nature without us. We are as sure as our senses can make us, that some things are, and must be, the causes of this sensation, and in tracing those things to their original,

original, we are necessarily led to suppose some eternal principle existing of itself, one or more \*. For either we must suppose

\* Plato apud Euseb. Lib. XI. cap. 29. Παν το γινόμενον υπέρ αιτις τινος εξ αναγκης γενεθαι. *Simplicius* in his Comment in Epic. Lugd. cap. 38. pag. 251. reasons to the same purpose. Δει αρα περηγμενας αιτιας ειναι των γινομενων και ει γενητα ειεν αυται αναγκη και τστων αλλας αιτιας ειναι περηγμενας εως επι τα αγενη τα ελθωμεν. So below, Ομοιως δε και υπο, &c.

One may very justly blame those writers, who have too much indulg'd their speculation in an argument of this importance; as if the being and attributes of God could receive any light or evidence from metaphysical ideas of space and duration, and other matters of the same curious and abstracted kind. Did religion depend upon such nice enquiries, the bulk of mankind must be very little concerned in the affair. We may likewise observe, that whatever evidence there may be in the reasons *a priori*, as they are call'd, for the existence of a God, these cannot be of any great use to convince an Atheist, who will not easily confess that he can frame any ideas of what is infinite and eternal. And others who are as much persuaded of the divine existence as they are of their own, may be unable to comprehend the force of such arguments, not to say, that the illiterate part of men can receive no instruction from them. The clearest ideas we have of the Deity are derived from familiar objects, which alone are sufficient to demonstrate his being and perfection, nor is it proper to use arguments in a subject capable of the strictest demonstration, which are out of the sphere of common understanding, or liable to any exception from their obscurity. It is not easy to frame any clear idea of a necessity absolute in itself, but every one may readily conceive that every effect must suppose a cause; and that 'tis no less a contradiction to imagine a greater number of effects without one original author, than it is to imagine one effect without its proper cause. By the same manner of reasoning we conclude, that the eternal being must be independent, because an infinite number of dependent beings without one independent, is as much a contradiction as

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pose such a necessary being existing of it self, or imagine that all things proceeded in a chain of causes and effects without any original at all; but such an infinite progression is impossible, it implies, as the learned *Dr. Clark* very clearly demonstrates, that every thing is dependent, and nothing independent; that every thing is an effect, and yet that there is no original cause; that is, either that all things produc'd themselves, or that they were produced by nothing at all; both which is absolutely impossible.

II. FROM the idea of a supreme cause we conclude that he must be infinitely powerful.

FOR

an infinite number of effects without an original. That the author of nature must be powerful, wise and good, we learn from those characters of power, wisdom and goodness which are every where apparent in the system of things; and as we cannot conceive that these perfections can belong to matter, we conclude that the supreme being must be of a more excellent kind, and free from all the imperfections of a compounded nature. From the characters of unity in the contrivance of things, we justly infer, that the author must be one, and being one, must be infinitely perfect, and every where present, it being impossible to conceive that any perfection can be wanting to a being who is the cause of all the perfections of every other being, and absurd to confine his presence within any extent of space, to whose power and wisdom it is impossible to set any bounds. These are natural conclusions of the mind, concerning the Deity, which one may understand without any metaphysical abstractions.



\* FOR an endless series of causes and effects without any original cause being a contradiction, there must be some one or more eternal causes from which all things derive their nature and properties; and therefore this one eternal cause must contain in himself all those powers and perfections which are produced by him. His power therefore must not only equal but exceed the united force of all dependent and inferiour causes whatsoever. This Idea of the divine power is not a consequence from any idea we frame of necessary existence, but only a reflexion we make on that deriv'd power we are conscious of in ourselves, and the various effects of power in other creatures. The intire evidence that all power must belong to one being depending upon those arguments which prove the unity of God, we refer you to those reflexions which shew from an unity of design in the appearances of nature, that the eternal cause can be but one.

EVERY

\* Ομοίως δε και υπο της γενησεως αναβαινοντες τα πρωτα κινησα αιτια ακινητα τοσαυτ ετεροκινητων υφετερον τινοσ κινησαι το δε ετερον τωλο, και τωτο επ απαντων οπερ εστιν ακινητων υδεν εως ετε κινων ετε κινωμενων μη εως αρχης της κινωσης. Simplicius.

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EVERY one's ideas of the divine power is more or less imperfect according to the reflexions he is capable to make upon the various effects of it in the visible creations; some characters of power are so obvious, that they cannot escape the most unobserving, others require a more particular attention to perceive them.

THE incredible swiftness of the heavenly motions \*, and their exact regularity in certain periods naturally strike the mind with the idea of the supreme cause which produc'd and continues this order. And such persons as are unfit to make particular observations upon these appearances, cannot but be sensible that these are the appointments of a powerful agent, and although such accounts as the learned give of the distances and the magnitude of the heavenly bodies, and their probable relation of usefulness to distant creatures, are perhaps more apt to astonish than gain credit with

\* Plato de Legibus, p. 214. Cant. de Rebus Div. Ασρων δε πειρ παστων και σεληνης ενιαυτων τε και μηνων και πασων ορων πειρ τινα αλλον λογον εραμεν η τον αυτον τυτον ως επειδη ψυχη μεν η ψυχαι παντων τωτων αιτιαι ερανησαν αγαθοι δε πασαν αρετην θεος αυτες εναι φησομεν.  
Plut. de Plat. Phil. Lib. V. Θεσ εννοιαν εχον απο των φαινομενων ασερων ορωντες τωτες μεγαλης συμφωνιας ολλα αιτιας, speaking of the first Men who were ignorant and illiterate.

with the vulgar. Untaught minds, however, without the help of glasses or astronomy, are easily led to make proper reflexions upon these Phenomena for exciting in them a reverent sense of the Deity.

THE power of God is no less visible in that huge collection of waters we call the sea, so happily for us confin'd within its channel. This probably communicates with a much vaster abyfs, which is contain'd within the sphere of the earth by certain passages at the bottom of the ocean, and is a great orb of water diffus'd all around under the Strata expanded over it. The earth being thus spread over this abyfs, must be liable to breaches by the subterraneous heat which makes the waters apt to boil up \*, and force a passage, and when these

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\* As the earth has been always in some countries subject to earthquakes, so one may observe from history, that these breaches of the earth have been often accompanied by inundations. *Xiphilm* in the life of *Trajan* describing the effects of an earthquake at *Antioch* observes, that the mountains subsided, and that waters were thrown out where there were none before. *Ορη δε αλλη υφιζησε και υδωρ πολυ εκ ον μεν πρωτερον ανεφανει.* So *Diodorus Sic.* Lib. XV. observes, that there were terrible earthquakes and inundations in the *Peloponese*. *Επι δε τειλαν κατιστα την Πελοποννησον εγενοντο σειμοι μεγαλοι και κατακλεσμοι, &c.* So, Lib. XII. he relates how several cities of *Greece* were drowned by water, occasion'd by earthquakes.

*Woodward's* history of the earth. Were it not for the *Diverricula* whereby the fire thus gains an exit, it would rage in the bowels of the earth much more furiously, and make greater havock than now it doth.

particular eruptions do not happen, it is subject to the worse effects of an universal earthquake, one cannot therefore but adore the power which has equally diffus'd under ground this internal heat, or when it happens to assemble in too great a quantity, provides a vent for it in particular Volcano's, and by this provision prevents a more general disaster.

WE judge of power both by the greatness of its operations, and likewise by their number and variety \*. One cannot but admire the cause of so many regular machines, with so vast a diversity of figure and composition, and adapted in the best manner to so many different purposes. And this idea we form by an easy reflexion upon the many kinds of animals, and under each kind so many particular sorts, with their different distinction of make and usefulness, and under each sort so many individuals, all consisting of a multitude of parts of a different texture united into regular systems. We cannot but observe likewise the great number of vegetables which nature has distributed into so many general kinds which again are distinguish'd by particular tribes and families; each

\* See Mr. *Boyle's* Veneration due to the Humane Intellect.

each of these various individuals is rais'd from a particular feed, and provided with fibres fitted to imbibe and convey nourishment, and to separate that matter which is proper for its growth from that which is extraneous and improper; such observations require no deep reflexion, no knowledge of philosophy, which every one may not easily acquire, and very evidently express a certain fruitfulness and invention of power of which we are not able to form any just idea. The supreme cause therefore must be infinitely powerful.

III. FROM the idea of a supreme cause in the same way of reflexion we conclude that he is infinitely wise.

WISDOM appears in the adjustment of means to ends, and expresses itself in such a convenient disposition of causes and effects as produces the most simple effects in the easiest manner, and with the greatest regularity.

AN obvious reflexion upon those objects which fall under our observation is sufficient to convince us that perfect wisdom belongs to God, who has not only fitted up so many regular machines,  
but

but rang'd them into a beautiful order, and such convenient relations one to another, as to produce the noblest effects, for which a different situation had render'd them uselefs \*. And altho' some appointment in nature may appear to creatures so ignorant, irregular and inconvenient, some wheels of the great machine originally uselefs, or very much disorder'd; some animals either unprofitable or noxious, that is, to beings whose observation is limited to a small district of what is but an inconsiderable part of the whole system, yet as the characters of contrivance and design are sufficiently conspicuous in what we know, we have reason to judge that those laws of nature which disagree with our ideas of beauty and order are yet founded in a contrivance no less wise, and would appear to equal advantage were we able to frame a compleat idea of the whole system, and the united connexion of all the parts.

## IV. FROM

\* De Cælo, Lib. II. cap. 31. Η δε φυσικς υδεν αλοζως υδε μασην ποιει.

Lib. III. cap. 3. Ετι το αλακτως υδεν εσιν ελεβεν η το παρξ φυσιν ε γαρ ταξίς η οικια των αιδητων φυσικς εσιν και τοι υδεν ως ετηχε γιγνεται των κατ φυσιν.

Xenoph. de Institut. Cyr. Θεοι ονίεσ αι παντα ισασι τα γιγνημενα και τα ονία και οτ εξ εκασθ αυτων αποβησεται; Lib. I. p. 76.



IV. FROM the same idea of a first cause we conclude that the supreme being is perfectly good, by a reflexion upon ourselves and other beings without us \*.

WE can indeed reason from the power and wisdom of the Deity with great evidence, so as to conclude that a being endu'd with these perfections, and sufficient for his own happiness could have no interest or self-end †, and therefore was incapable of any design in making so many creatures, but to communicate to them a different degree of happiness suitable to their

\* *Simplicius* infers from God's being the supreme cause, αιτια αιων και αρχη, αρχων, that he must be, αγαθους αγαθοτητων ομοιως δε και δυναμεις δυναμεων, p. 235. c. 38. Ludg. 1640.

Κοσμοϑ μεν καλλισϑ των γιγοντων ο δαιςϑ των αιτιων. Plato ap. Euseb. Præpar. Ev. Lib. XI. c. 29.

Αιτια της των παντων ποιησεως εδεμια αλλη προς εστιν ωλογϑ πλην της κατ εσσαν αγαθοτηϑ. Hier. in Pyth. p. 22. Lond.

Μεμηχανασαι δε προϑ παν τειο το ποιοιτι γινομενον αιη ποιαν εδραν διε μεταλμβανου οικιζεθαι και τινας τοπυς Plat. ap. Euseb. Præpar. Evang. Lib. XII. cap. 52.

† Αγαθϑ ο θεϑ πεπληρωμενϑ ωθης απ αρχης ταις απασαις ως εκ αν κακοποιητικϑ ο θεϑ ηη εδε τινη κακων αιτιϑ παντα δε τεναντιον παρεχων αγαθα τοις λαβειν βελομενοις, απασι χαιζομενϑ. Frag. ad Hier. de Prov. p. 209. Lond. 1650. Salustius de Diis & Mund. Cant. 1671. Κοιναι εστιν εννοιαι απασ παντες ανθρωποι ερωτηθειες ομολογησασι οτι πας θεϑ ο αγαθϑ οτι απαθης οτι αμεταβλητϑ.—And cap. 15. ωλο μεν γαρ το θεον ανευδεις.

which reason it is a more convincing method to derive our ideas of these perfections, not from philosophical speculations, which are liable to suspicion, but from the knowledge of human nature, and the obvious relation in which we stand to so many other things contriv'd for our advantage.

THE divine goodness needs not any distinct proof, as it is a necessary consequence of the same appearance which demonstrates the wisdom of God. For to speak strictly, the wisdom and goodness of the supreme being are only different apprehensions which we frame of that infinite power which produced all things. When we consider the proper order and disposition of causes and effects in a variety of contrivances, we call the author of this propriety a wise being; and when we observe the suitability of these contrivances to the nature and circumstances of beings capable of happiness, we call him good. And the same way we judge of objections to the divine goodness, as of those which are made against the wisdom of the supreme being. Particular instances of seeming disorder do not destroy the general evidence of a wise design, so the divine benevolence is not affected by some appearances in nature, which for want of ideas we find hard to be reconcil'd with the notions of goodness; the nature and perfections of the Deity, and the defects of our

our understanding being sufficient to account for such difficulties.

5. \* We have a sufficient evidence that the supreme cause is a being of a more excellent nature, than matter without figure, or parts or division, and that he is not chargeable with any of those imperfections which belong to bodies as such; this more perfect sort of being having no other name for it, we call a spirit or immaterial substance.

OUR reason is more at a loss in deducing this attribute or perfection of the Deity, for want of clear and adequate ideas. But altho' we are not able to frame any idea of substance in general; nor the proper nature of body and spirit; we have nevertheless a very clear apprehension of some qualities which flow from and depend upon these unknown natures, not only as different but incompatible, and therefore conclude with sufficient evidence that the essence to which those different and incompatible qualities belong must be of a different kind. Without any other medium for the discovery

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\* It must be own'd, notwithstanding this evidence, that there is no word, *Greek* or *Latin*, which properly signifies immaterial substance, nor is probable that the vulgar Heathen had any notion of a principle distinct from matter; some of the philosophers had not, *Nec vero aut quid efficeret aliquid aut quod efficiebatur posse esse non corpus*, says *Cicero* in the name of certain philosophers, *Acad. Lib. I. sect. 12*. So *Lucretius*, *Nam facere est & fingi sine corpore nulla potest res*. The universal byass in mankind to represent the object of religious worship by images proves the Deity was conceiv'd to be something material, and how much mankind ow'd their best notions of a Deity to reveal'd religion,

which reason it is a more convincing method to derive our ideas of these perfections, not from philosophical speculations, which are liable to suspicion, but from the knowledge of human nature, and the obvious relation in which we stand to so many other things contriv'd for our advantage.

THE divine goodness needs not any distinct proof, as it is a necessary consequence of the same appearance which demonstrates the wisdom of God. For to speak strictly, the wisdom and goodness of the supreme being are only different apprehensions which we frame of that infinite power which produced all things. When we consider the proper order and disposition of causes and effects in a variety of contrivances, we call the author of this propriety a wise being; and when we observe the suitableness of these contrivances to the nature and circumstances of beings capable of happiness, we call him good. And the same way we judge of objections to the divine goodness, as of those which are made against the wisdom of the supreme being. Particular instances of seeming disorder do not destroy the general evidence of a wise design, so the divine benevolence is not affected by some appearances in nature, which for want of ideas we find hard to be reconcil'd with the notions of goodness; the nature and perfections of the Deity, and the defects of  
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very of this difference \*, the wiser part of mankind have all along concluded that the supreme intelligence, as well as the principle of thought within us, were of that kind which is call'd immaterial substance in the same way that we know certainly by the sensible qualities of fire and water, and their different effects, that the nature of these elements is different, tho' we cannot frame any particular idea of the proper essence in either. And as it would be very useless to enquire into the unknown essences of bodies, in order to discover that one is of a different kind from another, when that difference is sufficiently evident from their distinct qualities; so it seems to be a more curious than profitable speculation, to reason in the dark and without ideas, in order to demonstrate what is sufficiently evident

\* The wiser Heathens believed the Deity to be something more excellent than matter, a simple un compounded Nature. *Plin. in Euseb. Præ. Evang. Lib. II. cap. 11. ad fin.*  
 Ου πολλὰ το θεῖον ἐστὶν ὡς ἡμῶν ἐκαστὸν ἐκ μυρίων διαφορῶν ἐμπροσθεν γινομένων ἀβροσισμὰ παρὰ φαπὸν καὶ πανηγυρικὸν μεμιγμένον ἀλλ' ἐν εἶναι δεῖ το ὄν ὡπερ ὄν το ἐν.

The same philosopher proves the essential difference between body and spirit from their different qualities. *Præf. Ev. Lib. II. cap. 28.* speaking of the human soul ———  
 Καὶ ἐπειδὴν τῷ μὲν θνήσκῃ τε καὶ λυθῇ καὶ ἀνοήτῳ καὶ ζωῆς ἀμεταχώ καὶ δια τῆς ἀπώσεως καὶ ἀδύνατος καὶ γινομένου καὶ ἀπολλυμένου ὕδατος τῷτε θεῷ καὶ ἀθανάτῳ καὶ αἰετῷ καὶ νοεῷ ζῶντι σὺγγίεναι. *Infr. δια γὰρ τὴν ποίαν ἕσταν ποίας εἶναι καὶ τὰς ἐνεργείας ὡς ἀπ' αὐτῆς εἶεν καὶ αἰῆς ἕσταν βλάστηματα.*

*Alcinoi Idea Platon. Philos. p. 26.* Ἀποκτίνῃ δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἐξ ὑλῆς καὶ εἶδὸς ἔχει γὰρ εἶναι ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης ἀρχία ὡς ἀσώματον ἀνεὶ οὐθεῖ. Καὶ γὰρ εἰ σῶμα ἐστὶ καὶ φθαρεθὸν



evident in itself, that knowledge and wisdom, the undoubted perfections of the Deity, neither are nor can be the result of any known qualities of matter in any composition of it.

\* MATTER or body, according to all the ideas we can frame of it, is something lifeless and unactive, cannot move of itself, and when it is put into motion, continues to move till something stop it; we cannot apprehend that any thing of this kind should be the cause of a regular motion, or the author of a deep and complicated design. Nor can we conceive that so great excellence should arise from a mere † texture of parts, as to render a thing very imperfect in itself  
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εσαι και μνησθ και μεταβλησθ εκασον δε τσηων ατοπον επωτου.

Porphyr. de Abst. Lib II. p. 80. Ομειν πρωτθ δεθ ασωμασθ τεων και ακινησθ αμειειςθ.

Salustius de Diis, cap. 13. Cant. Ειδε τις τες θεες σωμαλα λεγοι τις ποθεν των ασωματων η δυναμις.

Seneca somewhere calls the Deity, *incorporalis ratio*, which was the sentiment of the bulk of philosophers concerning the mind of man, as *Macrobius* informs us; so that nothing can be more false in fact than the affirmation of an impious writer, that the doctrine of immaterial essences took its rise from *Aristotle's* philosophy. See this opinion very well confuted by Mr. *Harris* in a sermon at *Boyle's* Lectures.

\* Plutarch de Stoic. Repugn. p. 1057. Πανταχθ την υλην αρην εξ αυτης και ακινητον υποκειδαι.

† It seems very evident that compositions cannot be of a different kind from the parts of which they are compounded. *Plato Phaed.* p. 139. Cant. Τη δε δοκει σοι αρμονια η αλλη τινι σινθεσει προσηκει αλλως πως εχεν ει ως εκεινα ανεχη εξων αν σηγχεηται υδε μεν ποιην πως εγωμει υδε τι παρην παρ αν εκεινα η ποιη η παρην; which contains the substance of *Dr. Clerk's* arguments for the immateriality of the soul. See *Dr. Clerk's* Letters to Mr. *Dodwell*. After all, these nice speculations of matter and spirit seem to lye out of the road of human understanding.

capable not only of motion and sense, but all the perfections of a thinking nature.

If thought and design do not flow from a meer composition of parts, much less can these be suppos'd to belong to every portion of matter originally as such; and if they don't, it is impossible to conceive that intelligence can be the result of any order and situation of unintelligent particles; as it is impossible that an entire difference in the nature of things could proceed from a mere alteration in the circumstances.

BUT perhaps the best and most convincing proof that the supreme cause must be of a different kind from matter is the various subordination of causes and effects, in one regular and united design, which is so evident in the works of nature. Matter consists necessarily of parts, and if each of these is supposed to be an intelligence, or only a particular number of them in a certain composition, in either case we shall have an infinite number of finite minds independent one of another, and acting without any concert or agreement; what might have been produced by such a medley of intelligences is easier to imagine than it is to conceive that any thing so beautiful and regular as our system, in which there are so many appearances of harmony \*, could proceed from any other cause than one intelligence.

\* Nemes. Περὶ φύσεως — ἔγω οἶ οὔτε ὡς μὴ οἰοῦνται διακεῖναι ἀλλὰ μετὰ ἰδία μὲν θεασθῆναι, — τὴν γῆν δὲ τὰ ὕδαρ καὶ τὸν ἀέρα καὶ τὸ παρ' τῶ ἐν τῇ καὶ ἄλλο παρ' ταῦτα ἐκ τῆς σπουδῆς τῶν δὲ γέγεννηται ὡς ἐπι τῆς τέλει φαρμάκων.  
P. 140. Oxon. 1671.

6. IT is absurd to confine the ſupreme being within any bounds or extent of ſpace. For we cannot pretend to limit † the power, wiſdom and goodneſs of that being who is the author of ſo many productions; and therefore as an agent muſt of neceſſity act ſomewhere, one cannot reaſonably ſet any bounds to the preſence of the Deity.

As we have not the moſt imperfect idea of the divine exiſtence in infinite ſpace, we cannot define it by any proper expreſſions: we cannot ſay, as ſome chuſe, that he exiſts by an expansion of his eſſence, as theſe words either convey no idea at all, or none we can ſeparate from the idea of extension and parts. It is better to be ſilent, than to ſpeak without meaning, or to expreſs our ſentiments in a manner which may lead us into improper thoughts of the Deity\*.

7. WHATEVER arguments there may be *a priori* to prove that there can be only one eternal cauſe, the cleareſt and moſt convincing proof (at leaſt to the bulk of mankind) which reaſon affords, is from the unity of deſign ſo manifeſt in the appearances of nature.

THERE are but two ways to demonſtrate the unity of God, without a revelation; either by our idea that neceſſary exiſtence

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† Xenoph. Απομ 66. Γινωſη το θεου οτι τοſοτον εſιν εθ αμα παντα οργη και παντα αληην και πανταχυα παριναι, &c.

\* Spinoza founded his ſyſtem upon this principle, that God was an extended ſubſtance, Eth. pars 2. prop. 2. *Attributum Dei eſt, ſive Deus eſt res eterna*; which he calls *ſubſtantia corporea que non niſi infinita eſt non niſi indiviſibilis concepi poteſt*. Par. 1. Schol. Prop. 15.

can be the property only of one being, and that it is a contradiction to suppose more than one, or, *2dly*, by such an uniformity in the laws of nature as necessarily proves the author to be one.

WHATEVER connexion there may be between the ideas of unity and self-existence, this cannot lead us into any method of reasoning familiar to common understandings, or very proper to convince those who are inclin'd to question this great article of religion.

WHETHER some learned authors on this subject have prov'd this connexion, or only suppos'd it, a person may doubt, who is entirely satisfy'd with the other parts of their demonstration.

HAVING defin'd necessity of existence to be the peculiar property of a being whose non-existence implies a contradiction; they chuse to make this definition of necessity to be the ground of proof, both that the necessary being is infinite, and that he can be but one. Had we any clear idea of a necessity absolute in itself, one might judge with more certainty whether it was safe to found upon it an article of so great importance: mean time it must appear a little improper to argue from a necessity which does not suppose the actual existence of things, when all our ideas of a supreme being (which we do not owe to revelation) seem to be deriv'd from that existence.

THO' it is not so clear that nothing could have existed necessarily, whose non-existence we cannot prove a contradiction; the supream Being however must be eternal by such a necessity of nature that he could not but have existed, for this reason, that an endless progression of causes and effects, without an original, implies a contradiction: but it is not from any idea of a necessity absolute in itself, that we arrive at this conclusion; but from a clearer principle, that every effect must have had a cause; other beings might have been necessary, notwithstanding this argument to the contrary. It must be own'd, that there is no necessity to suppose any more than one eternal cause, nor any probability from the nature of things but the highest evidence that there is but one. It is likewise certain that some connexion there must be between the ideas of unity and self-existence; so that both these must be the properties of the same eternal cause. However, as it is much easier for a man to go beyond his depth, than to find his way, in reasonings *a priori*; hence it is that some authors, instead of explaining this connexion, have only suppos'd it. That there must be something eternal and existing of itself, is almost self-evident, and cannot need a proof; that there is but one such being, we find difficult to demonstrate *a priori*, in a method which every one can understand:

derstand. The reason of the difference is plain: in the first case we argue from a clear undoubted principle; in the other, from an idea too abstracted from vulgar apprehension to carry in it the same evidence.

It were to be wish'd that some of a metaphysical genius would employ it in clearing up such arguments for religion: Mean time it may not be improper, or at this time unreasonable, to make a few reflexions upon the unity and moral perfections of God, from objects more familiar, and in a method of reasoning less liable to exception, as the same observations which demonstrate the goodness and wisdom of the supream Cause, afford the highest evidence that he is one.



#### C H A P. IV.

*Some remarks upon the universal inclination to idolatry.*

**B**Efore we enter upon these reflexions, it will not be improper, that as mankind in all ages and every country have had a general inclination to imagine a plurality of gods, to give some account of it. Hence it will appear that those nations, who have escap'd the

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common error, have ow'd that preservation more to the advantage of reveal'd religion, than to any extraordinary improvement they had made of their natural reason. This is a truth which no man can easily question, who considers that human nature has been the same in all ages, and has been pretty near equally expos'd to the influence of error and superstition; and that the Jews, who were the only nation who preserv'd the belief and worship of one God, were not distinguish'd \* from the rest of mankind by any extraordinary improvements in knowledge and literature.

It is not improbable that mankind before the deluge generally agreed, not only in the object of worship, but in the use of the same religious ceremonies; when the memory of the creation was fresh, or could be safely handed down from father to son by oral instruction. After this tragical event, the period of human life being shorten'd, religion was not so secure in the conveyance, and must have suffer'd some changes from the † uncertainty of tradition, and the negligence of those who were entrusted with it.

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\* Apollonius observes of the Jews, that they were the most ignorant and stupid of the barbarous nations, and the only people who had not produced some useful invention: *υψιστατες εναι των βαρβαρων, και δια ταυτο μηδεν εις τον βιον ευρημασ σημειωλησθαι μινες.* Joseph. contra Appion. lib. 2.

† It is probable some ceremonies of the primitive religion were for a long time preserv'd among those who had forsaken  
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THE fact is certain; men lost by degrees the sense of one supream Being the Creator of the universe, and gradually declin'd from religion and virtue; till falling from one superstition into another, they came to settle at last in an universal idolatry.

THIS great apostacy from the true worship was more quick in its progress, as mankind, after the deluge, were too much employ'd in the labours of agriculture, and the recovery of useful arts, to allow religion any great attention. Besides, as there was no way of record before the invention of letters, the memory of those facts on which the true worship was founded, insensibly decay'd, and in process of time was entirely lost.

MEN were thus left to their uninstructed reason, which they were not careful to improve; and as passion and fancy were more gratify'd by the corruptions of religion, and the sense of virtue was very much lost, that of truth could have no great influence: hence it was that idolatry spread with ill morals.

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the true God: the use of sacrifices to appease the Deity, and the rite of circumcision, seem to have been derived by a tradition from the patriarchal age; for as these usages were very ancient, so the observance does not seem to be founded on any natural reason; but the sentiment of one God, however reasonable, had been lost long before, as not being suitable to the deprav'd taste of mankind.

THE first examples of idolatrous worship, were only lesser deviations from the primitive religion: mankind retain'd a simplicity in their errors, which bore a resemblance to truth; and did not immediately entertain all those superstitions of opinion and practice, which were afterwards introduc'd.

THE first \* corrupters of religion had no temples or altars dedicated to particular gods, nor did they sacrifice beasts (at least in some countries) to appease the Deity. It is probable that the Egyptians first introduc'd the use of sacrifices into idolatry. The Persians † not only despis'd those forms of devotion, as useless: but blam'd the folly of representing a Being, who could have no resemblance to the human

\* Herodotus, lib. 1. concerning the Persians; *αγαλματα και θομβας και της εκ ην γωνω ποιουμενας ιδρυεσθαι αλλα και πεισεις μαριτη επιφερσει ως μιν ερωι δοκειν οτι εκ ανθρωποφουας ενουσαν της θεης καταπερ οι Ελληνες ειπαι.* The same historian ascribes the invention of images and altars to the Egyptians. Euterpe, cap. 4. ——— *βαμους και αγαλματα και της απικουμει πρωτους.* So Macrobius informs us, that these methods of religion were for a long time consider'd as unlawful by that people, Saturn. lib. 1. *Nunquam fas fuit Aegyptiis pecudibus & sanguine, sed prece & thure solo, placare deos.* Lond. 1694.

† Diogenes Laertius gives this account of the ancient Persians, that they condemn'd image-worship, and the ridiculous distinction of male and female deities. In proem. ——— *των δε ζων καταγινασκειν και μαλιστα των λεγοτων αρρετας ειπαι θεους και θελειας.*

Pausanias informs us, that Orpheus introduc'd into Greece the custom of appeasing the Deity by sacrifices: *πιστευμενος Ορφευς ευρηκεται ——— εργαων ανουσιων καθαρμους και τροπας μητιματων θεων.*

man form, by a material image; and laugh'd at the fond distinction of male and female deities\*. The magi, their directors in religion, worshipp'd fire as a symbol of the supreme Being; either because that element was a proper representation of the sun, or because fire seem'd to have a principal share in the productions of nature; as the Egyptians worshipp'd water for a like reason. It is likely those antient idolaters at first only consider'd the sun as an image of the supream Being: but from an unthinking sort of gratitude for the benefits they ow'd to his light and influence, they at last imagin'd this great source of heat to be the cause of all things. Accordingly we find that the † most antient idolatry chiefly consisted in a various adoration of this luminary, expressing his different effects and operations by different names. Thus the same object of worship was call'd Osiris by the Egyptians, § and Her-

\* Ammian. Marcellinus, lib. 22. Ignis ille cœlitus delapsus apud magos sempiternis focus custoditus.

† The sun generally pass'd for the supreme Being among the heathens. Macrobius observes of Plato, in somn. Scipion. Cum de *αγρω* loqui esset animatus dicere quid sit, nec ausus est, hoc solum de eo sciens quod sciri quale sit ab homine non possit: solum vero & simillimum de visibilibus solem repperit. Justin Mart. in his dial. cum Tryph. p. 349. has a strange notion, that the sun was created to be the object of worship — *τον μὲν ἕλιον ο θεος ἐδωκεν προτερον εις το προσκυνειν αυτον.* Clem. Alexand. deriv'd the same odd opinion from a mistaken passage of Deut. See Strom. lib. 6. p. 795.

§ Macrobius Saturn. lib. 1. p. 210. Lugd. 1696. Cum Isis Ofyridem

cules by the Tyrians; and had a different name in other countries. After the worship of the heavenly bodies, the most antient species of idolatry seems to have taken its rise \* from a superstitious veneration for illustrious dead, who had distinguish'd themselves in the service of the publick. These some nations invoc'd as their tutelur deities, interest'd them in their protection, and trusted to their assistance and conduct in circumstances of difficulty. As no creature is more glorious or useful than the sun, and gratitude is a very natural sentiment, it was not strange that men left to their own conduct should run into such extravagant expressions of it. But idolatry did not stop here: the humour of inventing deities prevail'd to a pitch of absurdity, which almost exceeds belief; and objects of worship were multiply'd beyond reckoning. Vulgar minds being unable to form any idea of a being different from matter, and who fill'd an immensity of space, had no other standard of religious worship, but an unreasonable fancy: they not only confin'd the deity to a place, and represented him

Osyridem luget, nec in occulto est, neque aliud esse Osyrim quam solem; nec Ilin aliud esse quam solem. See Saturn. lib. 1. c. 20.

\* An antient author makes this worship of deceas'd heroes, who had been benefactors to their country, to have been the oldest idolatry. Frag. ex Joan. Antiochen. cum notis Vales. η ειδωλατρεια ηρξατο απο Σιριουχ τωος καταγεγραμμενου εκ της Φυλης τε Ιαρεθ δευρημισαντος ειχοσι και αυρειασι τιμασθαι τε παλαι αρισευσαιτας και τιμασθαι ως ευρηγαις, και ταυτο επικρατητε μεχρι των χρονων Φαρεα του πατροσ Αερακην, &c.

him by an image; but dishonour'd him by the most fordid representations. They did not only give him their own likenefs, and \* dress him out with all the ornaments they were fond of; but to compleat the resemblance, they invested him with all their irregular passions, and made him accessary to all their crimes. How extravagant soever such notions were concerning a being infinitely perfect, they were such as men easily fell into, who had lost all the traces of the primitive religion, and neglected those characters of the Deity which are imprinted in the works of creation. From such a general depravation one may justly infer, that if the object of religious worship is a point of necessary knowledge, human reason never was sufficient for its own conduct.

No sooner was the antient tradition of one God effac'd, than mankind lost their way in an endless maze of superstition and falshood, out of which their own reason and the best human instruction was insufficient to extricate them. Not only did idolatry, in the most stupid appearances of it, overspread the ignorant part of mankind; but those nations likewise who had the highest pretensions to knowledge

\* Macrob. Saturn. lib. 2. Adeo semper ita se & sciri & coli numina maluerunt, qualiter in vulgus antiquitas fabulata est; quæ & imagines & simulachra formarum prorsus alienis, & ætatis tam incrementi quam diminutionis ignaris, & amictus ornatusque varios corpus non habentibus assignavit.



knowledge and politeness. Egypt and Greece were at the same time the fountains of learning and false worship, and were no less inventive in superstition, than in useful discoveries. Nor were men, all this time, unprovided with the means of better information: some there were in every age eminent \* for virtue, who acknowledg'd one God, and were ready to suffer for that profession; who inveigh'd against the religion of the vulgar, and recommended something more excellent. But they made no profelytes by their instruction and example; or, at least, were not able to reclaim any considerable number from the receiv'd superstitions, which prevail'd not only in spite of religion, but common sense.

BUT that men, who had no advantages but those which reason or example afforded them, should be so fatally inclin'd to idolatry,

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\* Providence, in every age, rais'd up men who were proper to reclaim the world from idolatry: there were several persons of the Jewish nation, whose piety and knowledge, especially after the captivity, entitled them to fame, and made them fit to be reformers. Socrates's character is well known: Plato makes him speak of himself as if sent by God to reform the Athenians, Apolog. p. 27. Cant. 1633. — *οτ δ' εγω τυγχνω αν τειστος αιος υπο του θεου τη πολει δεδωκε ενθινηδ αν κατανοησαιτε ου γαρ το ανθρωπιον εσικε εμε των μεν εμαυτου απαντων ημιλεκησαι — το δε υμετερον πραττειν αιμι εκαστω προσιτητα ωσπερ πατερα η αδελφον πρισυτερον παιδοντα επιμελεισθαι αρετης,* Nor was it merely in the cause of virtue that he was at so much pains; but to restore men to just sentiments of the Deity. Himself says, *εν πενη μνησια εμιμ δια την του θεου λατρειαν,* Accordingly his impeachment was, p. 18. Ap. *θεους διδασκον μη κομιζειν ουκ η πολεις νομιζει ετερα δε δαιμονια.*

is not so strange, seeing the same inclination appears in that people who were better instructed. The Mosaic account of the creation was intended to imprint the belief of one God, the author and cause of all things. This article of the Jewish religion was not only confirm'd by a number of extraordinary appearances; but was guarded by a great many positive laws and institutions\*, which had no other use but to create an aversion to idolatry, and to keep the Jews at a distance from it. Notwithstanding these precautions, that people, who were so much favour'd by the true God, were always prone to revolt from him; and so strong was their inclination to a false worship, that nothing less could cure them of it, but the hardships of a long captivity. The design of this short detail is to shew that the propension of human nature to idolatry was not to be corrected either by reason or revelation: let us now consider what might be the ground of this universal inclination.

## C H A P. V.

### *Some account of the grounds of idolatry.*

**T**HE common propension to idolatry could not arise from any difficulties, which men generally found in the order and system

\* See Spencer de Urim & Thummim, & Witsii Egyptiaca.

system of nature. The bulk of mankind never were philosophers, or, if they had been fit for such speculations, observations of this kind must rather dispose them to acknowledge one God, than to worship many.

OUR knowledge reaches but a little way in what we call the universe: we are but little acquainted with the part of the whole to which we belong; whether there are any other systems with which ours may have a connexion, we don't know, or what figure and importance it bears in the whole, we can only guess. However, we cannot but observe an harmony in that part of the creation which comes under our observation. \* Contrary natures and elements of a very different kind, are dispos'd into such an order as confesses the contrivance of a wise Agent: and one sort of creatures is subservient to the necessity and convenience of another. As every part in the composition of an animal obtains a proper situation, and is adjusted to a particular use, by which adjustment it becomes useful to the whole; so in larger systems †, one may observe the same

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\* So excellently an antient poet:

Hoc opus immensi constructum corpore mundi,  
 Membraque naturæ diversâ condita forma  
 Aeris atque terræ, pelagique jacentis,  
 Vis animæ divina regit.

† This connexion in nature was consider'd by the antients as a proof that all things proceeded from one cause. Nemesius,

connexion of parts, and unity of design : and thus extending our thoughts as far as we are able in the survey of nature, we justly conclude that there is the same beautiful agreement in the frame of the universe united into one society, which is so conspicuous in the constitution of particular systems.

† THE wiser part of mankind were probably convinc'd by such remarks as these, that nature was the production of one cause : and their

σπερι Φυσεως, Oxon. 1671. p. 7. ο γαρ δημιουργος εκ του κατ ολιγον ειπεν ετισυναπτειν αλληλαις τας διαφορας φυσεις ωστε μιαν ειναι και συγγειη την πασαν κτισιν εξ ε μαλιστα δεικνυται εις αν ο παντων των οντων δημιουργος; which connexion in the whole, and fit disposition of every thing according to each other, the same avthor takes notice of: ε μονου ην ωσσε την υπαρξιν των κατ μερος ατομων αλλα και εκαστα προς αλληλον συνηρμοσε οικειας ——— συναπτων αλληλεις τη κατ ολιγον οικειοτητι και παραλλαγη της Φυσεως ——— and concerning the position of the elements, p. 114. παλιν μεσον του υδατος και του πυρος εναντιων και οτιων εταξε τον αερα. This excellent order gave some philosophers occasion to observe, ουκ ανευ μουσικης γενεσθαι και συνεσταναι παντα, as Plutarch observes in his treatise de Musica, p. 1147. ωσπερ ο μουσικος δια των εαυτου μαθηματικων αριθμων την λυραν ουτως η Φυσις δια των εαυτης Φυσικων αριθμων τα εαυτης αρμοζει δημιουργηματα; Jamblic. de Mys. the same observation, ia effect, with that of an apocryphal writer, that all things were created in number, weight, and measure.

† Notwithstanding those difficult appearances in the natural and moral world, which seem to have been too hard for vulgar philosophy, the wiser heathens all along believ'd one God. Lactantius proves from a number of poets and philosophers, that this was their belief. Arnobius, lib. 1. contra Gentes, introduces them complaining that they were falsely accus'd of denying one supreme being. Philolaus, a scholar of Pythagoras, gives this account of the Deity: εστι δε ηγεμων και αρχων παντων θεος εις αρειων νοσημιος. Philo. de Opificio Mundi, p. 17.

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their compliance with the receiv'd superstition, was no more than a submission to the tyranny

A remarkable passage there is of Sophocles the tragedian, *εις ταις αληθειαις εις εστιν θεος, &c.* which you have thus translated by Mr. Le Clerk. "There is in truth but one God, " but one who made the heavens, and the earth, and the " winds; and yet the generality of mortals, by a strange illusion, set up gods of stone, and brass, and ivory, to have " a redress of their grievances ready at hand." The wiser heathens seem only to have express'd the different effects of one cause, under different names: *Idem ab diversis nominibus religionis est effectus*, says Macrobius. An excellent philosopher observes of the Egyptians, that they worshipp'd the elements under the notion of deities: Sallust. cap. 4. Cant. 1683. *αυτα τα σωματα θεους καλεσαιτες και Ισιν, μιν την γην Οσιριν, το υγρον Τυφνια η Κρονον, μιν υδαρ Αθανιν δε καρπους.* Accordingly, Aristotle observes that there was but one God, though express'd by many different names, *Εις δε αν πολυωνυμος εστι κατανομαζομενος τοις παθουσι*; which, I suppose, signifies, according to the different affections of matter; De Cal. cap. 12. Francof. 1606. And this Being, says he, is remov'd from all the imperfections of matter, and, while he moves all things, is himself immoveable, exerting his power in the different productions of nature: *πασης κεχαρισμενος σωματικης αδυναειας εν ακινητω ιδρυμενος παντα κινει και περιαγει οπου βουλεται ει διαφορας τε ιδεαις και φυσεσιν*; Author de Mund. cap. 11. Francof. The Stoicks had the same notion of God, that he was one principle, which animates and pervades the universe; producing various effects, according to the different nature of things: Themist. ad lib. 1. Arist. de Anima, (as quoted by Salmasius in his Comment upon Epictet.) — *τοις δε απο Σιτανος συμφανος η οδξα δια πασης ουσιας περιετρεχεται τον θεον τειμεμενους και που μιν ειναι νουν που δε ψυχη που δε φυτιν που δε εξη*; εξης seems to express that power by which the parts of matter cohere, *φυσις* relates to vegetables, and *ψυχη* to animals.

While the antients us'd different names for the supreme Being, they express'd under that veil their notions of natural philosophy. So Pharnuf. de Natura Deor. *ουχι οι τυχητες οι παλαιαι αλλ και σιμειναι την τουτου κοσμου φυσιν ικανοι και δια σημειολων και αιτιγμωλιαν φιλοσοφησαι περι αυτης εν επιφοροι*. Inter Myth. Cant. Therefore, we find, the antient mythology of different nations differ'd according to their different conceptions of natural cau

tyranny of custom, and the humour of the times; or it may be by that complaisance they only meant to acknowledge the various effects and operations of one cause, under different objects of worship.

OTHERS there were who found so many seeming disorders in the natural and moral world, that their belief of one God was very much shaken by such difficulties: the general corruption of manners, and the early apostacy from virtue, suggested bad suspicions; and the many sufferings of human life, from which the most virtuous were not exempted, carry'd them into speculations inconsistent with the goodness and unity of God;

ses, as the same writer observes; Πολλὰς καὶ ποικίλας περὶ θεῶν γεγενεῖναι παρ τοῖς παλαιοῖς μυθολογίας. The antient mythology being nothing else than the history of nature, or the various changes of matter before things had settled into their present order, and these changes being the effects of one eternal mind; hence the history of the gods, and that of nature, came to be the same; this one Being exerting his power in a various manner, according to the nature of things; as an antient writer observes: περὶ ἀπίστων, c. 21. inter Myth. Cant. εἶνος οὐλὸς τοῦ μετεχόμενου θεοῦ ψυχή μιν ἄλλως φαντασία ἄλλως καὶ αἰσθησις ἄλλως μετεχει. And so the Egyptians, whose ideas of religion were transmitted to other nations, express'd by a great number of religious rites the various operations of a divine power, Macrobius Sat. lib. 1. cap. 20. Sacrorum administrationes apud Ægyptios multiplici actu multiplicem Dei asserunt potestatem. I shall conclude these notes, (which are design'd to shew what notions the wise heathens had of the supream being) with the words of an old author: τὴν πρώτην αἰτίαν μίαν εἶναι προσήκει πάντος γὰρ πληθους ἡγεῖσθαι μονὰς δυνάμει καὶ ἀγνοοῦντι πάντα νικᾶ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πάντα μετεχειν ἐκείνης ἀνάγκη; which supream cause they us'd to style, πρῶτος θεός.



God; nor could all their philosophy give a satisfying account of such appearances.

It is certainly a matter of very great difficulty, in which human reason was ever at a loss, that mankind should have been in most ages so generally wicked; and that, though virtue has been always more or less the subject of praise and speculation, people of all ranks should have been so little fond of the practice. Vice, on the contrary, has been a theme of satyr and invective; but notwithstanding very much care's'd: and the secular advantages arising from the practice, under an affected abhorrence, have been generally reckon'd too considerable to be neglected. To say the truth, the virtue of many has been nothing but a farce very ill acted, or a mere commerce of interest.

THUS, while some have made no other use of religion but to be a cloak to vice, or a step to something they lik'd better; and the most steadfast professors of it have too frequently been very great sufferers for that attachment; bold men have ventur'd to despise both the thing and the appearance, as a political scare-crow of designing men, to frighten less thinking people from those actions which led to riches and honour.

SUCH offensive appearances of interested virtue, and prevailing vice, have not only scandaliz'd the weaker sort, but sometimes made the notion of providence appear a dif-

fcult speculation to men of superior understanding. Had vice and error, which generally go together, been only the product of one age, or the peculiar growth of one country, thinking people would have consider'd them in the same view they do a noxious animal, or a poisonous weed, which nature had suffer'd for reasons of which we were unfit to judge: but when immorality, in every species of it, became almost universal, so odd a phænomemon made some fancy that vice was a part of our constitution; and consequently produced very strange \* speculations. It was likewise a considerable objection that bad men should not only multiply very fast (like thistles) tho' very hurtful to the better part of society, but should prosper by their vices; and should not only suffer no check in their progress; but carry with them to the grave all the marks of favour and a good cause. As such disorders were not easy to be reconcil'd with a supreme goodness, many triumph'd in the † denial of it: and others, who thought their

\* Nequaquam nobis divinitus esse creatam

Naturam mundi, quæ tanta est prædita culpa.

Some deny'd the deity; others, his providence. Arrian. Comm. lib. 1. c. 12. Cant. Περὶ Θεῶν οἱ δὲ εἶναι μὲν ἀργοὺ καὶ ἀμελεῖς καὶ μὴ προνοεῖν μηδένος.

† Τολμῶ κατεῖπειν μὴ ποτ' ἐκ εἰσὶ Θεοί

Κακοὶ γὰρ εὐτυχοῦντες ἐπιπληττοῦσι με.

The strange inequality in the condition of good and bad men was a common occasion of impiety. Simplicius gives this reason for the growth of atheism, Comm. cap. 38. p. 212.

Κακοὺς ἰδῶσιν ἀρχόντας καὶ μίχρη θανάτου γηραιούς ευρο-  
 υτάς

their virtue neglected by such unequal distributions, grew peevish, and were ready to condemn their former choice. Some sceptical philosophers made a bad use of such observations, to confirm themselves and others in the opinion that there was no particular providence. The friends of virtue endeavour'd to reconcile such unfavourable appearances with the moral perfections of God; while they maintain'd that there was no other cause of evil, but the abuse of liberty; and that every man, being his own master \*, and acting without any necessity impos'd upon him, either from his own nature, or external objects, could therefore be only chargeable with all the unhappy consequences of an irregular choice: for though the author of nature had given him

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liberty,

εντας και πασιν την εναν ενστε παραδιδοντας πλουτουτας και υλιανουτας, τοις δε αγαθους απο των ανηκιστα πασχοντις μηδενιας επιμηνιας απο τωτων εκδικησιωας. To the same purpose, Athenag. de Resurr. Mort. p. 61. Πολλους μιν αδους, &c.

\* Simplicii Comment. in Epict. c. 34. p. 181. Εμνη γαρ βια το κακον επιραττει η ψυχη ταχ αι τις τον θεον αιτιατατο συγχωρησαντα βιασθηναι και τει ουδε το κακον αν το βια πραττωμεν.

And therefore to establish the notion of vice, and vindicate the author of nature, they very justly made man to be matter of his own actions, Marc. Anton. lib. 7. Πανταχου και δικηκως επι σοι εστι και τη παρουση συμψασει θεοσιδως ευαρεστην και τοις παρυστι ανθρωποις κατα δικαιοσυνη προσφμεσθαι. These plain reasoners had not arriv'd at that height of philosophy, as to believe that men might be accountable for actions which they could not avoid. On the contrary, they asserted that no external causes impos'd any necessity, the mind acting from itself. Cicero de Fato, c. 10. Ad animorum motus voluntarios non est requirenda externa causa: motus enim voluntarius eam naturam in se ipse continet, ut sit in nostra potestate nobisque pareat? nec id sine causa; ejus rei causa ipsa natura est.

liberty\*, (the highest excellence, and the foundation of all valuable enjoyments) no man was either wicked or unhappy but by his own fault.

THE bulk of mankind were not able; some were not willing, to distinguish so justly: human actions appeared to them in another light, as unavoidable effects, which either follow'd one another in a fatal series of infinite causes, or suppos'd some principle originally evil the author of this necessity.

AN infinite succession of causes and effects was a notion too obscure to be entertain'd by the

\* Because the Author of our being might seem to be chargeable with those disorders which arose from the abuse of liberty, to prevent any imputation on the Deity, they affirm'd that this liberty was the highest perfection, the source of the greatest happiness, and every moral virtue; and an essential property of a reasonable being; Simp. p. 185. Com. *πρωτων αγαθων νομιζομενων εν τω κοσμω μειζον εστι και τιμιωτερον εστιν αγαθον η αυτεξουσιως. Παντων γαρ υπο σεληνην υπερεχει τουτο· and p. 97. ει δε αγαθον νομιζομενων εν τω κοσμω μειζον εστι και τιμιωτερον πως αν ειη κακου αιτιος ο το αγαθον υποσησας.* And so Arrian calls this free agency, lib. 3. cap. 3. *υλη του καλου και αγαθου το ιδιον ηγεμονικον.* Hierocles makes it so necessary, that the notion of a Providence must stand or fall with it, as well as all moral difference of human actions: De Provid.

— προς αρετην και κακιαν αυτοκινήσεως ημων η προνοητικη ει-  
μαρμενη δειται, p. 18. and all just distribution of rewards and  
punishments; *· ε γαρ αλλως δικαια ανισος διανομη μη υποβειν λα-  
βουσα το ημετερον εξουσιαν,* *ibid.* And as they held liberty es-  
sential to reason, they concluded it was no more inconsistent  
with the divine perfections to make creatures capable to offend,  
than to make them reasonable: Nemes. *περ φυσικως,* p. 294.  
*Αναγκη γαρ των δυοιν το ετερον η αλογον γενεσθαι η λογικον και περι  
πρακτεα συσφρομενον αυτεξουσιον ειναι, εξ αναγκης ουν πασα φυσικη  
λογικη αυτεξουσιος εστι, και τριπτη κατ την εαυτης φυσιν.*

the vulgar; 'twas more easy for them to ascribe all those disorders, which disturb'd the beauty or order of the universe, to an evil principle: they were willing to cast the blame of their bad actions upon necessity; and the fears of superstition, heighten'd by that gloom which suffering throws upon the mind, as well as the prevailing inclination in mankind to fancy the Deity to be very like themselves; these dispositions, I say, favour'd by appearances, first produc'd the opinion of a mischievous being, the cause of all evil\*.

HOWEVER we account for it, the fact is not to be deny'd that too many, not only of the vulgar, but even the more judicious, in every age, have believ'd that an evil deity had an equal share in the government of the world. We learn from Plutarch †, that this opinion was deriv'd from the first divines and lawgivers, by a tradition so antient that the author could not be discover'd; from whose

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time

\* Those who could not distinguish so well, concluded there must be some original cause of evil, as there was of good; as nothing could exist without some cause: *ει δε εστιν αναιτιας πεφυκε γενεσθαι αιτιαν δε κακω το αγαθον εκ αν παραθοι, δει γενεσθιν ιδιων και αρχην ωσπερ αγαθω και κακω την φυσιν εχει,* Plutarch. de Iside & Osyride.

† Plutarch. de Iside & Osyride: *Παμπαλαιωσ αυτη κατεστιν εκ θεολογων και νομοθετων εις τε ποιητας και φιλοσοφωσ δεξα την αρχην αδελφοτην εχουσα · την δε πειν ιαυραν και εδσεξαλοιπτον εκ εν λογωισ, &c.* So Diogenes Laertius informs us, that the Egyptians (whom Aristotle calls the antientest people of the world) held two principles, one the cause of good, and the other of evil;

time it had obtain'd a firm and uninterrupted belief, and was the subject not only of vulgar persuasion, but the ground of religious rites and institutions, both among Greeks and Barbarians. The \* Stoicks, and other philosophers, only disguis'd the common notion, when they ascrib'd all evil to a certain pravity of matter †, which disturb'd that order which the Creator had establish'd, and tended to reduce things to the primitive confusion. For which reason Manes, the patron of an evil Principle, made § matter to have been his production. Other antient hereticks seem to have conceal'd the same belief of two principles

as the Persians and Greeks did; Proœmio: *δυο κατ' αυλης αρχαι κγαθεν δαιμονια και τω ανωμα Ξευς και Ωρομασδης, τω δε Αδης, &c.* And so the Romans had the same notion: *Virgilium quoque* *αυτ' (says Aulus Gellius, Noctes Atticæ, lib. 3. c. 12.)* *lumina lava in Georgicis quoque deprecari, significantem quandam vim esse hujusmodi deorum in lædendo magis quam in juvando potentem.*

\* Seneca, *Præfatio ad Natural. Quæst.* Non potest artifex mutare materiam; non quia cessat ars, sed quia id, in quo exercetur, inobsequens est arti.

† Hierocles, *de Provid.* p. 11. Lond. *διότι η της υλης και κια η προχρηται την επιθειον και επεισο διωδη ταξιν αποσειεται συν-εχως εις την αγενητην αυτης ως τις ειποιεν αταξιαν ανατρεχουσα.*

§ Epiphani. *Hæref.* 66. *εχειν δε εν τω κοσμω των τριτων αρχωνας υποσησεις και την μιν μιαν πεποιθηκειναι το σωμα την δε ψυχην ειναι της ετερας.* To conclude, all mankind seem to have been divided into those three distinctions, either, 1. Those who deny'd there was any Providence or supream Goodness at all. 2. Those who ascrib'd all the evil in the world to the abuse of liberty: or, 3. Those who held a plurality of gods, some the cause of good, and the others, of evil. The last opinion seems to have taken its rise from some difficult appearances, which they could not reconcile with a supream



ciples under an unintelligible jargon of their own. Indeed, the true religion itself was not altogether free from the taint of this opinion, which was too much entertain'd by some, who sincerely abhorr'd the notion of an independent being necessarily evil.

COMMON entertainment is no proof that an opinion is true: for nothing can be more absurd in itself, than this of two principles, or more repugnant to the ideas we receive from nature. We cannot frame any notion of a being, at once evil, and existing of himself: or, could we reconcile two such inconsistent attributes, we could not thereby account for the present order of things. For how could two beings, one perfectly good, and the other perfectly evil, so opposite in their interests

pream Goodness: for as for the notion that the same Being could be the proper cause of all good and all evil, it was too absurd to find any entertainment; and was rejected, as an antient writer informs us, both by Greeks and Barbarians, as an impossible falsehood. *Ψευδὸς ἀδύνατον περὶ ἢ πάντες Ἕλληνας καὶ βαρβαροὶ ταναυῖα ἀληθῆς διαδοξαζοῦσι.* In fine, the foundation of religion ought to be laid in a just apprehension of the moral attributes of God; *της περὶ τας θεας ευσεβείας ἰσθὶ οὐ το κυριότατον ἐκεῖνο ἐστὶν ὁρθῶς ὑποληψῆς περὶ αὐτῶν εἶχειν ὡς αὐτῶν καὶ διοικεῖται τὰ πάντα καλῶς καὶ δικαίως,* Epict. c. 36. And nothing can be more contrary to a supream Goodness, than the notion of fate or necessity. So an antient author observes, Sallust. de Provid. p. 18. *το δὲ ἀδικίας τε καὶ ἀσελγείας ἐκ τῆς Ἐπιμαρκιανῆς διδοῦναι ἡμᾶς μὲν ἀγαθούς, τοὺς δὲ θεοὺς ποιεῖν ἐς κακούς.* Now as the clearest evidence for the divine goodness is deriv'd from the knowledge of our selves, and the relation in which we stand to other beings, the design of the following discourse is to lead the reader into such reflexions, as may be useful to give him a right notion of human nature, which has been very much misrepresented both by good and bad men, with very different views.

interests and designs, agree in making a world, or any thing else? or how could any thing regular and uniform arise from so odd a contrast of original causes?

BUT general reasonings are not so proper, when the objection against a supream Goodness is built upon facts: we ought therefore to compare appearances, that so we may judge on what side the greater evidence lyes; whether the marks of good design in the make of man, and other creatures, is a better and more convincing argument to prove that nature is the production of one good Being, or the defects of human nature, and the evils to which human life is liable, to prove the contrary.

MANY things indeed there are, which we cannot easily reconcile with the idea of a supream Goodness; but the real difficulties have been much increas'd by ascribing a multitude of evils, which are either imaginary, or the creatures of our own liberty, to the Author of nature: these are consistent enough with religion, if men are once allow'd to be masters of their own actions, and other evils, which are properly natural, and make but a small part of what men suffer, are but difficulties, which, considering our incapacity to judge of the designs of Providence, are not perhaps very considerable, at least not sufficient to preponderate the evidences on the other side. For if some disagreeing ap-

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pearances in so large and profound a subject of speculation as the nature of things, were enough to overthrow the evidence of sense in a thousand instances of goodness; or, in other words, were clear ideas of benevolence to yield to ignorance and conjecture, and conclusions to be form'd, not from what we know, but from what we don't, human understanding would be as useless and insignificant a faculty in other matters, as some have unjustly suppos'd it to be in religion.

INDEED, did the case stand as some have stated it; was human nature so wicked and so wretched a thing as they have been pleas'd in great good nature to represent it, no otherwise distinguish'd from that of other creatures but by propensions to offend which they could not resist\*; or were men as necessarily mov'd by their passions, as a machine is by the wheels, or the sea by the winds; and were their motions at the same time as irregular, equally contrary to their own and the happiness of society: creatures of so odd a make must either be the work of a blind undesigning nature, or of a being which intended to **make** them unhappy. Opinions of such horrid consequence naturally tend to destroy the comfort of every man's breast, and it is no wonder if they should sometimes terminate in a resolution as unnatural as it is impious: for what concern could a thinking man have for  
life,

\* See a late discourse, entitled, a Philosophical Dissertation on Death.

life, who was necessarily unhappy without possibility of redress.

BUT, thanks to heaven, reason has no great share in such melancholy reflexions, which are little else than the dictates of passion and discontent: for as men rashly censure the actions of their governors, when ill-humour inclines them to find fault, and ignorance makes them unfit to judge; so under the wise administration of Providence there are many such malecontents, who, instead of a fair survey of nature with the modesty of creatures, run headlong into censure, and are fond of difficulties: hence every appearance of disorder has been unjustly heighten'd, and disorders fancy'd where there is not so much as the appearance: hence their own mistakes have been charg'd upon nature, and every objection made unanswerable, to which they could not find an answer.

Now as discontent has commonly an equal share both in impiety and superstition, and the same suspicion which makes the timorous tremble at the apprehensions of a being perfectly evil, is apt to make the bold presume there is no providence at all with which men have any concern; no reflexions can be more useful than such as tend to make us satisfy'd with our selves, and reconcile us to the order of nature: nor can any thing of this kind be unseasonable, at a time when too many, from a distrust of the supream Goodness, are inclin'd to fancy that to destroy life is the only consolation left to the unhappy.

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*O'bservations on the unity of good design, in the frame of man, and other creatures, as that affords sufficient proof both of the unity and goodness of the supream Being.*

**T**HE general inclination to idolatry or impiety, arising from some difficult appearances in nature which seem'd to impeach the divine goodness; no observations can be more instructive than such as tend to vindicate this perfection of the Deity, from a survey of his works.

HUMAN nature is that part of the creation with which we are best acquainted; and such knowledge as relates to our selves, and other creatures about us, is not less valuable, but more useful, that the objects of it are familiar, and that it demands no great attention to acquire it.

SPECULATIONS about the distance and magnitude of a star, or the motions of a comet, or such minuter enquiries as regard the lower parts of life, *v. g.* the generation of insects, or the production of shells; these, I say, may afford matter of more profound observation: but as that sort of food is not always the most wholesome, which is most curious in the kind, and hardest to be got; so

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we are not to estimate the value of knowledge by the difficulty of acquiring it, which so far resembles trade, that it turns commonly to best account when the materials are the growth of home. Indeed the objects we daily converse with, bear the most intelligible character of a supream mind; so many beings there are within our observation, so nicely adapted to human use, for which they had been unserviceable with another make and situation; so many provisions there are not only for sustenance, but enjoyment, with so great a variety of good intention in those things we see, hear, and feel, and best understand, that there is no need to seek for remote proofs of a divine care and benevolence, from distant parts of nature. From such familiar objects, and a reflexion upon ourselves, we derive the clearest notions of a Deity, and his perfection: for by the character of our own mind, and the tendency of those affections which are natural to us, we learn sufficiently the design of making us such creatures as we are, and consequently how much we are indebted to the maker.

ANOTHER use of such observations is to confute those suspicions of the divine care, which has been in all ages the great support of superstition and impiety, and has had perhaps a greater share in the singular opinions of some odd people, who are stil'd atheists, than any profound researches into nature. In the following discourses I shall shew, the common



grounds of irreligion and idolatry are unreasonable, from such considerations as these :

I. THAT many creatures, animate and inanimate, are made serviceable to our use, and that by a variety of contrivances which express an unity of design.

II. THAT such is the make and constitution of our bodies, that we are plainly made not for subsistence only, but the enjoyment of life.

III. THAT our minds are endued with such principles and affections, as lead us to the pursuit both of private and publick happiness.

IV. THAT when we deviate from these principles, so as to act contrary to our own and the interest of society, we are not influenc'd by any necessity impos'd upon us by the Author of our being.

FROM these general propositions sufficiently prov'd, it will follow,

1. THAT there is a plan laid by the supream Being for the happiness of men, in a combination of natural causes and effects, the execution of which nothing can ordinarily defeat, but their own ill conduct.

2. As the virtuous principles of human nature cannot be altogether and generally extinguish'd, it will follow that mankind cannot be quite so bad as some have represented them.

3. THAT the evils to which human life is liable in ordinary circumstances, are more

than compensated by the pleasures of which we are made capable; and that the complaints people are apt to make, are either altogether groundless, or only a peevish aggravation of those misfortunes which they bring upon themselves, or which nothing but discontent makes intolerable\*.

4. THAT the Author of a system in which so many causes concur to one good design, the happiness of men, is perfectly good, and can be but one.

LASTLY, From these principles it will follow that discontent, and all those opinions and practices which arise from it, are unreasonable.

I. THAT mankind are placed among a variety of objects fitted to give pleasure, with proper faculties to enjoy them, is a thing which requires no proof. The particular make of those creatures, and their adjustment to our circumstances, is a plain argument that they were intended for our use.

ONE cannot but † observe in the scale of animals a certain gradation of being, by which they descend through several intermediate degrees

\* Θεός εδωκεν ημῶν τὰς δυνάμεις ταύτας καθ' ἃς οἰοῦμεν παντὸ ἀποβαίνον μὴ ταπεινωμένοι μηδὲ συγκλωμενοὶ ὑπ' αὐτῶν. Arrian. in Epict. cap. 7. lib. 2.

† That other animals were made to be useful to man, is not an opinion we owe merely to revelation. Xenophon. *Απομ.* cap. 3. p. 147. Lond. 1720. ἔ γὰρ τοῦτο φανερόν ὅτι πάντα ἀνθρώπων ἐνεκα γίνεταί καὶ ἀνατρέφεσθαι τι γὰρ ἄλλο ζῶον αἰγῶν τε καὶ ἡνίων καὶ ἵππων καὶ βοῶν καὶ οἴων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζῶων τούτων ἀγαθὰ ἀπολαύει.

degrees of reason and sense, till they dwindle into mere existence; and that every sort of creatures, according to the rank they obtain in nature, enjoys the usefulness of those below them, at the same time they are subservient to the happiness of superior animals: accordingly, the structure of every animal is adapted to its particular station, and the ends for which it was design'd \*. Now as man is a creature of more excellence than the perfectest kind of brutes, (though as to some particular qualities he may be exceeded by some of them) 'tis no fond imagination to suppose, that creatures less perfect were made for his service: for besides that this observation agrees with the subordination of other animals, the lesser to the greater (as some fishes and insects were plainly design'd to be the food of others more perfect in the kind) this intention of nature is sufficiently express'd by the suitability of those creatures to the wants and necessities of mankind; and it is plain, though we may discover and improve this fitness, we do not make it. Many † animals are naturally fit to serve us in different ways, for which they had been useles had their make been

\* Such a gradation of being is remark'd by an excellent philosopher: Nemes. *περι φυσικης συναπτων αλληλοις τη και ελιγον οικειοτητι και παραλλαγη της φυσικης ως μη και πολυ διαβαιναι τα παντα αψυχα των εχοντων φυτων την θρηπτικην δυναμιν, μηδ αυτα των αλογων των λογικων απηλλοτριωσαι.*

† Nemes. p. 32. *δηλοι δε τευτο και η των πολλων ζων κατασ-*

been different. Every one almost pays his quota to the lord of the creation, if not immediately, yet at least by a subservience. To some we are indebted for food and cloathing, to others for the means of health; one sort assists in agriculture and mechanical arts, another transports us from place to place, and a third are the ministers and companions of our innocent diversions: and although it seems a barbarous abuse of our power, to give those creatures unnecessary pain, and a wanton cruelty to sacrifice their lives to mere luxury and appetite; however as the health and convenience of man are more considerable than the life of a brute, it does not appear unequal that creatures, who are so much beholden to our care for the comfort of their life, (as many of those are which are immediately useful to us) and to whom the destruction of life can be no great evil, should sometimes lose it for our subsistence or convenience.

## II. As

κεινη προς υπερ ησαν των ανθρωπων επιτηδιος γενομενη. Nor is it unfit that so many creatures should have been intended for the service of such a being as man, who has so many prerogatives of nature above them: *τις δ αν εξιπτεν δυναιτο τα τουτου του ζωου πλεονεκτηματια πελαγη διαβαίνει ουρανον εμβατενει τη θηρηη ασεραν κινηματα και μετρα κατανοει γην καρπουσαι, και θαλασσαν θηραν και κητων καταφρονει πασαν επισημηη, &c.* This advantage of reason, makes up for the defects of some inferior qualities which brutes may possess in a higher degree: *ο ανθρωπος πασας εχων τας δυναμεις εν εκαση λειπεται ητω μεν γαρ εχομεν την λογικην δυναμιν υπερ οι θεοι και τον θυμον και επιθυμιαν ενδεεσεραν των εν τοις αλογοις, και την θρηπτικην και αυξητικην δυναμιν ελλαττουμενας των εν τοις φυτοις.* Auctor vitæ Pythagoræ apud Photium,

II. As for those inanimate creatures about us which we enjoy by the organs of sense, it is plain these are variously contriv'd for our pleasure and use; and the benefit we receive by them depends upon a combination of natural \* causes, which equally expresses the wisdom and goodness of the Creator.

THIS contrivance of different natures for human use is visible in so many instances, and those so obvious, that it requires no profound reflexion to observe it. One need not be a theorist or philosopher to acquire a sufficient stock of this knowledge from the most familiar objects; on the contrary, he must have no great share of reflexion, who has not made many such observations. One of plain understanding, whose thoughts never soar'd so high as the fix'd stars, who has not skill to demonstrate, nor philosophick faith to believe the incredible motions and prodigious bulk

\* The adjustment of our organs to the objects of sense, and the subserviency of one sense to another, is observ'd by an old author; Timæus, περι ψυχης κοσμου, p. 15. την δε αυθησαν των μεν οψιν αμμιν τον θεον αναψαι εις θεϊαν των ουρανιων και επιταμιας αναλαψιν, των δε ακοαν λογων και μελαυ αντιληπτικην εφησεν ας περισομοιος εκ γενεσιος ο ανθρωπος ουτε λογον προεσθαι δυνασθαι δια και συγγενεσεται τω λογω ταυταν αισθασις φανη ειμιν. It is certain, the faculty of speech would be of little or no use to us, did we want that of hearing. Xenoph. Απομν. το δε ειπειδη πολλα μεν καλα και ωφελιμα διαφεροντε δε αλληλων, εσι προδιδηται τοις ανθρωποις αισθησεις αρμοδρουσας προς εκασα δε αν απολαωμεν παυτων των αγαθων.

Nemes. p. 243. Πρωτον μεν φωτος δεομεθα ημιν ο θεος παρεχουσι  
 ογε ει μη ειχομεν ομοιοι τοις τυφλοις.

bulk of those bodies which appear so little, may be wise enough to infer from the uniform appearance of the sun and moon, that motions so regular as theirs are must suppose the direction of some intelligent Cause, and that the advantages we receive from this regularity are very considerable: though he has no notion of the earth's daily revolution upon its axis, or its annual circuit in the ecliptick, he cannot but perceive that the succession of day and night, and the constant variety of the seasons, must depend upon certain motions admirably contriv'd for our advantage. It is fit that our spirits should be recruited by sleep, after the fatigue and cares of the day; and it is no less plain that darkness favours such repose. \* Too sudden a change from cold to heat might have violent effects; nature has therefore provided that we should not pass from one extreme to another but by certain intermediate degrees. The distinction of seasons makes a beautiful contrast in nature; and we owe to this diversity many solid advantages, particularly that the earth produces a greater variety † of plants and vegetables, which being of a very unequal texture,

\* This appointment of nature is notic'd by Xenophon —  
 ἔπειθ' καὶ τοῦτο φανερόν ἐστι οὐκ ἂν ὑπερεγκοίμην εὐπὲ τοῦ καύματος οὐτὲ τοῦ  
 ψυχροῦ εἰ ἐξαπίνης γιγνοίτο οὕτω μὲν κατὰ μικρὸν ἀπινῶν ὡς λαμβάνειν  
 ἡμᾶς εἰς ἑκάτερα τὰ ἰσχυροτάτα καθίσταμενος.

† Woodward, History of the Earth. There are we know, says he, some sort of vegetables which consist of particles very  
 fine



ture, could not be rais'd or nourish'd to their full growth by the same degrees of heat and influence; and 'tis no less certain that the change of distance with respect to the sun, is the cause of this difference. It is not material to know whether we owe such successions to a motion of the sun, or the earth: the wiser part of mankind had the same idea of these appointments in nature, long before there were such persons as Ptolemy or Copernicus.

AN illiterate person, who never perus'd a system of natural philosophy, nor can relish the notion of distant inhabitable worlds, may yet be persuaded, upon sufficient grounds, that the same wise and good Being, who gave such regular motions to the sun and moon, contriv'd the fix'd stars for certain great designs, of which he is not capable to judge.

IF such a person considers the air, he cannot but observe how well this element is fitted for the purposes of life; he cannot but feel a constant pleasure in the healthful  
M draughts

fine and active, and which therefore require only a smaller degree of heat to raise them from out of the earth up into the  
seeds

draughts of it; he cannot but conclude from his own experience, that any considerable change in the state of it would not only render it unfit for respiration, but a conveyance of diseases and death: nor is he less sure of this observation, that he cannot demonstrate how such tragical effects should proceed from such a change. A person may enjoy all the pleasures of fine weather, with gratitude, who cannot enter into the philosophical causes of bad: he may not be able to describe how sounds are convey'd to the ear, or the ideas of colour to the eye; and yet may understand, that the pleasure arising from these sensations is the consequence of certain qualities in the air, which are fitted to our organs: he may not be able to give any account of the origine of winds, and yet be sensible that those violent motions of air, are of use to dissipate noxious vapours, and to carry about the clouds from one country to another for a due distribution of rain; or if he should not know this, he cannot be ignorant, that every wind, however boisterous or violent, transports some vessel into a safe harbour, and  
 many

feeds or roots of those vegetables, for their growth and nourishment: so that for raising of these the sun's power, where only lesser, is sufficient, and therefore they begin to appear in the earlier months February and March; when the sun is far advance'd, it is but just come to the pitch of another set of vegetables.

many more perhaps than it drives against a rock.

\* How the earth is suspended in the air, and always obtains the same just situation with respect to the fountain of heat, is a matter of difficult speculation; but there is no difficulty in observing the advantages we receive from the wise appointment, that we should always remain at such a convenient distance, so as not to suffer any great hurt from either extreme.

† EVERY one knows that life cannot subsist without a due proportion of heat, and that the extremes on either side are equally dangerous, which must either stupify the senses, or make them languid; and where the excess does not destroy sensation, it must abate the pleasure, and render our bodies unfit for

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action:

\* Plato imagin'd that nothing was requir'd to this constant position of the earth in one part of the heavens, but that all its parts should be equally pois'd, and the surrounding æther should be perfectly uniform: Plato's Phæd. p. 169. Πίπεισμαι τοῖσιν ἐγὼ ὡς πρῶτον μὲν εἰ ἐστὶν γῆ ἐν μέσῳ τῆ βραχέος περιφέρειας οὐρα; μὴ δὲ αὐτὴν δεῖν μῆτε αἶρος πρὸς τὸ μὴ πίπειν μῆτε ἀλλῆς ἀναγκῆς μῆδ' αἰτίας τοιαύτης ἀλλ' ἰκανὴν γέ εἶναι, αὐτὴν εἶναι τὴν ὁμοιοτήτα τῆ βραχέος αὐτῆς αὐτῶ πάτη καὶ τῆς γῆς αὐτῆς τὴν ἰσορροπίαν. Our modern philosophers perhaps will not reckon this account of the matter to be satisfying.

† Arrian. in Epictetum, lib. I. p. 119. δισταξὲ δὲ θεροῦ εἶναι καὶ χειμῶνα καὶ φορᾶν καὶ ἀφορᾶν καὶ ἀρετὴν καὶ κακίαν καὶ πᾶσας τὰς ἐναντιότητας ὑπερ σὺμφασιες τῶν ὀλῶν.

action: now if he looks into a map, he cannot but learn that the earth under most climates is habitable; and where there is some inconvenience from the excesses of heat and cold, nature has provided those in a less convenient situation with a proper remedy; against the excess of heat, refreshing streams, breezes from the sea, and cooling grottos; and against the defect, the conveniences of fewel, housing, and cloths.

NOR is the benefit we receive from a due proportion of rain less obvious; and though it may require a philosopher's understanding to calculate what quantity of vapours is rais'd by the heat of the sun, and to describe the successive changes it receives as it happens to be rarefy'd or condens'd, it requires less capacity to observe that the rain distils in drops, and does not pour down in streams, which would be very inconvenient; that it falls in such a manner as to soften\* and fructify the ground, which the best cultivation

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could

\* Xenophon very justly observes of water, that we not only owe to it the growth of those vegetables which afford nourishment; but that this element makes a part of it. *Απομ.* p. 241. Lond. 1720. *Πάντα τα χρησιμα ημιν συντρέφειν δε και αυτους ημιας και μεμιγμενον πασι τοις τρεφουσι ημιας.* It was probably for this reason that the antients made the ocean to be the origine of all things; because the vapour which is rais'd from it,

could not make fruitful without it; and that the quantity of rain is ordinarily suited to the exigence of different countries.

ONE need not be a theorist to know that the sea is a vast collection of waters, which by its natural fluidity is apt enough to overflow the earth, was it not confin'd within its bounds. It is not so plain that there are cavities under ground, prepar'd to receive it, and that it communicates with a greater collection of water diffus'd under the earth. However, every one may be sure that this element maintains a vast variety of inhabitants, which have their food

it, and falls down in rain, is one of the principal causes of vegetation. Pharnutus calls it, *αρχηγος των παντων*. For the same reason Neptune was stil'd, *φυταλμιος*. *επειδη του φουεωδαι τι εκ της γης γινομαισι η εν αυτη οικιας παραστιος εστιν*. The ancient Egyptians worshipp'd those elements, fire and water, as the chief causes of our subsistence. Porph. de Abstinent. lib. 4. *υδωρ και πυρ σεβοντες καλιστα των στοιχειων ως ταυτα αιτιατα της σωτηριας ημων*. This was the reason, perhaps, why Thales, who first accounted for the origine of things in a strict philosophical way (*πρωτος διηβωσε τον περι αρχων λογον*, as Eusebius observes of him, Prop. Ev. lib. 10. c. ult.) made water to be the principle of which all things were produc'd; *αρχην των παντων υδωρ υποσησατο*. 'Tis certain that the various changes of this element, with the constant influence of the sun, are a regular circulation of causes upon which the life of man and other animals continually depends; and express a plain contrivance for our subsistence: as Nemes. *Ουκ αν αστραν κινησεις και σπρασος και ωραι και ομηροι και τα τοιαυτα ου δια ταυτα γεγονε αλλα ινα των τροφων ως εν κυκλω διηκεω χωρηγουμενων αποτελις και η των προσφερομενων τους καρπους διαρμεινη φυσις, ως ευρισκεισθαι ταυτη μιν δια τους καρπους δια τα ζωα και τον ανθρωπον*.

food in the ocean, and that the saltness of its water is necessary to their preservation; and that these creatures are variously useful. In fine, nothing is more obvious than that the sea is the great scene of navigation and commerce, by which the necessities of one country are supply'd by the productions of another, and a proper distribution made of nature's bounty to the remotest and least favour'd climates.

WHETHER the earth moves, or not, or whatever may be its particular figure, we are sure it yields a sufficient provision for man and beasts: nor is it less the granary and store-house of nature, because we may not be able to give a philosophical account of its productions. Many plants, shrubs and trees grow upon its surface, which please our senses by their figure and smell, and regale our taste; tho' we do not understand how they grow, or what particular texture of parts is the cause or occasion of these grateful sensations. We may be sure that the earth is stor'd with juices proper for the maintenance of these vegetables, though we never curiously observ'd those tender fibres which nature has prepar'd to receive them. Every one knows there is such a thing as nutrition, though he cannot form any idea how the nutritive liquor ascends in tubes into the branches and leaves, and  
making



making a circuit through the bark at length returns to the root; a circulation not so sensible as the effects of it, the growth and nourishment of so many vegetables, which are variously useful either for food or medicine, either immediately to men, or those creatures which afford him sustenance. A truth so certain that (as some judicious physicians have observ'd) the diseases which prevail in different countries may be known by the nature of those medicinal plants which they produce; what particular qualities, or constitution of parts this healing virtue depends upon, is a point of more philosophical consideration.

'Tis not of importance to know whether rivers take their origine merely from rain, or from a subterraneous vapour, rais'd by heat, and afterwards collected into proper reservoirs. Philosophers may dispute the point till they are weary; it is sufficient for ordinary folks to understand that rivers afford a beauty and convenience of which very few countries are destitute, and that nature has provided proper chanel, for their conveyance from one country to another. Nor is the wisdom of nature less apparent in the distribution of these through the earth, according to the circumstances of different countries: for as rain is usual-  
ly

ly dispens'd in proportion to the necessities of a climate; so, for this end, the largest \* rivers take their rise in those parts of the globe, which are most liable to the inconveniences of heat, as a natural remedy against this disadvantage.

AND although some have censur'd the unequal surface of the earth as a very ugly appearance, this seeming deformity is compensated by the benefit we receive from it. It is certain if we could not well subsist without rivers, mountains must be a necessary evil, as waters cannot run upon a level, or would not be of any great use did they stagnate: and as the source of rivers must be above the ordinary surface of the earth, and have a course proportionable to the height from which they flow; hence it is that the countries which lye in the Torrid Zone, or those parts of the earth where the heat is very great, are provided with mountains of a suitable height.

THE subterraneous world is a part of nature to which the wisest must be very much strangers: and though some are endow'd with so much sagacity, that nothing seems to escape their  
their

\* As the Nile, the Niger, the Rio de Volta, the Ganges, and Rio de Plata.

their observation; it can reach no farther than the objects which some way fall under their senses. Any accounts of what passes under ground, may be justly compar'd to fairy-tales, which are more the offspring of fancy than experience. Notwithstanding this uncertainty, we are sure there are many fossils of excellent and almost necessary use in life, and there may be many more, which would be useful could we apply them: besides those which human labour has produc'd, there are vast treasures of undiscover'd metals and minerals, and stones of divers kinds, deposited under ground, to be dislodg'd upon a proper occasion, which are design'd at once to serve the future purposes of life, and employ the industry of discoverers.

It is too certain from daily experience, that some countries are subject to violent shocks from a subterraneous heat, and a particular disposition of the earth in those places: without enquiring into the proper cause of such disasters, we may be sure that such accidents would be more frequent, did not we owe their prevention to a good contrivance.

NATURE, in all its productions, is perhaps more or less liable to waste and decay; some parts however are so stable and permanent, as not to have suffer'd any apparent change or diminution within the memory of man, or so far as history doth inform us. The heavenly bodies, so far as observation reaches, dispense their influence without any abatement or alteration in the appearance; and our earth, by an immutable law of the Creator, remains in the same convenient situation: the sea is confin'd to its channel, and makes no encroachment on the dry land, at least, no considerable depredations; and that remains so far unchang'd, that \* mountains are not either ordinarily rais'd or destroy'd by earthquakes, or any considerable part of the continent torn off and separated from the main land, and reduc'd into islands. If there have been any stories to the contrary, these want to be better attested; mean time the superficial parts of the earth, from which plants and animals derive their sustenance, are subject to a continual decay, are apt to be wasted by digging, and wash'd away by the violence of weather: but these  
dimin-

\* See what arguments Dr. Woodward has brought to support this assertion, in his *Natural History of the Earth*.

diminutions are supply'd by proper manure, and by that vegetable matter with which rain water is impregnated\*.

VEGETABLE bodies are generally so framed, as to be capable of a short duration; but a provision is made for a succession of the species, by those different seeds which were originally lodg'd in the earth, and are thought to include the entire form of every vegetable: for raising of which to their proper growth there is a continual supply of juices proper for their nourishment, and which every soil is apt to produce according to its different productions.

AND as those animals, from which we derive our sustenance, soon return to dust, for the continuance of the species all animals are led by an irresistible appetite to propagate their kind; and are govern'd by a strong affection to their young, which

N 2

they

\* Nor does the water (says a late author) serve only to carry the matter into these bodies (vegetables) but the parts of it being very soluble and lubricous, as well as fine and small, it easily insinuates it self into, and placidly distends the tubes and vessels of vegetables, and by that means introduces into them the matter it bears along with it, conveying it to the several parts of them; where each part, by a particular mechanism, detaches and assumes those particles of the mass so convey'd, which are proper for the nourishment and augmentation of the part, incorporating those with it, and letting all the rest pass on with the fluid.

they express in a wise care to provide for them so long as they stand in need of that assistance: in a word, they are all provided with proper food, and the means of obtaining it; the make of their bodies is suited to their particular usefulness, and they are furnish'd with an invincible inclination to do what is necessary to preserve themselves\*, and continue the kind; for which purpose, as there is a proportion between the males and females, so the different species of living creatures more or less useful to us, are observ'd to multiply in proportion to the advantages we receive by them.

ONE need not consult books in order to collect many such observations, which are

\* Nature has provided all creatures, not only with an appetite, but the means of self-preservation, against all those attacks which may threaten their safety. Nemes. *περι Φυσ.* p. 87. speaking of this various provision in brutes: *ε μνη ασοβοηθα παντα πασιν αυτα κατελοιπεν δημιουργος αλλ εκασω φυσικην ε λογικην ενεβαλε συνεσιν, τισι δε πανουργιαν ενεθηκεν ωσπερ τεχνης εικονα και σκιαν λογικην δυοιν τωτων επεκα υπερ του και τας ενεσώσας επιβουλας εκκλινειν και τας μελλουσας προφυλαττεσθαι.* The same author truly observes of mankind, p. 35. *εχει δε μυριας ο ανθρωπος αντιπαθεις τωτων δυναμεις δεδωμενας παρα του δημιουργου ειργειν και αμυνεσθαι και διαρβουσθαι τας επιβουλας αυτων δυναμενας.* The preservation of the kind, is the effect of an inclination which is common to all animals. Aristotle observes particularly of mankind, *ανδρι και γυναικι φιλικα δοκει ειναι κατ φυσιν υπαρχειν, ανθρωπος γαρ τη φυσει συνδυασικον μαλλον η πολιτικον και σω προτερον και αναγκαιοτερον οικια πολειω και τεκνοποιια κοινοτερον ζωαις.* Arist. *Ethic. lib. 9. p. 374. Edit. Ox.*



are so plainly writ in the characters of nature; so that a person who is not vers'd in physical enquiries, or an adept in metaphysicks, may make such conclusions with as much evidence and certainty as any learned person whatever, who pretends to demonstrate the laws by which God made and preserves the world. Learning, indeed, may assist our enquiries, and enlarge our views: but no acquisitions of this kind can add to the evidence of what we see with our eyes.

To sum up the evidence; If so many creatures of a different nature are, by a particular contrivance, fitted to our use, and minister to our happiness; if plants and vegetables are so form'd as to receive proper nourishment by rain and heat, and these are dispens'd in a due proportion for this effect; if the air is distributed into every part of them by proper vessels, and the vegetative liquor is made to circulate; if the air we breathe is fit for respiration, and the earth we tread upon is an agreeable scene, wisely contriv'd for the entertainment of our eyes and ears, and other organs; and if we are not only entertain'd by those objects which grow upon its surface, but live upon this growth; have not only necessary maintenance, but a variety of wholesome

some food: these provisions, both for subsistence and enjoyment, were not intended merely for the support of an animal life; but to convince our reason that the Author of a system, compos'd of so many parts, rang'd into such beautiful order, and so highly conducive to our advantage, must be a wise and good Being; and that the government of nature is not divided into particular districts independent of the whole, and subject to distinct deities; but is one united empire, which is govern'd, as it was produc'd, by one supreme mind.

As we judge of a piece of history-painting by the proper disposition of the figures, and the just relation which the lesser bear to the principal; so, in the survey of nature, the fitness of every particular appointment is to be determin'd by its subserviency to human happiness, at least so far as we can judge of it with sufficient certainty: for as for more extended views of design beyond our system, we may indeed conjecture, but cannot by our reason take in a larger compass.

HOWEVER, as in a well-wrought poem there may be some episodes, some particular passages, *detaché*, which seem to have no connexion with the principal design,  
and

and yet these may not only be excellent in themselves, but ornaments to the whole; just so in the frame of nature, many parts of the composition may appear to us in not so favourable a light, when these are consider'd in relation to the system, merely from our ignorance or mistake concerning the main intention of the Author.

NOTWITHSTANDING this visible harmony of natural causes and effects, if man, for whose advantage so many creatures were suppos'd to have been made, was in his own nature, that is, by his original frame, a creature without any good principles or dispositions leading to happiness; was his reason \* an useless faculty, or only fit to lead him astray, and that  
reason

\* A late writer says [Philosophical Discourse on Death]  
 " Human passions are like the winds, of which the strongest  
 " hurries away the ship wherever they please, without con-  
 " sulting its able pilot;" and many better authors have fallen  
 into the same assertion. It has been too much the custom  
 for men to form a judgment of human nature by a reflexion  
 upon themselves: it is too true that passion has a great share  
 in human actions, and 'tis possible for men to be so much  
 enslav'd to it, that they cannot but act according to its  
 direction; but that men are all naturally in such an unhappy  
 state of servitude, is not to be prov'd by a mere affirmation.  
 A very wise author observes, that a power to use our appetites  
 aright, is the uncontroll'd privilege of human nature: Arrian.  
 in Epictet. cap. 19. p. 231. *ὅτι πλετοῦς ἐστὶν ἰσφὴ μὴ ἔθ' υγιαιῖα ὅτι δόξα  
 ὅτι ἄλλο πᾶσι πλὴν ὁρθῆς χρῆσις φαίνεται τῷ τῷ ἀκωλύτοι  
 φησὶ*

reason the dupe of his passions, being first wicked by an unavoidable effect, and then miserable by a necessary consequence, it would not appear a very probable supposition that so many things were made for his use, or that a creature, so oddly constituted in himself, should have been chiefly consider'd in raising so goodly a system: for as  
a wife

*Φησι μόνον τὸ ἀνεμποδίσον.* It may be this author was not sufficiently sensible of human weakness in our present state: however it must be more dangerous to go upon the other extreme, and to divest mankind of a liberty which is essential to our nature, the want of which must equally suppose that there is no such thing as either vice or virtue, and at once destroy the foundation of a good man's hopes and a bad man's fears: *Simpl. Comm. p. 238. cap. 39.* *Ἀναίρεμνης ἀπο τῶν οὐτῶν τῆς ἐφ' ἑκατέρᾳ ῥοπῆς τῶν ψυχῶν ἀνάγκη καὶ τὰς πολυτιμητέας ἀνθρώπους ἀρείας συν ἀναίρεϊσθαι καὶ τὸ εἶδος ὅλον ἀνθρώπινον ἔγωγ' ἐτιν σοφρῶσυνη καὶ δικαίωσυνη ἀνθρώπινη εἰμῆ καὶ παρατραπέσθαι πεφυκε.* To the same purpose a Christian writer, *Clemens Alexand. lib. 1. p. 311.* *οὐτε δὲ οἱ ἐπαινοὶ ἔτε ψόγοι ἔθ' αἰ τιμαὶ ἔθ' αἰ κολάσεις δικαίαι μὴ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐχούσης ἐξουσίαν τῆς ἁρμῆς καὶ ἀφορμῆς.* This is a dictate of common sense, not to be evaded by a simile or a scholastick distinction. One may easily judge with what design Mr. Bayle advanc'd so bold a paradox, That the idea we have of a creature, was inconsistent with a power to act from it self: in the article of the Panliciens, p. 2327. *Que felon les idées que nous avons d'un être créé, nous ne pouvons point comprendre qu'il soit un principe d'action, qu'il se mouvoit lui-même, &c.* It did not require the acuteness of this ingenious writer to perceive the proper and necessary consequence of this opinion, or the truth of what Origen much better says: *Ἀρετῆς μὲν εἰαν ἀρετῆς τὸ ἐκούσιον ἀνετῆς αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν.* I shall conclude this note with an observation of an ancient philosopher; that the proper exercise of reason is the true liberty of a reasonable being. *Eulog. Eth. Stob.*

a wise architect would not throw away his skill in building a palace to accommodate vermin and beasts of prey; so if man was so unreasonable and deprav'd a creature as some describe him, instead of any difficulty to account for some tolerable inconveniences and disadvantages of life, it would puzzle one to give a reason for so many obvious provisions, and such a waste of bounty, in favour of a being, who, as he is suppos'd to be destitute of liberty, and to have a very small share of reason, cannot pretend to any great excellence above the beasts which perish.

To make the former account of nature, and the end of its various productions, appear probable and consistent, it will be proper to do human nature and the wise Author justice, by shewing some of these peculiar excellencies with which we are endu'd.

IN the survey of which we shall find, that mankind are not only provided with the outward materials of enjoyment, but likewise possess certain advantages both of body and mind, which tend equally to

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private

Τον κατα νομι αρα βιον και εχομεσεν των θεων διαζην μελητητεον ουτος γαρ ημιν μοιρος αποδιδωσι την αδισποτην της ψυχης εξευθαν.

private and social happiness. It will also appear from a just account of our selves, that whatever disorders bad education, a mistake of interest, and passions ill-govern'd, may betray some to commit; that the errors of life are not the consequences of any unhappy necessity impos'd upon them, but the results of a choice perfectly free, or, at least, arise from causes which they had originally a power to prevent.

BEFORE we consider the character of our minds, it will not be improper to take a short view of that part of ourselves which we are apt enough to admire, and is indeed too considerable to be overlook'd.

OUR bodies arise from a very inconsiderable origine; but when every part obtains its proper substance, just figure, and usefulness, the whole machine arrives at a form which is apt enough to please, and is worthy of the wise Artificer.

THOUGH we are not so much distinguish'd from mere animals by the beauty and justness of our make, as by more valuable advantages, one cannot but admire how much wisdom and contrivance is express'd in so regular a system of veins and arteries, nerves and tendons, all exquisitely fitted



fitted for distinct ends and purposes in life. A man must have a strange propension \* to doubting, who can question whether so complicated a machine as the human body, was the production of a wise and designing mind. We may indeed mistake in assigning the offices for which particular parts were fram'd, as we cannot enter into all the views and intentions of the Creator; but however imperfect our knowledge may be in some instances, our certainty is not the less concerning a contrivance in the whole; as any one must know that a watch is the work of some artist, though he is not able to explain the mechanism of all its parts; nor is he at a loss to understand the general design of the machine, because he cannot particularly tell how these contribute to produce the effect: in the same way of reasoning we may

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\* Spinoza somewhere calls final causes, *figmenta humana*; and a person much more considerable, *Des Cartes*, affirms that the intentions of nature are all equally hid in an impenetrable obscurity. But this is a paradox contrary to the common sense of men. An antient philosopher much better observes, *Sallust. de Provid. p. 18.* *Εστι δε και της περι τη φυσικη προνοιας ιδειν, τα μιν γαρ ορματα διαφορη προς το βλεπειν κατεσκευασαι, ρινες δε υπο σωμα δια το κρινειν οδοντα, των δε οδοντων οι μισοι μιν οξεισ δια το τερνιεν οι δε ενδον πλατεισ δια το τριπειν τα σιτια.* This obvious provision of nature, in the structure of the teeth, *Xenophon* likewise remarks, *Απομ. p. 60. Lond. 1720.* *τους μιν προσθεν οδοντασ πασι ζωοισ αιοουσ τερνιεν εναι τους γομφουσ αιοουσ*

be sure that the eye is an organ made for a certain end, though we are not able to describe all the humours, coats, and muscles, of which it is compos'd, or account how this curious apparatus is made serviceable to a particular office.

WHATEVER may be the particular intentions of nature in the mechanism of an human body, we need no philosophy to assure us that \*life, and the continuance of it, is the end of this curious system: for do we not find that those parts which are essential, and cannot be wanted, are strongly fortify'd against outward accidents, by bones and muscles; or are deeply lodg'd in cavities, that they may not be expos'd to external violence: for the same end of preservation were not the most useful parts, as our legs and arms, made double, that we might have one in reserve if the other should happen to be lost or disabled.

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παρα τούτων δεξάμενος λαλῶν. And having mention'd the proper situation of the mouth, the nose, and the eyes, he concludes, ταῦτα οὗτου προνοητικῶς πεπρωγμένα ἀπορεῖς ποτὶρος τυχῆς ἢ γυμνῆς ἐργα εἶναι.

\* Xen. Απομ. p. 62. ——— το δὲ ἐμψῦσαι μὲν ἐρωτᾶ τῆς τεκνοποιᾶς ἐμψῦσαι δὲ ταῖς γενομέναις ἐρωτᾶ τοῦ ἐκτρέφειν ταῖς δὲ τραφεῖσι μεγίστην μὲν πόνον τοῦ ζῆν καὶ μεγίστον φόβον τοῦ θανάτου.

THE same intention of nature is pursu'd in making a particular pleasure the reward of those actions, as eating and drinking, which are necessary to preservation; and in making the omission or neglect of them produce a very painful sensation, to the end that the repetition of the same actions conducive to health, might not cloy us so far as to make us neglect what is necessary.

BUT we were not design'd merely to subsist: all the sensations of a person in health, are grateful, and the pleasure which attends them, is the result of such a constitution as nature has given us; so that the same actions which are inconsistent with health, must in the same degree be hindrances to that happiness which depends upon it. The Author of this connexion intended to engage us from the motive of pleasure, to pursue the means of self-preservation.

#### EXPERIENCE

\* Archytas Pythagoreus. Ο αγαθος απη ουτω διακειται ποτ ευτυχιαν ωσπερ και ο τω σωμμετι καλας και ραμαλειως ποτ υγιειαν. So Aristotle, Ethica, cap. 8. lib. 1. Τοις φιλοκαλοισ εσιν ηδεια τα φυσει ηδεια, τοιαυτα δε αι κατ αρετην πραξεις ——— ουδεν δε προσδεται της ηδονης ο βιος αυτων ωσπερ περιαπτου τινος αλλ εχει την ηδονην εν εαυτω.

Plutarch, in his book of Moral Virtue, makes Ariston  
an

EXPERIENCE teaches that certain \* actions, and the affections which lead to them, naturally produce an agreeable flow of spirits, and that good-nature and benevolence give a brisker circulation to the blood : on the contrary, an irregular self-love, which contracts a man within himself, is usually accompany'd with an unreasonable care and distrust, which is an equal disturbance to the vigour of health, and the easiness of reflexion. In short, as the actions and tempers of men are kind and human, or cruel and barbarous, the causes of health and self-enjoyment are either hinder'd or promoted, by a mysterious connexion, which is not the less certain, that we have not philosophy to explain it.

By this connexion in nature, 'tis provided that both parts of our constitution might be rewarded by those actions which are of common advantage, and that at once we should enjoy the pleasures of sense and reflexion, the consciousness of a good action, and the health it produces.

## HEALTH,

an antient philosopher say, that *αρετη*, or virtue, was the same with *υγια*, or health; how justly, one may learn from Cumberland de Legibus Naturæ.

HEALTH, indeed, is liable to many natural interruptions, which no degree of virtue can prevent; however, those necessary disorders are not perhaps so many, as those men contract by an ill conduct; not to say that such interruptions may heighten the enjoyment of life, and though they make a very disagreeable contrast, are not altogether unprofitable to promote that reflexion, which is a much larger cause of satisfaction.

As the frailties of age tend to make life a burden, it can be no great hardship, one would think, to be deliver'd from it by death\*. Men indeed have a very absurd appetite of life, and are willing to survive every enjoyment which can make it valuable: but nature consults  
our

\* As the Author of nature has plainly design'd us for a very short duration in this world, nothing can be more unreasonable than this desire of life. An excellent writer exposes this weakness of our nature in a very reasonable manner. Arrian. cap. 6. in Epictet. Τίνος ενεκα γίνονται σαχυνες, ουχ ινα ξηρανθωσιν αλλα ξηραινονται μεν ουχ ινα θεισθωσιν—— ει συν αισθητην ειχον ευχεσθαι αυτους εδει ινα μηδε ποτε θεισθωσι. τυτο δε καταρα εστιν επι σαχυαν το μηδε ποτε θεισθηναι ουτω ιστιν, οτι και ανθρωπων καταρα εστιν το μη αποθανειν ομοιον τω μη πεπικνηθηναι μηδε θεισθηναι. As it would be contrary to the design of nature for corn not to ripen, and afterwards to be cut down; so it would be no less so for man not to die, and inconsistent with the good intentions of the supream Being, who design'd this world for  
a state

our interest better; one friendly stroke makes the virtuous happy; and had men no expectation beyond the grave, our own follies, and the injustice of others, frequently make this world so tedious a tragi-comedy, that the concluding scene ought not in reason to displease us.

LET us consider man, not only in relation to health, but in that part of his character which is more valuable, as a creature of sense and reason, as a member of society, and a free agent; we shall find that human nature is endow'd with such powers and faculties, such principles and affections, as are equally conducive to his own, and the united happiness of the whole species: and a few observations on these heads will make it plain, that our nature is not so bad as some have describ'd it; and that all our errors are only chargeable upon certain causes which we had in our power to prevent.

## OUR

a state of preparation in order to a future. Life has so great a mixture of evil, that we may be content to part with it, *ανθρωπον ειναι δε διητον ουδενα ουδε εσισθαι τω κακον εξ αρχης γνωμενα ου συνεμιχθη τοις δε μεγαλοις αυτων μεγαλα.* Herod. lib. 7. cap. 203. The happiest have some share of evil; and the greater part (perhaps) suffer more than they enjoy.



OUR senses afford us a various sort of pleasure, which depends upon a combination of causes contriv'd in the best manner for producing in us a grateful sensation.

How this pleasure is produc'd, is much above our reason to describe; we know a particular structure of the \* organs is requisite, and a proper disposition of the air to transmit certain ideas of figure and sound; and should we add, that there is an unintelligible agreement between the faculty and the object of sense, we should not by such an expression be able to convey any idea how we come to be so entertain'd.

IT is certain, sensation makes a considerable part of common enjoyment, and those of perfecter organs who have the art of grafting the pleasure of reflexion upon those of sense, have a much more elegant satisfaction; the harmony of sounds, and the artful compositions of colour, conveying to people of better taste certain ideas of which the vulgar are incapable. Now if we consider how small a share of reflexion contents

\* Xenop. Ατυπ. p. 60. *εκ σοι δοκει εξ αρχης ποιων ανθρωπος περιθεσθαι αυτοις διων αιθανονηαι εκασα ορθολικως μενωθ ορατα οραται ωτα δε ως ακουεν τα ακουσα, Οσμων γε ημη ειρες τερεσεθησαν τι αν ημιν ορελοστις δον αιδησις ην γλυκεων και δειμων και πανηων των δια σωματῶ ηδεων ημη γλοττα τωτων γνωμων ενεγαθη: This suitability in the structure of the organs of sense to external objects, is a plain contrivance, without either of which the other would be useless.*

the bulk of mankind, and how indifferently they are provided for mere rational entertainments, whether they are of better or worse condition, we cannot but perceive that the pleasures of sense make the principal ingredients, in what we improperly call happiness. When these suffer any interruption by any disappointment, want of company, or a failure in the organs; how much are we at a loss to pass the time? In this interval of sense, reason is but coldly receiv'd, and is reckon'd no better company than one who would always talk, and has nothing to say. Reflexion is indeed no pleasant task to the generality of men as it exposes them too much to their own view, and where the imagination is not lively, and stor'd with images, or the mind very sensible to the pleasures of religion; to be without any one of our senses, must be a very bad thing.

A person however might live without many agreeable sensations; nor would any such want of enjoyment prove a hinderance to the necessary affairs of life. But as the author of our being design'd us not for meer subsistence, he made us capable of many unnecessary pleasures which one may call the perquisites of life, and plac'd us in such a situation with respect to outward objects, that it costs us no pains or endeavour to enjoy them; every thing almost in nature being

ing more or less a cause of pleasure, and every organ a proper conveyance of it. And to convince us that this capacity is not a necessary but arbitrary effect, it is made the result of a particular structure of the organs, agreeing with such a state of the air as is not capable of any great change without defeating the sensation altogether, or at least without a considerable abatement of the pleasure which it is design'd to convey.

O U R senses not only convey pleasure, but furnish proper ideas to employ our reflexion; without these materials the mind must either have no ideas at all, or be necessarily misled by its own prejudices; reason could no more act without the informations of sense, than an artist without his tools; the best understanding would not be in much better circumstances than that of an old woman who having surviv'd her memory, and \* her judgment enjoys no faculty of reason in any degree of perfection but that of her tongue,

I F we consider human nature with respect to reason, or a power to reflect upon its own ideas to compare them, and to range

\* It is not the less true that the supreme Being can, when he pleases, give us ideas which we do not receive by our senses; but mere reason and philosophy can do nothing more but compare and make conclusions from the appearances of outward objects, and the reflexions of our own understanding upon them.

them into proper methods, we shall find that this faculty, imperfect as it is in most people, is yet sufficient for the purposes of life. Human understanding in its natural circumstances is not so considerable as some, nor so contemptible a thing as others would persuade us. The minds of men indeed are generally contracted within the narrow circle which early prejudice prescrib'd to them, and cannot without some difficulty enlarge their views beyond it. But those men who cannot extend their thoughts so far, as to judge in points of difficulty, frequently possess a good sense which is more common, and of more use than distinguish'd Abilities. \* It must be own'd that as few people in comparison are qualified to govern, so most men have reason

\* *Xenophon* justly observes, that it is easier to govern all other creatures than man, *Institutio Cyri*, Lib. 2. Ως ανθρωπω περικοτι παντων των αλλων ρινωι εν εαυτω η ανθρωπων αρχεν. And no quality makes people more ungovernable than self-sufficiency, and an opinion of their own understanding. Should we suppose therefore that mankind had generally a great share of reason with the same share of ambition and pride; society would be continually liable to be overturn'd, nor could Government be safe in the best hands, if the bulk of men had as much ability as they have inclination to cast off the yoke.

This narrowness of mind observable in most men is further useful, as makes them fitter to manage their own Affairs; men must have few ideas, to be capable of application one way; nor are the affairs of life carry'd on but in slow methods, and by the dint of industry, for which men of genius and fire are not very well qualify'd. In fine, did the number of projectors in society exceed by a great proportion that of the industrious; that disproportion would make it resemble a particular man who had brains to contrive without any hands to execute.

reason enough for their own conduct. But government cannot be safely lodg'd in many hands, nor can it sit so easy, or become so effectual to publick happiness, when those who are oblig'd by their station to obey, think themselves wise enough to command. It is therefore better calculated for the good of mankind, that there are so many more capable of submission, than of an useful concern for society; for it must be own'd, that a good understanding is frequently tainted with an ambition and a thirst of superiority, which leads men into designs to embroil the publick when they are not suffer'd to manage it.

As for speculation, the happiness of mankind depends so little upon it, that by a wise appointment very few are capable of proficiencie in this way. Was society overrun with meer philosophers, the publick might suffer as much perhaps by the subtilty of their disputatious art as by a standing army; people of this humour would be apt to propagate an itch of idle and unreasonable enquiry, 'till religion and government were in danger by it, and the proper business of life at a stand.

PROVIDENCE has appointed better, that there should be many who understand the philosophy of right and wrong, and few fit to discover the longitude, or to pursue a  
point

point of meer speculation ; few whose thoughts can extend to the debts of the nation, and many who are capable by good oeconomy to pay their own.

THE wisdom of nature appears in nothing more than in the various characters and inclinations of men depending upon a different turn of the mind and constitution of the body. To this natural diversity we owe the great number of actors in all the offices of life, and even in the lowest methods of usefulness, to which men of genius could not submit.

IT happens likewise by a wise provision, which is more perhaps a contrivance of nature than human policy, that as there is generally a sufficient number of volunteers in every useful employment, so the distinctions are not overstock'd by too many actors, which would in the same way hinder the business of life as the motions of a machine must be necessarily clogg'd by a multitude of useless parts, or by an undue proportion of those which are useful.

AFTER those general characters of the human understanding, which plainly shew that nature design'd us for society ; let us consider some of these principles and friendly affections, which naturally lead men when they follow nature without a bias  
from



from a mistaken interest to the effectual pursuit of private and publick happiness.

I. NOTHING is more certain than that mankind \* (which way soever they come by it) have a sense of a supreme mind perfectly wise and good, and that such apprehensions contain a natural persuasive to all those actions which make them resemble the Deity. Men indeed have very much differ'd in their notions of God; according as the sentiments of nature have been more or less corrupted by ignorance and superstitions; and the opinions of the wisest have receiv'd a tincture from certain topical falsehoods which error has establish'd; however as the sense of a supreme Being has surviv'd every

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\* However much men are dispos'd to undervalue Religion as a thing of little use with respect to this world, it may be very justly be question'd, whether society could subsist even upon the worst terms without some or other form of it; it is plain that there is scarce an example of any nation without some religion. The bulk of mankind do not owe their ideas of virtue and vice to abstract speculations; nor is interest and duty so constantly on the same side, but that men may have frequently an interest to undermine the publick, and to act a very hurtful part to society; so that if men are generally bad moralists, notwithstanding the motives of religion, we may be very sure they would be infinitely worse, had they none at all. As piety is the root of every virtue [*των αρετων αρχη ευσεβεια και περιμα των αγαθων παντων αυτη*, as Hierocles has it in *Carm. Pyth.* p. 168.] so even the worst sort of it, even idolatry it self, has produc'd some good effects. The motives of religion (says Puffendorf *De Jure Gentium*, vol. I. p. 164.) having always had a considerable influence in turning people from vice, and engaging them to virtue, however confus'd and imperfect their ideas of a Deity were.

corruption of religion, nothing of this kind has been powerful enough to destroy the influence of religious opinions upon virtue; nor is any species of idolatry so pernicious in its consequences as not to be justly preferable (the interests of society only consider'd) to absolute impiety and irreligion\*.

IT seems likewise a natural sense of mankind, that there is a sort of † intercourse between the supreme Being and virtuous minds, from which men of this character derive certain sentiments leading to happiness, are restrain'd from actions hurtful to themselves and society, and are enabled to overcome the difficulties of virtue and the allurements to a contrary practice.

N O R

\* The belief of a future state seems to be a natural sentiment which mankind have deriv'd from the notion of a supreme Being who concern'd himself in their affairs: This has always obtain'd more or less. *Macrobius*, after having related several different opinions concerning the soul, observe, that the opinion of its being immaterial as well as immortal, prevail'd. *Obtinuit non minus de incorporalitate ejus quam de immortalitate sententia*; which, if we believe *Cicero*, was the ancient opinion of the greatest and most famous philosophers. *Antiquis philosophis hisque maximis longeque clarissimis placuit quod aternos animos divinosque habeamus*: See *Stillingfleet's* Addition to his *Origines Sacrae*.

† *Xenop. Instit. Cyr. p. 76.* — των συμβεβηυομενων ανθρωπων οις ανιλεω ωσι προσωμαινεσι ατε χρη ποιειν και α' ε' χρη.

*Hierocles* makes the sense of virtue to be a divine impression upon the mind, — πως δε εσαι τι καλον ομη προς κανονα του θεου περατληται, πως δε το προς τετον περατομενον ε της εκεινη ενεργειας παντως δηται προς υποσαση. In *Carm. Pyth. p. 234.* Lond.

NOR is this opinion of a divine assistance the consequence of any particular notions, but seems to follow naturally from those ideas which the bulk of men have fram'd of a Deity, and from those plain characters of goodness, which are every where legible in the book of the Creation.

NOW the tendency of such a sentiment to the welfare of mankind is sufficiently plain.

ANOTHER rich endowment of our minds is the natural \* apprehension of right and wrong,

\* A certain fix'd notion of moral good and evil the bulk of mankind always had, and ever will have, notwithstanding some particular immoral practices which have but too much prevail'd. *Vossius* observes in his *Hist. Pelagiana*, p. 369. *Inesse homini a natura scientiam recti & honesti, communis veterum sententia*; these sentiments were common to mankind, and deriv'd from the works of creation, as *Hierocles* observes, in *Carm. Pyth.* p. 276. Ταυτα δεσιν αληθεια και αρετη αποτης δημιουργικης υστας αι και ωσαυτως πασιν ελλαμπομενη. By these they are distinguish'd from the Brutes, το λογικον ζωον μορον σημαιδανειται της δικης περ ουκε, *ibid.* p. 130. These moral principles, as *Aristotle* observes, are of such a nature, that no degree of wickedness can destroy them, *Ethic.* p. 272. Ουκ διασφραζει γαρ ημοχθηρεια και διαφουδεδαι ποιει περει τας πρακτικας αογας; and are the same, notwithstanding the differences of different nations concerning religious rites and ceremonies, as *Arrian* observes, cap. 23. in *Epictetum*, Περωληφεις κοινας πασιν ανθρωποις εισι, και περωληφεις περωληφει υ μαχεται; αυτη εισιν η Ιουδαϊων και Σηρων και Αιγυπτιων και Ρωμαιων μυχη υ περει τε οτι το οσιον παλιον περστιμητεον και εν παλι. περστιμητεον και εν παλι μεταδιωκτεον αλλα περτεροκεσιν οσιον τκτο το γοιοθη σαγην η ανοσιον. And so *Plato* observes, that men had every where the same common notion concerning some matters, *Phædo*, p. 93. ερωτωμενοι ανθρωποι εαντις καλας ερωτα αυτοι λεγκσι παλι α εχει, *Xenophon* infers from the agreement of different nations

wrong, virtue and vice; the sense of which distinction has never been intirely wanting in any considerable number of mankind, at least in the greater lines of morality, even in their lowest ebb of knowledge and virtue; and tho' the moral sense has been liable to depravation by the ignorance of some, and the affected singularity or vicious inclinations of others; yet so deeply are those sentiments laid in nature, and so early conclusions they are of the mind before it has receiv'd any tincture; nay, so closely interwove with the natural

nations in the same laws concerning the worship of the Gods, and the honour due to parents, that seei'g men never could assemble to agree in making such institutions, that they must have been of a divine original, Αποσ. p. 259. — *τινας εν νομιζεις τεθεκεναι τις νομος τωτης ευγενους δευς ομια τις νομος τοις ανθρωποις θειαι. και γαρ παοιν ανθρωποις πρωτον νομιζεται τις δευς σεβει εν εν και γουνας τιμαν παλαχε ουιζεται.* A conclusion not to be confuted by certain diversities of opinion and practice on some points of morality, nor by the laws of soine nations otherwise learned and polite however contrary to the laws of nature; as these are only exceptions to a general rule; much less can these differences prove, (as a late writer would unreasonably conclude from them) that the difference of right and wrong, of virtue and vice, has no foundation in nature; but depends upon mere authority. For as a mistake of political interest is not sufficient to prove that there is no true policy, nor an error in private life, that there is no prudence or œconomy. So deviations from the common interest of all societies cannot prove that there is no such interest, which is not founded either in the opinions or practice of men but in the nature of things, and is always the same whatever people think of the matter. Not to say that the sense of lawgivers or the wisest part of a nation is not always to be learn'd from some general customs, or even from some laws, as some corruptions in morals may be of too long a standing, and too much favour'd by a vulgar and preventing inclination to admit of any remedy which might be provided against them.

natural affections of men, that very few of the most abandon'd have been able to destroy them.

It must be confess'd, the original sense of morality is not equal in all, as all have not an equal understanding, some have a nice feeling of right and wrong in all their differences. They do not only understand the distinction but are fond of it, and take a pleasure to cherish and cultivate what nature has planted in their minds.

OTHERS lose the ideas of virtue in a sordid attention to interest, or at least have those impressions very much weaken'd; and some seduc'd by their passions endeavour to destroy a reflexion which does not favour the indulgence. Nay, we may add that the difference of moral good and evil is not equally clear in all circumstances even to those who are the best and fairest judges, and some cases may be so difficult as not to admit of any certain solution at all. Notwithstanding this diversity arising from the circumstances of men and the nature of things, one may affirm without any danger to be confuted, that virtue in some appearances is so amiable, and vice so shocking a thing, that those persons who are least indebted to nature and education are necessarily pleas'd or offended by it, and where-ever the distinction is not so obvious in it self,

or the mind is so blinded by passions and a wrong interest as not to perceive it, yet reason, when it judges without a bias and upon a due consideration, generally pronounces on the side of virtue.

BUT as the bulk of mankind are not to be govern'd only by abstracted views of virtue and vice, and are subject to certain seducing impressions which move them in a more effectual way, nature has provided us with such affections as may balance the unthinking appetite of pleasure, by giving us a contrary interest consistent with the happiness of our fellow-creatures, or to speak properly the same.

I. NOTHING has been more justly tax'd as the fountain of all disorder and injustice than the love of ourselves, there is however a virtuous self-love which is not only the hinge upon which all our actions turn, but is indeed the first principle of nature, and the source of every virtue.

† THIS principal regard to our own happiness, when it is regularly follow'd, can be  
no

† *Natura induit, nobis inolevitque amorem nostri & caritatem, ita ut prorsus nihil quippiam esset carminis pensusque nobis quam nosmetipsi, atque hoc esse fundamentum rata & conservanda hominum perpetuitatis.* Aulus Gellius, *noctes Atticae*, cap. 5. lib. 12. So *Arroan in Epictet*, cap. 22. lib. 2. ἄδεν γὰρ ἕτω φίλον ἑαυτοῦ ὡς τὸ αὐτὸ σὺμβῆσθαι τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ ἀδελφοῦ καὶ πατρὸς καὶ θεοῦ; and 'tis certain that  
we



no hinderance to the welfare of others; on the contrary, as the desires of interests in men of the same circumstances are generally the same, and promoted or hinder'd by the same sort of behaviour, this principle of self-love may very justly be consider'd as the common measure and standard of all those actions which tend to, or obstruct the happiness of others.

INDEED in a just way of thinking, such a connexion appears between our own and the interest of society, that a prudent regard to our selves must be in ordinary cases a strong inducement to consult the publick. Every member of a community being a part of the whole, and the common happiness of society, nothing else but the sum of particular interests; and as the member of an human body must by a natural sympathy share in the disorders of the whole, the same must happen in politick society, even tho' the unjust invader should secure the success of a bad design.

MANKIND however from a proposterous regard to their own happiness, are apt to

consider  
we are so fram'd, that the desire of happiness must enter into all our designs, and be the ground of all our pursuits; so that however it may be the proper character of a bad man to act meerly from self-love, as *Aristotle* observes, *δοκει ο μνη αυλησ εαυτε χαειν παλτα πραττειν*, *Ethic. cap. 8. lib. 1c.* yet the same author likewise observes that there is a virtuous love of our selves, which more properly deserves that name, p. 144. *Eth. Ox. Και ολωσ αν ει το δεσ.*

consider private interest as something independent of the community: And as natural motions are quickest nearest the center, those of self-love are apt to be predominant in every case; but as this encroaching principle is not properly the love of our selves, but a mistaken pursuit of it, the author of nature cannot be charged with the consequences of this mistake, unless it was the same thing to have a good principle, and to make an absurd use of it.

THE desire of reputation is an effect of self-love which produces the greatest advantages to society; for as reputation is the publick \* approbation of good actions, nothing can be a greater excitement to the performance than a love of fame. As the bulk of men generally agree in the notion of publick interest, unless where private interest makes them differ, it is unlikely any man should procure esteem by selfishness or ill-nature; hence self-love acquires an interest to enlarge its views beyond private good, or at least to put on a disguise in the pursuit of it †.

THIS

\* *Ethica*, p. 38. ἔτιμαται ὁ μὴδὲν ἀγαθὸν κοινῶ πρᾶξων, τὸ γὰρ κοινὸν δίδεται τῷ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ἢ τῆμῃ δὲ κοινόν, *Eth. Ox.*

† Ὁ ἀνθρώπος κοινωνίας μερῶ ἐν τῇ καὶ συν τῆτοις ὁλοκλήρῳ, *Hippodam de felicitate inter Myth. Cantab. Porphy. de Abst. p. 123. lib. 3.* — ἀλλ' ἐκεῖ τὸ χρυσοπτεροπιθανόν, ἢ ὡς ἡμᾶς αὐτῶν καὶ ἀλλήλων οἱ θεοὶ χρεῖν ἐποίησαν ἡμῶν δὲ τὰ ζῶα.

THIS sense of honour is observ'd to be most prevalent in those who have the greatest abilities either to do good or harm to society, and seems to be a wise provision to secure those in its interests who are too selfish to do good from the motives of mere benevolence. This passion is not so properly a virtue, as a disposition to it, and when a man is so engross'd by it as to be incapable of good actions where fame is not the reward of them, the desire of reputation can only pass for a tolerable weakness. However as the happiness of society is not so immediately concern'd in the moral character of actions as in their result and consequences; 'tis wisely appointed that so many should seek the reward of vanity in a behaviour conducive to the publick, who would otherwise neglect its interest from a deficiency of good-nature.

SHAME has the same tendency to common good in an opposite way; it seems to arise from a consciousness of ill-desert, for actions which express too great attachment to private interest and a mean behaviour in the pursuit of it. As the love of fame is an excitement to virtue, shame is a check upon vice. This passion is strongest in those who thro' the weakness of their sex or the want of experience are most liable to seducement; in such the sense of dishonour is a balance to the weakness of reason, and the

the imprudent love of pleasure. It † frequently supplies the defect of good principles in stronger minds, and secures the practice of virtue when the inclination is lost, or at least restrains from those actions which lead to infamy. When difficulties and dangers would deter men from their duty, or pleasure sollicitates them to a crime, this prevalent passion gives a weight to the lighter scale, and defeats one fear by a greater. The advantage of this principle to society is most observable in those persons who are entitled by their birth and fortune to make an advantageous appearance in life, and who consequently must dread all those actions which tend to lessen their character. Was it not from this restraint upon their minds, a power to do hurt join'd with an inclination, and uncorrected by the fear of laws, must frequently produce a deal of more mischief than actually happens.

NOTWITHSTANDING those natural guards of virtue, human nature is very apt to go astray, from motives which every man may feel in himself, and from external impressions which we are perhaps less able to resist :

† Tho' shame is no virtue, it is no less useful to society than if it was. It is no weak argument for a providence, that those who have the strongest inclinations to pleasure, and the least share of reason to govern them, are so much under the check of this passion. See *Aristotle's Ethica*, lib. 5. p. 190. Oxon. φαυλε δ'ε και τι ειναι &c.

resist : Nature has therefore added many outward advantages to a reasonable practice as well as a particular pleasure to the reflexions of a virtuous mind, as a sort of fee to retain us in a good cause. Thus we are plac'd in a sort of *æquilibrium*, almost equally attracted from both sides, till a wise resolution or bad choice destroys the balance.

IT is not perhaps strictly true, that the natural advantages of virtue are sufficient to recommend it to a reasonable choice under all the possible disadvantages of situation; setting aside the prospect of a future recompence; however one may venture to affirm, that we have as many present rewards of doing \* well as are more than an equivalent for the ordinary discouragements of a good practice, or the usual temptations to a bad.

SUCH is the make and constitution both of our bodies and minds, as well as the dif-

\* *Ethica Oxon.* p. 417. ο σπεδαιθ τοις κατ' αρετην προαξσει γαιρη τοις δε απο κακιας δυσχεραίνει καθαπερ ο μισικθ τοις καλοις μελεσιν ηδεται επι δε τοις φαιλοις λυπεται.

This natural pleasure of virtue more than compensates that inequality of outward condition which happens to good and bad men; for as no prosperity can make a bad man happy, so no disadvantages of life can destroy the pleasure of innocence, *Salust. de Prov.* p. 18. Οι δε κακοι μη ευτοχουσι αγαθοι δε πονοιλαι θαυμαζεν ε δε οι μη γαρ παρ'α οι δε κδενθ πλεστον ποιουσι και των μη κακων η ατυχια εκ αν οφελου τω κακιαν τοις δε αγαθοις η αρετη μοισι αφισκη.

position of things without us, that every † species of vice carries some degree of punishment along with it, and sooner or later defeats its own end. The immediate consequences may not be always or generally to the disadvantage of the agent, but the issue and result even in this life very seldom turns out well; so that one may affirm without any danger to be confuted, that as there is a combination of natural causes leading virtue to happiness, which is not ordinarily defeated by cross accidents; so there is a like conspiracy of design in the contrivance of nature to make a bad man unhappy, and consequently a bad politician.

COULD a man escape the punishment of his own reflexion, the natural consequences

† *Lucretius* well describes the consequences of vice:

*Quanta conscindunt hominem cupidinis acres  
Sollicitum cura? quantique perinde timores?  
Quidve superbia, spurcities, petulantia, quantas  
Efficiunt cladeis? quid luxus, desidiesque?*

Πας φωνλθ βιθ δουλειας πληρης, *Porph.* Every bad man is in the same condition with that of a tyrant, which *Plato* describes as accompany'd with continual fear and anxiety, φοβα γεμων δια πανθ τε βικ σταδασμων πληρης, *Plat.* Nothing can happen well to a man who is destitute of virtue, says another, τω δε αρετη ερημω υδεν αλλο καλως εχεν προσηκει. *Κηροπ.* p. 426. So that as *Simplicius* well observes, was there no future state, it would be notwithstanding every man's interest to be good, *Simplic. Comment.* in *Proximito*, Αλλα και τις υποδηται, &c. *Sallust.* cap. 4. Αρετη και η εκ της αρετης ηδονη τε και δοξα ενδαιμονας ηκει ποιων τις κατ' αρετω ζωω παρελομενος και δυναθεντας.



ces of some actions must create him displeasure. Tho' a proud man could please himself, it is certain, he would obtain more respect if he sought it less. Luxury tends to disease, and yields nothing one can properly call pleasure, which may not be enjoy'd with temperance and health. An unwillingness to do good makes a man unfit to receive it. Avarice is little else than an art to be poor with all the pains of making rich. Ambition is a disease, and envy a torture to the mind, and every species of hatred or inhumanity creates an unnatural disturbance. In a word, there is no sort of irregular self-love which does not undermine it self; no species of injustice which has not a Demon following it in its natural effects and consequences, and the unjust man's reflexion, if he has any, must be the worse Demon of the two \*.

HOWEVER common such observations may be, the evidence arising from them is not less, that every exertment of self-love without a regard to our fellow-creatures naturally tends to disappointment, and that this constitution of our nature must necessarily imply a very kind design in the

\* Nothing indeed is more certain than the fine observation of Aristotle, cap. 10. lib. 1. Ethic. *Κυρια δεσιν α κατ' αρετων ενεργεια της δδαιμονιας α δε ενανθια ενανθια* ——— *αει εδεν γαρ κτας υπαρχει των ανθρωπινων βεβαιωτης ως αει της ενεργειας των κατ' αρετων, μονιμωτες γαρ των επισημων αυται δεκκσι η αλ.*

maker, who could have fram'd our bodies and minds in such a manner, as to make all the irregular pursuits of a pernicious self-love productive of that happiness to some particulars which they tend to destroy in the rest of the species.

BESIDES self-love and the passions which arise from it, there are other affections natural to our minds, which are no less conducive to common happiness; these govern men not by reason or virtue but by passion, and what people call instinct.

OF this sort is the \* tenderness which mankind and all other animals bear to their offspring; the reason of this affection is sufficiently plain, as it is a necessary provision for the continuance of the kind, and no species of creatures could subsist without the care it produces; for this reason it extends to the fiercest and most savage creatures.

IT is no argument of neglect in the supreme Being, that man of all animals comes into the world in the most helpless circumstances. Reason was given us to supply many other wants; and the indigence of human offspring

\* *Aristot. Ethica, lib. 8. p. 337. φουση εν υπαρχειν (φιλια) εοικε προς το γιγνημενον τω ζωνησαντι και ε μονον εν ανθρωποις αλλ και εν ορνειοις και εν τοις πλειστοις των ζωνων, και τοις ομο εδνεσι προς αλληλα και μαλιστα τοις ανθρωποις.*

spring only makes a larger object of parental care. To secure this, the † mother is not only endued with tenderness and innocent prejudice in favour of her child, but provided with something else to support its weakness. Was it not for this kind provision, to die and to be born would be nearly the same. \* When one considers that the object of this affection has nothing but cold, hunger, and cries, to recommend it, and what a watchful anxiety attends this care, he cannot sufficiently admire the wise goodness of our common parent who gave the mother so much love to reward so much pains, and by making this tenderness to be more the effect of nature than virtue has secur'd so many females in the interest and preservation of mankind, who, were they left to themselves, would not probably indulge a concern so inconvenient, to themselves and which is too seldom rewarded by a grateful return.

AND

† Αἱ μητρες τῷ φιλεῖν χαίρουσαι αὐτῆ εὐχεσθαι δεζήτησιν ἀλλ' ἰκανόν αὐτοῖς εἰσικεν εἶναι εἰαν ὀρωσι εὐ περὶ τῆσ' αὐτῆσ' καὶ αὐτῶσ' φιλεῖσιν αὐτῆσ' καὶ ἐκεῖνοι μὴ δυνώσῃσιν τῆ μητρὶ εὐ πρὸς κῆα ἀπο γέμην δια τῶσ' ἀγνοῖαν ; so disinterested is this natural affection.

† Xenoph. Απομ. lib. 2. cap. 2. ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ὑποδεξάμενη τε φέρει τὸ φορτίον τῆτο βαρῆσ' ὀρεμένη καὶ κινδονεύσα. πῶσ' τε βίη καὶ μεταδίδουσα τῆσ' τροφῆσ' ἢ καὶ αὐτῆ τροφέται καὶ σὴν πολλῶσ' πονῶσ' διενεγκασα καὶ τεκῆσα τρέφει τε καὶ ἐπιμελεῖται ἕτεσ' περὶ πεπονθῆσ' αὐτῆσ' ἀγαθῶσ' ἕτεσ' γιγνώσκον τὸ βρεσθῆσ' ὑπ' ὅσ' δὲ παχεὶ \* δὲ σημαῖνεσ' δυνάμετον ὅσ' δὲ εἶται.

AND altho' this consideration makes natural affection to be a thing of no great merit in the mother, the goodness of the supreme Being is only the more conspicuous for being the author of this necessary tenderness.

BESIDES that love which regards the helpless part of our kind, our minds are endow'd with a more † extensive benevolence. This affection is something of a more generous nature, as it regards the whole species, and does not flow from an immediate reflexion upon ourselves: \* It is a characteristick of our kind, for tho' other animals express the same affection to their young, and the like concern to provide for them, we do not perceive in them the same expressions of a general good-will to those of the species. Nor is this general love less a part of nature, that some such Savages there are, who have either inherited a very small share of it, or have extinguish'd it by unnatural passions; as these Barbarians are only to be rank'd in the same class of human

† Cicero de Stoicis Academ. lib. I. p. 11. Edit. Dav. *Hominem esse censebant quasi partem quandam civitatis & universi generis humani, eum esse conjunctum cum hominibus humana quadam civitate.* So Arrian calls man a friendly and sociable creature. Φιλον και σπνηθη της αυτης πολεως πολιτω.

\* Xenoph. Απομ. φυσει γαρ εχουσιν οι ανθρωποι τα μω ελικα δεονται γαρ αλληλων και ελεξι και σωεργοντες : φελεσι και τετο σπνηειτες χαειν εχουσιν αλληλον.

human creatures with others who are born without legs or arms, or have lost them by misfortune.

IT is not to our purpose to enquire whether or not the love of mankind is meerly self-love in a friendly disguise: whatever name we give it nothing is more real in it self, and when men follow the motions of nature without any bias more extensive in the effects. In the wise and virtuous humanity receives no check or abatement from the difference of country. The object of this affection is of all nations and languages, and loses nothing of its beautiful appearance in a stranger, or even an enemy.

FROM this generous principle we derive a natural sentiment in favour of the distress'd; and if their misfortunes have been procur'd by a steddiness and warmth in the cause of truth and virtue, we feel an ardor and impatience to redress the wrongs which injustice has done them, or at least express a compassionate fellow-feeling with them, for those hardships we cannot redress.

\* GRATITUDE is an effect of the same principle. It is an affection we feel towards those

\* *Xenophon* observes of the *Persians*, that they severely punish'd such as had it in their power to return a favour, and neglected to do so, as a sort of miscreants who must be wanting to their friend and country, as well to the duties of religion and nature.

those who have oblig'd us, and a desire to return the obligation. An inclination so natural, that very few are altogether without it, but either a very profligate or a very unthinking sort of creatures, who are equally destitute of every good principle. And if there are some meerly of too little reflexion as not to know they have been oblig'd, it would be hard to charge people of so low a class with a crime; ingratitude in them is not so properly want of virtue as want of sense.

IT is probable such friendly \* affections and a desire to provide for the necessities men labour'd under in a state of nature, first

Κηρση. p. 8. *Hut.* Και ον γνωσι δυναμψον μη χαιιν αποδιδοναι μη αποδιδουσα κολαζεσι και αυτον ιχυρωσ. Οιοι-ται γαρ αχαιεισ και πειει θεει αν μαλιστα αμελωσ εχειν και πειει γονεασ και πατειδα και φιλεσ. Gratitude being indeed the sum of all obligation.

\* Men at first were oblig'd to defend themselves against the attacks of wild beasts, which could not be done to any advantage without herding together, as *Porphyry* observes, *De Abstinent. Sectio.* ε γαρ δυνατον σωζεσθαι μη περιωμθενεσ αμυνεσθαι αυτα σω τρεβομθουσ μετ' αλληλων. It was probably either to avoid some present danger, or to obtain some necessary advantage that men first enter'd into society. I cannot persuade myself (says *Mr. Bayle*) that societies were form'd because men foresaw, by consulting the ideas of reason, that a life of solitude would be no honour, either to their own kind or to their maker, or to the world in general, 'twas the present satisfaction and the meer hopes of living in safety, or else force that produc'd the first communities, without having in view, laws, commerce, arts, and sciences, the aggrandizing of states, and all the other things that make the beauties of history. *Nouvelles Lettres a la occasion de la Critique du Calvinisme.*



first induc'd men to give up their liberty, partly to have a refuge from the effects of † injustice in a common protection, and partly to enjoy the natural pleasures of conversation and humanity. \* Reason endow'd with such

† An ancient writer gives a just account of other motives which induc'd men to form society besides those we have mention'd, *Nemes.* p. 20. *δια δε τας τεχνας και τας επισημας και τας απο τετων χρειας αλληλων δεομεδα, διαδετο αλληλων εις ταυτα σωελθην κοιωνσ μω αλληλοισ κατα τας τε βις χρειας εν τοις σωαλλαγμασι. Ηηλικα συνεδον και συνεικίαν πολιν ανομασομω ινα εζηυθεν και μη ωρρωθεν τας ωφελιας καρταμεθα. Φισει γαρ συνηγελασικον και πολιτικον ζων γεγονεν ο ανθρωποσ εις γαρ \*δεις αυταρκησ εαυτω πωσσ απαντα. Εηλων εν αι πολεισ δια τα σωαλλαγματα και καθηματα συνεσυσαν.*

\* It is neither agreeable to reason nor history to suppose, that the state of nature, or the condition of men before larger societies were form'd, was so dismal and wretched as some have describ'd it. *Puffendorf* indeed has observ'd, “ That there was nothing then but ungovernable passions, wars, fears, poverty, nastiness, solitude, ignorance, and wildness; and old *Hobbs* could find no better expedient to prove men had a right to do whatever self-love dictates, but by supposing, that this was a natural privilege of mankind. But all this is mere supposition and conjecture. It is certain, that whatever advantages of learning and politeness we may derive from society, a great deal of what passes under these specious names, may be justly call'd pedantry and imposture, vanity and foolishness; “ and if there be “ any thing that's good (as *Barbeyrac* observes) there is room “ for it in the state of nature: Besides, this order and beauty, “ these charms of conversation, which we so much boast of as “ the effects of society, are no where to be found but in considerable towns. Clownery and rudeness is the country's “ entertainment in the most civiliz'd government.” But not to lessen the advantages of a social state (which no doubt is preferable in the present condition of mankind) it is certainly true, that if men had not abandon'd the dictates of reason and true interest to follow those of passion and a mistaken self-love, they might have enjoy'd all the happiness of life with the greatest innocence without forming larger societies. And that they did so appears from history.

such good-natur'd affections naturally dispos'd men to perform all those offices to others which they expected from them, tho' interest or ambition might too soon afterwards and too generally corrupt these principles, and engage them to act contrary to their own and the common interest. It is not hard however to guess what behaviour would naturally flow from such dispositions, and what sort of creatures mankind were † in their primitive state. Whatever vices might have prevail'd in the world, and how early soever, we are very sure that \* nothing would be requisite to make society

which shews that mankind were not so universally deprav'd 'till they became the subjects of government; not that government made them, but only suppos'd them such, being a necessary security against the effects of that fraud and injustice which began to prevail. We learn from an old historian, that the first governors were remarkable for justice and an attachment to the laws of their country. *Και κερτις ἦν βασιλευς ο δίκαιοτατ' και νομιμοτατ' και μηδεν εκδιατωμεν' των πατειων Δηλον δε Ομηρ' Δικαιοπολος καλων της βασιλες και δεμισοπολος.* &c. *Dion. of Halicarnass.* as he is quoted by *Barbeyrac* in his notes upon *Puffendorf*, p. 185. vol. I. And 'tis a common observation both of poets and historians, that mankind were in their first state a virtuous and innocent sort of creatures. See *Grotius's* Notes upon his first Book, *De Veritate Relig.*

† *Felicissimi mortalium nulla adhuc mala libidine, sine probro, scelere, eoque sine pana aut coercionibus agebant: neque opus erat, cum honesta suoque genere peterentur, & ubi nihil contra morem cuperent, nihil per metum vetabatur. Ac postquam exni equalitas & pro modestia ac pudore ambitio & vis incedebat, provenere dominationes multoque apud populos aeternum mansere.* *Tacit. Annal. lib. 3.*

\* The present circumstances of mankind, and their deviation from virtue sufficiently prove we stand in need of revealed religion, notwithstanding this remark. *Porphyrus*  
very

ciety happy, and to establish both private and publick interest on the surest foundation, than an attachment to those principles which the author of nature has given us : And that all those passions which disturb order, and turn men out of the road of happiness, such as the immoderate desire of riches and power, all encroachments upon property either private or publick, and every method of injustice arising from these irregular affections, are properly acquisitions of our own, and deviations from the original temper of mankind.

As an artist is able to judge of the force and justness of a mechanical invention, and the design of the contriver, by a survey of the wheels, their particular movements and structure, and the composition of the whole ; so a person of reflexion by considering the structure of the human body and the constitution of the mind, the character of our reason and natural appetites, and the particular tendency of those affections which are common to men, may certainly know what sort of action and method of life nature de-

very justly observ'd, that the want of attention to the interest of society makes laws necessary which otherwise would be useless. *De Abst.* lib. I. *εἰ δὲ πάντες ἐδύνατο βλέπειν καὶ μνημονεύειν τὸ συμφέρον ἑαὐτῶν περὶ σφοδρῶς νόμον ἀλλ' ἀνταρξέτωσιν τὰ μὴ βλάβησιν τῶν ἀπειπομένων τὰ δὲ ἐπράττειν τῶν περὶ τεταγμένων, ἡκανη γὰρ ἢ τὸ χρησιμὸν καὶ βλάβησιν δεικνύει τῶν μὴ φεύγειν περὶ σκευασμάτων δὲ ἀρεσίων.*

sign'd us to follow, and may probably calculate what pain or pleasure shall arise from such a prosecution of our natural sentiments.

AND as an engine may be contriv'd upon the justest design, and fram'd in all its parts in such a manner as to obtain the intended effect; and yet any great irregularity in the movement, or displacing of the wheels, must necessarily render it useles, and defeat the main design. So in the composition of human nature, whatever may be the character of human reason and affections in their natural state, and however well contriv'd these may be to produce a course of action sufficient to happiness †; yet if there is any depra-

† It would not be hard to form an idea of publick and private happiness, would men consult their reason more than the prejudices of education. Altho' the interests of mankind in civil societies must differ according to their different situation and other circumstances, or as they are more or less provided with the means of acquiring riches and power. There is notwithstanding an universal interest of mankind which is not affected by such topical differences, depending upon the natural effects and consequences of certain actions with respect to private and publick welfare. As the interest of particular civil societies are founded upon their particular circumstances, so the common interest of mankind is the result of those actions which under all differences of climate have the same influence upon publick welfare. This seems to be the proper notion of publick happiness, which doth not consist in what is peculiar to one country but what is common to mankind, not in a great abundance of wealth, foreign conquests, or such a flow of prosperity as is apt to produce luxury; but in the common possession of those advantages which constitute private happiness, *viz.* in the security of life

depravation of these faculties, or any mistaken pursuit of interest arising from thence, the design of the supreme Being to make men happy must be so far disappointed; and if this depravation arises from causes which might have been by proper caution prevented, and with the ordinary means and excitements to act virtuously, all the consequences of such a disappointment are only chargeable upon our own ill conduct.

LET us suppose a man in health using his reason and other faculties, as common sense teaches him, govern'd by a wise self-love, excited by a desire of reputation, and restrain'd by the shame of bad actions; one who follows the motions of nature in a tender concern for his offspring, who submits to the laws of society, and is led by a more extensive benevolence to promote the welfare

life and property, the blessings of peace, and a freedom from unjust severities upon any account. To produce which nothing could be requisite but for every man to act according to those principles and affections which the author of nature has given us, however much these have been put out of their proper course. For this reason *Aristotle* makes virtue to be something which is every where the same, *μια μόνον πανταχού κατ' ευσιν η αρετη*, *Eth.* cap. 7. lib. 5. and *Plato* observes, that there is a moral beauty and equity of actions which is uniform, and cannot admit of any change or variation from circumstances. *Phed.* p. 112. *Cant.* αυτη το ισον αυτη καλον ο εστι μηποτε μεταβολην και ην τιμην ενδεχεται ——— ο εστι μορφηδες ον αυτη καθ' αυτη αυταντης, και εδς ποτε εδαμνη εδαμως αλλοιωσιν εδεμιαν ενδεχεται.

welfare and happiness of every man whatsoever; and who acts in this manner from a deep sense of a supreme Being who is too good and beneficent to suffer his virtue to be unrewarded: Can we suppose a person govern'd by such principles, and exerting himself in a prudent method of useful employ without enjoying many outward advantages (besides the pleasure of reflexion) which he could not have obtain'd by a different conduct? Nay, can we suppose any condition of such a reasonable creature as man that is with such limited faculties of enjoyment which comes nearer to happiness †.

SHOULD such a person fall into misfortunes which are common to men, should he survive his liberty, estate, or, if it was possible, his friends; would he be capable of no relief in the \* lowest ebbs of his fortune,

† The same course of action which tends to private, must likewise have an equal influence on publick happiness, and the last is a more certain consequence of it; for tho' particular persons may be very great sufferers notwithstanding their virtue and good conduct, the publick always reaps the advantage; and altho' the best œconomy in private affairs may sometimes fail of success, publick virtue never ceases to produce a proportionable effect. That this was the sense of mankind is the observation of Cicero: *Omnis antiqua philosophia sensit in una virtute esse positam beatam vitam, Academic. lib. 1.*

\* *Alcinoi Idea Phil. Plat. p. 60.* οι τον μω επισημιω έχοντα περισημιω δ τυχεσατον και δδαιμονεσατον εκ ενεκα των τιμων ων τοικτω ων ληψεται κδε μιθων ενεκα αλλ' και πονηας λανθανη ανθρωπος και τα λεγομενε κακα οιν ατιμια και φυγαι και θανατω συμβαινωσι.



tune, from the reflexions of virtue? Or could he be so entirely wretched as to find no comfort \* but in a resolution to destroy a life which he had hitherto pass'd with innocence and advantage? Sure they must know human nature very little who can form such a notion of it, or must have a very strange one of their own.

MEN have been too much inclin'd to draw characters of mankind in general from an observation very much confin'd, or from particular reflexions upon themselves. — Such people have either too much convers'd with the worst of the species or have been none of the best of it themselves. They have generally been such as have derived a sowerness from disappointments in life, or particular opinions in religion †; or were crea-  
tures

\* The sufferings of human life in one way very often are the means of producing great advantages of another kind, as *Simplicius* observes in *Epiclet.* p. 305. *Lugd.* Και η παινη η φικηροτατη ημιν η τε σωματῶ πολασις σερητω εχει την γυμνασιαν της ψυχης και την καθαρισιν. Παινη δε ταισιντα μετ' αγαθον εχει το ανδρικως υπομειναι. Και γαρ τε μη περσι πεισιν το ωει πεσοιη καλας διαγυρεται ωφελιωτερον εστιν τω ανθρωτω, επιερ τε μη μη περσι πεισιν τε σωματῶ και των ενιῶ εστιν αγαθον το δε καλας διαγυρεται της ψυχης. Human life indeed is subject to many disasters which are not to be avoided; but these are not so intollerable that virtue and a right notion of things are not frequently sufficient to support the sufferer, as the same author observes. Και γαρ το ατιμασθηναι η χρηματων αφαιρεσθηναι η αστηθηναι κτ εστιν επι εμοι αλλ' το ορδον εχειν ωει αυτων εσχημα, p. 64. cap. 10.

† The French moralists as *Rochfaucault D'esprit.* and *Dellegarde*, and other writers, too much devoted to *St. Augustin,*

tures so very profligate, that they had no way to appear tolerable, but by an undistinguishing satyr on the rest of the kind; or by charging all those extravagancies of behaviour they could not pretend to justify upon an unhappy necessity which they could not possibly avoid.

IT is not hard to confute this general satyr by such reflexions as plainly prove, that men are either not so very bad as some have represented them to be; or when they act wrong, are not subject to any such circumstance of irresistible inclination, as leave them no power at all of acting otherwise.

I. MEN are not generally so bad as some modern satyrists have describ'd them; it must be confess'd, that the errors of human life is a subject upon which it requires no great wit or invention to enlarge. But as it is a certain way to make men worse than they are, to represent them so, it is much more conducive to virtue, and more agreeable to humanity to indulge a little good-nature,

*sin*, have from certain odd principles represented mankind almost in as bad a character; as Dr. *Mandeville* would chuse to give them or any other writer against religion. It seems to be a judicious remark of an old writer, that the number either of very good, or extremely bad men, is not so great as people fancy, *Plato Phad.* p. 133. τὸς μὲν χρηστὸς καὶ ἄσπιτος ὀλίγος εἶναι, τὸς δὲ μετὰ ζῆν ὀλίγους.

ture, in making such allowances for the errors or even crimes of men, of which they are capable by a fair interpretation.

\* NOTHING is more easy, or less to the purpose than to shew from unattested scraps of history, that there have been many particular persons, nay whole nations, who every age have so far departed from common sense and virtue, as to entertain very absurd opinions, and to commit very great immoralities. Such observations, were they never so well vouch'd, would not shew what is human nature; but only how far some may deviate from, and act contrary to its genuine principles. Was one to collect all the stories of men born in every age and country, with a monstrous figure and unnatural defects of body, the collection might be pretty large, tho' the whole sum of such mishapen and imperfect creatures must be inconsiderable, compar'd with the rest of mankind whom nature has form'd after the common model. But sure it would be very unjust to draw the picture of a human body from one of these extraordinary productions. The same injustice it is to make the particular † deformities of the human

\* See Philosophical Discourse on Death.

† An ancient *Pythagorean* philosopher gives this account of the monstrous licentiousness of some people, *δια γαρ τας παρ' φύσιν αμετρους επιθυμιας πολλοι εις ακαταχετους οφμας εξωκειλαν και ειτε τας εκ των θυγατερων ειτε τας εκ των ματερων ανωσιωτατες ηδονας απειχομ'ο αλλα και επι*

man understanding a standard by which we judge of human reason or virtue in general; no doubt there have been always some of as odd and singular a cast as to the make of their minds, as others have been in that of their bodies; but perhaps both these kind of irregular productions have not been less different from mankind in the bulk, than a brute is unlike to a man.

NOR does it signify to shew that some nations, remarkable for learning and politeness, have been distinguish'd by very extravagant opinions and customs no less unreasonable; for the character of a people cannot prove all their sentiments to be just, or their practices according to nature. If we may be allow'd to judge of nations, as we do with reason of particular men, none have thought and acted more foolishly in some instances than those who have been highest † in their pretensions to reason and philosophy. There was likely more \* virtue in the primitive ages

πατρίσθλονια παραγενόηο και πολλα τα ιδια τέκνα κασε-  
φαξαν. Hipparchus inter Mytholog. Cant.

† Τες παλαις και εγγυς θεων γεγονοτας βελτιστες τε ον-  
τας εουσει και τον αεισον εζηποτας βιον ως χρυσαν χρυθ νο-  
μιζεσθαι. Peripateticus citatus. Porp. de non esu animal.  
Grotius de Veritate Rel. Christ. in Notis ad lib. I.

\* Sextus says of Anaxagoras Hypotop. lib. 1. cap. 13.  
Ο λωκλω εναι την χιορα οτι χιον υδωρ εσι πεπηγθ, το  
δε υδωρ εσι μελαν. Another deny'd there was any such  
thing as motion.

Indeed the antient philosophers were generally so fond of paradoxes, that one need not be surpris'd that they maintain'd strange opinions of religion and morality.

ages of the world, before the improvement of the sciences, or the invention of useful arts than after. Before greater societies were form'd, men generally follow'd the untaught sense of morals; the terrors of laws were not known, nor were severer penalties of any use; as such methods of correction did not become necessary 'till men had a temptation to deserve them. It is certain that ancient writers, historians as well as poets, agree that government was introduc'd for the punishment of crimes, and that mankind lost their primitive innocence \* with the rudeness and simplicity of their manners. We cannot indeed give any account of the rise and spring of this degeneracy, nor of its various progress afterwards. However as some modern nations who are descended from the wisest and bravest progenitors, are undoubtedly known to have degenerated from their original virtue, and are noted for certain vices unknown to the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans*: In the same manner we may judge of mankind in general, whose apostacy from their primitive integrity is not the less certain from history, that our reason is not able to trace it to its proper origin.

\* *Sed postquam tellus scelere est imbuta nefando,  
Justitiamque omnes cupida de mente fugarunt,  
Persudere manus fraterno sanguine fratres, &c.* Catullus.

WHAT may be the particular cause of this depravation is not so clear; one may observe in general, that the sense of virtue in the vulgar has been in all ages more supported by a tradition of facts than by the strength of their own reflexion; it is probable therefore that the failure of this tradition had no little share in the general corruption of manners.

WHATEVER judgment we may make concerning the cause, the effects and extent of this depravity seem to have been too much aggravated, both by some who were no friends to religion, and others who have mistaken its interest †.

NOT to enter into the secret springs and motives of human actions, which are too close a scene to be reveal'd. If we consider those appearances of vice which abound in the world, and the more obvious character of human actions, we shall easily perceive that these are of such a nature, and arise from such causes as are fairly capable of some extenuations.

\* MISTAKE and passion are the ordinary sources of an irregular and hurtful  
con-

† Many writers of morality, such as *Rochefoucault D'esprit*, very unjustly condemn self-love as an irregularity, and then make all our actions to proceed from it.

\* Ignorance and false opinions commonly lead men astray in their practice. A judicious writer observes, that our  
irregular



conduct. \* Virtue cannot be acquir'd without some reflexion, which unthinking people are not willing to give; sloth betrays them into a habit of inattention, and inattention

irregular passions arise from bad education, ignorance, or constitution, *Nemes.* πει φύσεως, p. 183. *Ολοπ.* εβγινοντα τα φαυλα παθη τη ψυχη δια τειων τετων δια κακης αγωγης εξ αμαθειας υπο καχεξιας. Whereas other animals, says a famous historian, are only slaves to their appetites. Mankind are likewise seduc'd by their opinions, τα μιν αλλα ζωα ταις τε σωματῶ επιθυμιας δελδη το δε των ανθρωπων χυτ και προςδεδοξαμνον κκ ητην η διε τλω ουσιν αμαρτανη. *Polybius*, Which gave *Socrates* occasion to lay it down as a maxim, that no man ever offended but thro' ignorance, *υδνεα πρατην παρα το βελτισον αλλ' δι' αγνοιαν*, *Arist.* *Eth.* p. 195. *Ox.* And the same was the sentiment of *Plato* as one of the antients informs us, *Alcibi* *Εισαγω*, p. 65. *Ox.* — εαν ποιη τι παρα τον ορθον λογον, υπο αμαθιας και αφερτυνης τετο παχειν φησιν αυτον ο Πλωταν.

\* Passion, as an antient philosopher observes, commits a violence on the mind, making those who are subject to its power act contrary to their known interest, as a skittish horse runs away with the rider. Παν παθητῶ βιασικον εστι ως και πολλακις ορωσας. τρε εν τοις παθεσι, &c. *Stobaeus* *apud Salm. in Epictetum*. So *Plato* speaks of some who were so overcome by the sense of pleasure and pain as to be incapable of acting according to reason, *ειδοτες αλλα εναι βελτιω ων δη πρατησι δια τινας ητης ηδονων ηληπων κ ποιεν*, *De Legib.* lib. 10. p. 210. *Cant.* This propensity of human nature, to be hurried into bad action by the violence of desire, anger, and other appetites, was complain'd of by heathens as a weakness and depravity of our minds, *Plotin.* lib. 8. *Ennead.* *apud Salm.* ει δε τις αδειναιαν ψυχης τλω κακιαν λεγοι ωπαθη γην και δκνητον εναι απο παντῶ εις παν κακον φερονμω, δκνητον μω εις επιθυμιας δρεδισον δε εις οργας προπετη δε εις συγκαταθεσεις. Which depravity, as some observe, occasion'd an uneasy conflict in the mind distracted by different inclinations, *Αυτορ vite Pyth.* *apud Photium*, οθεν εκ ποικιλων δυναμωων σνησεωτες δυσρησεν τον βιον εχομω, εκασον γαρ των αλλων υπομιας φυσεως οιακιζεται ημεις δε υπο των διαφορων δυναμωων ανηπαμωνοι, &c.

tention makes them liable to a thousand errors. Such are apt to be seduc'd by a wrong notion of interest, or flattered by expectation to commit a crime. Prejudices early receiv'd and confirm'd by the authority of example, or it may be some original defect in the thinking power, may often create a difficulty of judging right, and therefore must suppose a lesser degree of guilt in acting wrong.

IT is easy to frame a notion how far a mind sincere, tho' less firm in the cause of virtue, may be overcome by a particular fondness, which, tho' it owes its strength to indulgence, may have likewise some foundation in nature \*. Love and hope first make men

\* The constitution of our bodies is another source of our disorders, not only by an influence upon our minds; but as they are the subject of many wants, diseases, and many of those irregular affections take their rise here, which divert us from the pursuits of virtue. Μυειας μὴ ἀρχολίας παρέχει το σωμα δια την αναγκαιαν τροφην ετι δε τινες νοσοι περισπεσωσιν εμποδιζουσιν ημων τιν τιν οντθ θησαν, ερωτων τε και επιθυμιων και φοβων και ειδολων πασηδαπων και ολυαιας εμπιμπλυσιν ημας πολλης. *Plato Phæd.* p. 86. *Capit.*

To the same purpose *Xenoph.* *Απομ. cap. 12. lib. 3. pag. 210.* τις εκ οιδεν οτ και εν τωτω πολλοι μεγαλα σφαλλοσιν διατομη υγιαινεν το σωμα. Και λιθη και αδυμια και δυσκολια και μανια πολλακις πολλοις δια την τε σωματθ καχεξιαν εις την διανοιαν. εμπιπτουσιν ωσε και τας επισαμας εκβαλειν; and these effects are not strange if we consider the intimate union of the body and the mind, and their mutual influence upon, and sympathy one with another, for as *Aristotle* observes, εξαλλαξεν τας διανοιας υπο των τε σωματθ παθηματων και τεναντιον δη τοις της ψυχης παθημασι το σωμα συμπεχει. See more to this purpose

men blind, and then hurry them on a precipice, please them so long with a *Siren's* song 'till they have lost the sense of danger, and the means to avoid it: In fine, so possess their imagination with a distant good that they have no apprehension of a present evil.

SUCH irregular passions not only involve the understanding in a cloud, but create to men a multitude of imaginary wants; which, as they are not to be supply'd in a fair way, must necessarily engage in unwarrantable pursuits: † No wonder then the mind, in this  
hurry

purpose in *Julianus Apostata in oratione solis*, and *Salmas* in his *Comment. on Epictetus*.

Thus as a body well dispos'd may be subservient to the mind in the offices of reason and religion, so an inconvenient constitution may be a very great hinderance to virtue. οργανον γαρ το σωμα της ψυχης εαν μω επιτηδεις κατασκευασθη συνεργει τη ψυχη και αυτη εχει επιτηδεις, εαν δε ανεπιτηδεις, εμποδιζει, και τοτε χρεια τη ψυχη απομαχομενη προς τω ανεπιτηδεοτητα οργανω. *Nemes.* p. 113. Ox. Whatever bad actions may arise from ignorance and false opinion from passion, and unhappy constitution of the body, unfavourable to religion, nature has directed our aims right, and no man misses of happiness but by some mistake, which gives him a wrong bias in the pursuit of it, αφαιτανει μω ψυχη (says a wise writer) οτι εφιεται αγαθε πλανηται παρ' το αγαθον. *Sallust.* cap. 11. or as *Aristotle* to the same purpose: φιλει δε εκαστ' ε το ον αυτο αγαθον αλλα το ραινομενον, *Ethic.* p. 342. In fine, however we account for the cause of our ill conduct, there is a necessity of owning some present defect of human nature to which we must ascribe it; how we came by this depravity is a point of too difficult speculation for mere unassisted reason.

† *Aleisot.* cap. 3. lib. 2. *Eth.* p. 57. Πσει ηδονας γαρ και λυπας εσιν η ηθικη αρετη, δια μω γαρ ηδονην τα φαυλα προετλομω δια τε τω λυπη των καλων απεχομεθα.

hurry of desire, and fancy'd necessity suffers such disturbance as to forget the just sentiments of nature, and the proper measures of action.

THE guilty person from an unfortunate situation is frequently press'd by a motive so violent that no ordinary virtue can resist it; the dire images of poverty and disgrace haunt his mind, at the same time he is urg'd by the painful sensations of thirst and hunger.

SOMETIMES bad actions are done not with an intention of doing hurt, but to avoid it; a groundless suspicion is allarm'd, and self-love must be in arms to retaliate an imaginary wrong or an injury which was not intended.

MANY honest people, who have a bad judgment but a very good meaning, are hurry'd into a behaviour equally pernicious to themselves and the publick, merely by apprehensions which men of design have industriously infused into them. It is easy to conceive how an ambitious demagogue may with a little art, and a deal of malice work an unthinking croud into such violent ferments as may end in very fatal resolutions. A small share of the guilt of what is done under such disorders must lie at the people's door. For if oppression is sufficient

to make a wise man mad, it is not strange that the groundless fears of it artfully inculcated upon weak minds should be enough to make those mad who are not wise. And people in such circumstances, whatever their actions may be, cannot be very criminal.

MANY bad actions, which have produc'd the worst consequences to society, have proceeded from a commendable motive in the agent, such as a regard to the publick, and a zeal for the common rights of mankind; or from some mistaken notions of religion.

IT is natural for men \* to be fond of liberty, and jealous of every attempt to deprive them of so great a blessing; virtuous minds have a passion for their country, which nothing can extinguish; tho' a weak sort of tendernefs, such as mothers bear to their children, is apt to lead the less judicious into improper expressions. When this jealousy for the publick is awaken'd by a groundless suspicion, like a mighty torrent it carries all before it. Nothing less can assuage the fury of a multitude but the destruction of

\* Hatred and envy are too commonly the companions of power, hence the actions of the best princes have been plac'd in the worst light, when there was nothing to be expected from flattery, or no danger from such unjust censure; it were easy to prove this by instances. That bad princes have been made worse, one cannot easily doubt who reads the lives of the first *Roman* Emperours.



those from whom they are taught to apprehend a danger. History is full of those disorders. Indeed so much mischief has been done from an apprehension of publick injury, and so many innocent sacrifices have been made to a popular resentment, either provok'd by bad usage, or alarm'd by mistaken fears, that one could almost fancy that all the advantages of society were not sufficient to balance all these bad consequences. It would be very unjust however to frame a notion of mankind from the effects of passion in those who want reason or experience to moderate its transports. Nay, those excursions of zeal for the publick, however hurtful in the effects, yet as they proceed from a notion of publick good, or an irregular warmth in the pursuit of it, express something in it self commendable. For what is generally the cause of such commotions but the ill-judging † simplicity of those who are the tools perhaps of a particular man's interest or ambition; and who may pretend to the virtue of loving their country even while they have the misfortune not to know its interest, from an ignorance which is too common and necessary to be criminal.

FALSE notions of religion inconsistent with charity and publick good too often engage

† The Author of this *Discourse* does not intend by these remarks to make any allusion to some late political quarrels with which he could have nothing to do.



engage men to commit crimes against society; it is exceeding odd, that acts of cruelty should ever pass for proper expressions of regard to the Deity; but education has a force even upon reasonable minds which one cannot easily imagine. And tho' history too well informs us what cruelties an ignorant zeal has produc'd, yet this unnatural effect of devotion shews more the strength of a bad religion than any original corruption of human nature.

IT were easy to shew from other cases, that as the actions of men are not always so bad as they appear, so the characters of men may in many instances by a reasonable interpretation be consider'd as much better than their actions.

THOSE cursory remarks are not design'd to excuse the ill conduct of men, or to lessen their real guilt; they only shew that human nature is not altogether so bad as appearances may signify. Men must be too much to blame after all the apologies one can frame for them. But if the disorders of life generally proceed from passion and mistake arising from inattention, and if neither of these motives are always or generally the effects of an original necessity, but might have been prevented by a proper endeavour; it must appear very unjust to charge God with our follies because we are pleas'd to make fools of ourselves.

2. IT will be proper therefore to consider, whether men are under any such circumstances of necessity, as some, to destroy the principles of natural religion, have thought fit to describe them.

NOTHING is plainer than that men must have liberty to be capable of blame; for which reason all those who have been the most artful enemies of religion have attack'd this foundation of it.

HAD the author of our being so contriv'd our nature as to make us the meer tools † of appetite and passion, as reason must be a very useless faculty upon such a supposition; so the human mind could be consider'd in no other light, than as a machine of a very odd and irregular contrivance, in which the maker had thrown away abundance of art upon a very bad design; nor would it be less absurd to ascribe virtue or goodness to a thing so passive, than to make it the production of a cause perfectly wise.

BUT if mankind are always masters of themselves, so far as the virtue of their actions is concern'd, those may be very bad, and the author of their being no way chargeable

† Cicero de Fato. *Ad animorum motus voluntarios non est requirenda externa causa, motus enim voluntarius eam naturam in se ipse continet ut sit in nostra potestate nobisque pareat? nec id sine causa, ejus enim rei causa ipsa natura est.*  
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able upon that account. Whether men have any such power to act or not, in many cases is a matter of experience, and cannot be determin'd by a metaphysical reasoning. And if experience must determine the question, we shall not only have the multitude of judges on the side of liberty; but indeed all who have not philosophy enough to argue themselves out of a common feeling; which in a case of this nature must carry in it much more weight and evidence, than all the niceties of speculation on the other side.

IT is not hard for men of leisure and invention to find difficulties sufficient to puzzle the clearest subjects. Nothing more is requisite but that the affair be very abstruse, and people in the humour to dispute. Some there have been, both ancient and modern, † who by a philosophy extremely profound, and

† Aul. Gel. *Noctes Atticæ*, cap. 5. lib. de Pyrrhon. *Nihil enim decernunt nihil constituunt, sed inquirendo considerandoque quidnam sit omnium rerum de quo decerni constituique possunt, at ne videre quoque plane quicquam neque audire se putent; sed ita pati afficique quasi videant vel audiant.*

So *Aristoteles de Calo*, lib. 3. cap. 1. Tully mentions the same sceptical philosophers under another name, *Academ.* lib. 2. p. 139. Edit. Davis. *Quid Cyrensi videntur? minime contempti qui negant esse quicquam quod percipi possit extrinsecus, ea se sola percipere qua tactu intimo sentiunt ut dolorem et voluptatem, neque se quo quid colore aut quo sono sit scire, sed tantum sentire adfici se quodam modo.* Notwithstanding this author's judgment, it seems a very contemptible philosophy, if it can deserve that name at all, which endeavours to reason people out of the highest evidence; nor would it be of any use to confute so vain a paradox, as it would be to no purpose; for if our senses are not to be depended on, our reason cannot deserve to be trusted.

and some may be apt to think very idle, have ventur'd to question the actual existence of those things we see and feel meerly from some difficulties in the idea of sensation, and the *substratum* of matter; but common sense is too stubborn a thing to yield to a mere philosophical difficulty from which nothing is exempted. Indeed, if the evidence of feeling, or the inward consciousness of every man's experience (excepting some metaphysicians) was to be confuted by a subtlety not only philosophy but common sense must end in learned chicane: But as we either want ideas or proper terms to express them in questions of this kind, a man must lose his time in the most disagreeable manner, who employs it in such speculations †.

BUT to return to our subject, it cannot be deny'd that passion \* and external objects have

TOO

† Philosophy at first seems to have been a simple inquiry into facts, without that idle and contentious subtilty which the vanity of the Greek Sophists introduc'd afterwards, by which it became an art of trifling, as a learned Father of the church observes, *Clem. Alex. Strom.* 8. c. 1. *αλλ' υδε οι παλαιωτατοι των φιλοσοφων επι το αμεις βητην και απορειν εθερεσησοι μηδ γαρ νεωτεροι των παρ' Ελλησι φιλοσοφων υπο φιλοτιμιας κειης και ατελες ελεγκτικως σμυ και ειρικως εις την αρχησον εξαγοσαι ελυθειαν.* It is well that the gentlemen of the royal Society, and some other reformers in philosophy have pursued knowledge in a better way.

\* Cicero de Fato, cap. 5. *Non enim si alii ad alia propensiores sunt propter causas naturales & antecedentes; idcirco etiam nostrarum voluntatum atque adpetitionum sunt causa naturales & antecedentes; nam nihil esse in nostra potestate si*  
res

too great a share in human actions to leave men at liberty, either to act or not in every particular instance; men are often led headlong by a blind and unreasonable impulse; but are they therefore never calm and undisturb'd? are men never free from the influence of a prevailing interest, or an overruling affection? Do they never consider things in themselves without a bias from external objects; and does not the mind frequently come to a resolution after a close and mature survey of the reasons or motives of action? And after a person has determin'd to act, may he not suspend the action 'till he has better consider'd the reasons of choice? What can be more plain than that this precaution must suppose him free from any present necessity? It is very true indeed, when a person has finally determin'd himself to act, he can have no longer a liberty to act otherwise; but this final determination is the action it self, and sure it cannot be proper to ask whether a man retains a power of acting one way, in the very instant he acts another †.

It must be own'd indeed, that mankind are apt enough to be mov'd by external appearances,

*res ita se haberet: Nunc vero fatemur valentes imbecilli essemus non esse id in nobis. Quis enim ex eo cogi putat ne sedeamus aut ambulemus voluntatis esse.*

† One may see an excellent Defence of Liberty in the Letters which pass'd between Dr. *Stark* and Mr. *Leibnitz*.

pearances, and that objects appear in a very different light to the mind according to the present temper and circumstances of the agent. It is likewise true, that actions may become necessary or unavoidable by the violent influence of a particular situation \* on the mind; but men are not ordinarily plac'd in such circumstances of necessity. Besides this necessity arising from an extraordinary combination of circumstances may well enough consist with an original liberty. For it does not prove that our affections are ever at the command of outward objects, or our reasons are always controll'd by our affections; experience on the contrary proves that our actions sometimes follow our understanding; or, if they don't, the most ignorant are not subject to any unhappy necessity of acting from a wrong judgment.

WHATSOEVER may be the bad influence of ungovern'd passions, or a mistake of interest in any present unnatural state of the mind, the author of nature cannot with any justice be chargeable with this necessity, or the consequences of it, unless it be the result

\* *Chrysippus* in *Cicero* makes this comparison, to reconcile human liberty with the influence of external objects. *De Fato* sect. 19. *Ut igitur qui protrusit Cylindrum dedit ei principium motionis volubilitatem non dedit; sic visum obiectum imprimis illud quidem & signabit in animo suam speciem, sed assensio nostra erit in potestate; neque quemadmodum in Cylindro dictum est extrinsecus pulsa quod reliquum est suapte vi & natura movebitur.*



sult of causes properly natural \*; whatever constraint the force of habit may impose, as that is acquir'd by our own fault, it must only be ascrib'd to ourselves. Men indeed may contract invincible inclinations to act wrong, and bind themselves with the ties of an acquir'd necessity; but what way soever they may forfeit their liberty, 'tis sufficient to clear the supreme goodness that they once had it; or that any natural impediments to virtue, arising from temper and circumstances, might have been originally conquer'd by a proper endeavour.

To preserve our notions of a supreme goodness, it is necessary to keep always in mind, what particular state of the mind and affections is properly natural to us as men, or peculiar to us as creatures of a certain make, and what impotence to virtue has been contracted by a wilful repetition of ill conduct.

BEFORE one has arriv'd at a sufficient age for acting any reasonable part in life, the native innocence of the mind is tinctur'd by false sentiments leading to disorder; the passions have taken a wrong course, and are turn'd out of the road of virtue; some phantom of happiness is made an idol of

\* Sallust. de Provid. p. 18. ——— Καὶ τοῖς κατ' οὐσίην ἐχέτιν ἐπαγαθὸν γίνεται πείρα, τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τέρψηναι κακῶς, ἀδυνεστερώς ἐχέτιν τὰ παρὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀγαθὰ εἰς τὸ χεῖρον μεταβάλλει ὥσπερ τὸν πλῆθον ἀγαθὸν οἷα πᾶσις ὀφθαλμίοσιν βλάπτειν οἷα συμβαίνει.

the soul; irregular propensions, inconsistent with our own peace and the happiness of others, may be too deeply fix'd for an ordinary resolution to root them out. A man in such a depravation of temper, will be apt to frame apologies for his ill conduct; and to make himself appear less guilty will be inclin'd to confound nature and habit the effects of his own indulgence, and an irresistible weakness of the mind; but would such a person ascend in his own reflexion to the rise † and spring of every vicious or irregular affection, he must easily perceive, that the beginnings of vice had been no hard conquest, had he been at proper pains to assist the weakness of nature by giving a contrary bent to her too forward inclinations one way, and by a particular survey of every defect or irregularity in his present temper, and tracing it to its original source, he shall find it resemble some great river, which however not very considerable in the origin has gradually swell'd into a vast current, by the continual accession of smaller streams\*.

THUS

† Men who have once possess'd a natural liberty of acting virtuously, may lose it by a vicious indulgence. *Aristotle* illustrates this observation by a proper comparison, *Ethic.* lib. 3. cap. 6. *ὡς περὺ ὑδαφένῃ λιθὸν ἐπ' αὐτὸν δυνάτον ἀναλαβέν ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐπ' αὐτῷ το βάλειν καὶ εἶπαι ἢ γὰρ ἀρχῇ αὐτῷ, ἔτω δὲ καὶ τῷ ἀδικῷ καὶ τῷ ἀκίλευτῷ ἐξ ἀρχῆς μὲν εἶναι τοῖσθ' μὴ γινέσθαι διὸ ἐκόντες εἰσι, ἡγομάροι δὲ καὶ εἶσαι μὴ εἶσαι.*

\* The original depravity of human nature being a doctrine peculiar to the Christian religion, it was not proper to take notice of it here.

WE have endeavour'd in the preceeding Reflexions to shew certain characters of a wise and good design in the make and constitution of human nature, and the relation of other beings to our happiness; from which, without the help of any metaphysical skill, we may certainly infer that goodness and unity of the supreme Being which are the necessary principles of all religion. From which reflexions duly consider'd, these conclusions must naturally follow.

1. THAT there is a plan laid for the happiness of mankind in the frame of human nature, and a various combination of external objects fitted for our enjoyment; which nothing can ordinarily defeat but our own ill conduct\*.

2. THAT

\* As for the evils to which human life is obnoxious, they are either such as have a necessary connexion with the present state of mankind, as a Stoick Philosopher observes concerning diseases. *Aul. Gell. Noctes Attice, lib. 6. cap. 1. Non fuisse hoc principale natura consilium ut faceret homines morbis obnoxios, nunquam enim hoc convenisse natura auctori parentique rerum omnium bonorum. Sed cum multa inquit atque magna gigneret pareretque aptissima & utilissima alia quoque simul agnata sunt incommoda iis ipsis que faciebat coherentia: eaque non per naturam sed per sequelas quasdam necessarias facta dicit quod ipse appellat, κατὰ παρεχολουθίαν*, or, 2. These evils are effects of human liberty, so that nothing but the destruction of that could altogether prevent them. Thus we cannot imagine any virtue in consulting the interests of society, if men were absolutely incapable of acting otherwise; all the pernicious effects therefore of pride, ambition, and every irregular species of self-love, which tends to our own or the publick unhappiness, are only abuses of that principle which is the source of every virtue.

2. THAT notwithstanding our present degeneracy there are certain natural principles and affections in mankind leading to the practice of virtue, and consequently both to publick and private happiness.

## 3. THAT

1. Many of those evils proceed from ignorance and mistake of interest, which might have been prevented by a proper care to inform ourselves. These put men upon a wrong pursuit of happiness, as *Plato* justly observes, 2 *Alcibiad.* p. 242. — ἄδεν κωλυεν εἰπω τω γε ἀγνοῦντι ἵτο βελτίστον παρῆσθηναι ποτε δοξᾶν ὡσε οἰηθῆναι καὶ το κακίστον ποτε βελτίστον εἶναι.

4. Many of the hardships of life have no real existence but in the imagination or discontent of the sufferer; being only a want of something which we vainly suppose to be necessary to happiness, as riches, honour and learning. Concerning these possessions *Seneca* justly observes. *Omnia ista bona quae nos speciosa sed fallaci voluptate delectant, pecunia, dignitas, potentia, aliaque complura ad quae generis humani caeca cupiditas stupefcit, cum labore possidentur, cum invidia conspiciuntur, eosque ipsos quos ornant premunt, plus minantur quam profunt.* Seneca ad Polyb. lib. 1.

4. The greatest pain of life arises from a disorderly excess of love, hope, fear, and other affections; which must necessarily create torment even in the highest affluence of outward possession, as one well observes, ἀθεοῖζέε χρυσεον συναγε ἀργυριον οικοδομεῖ περὶ πατῆς, ἀν μὴ τὰ παθῆ κατὰ σὸρβας καὶ φόβον καὶ φροῖδων ἀπαλλαγῆς οἶνον δοθεὶς πυρρετοῖσι; the feverish desire of happiness being only inflam'd by outward gratification. *Verum est profecto* (says a philosopher in *Aulus Gellius*, cap. 8. lib. 9.) *quod observato rerum usu sapientes viri dixerunt multos agere qui multa habent magnamque indigentiam nasci ex magna inopia, sed non ex magna copia, multa enim desiderari ad multa quae habes inenda.*

In fine, as the greatest evils arise from a bad conduct, the only method to prevent them is to govern our appetites in the quest of happiness, and instead of sensual indulgence, and other wrong methods of pursuit, to seek that self-enjoyment which consists in the acts of virtue and goodness. Hence *Aristotle* observing that a bad man was at a perpetual strife with himself, and liable to a painful remorse, advises people to study goodness, as the only means to reconcile a man to his own breast, and to procure him the pleasures

3. THAT as virtue or a reasonable pursuit of happiness is not a thing impracticable, so the practice of it ordinarily produces as many advantages, as together with the natural pleasures of sense and reflexion, sufficiently compensate those evils to which human life is commonly expos'd.

4. THAT the author of a system in which so many causes are put together with such a various and admirable contrivance, all conspiring in our happiness, must be perfectly good, and can be but one.

5. THAT as our ideas of one supreme Being, of perfect wisdom and goodness, are deriv'd not from nice and abstracted speculations, but from plain reflexions upon human nature, and external objects calculated for our use: So speculations out of this sphere of observation, cannot be of any great or at least general use to prove the Being or perfections of the Deity; concerning which those must be capable of the highest certainty who have no skill either in metaphysical or natural philosophy.

A

tures of friendship and benevolence. *Εἰ δὲ τὸ ἕτως ἔχειν  
κίαν εἰν ἀδελφίον φιλίαν τὴν μοχθηρίαν διατεταμένως  
καὶ περισσότερο ἐπιεικὴ εἶναι ἕτω γὰρ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀν καὶ ἐτε-  
ραὶν φίλων ἴσσοιτο.* *Arist. Eth. p. 401.* And surely the re-  
flexions of virtue with the innocent entertainments of life,  
are more than sufficient to balance those unavoidable evils  
to which good men are ordinarily liable; especially when  
the prospect of a future happiness is added to the account;  
a prospect which is highly reasonable upon the supposition  
of a supreme goodness.

A late writer of a particular character has \* ventur'd to propose a very desperate remedy against the misfortunes of life: And truly, if there is such an unavoidable series of misery and vice in the present state of mankind, as he pretends, the unhappy do not seem to be capable of any better consolation. The preceding reflexions or others of the same nature may possibly furnish a fitter entertainment to the minds of the unfortunate, by diverting their melancholy to a subject infinitely more agreeable; a subject which cannot but please the virtuous part of mankind, and as for those of a different character they owe it to their own ill choice, that they are incapable of the same satisfaction.

## WERE

\* Self-murder, which some late writers have undertaken to defend, was condemn'd by the best authors of antiquity. *Macrobius* makes *Plato* express himself in this manner, cap. 13. lib. 1. *In Som. Scip. nos esse in dominio deorum quorum tutela & providentia gubernamur; nihil autem esse invito domino de his quae possidet ex eo loco in quo suum constituerat conferendum: & sicut qui vitam mancipio extorquet alieno crimine non carebit, ita eum qui finem sibi domino necdum iubente quaesiverit non absolutionem consequi sed Reatum.* Which words are but a translation of a passage in his *Phaedo*, p. 80. *Cantab.* Και ημεις της ανθρωπης εν των κτηματων τοις θεοις εναι, &c.

*Aristotle* condemns self-murder as an injury to society, *Ethic.* lib. 6. p. 241. ο δε δι' οργην εαυτων σφατην εκων τειτο δια παρσι τον νομον ο εν εα ο νομος ——— διο τις πολις ζημιοι και τις ατιμια παρσι εσι τω εαυτω διασφρασι ως τω πολιν αδικηθη. In another place he makes it to be the action of a coward, *Ethic.* cap. 10. lib. 1. p. 37. I shall conclude with an epigram of *Martial*.

*Rebus in adversis facile est contemnere vitam;*  
*Fortiter ille facit qui miser esse potest.*

Ep. 57.



WERE men content to act the part which nature, or rather the author has assign'd to them, no degree of suffering could so far disconcert them as to make them forget a supreme goodness, and that their lives are only at the disposal of the author.

OF all the evils to which human life is expos'd, those of our own procuring are the worst; a guilty reflexion with the pain of discontent, are the stings which make every other hardship intolerable, and none can be such, if the sufferer is strengthen'd by a sense of the Deity.

MERE existence tho' allay'd with some inconvenience had been a favour; but when the author of our nature had added to a being we could not pretend to deserve so many advantages, and placed us in so large a sphere of enjoyment, among so many easy opportunities of receiving pleasure, as well from the innocent entertainments of sense and appetite as from the nobler exercise of reflexion and social love, and made so many obvious provisions for the general happiness of the species, of which individuals must share as they are parts of the whole; for creatures so highly distinguish'd by a divine bounty to distrust his goodness, and to act the part of deserters, must surely imply a very criminal ingratitude.

F I N I S.

*William Thomson*

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William Johnson

1748

Genl. Dudd

1794







