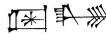


NATURAL LAW AND
ENLIGHTENMENT CLASSICS

*An Essay on the Nature
and Conduct of the
Passions and Affections,
with Illustrations on
the Moral Sense*
Francis Hutcheson

Edited and with an Introduction
by Aaron Garrett

The Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson



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Design of the following Sections; and to explain more fully how the *Moral Sense* alledged to be in Mankind, must be presupposed even in these Schemes.

5

SECTION I

*Concerning the Character of Virtue,
agreeable to Truth or Reason.*

10

[213/215] Since Reason is understood to denote our *Power of finding out true Propositions*, Reasonableness must denote the same thing, with *Conformity to true Propositions, or to Truth*.

15

Reasonableness in an Action is a very common Expression, but yet upon inquiry, it will appear very confused, whether we suppose it the Motive to *Election*, or the Quality determining *Approbation*.

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There is one sort of *Conformity to Truth* which neither determines to the one or the other; *viz.* that *Conformity which is between every true Proposition and its Object*. This sort of Conformity can never make us *chuse* or *approve* one Action more than its contrary, for it is found in all Actions alike: Whatever *attribute* can be ascribed to a *generous kind Action*, the *contrary Attribute* may as *truly* be ascribed to a *selfish cruel Action*: Both Propositions are equally *true*, [216] and the two contrary Actions, the Objects of the two [214] *Truths* are equally *conformable* to their several Truths, with that sort of *Conformity* which is between a Truth and its Object. This *Conformity* then cannot make a Difference among Actions, or recommend one more than another either to *Election* or *Approbation*, since any Man may make as many Truths about Villany, as about Heroism, by ascribing to it *contrary Attributes*.

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For Instance, these are *Truths* concerning the *Preservation of Property*. "It tends to the Happiness of human Society: It encourages Industry: It shall be rewarded by God." These are also *Truths* concerning *Robbery*. "It disturbs Society: It discourages Industry: It shall be punished by God." The former *three Truths* have the *Preservation of Property* for their

Conformity to
Truth exam-
ined.

Object; the *latter three* have *Robbery*. And each Class of Truths hath that sort of *Conformity* to its Object, which is common to all Truths with their Objects. The *moral Difference* cannot therefore depend upon this *Conformity*, which is common to both.

The *Number* of Truths in both cases may be plainly the same; so that a good Action cannot be supposed to agree to *more Truths* than an evil one, nor can an evil Action be disagreeable to any *Truth* or [215] *Compages* [217] of Truths made about it; for whatever Propositions do not agree with their Objects are not Truths.

If *Reasonableness*, the Character of Virtue, denote some other sort of *Conformity* to Truth, it were to be wished that these Gentlemen, who make it the original Idea of moral Good, antecedent to any *Sense* or *Affections*, would explain it, and shew how it determines us antecedently to a *Sense*, either to *Election* or *Approbation*.

They tell us, “we must have some *Standard* antecedently to all *Sense* or *Affections*, since we judge even of our Senses and Affections themselves, and approve or disapprove them: This Standard must be our *Reason*, Conformity to which must be the original Idea of moral Good.”

Reasons either
justifying or
exciting.

But what is this *Conformity of Actions to Reason*? When we ask the Reason of an Action we sometimes mean, “*What Truth shews a Quality in the Action, exciting the Agent to do it?*” Thus, why does a *Luxurious* Man pursue *Wealth*? The Reason is given by this Truth, “Wealth is useful to purchase Pleasures.” Sometimes for a Reason of Actions we shew the *Truth expressing a Quality, engaging our Approbation*. Thus the Reason of hazarding [216] Life in just War, is, that “it tends to preserve our [218] honest Countrymen, or evidences publick Spirit.” The Reason for *Temperance*, and against *Luxury* is given thus, “Luxury evidences a selfish base Temper.” The former sort of Reasons we will call *exciting*, and the latter *justifying*.* Now we shall find that all *exciting Reasons* presuppose *Instincts* and *Affections*; and the *justifying* presuppose a *Moral Sense*.

* Thus *Grotius* distinguishes the Reasons of War, into the *Justificae*, and *Suasoriae*.
[[See *Grotius, De Jure Belli et Pacis*, II.I.I. *Grotius* makes his distinction with ref-

Exciting Reasons suppose Affections.

As to *exciting Reasons*, in every calm rational Action some *end* is desired or intended; no end can be intended or desired previously to some one of these Classes of Affections, *Self-Love*, *Self-Hatred*, or desire of private Misery, (if this be possible) *Benevolence* toward others, or *Malice*: All Affections are included under these; no *end* can be previous to them all; there can therefore be no *exciting Reason* previous to *Affection*.

We have indeed many confused Harangues on this Subject, telling us, “We have two Principles of Action, *Reason*, and *Affection*, or *Passion* (*i.e.* strong Affection): the *former* in common with [217] Angels, the *latter* with Brutes: No Action is wise, or good, or reasonable, to which we are not excited [219] by *Reason*, as distinct from all *Affections*; or, if any such Actions as flow from *Affections* be good, ’tis only by *chance*, or *materially* and not *formally*.” As if indeed *Reason*, or the Knowledge of the Relations of things, could excite to Action when we proposed no *End*, or as if *Ends* could be intended without *Desire* or *Affection*.

But are there not also exciting Reasons, even previous to any end, moving us to propose one end rather than another? To this *Aristotle* long ago answered, “that there are *ultimate Ends* desired without a view to any thing else, and *subordinate Ends* or Objects desired with a view to something else.”⁴² To *subordinate Ends* those *Reasons* or *Truths* excite, which shew them to be conducive to the *ultimate End*, and shew *one Object* to be more effectual than another: thus *subordinate Ends* may be called *reasonable*. But as to the *ultimate Ends*, to suppose *exciting Reasons* for them, would infer, that there is no *ultimate End*, but that we desire one thing for another in an infinite Series.

No exciting Reasons for ultimate Ends.

Thus ask a Being who desires *private Happiness*, or has *Self-Love*? “what [218] Reason [221] excites him to desire Wealth”? He will give this

erence to Polybius and Livy. Barbeyrac, in the commentary on his edition of Grotius (Jean Barbeyrac, *Le Droit de la Guerre et de la Paix par Hugo Grotius* [Amsterdam: Pierre de Coup, 1724], 2v.), cites Polybius, *History*, III.6.]]

42. See *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.1. See also Gilbert Burnet (ed.), *Letters Between the Late Mr. Gilbert Burnet, and Mr. Hutchinson, Concerning The true Foundation of Virtue or Moral Goodness. Formerly Published in the London Journal* (London: W. Wilkins, 1735), 49–50.

Reason, that “Wealth tends to procure Pleasure and Ease.” Ask his Reason for desiring Pleasure or Happiness: One cannot imagine what Proposition he could assign as his *exciting Reason*. This Proposition is indeed true, “There is an *Instinct* or *Desire* fixed in his Nature, determining him to pursue his Happiness;” but it is not this *Reflection* on his own Nature, or this *Proposition* which excites or determines him, but the *Instinct itself*. This is a Truth, “*Rhubarb* strengthens the Stomach:” But ’tis not a *Proposition* which strengthens the Stomach, but the *Quality* in that Medicine. The Effect is not produced by *Propositions* shewing the *Cause*, but by the *Cause* itself.

In like manner, what *Reason* can a benevolent Being give, as exciting him to hazard his Life in just War? This perhaps, “such Conduct tends to the Happiness of his Country.” Ask him, “why he serves his Country?” he will say, “His Country is a very valuable Part of Mankind.” Why does he study the Happiness of Mankind? If his Affections be really *disinterested*, he can give no *exciting Reasons* for it: The Happiness of Mankind in general, or of any valuable Part of it, is an *ultimate End* to that Series of Desires.

Men have
many ultimate
Ends.

[219/222] We may transiently observe one Mistake which many fall into, who in their Philosophical Inquiries have learned to form very *abstract general Ideas*: They suppose, because they have formed some Conception of an *infinite Good*, or *greatest possible Aggregate*, or *Sum of Happiness*, under which all *particular Pleasures* may be included; that there is also some *one great ultimate End*, with a view to which every *particular Object* is desired; whereas, in truth, each *particular Pleasure* is desired without farther view, as an ultimate End in the *selfish Desires*. ’Tis true, the *Prospect* of a greater inconsistent Pleasure may surmount or stop this Desire; so may the *Fear* of a prepollent Evil. But this does not prove, that “all Men have formed Ideas of *infinite Good*, or *greatest possible Aggregate*, or that they have any *Instinct* or *Desire*, without an Idea of its Object.” Just so in the *benevolent Affections*, the Happiness of any one Person is an *ultimate End*, desired with no farther view: And yet the observing its *Inconsistency* with the Happiness of another more beloved, or with the Happiness of *many*, tho each one of them were but equally

beloved, may overcome the former Desire. Yet this will not prove, that in each *kind Action* Men do form the abstract Conception of *all Mankind*, or the *System of Rationals*. [210] The forming such large Conceptions is indeed useful, that so we may gratify either our [223] *Self-Love* or *kind Affections* in the fullest manner, as far as our Power extends; and may not content our selves with smaller Degrees either of *private* or *publick Good*, while greater are in our power: But when we have formed these *Conceptions*, we do not serve the *Individual* only from Love to the *Species*, no more than we desire *Grapes* with an Intention of the *greatest Aggregate* of Happiness, or from an Apprehension that they make a Part of the *General sum* of our Happiness. These Conceptions only serve to suggest *greater Ends* than would occur to us without Reflection; and by the *Prepollency* of one Desire toward the *greater Good*, either private or publick, to stop the Desire toward the *smaller Good*, when it appears inconsistent with the greater.

Let us examine the Truths assigned as *exciting* to the Pursuit of publick Good, even by those, who, tho they allow *disinterested Affections*, and a *moral Sense*, yet suppose something *reasonable* in it antecedently. They assign such as these “publick Good is the End proposed by the DEITY.” Then what *Reason* excites Men to concur with the DEITY? Is it this, “Concurring with the DEITY will make the Agent *happy*?” This is an *exciting Reason* indeed, [221] but plainly supposes *Self-Love*: [224] And let any one assign the *exciting Reason* to the Desire of Happiness. Is the Reason exciting to concur with the DEITY this, “The DEITY is our *Benefactor*?” Then what *Reason* excites to concur with Benefactors? Here we must recur to an *Instinct*. Is it this Truth, “The divine Ends are *reasonable Ends*?” Then what means the Word [*reasonable*?] Does it mean, that “the Deity has *Reasons* exciting him to promote the publick Good?” What are these *Reasons*? Why, perhaps “we do not know them particularly, but in general are sure that the DEITY has *Reasons* for them.” Then the Question recurs, What Reason excites us to *implicit Concurrence* with the Ends of the DEITY? The *Reasons* which excite *one Nature* may not excite another: The Tendency of an Action to the *Happiness of one Agent* may excite him, but will not excite another *Agent*

The common
Reasons exam-
ined.

to concur, unless there appears a like Tendency to the Happiness of that *other*. They may say, “they are sure the *divine Ends* are good.” What means *Goodness*? Is it *moral* or *natural*? If the *divine Ends* be *natural Good*, i.e. *pleasant*, or the *Cause of Pleasure*, to whom is this *Pleasure*? If to the DEITY, then why do we study the Happiness or the pleasing of the DEITY? What *Reason* excites us? All the possible Reasons must [222] either presuppose some *Affection*, if they are [225] exciting; or some *moral Sense*, if they are justifying.—Is the *divine End* naturally good to us? This is an exciting Reason, but supposes *Self-Love*. If we say the *divine Ends* are *morally Good*, we are just where we began. What is *moral Goodness*? *Conformity to Reason*. What are the *Reasons exciting or justifying*?

If any alledg as the Reason *exciting* us to pursue publick Good, this Truth, that “the Happiness of a *System*, a *Thousand*, or a *Million*, is a greater Quantity of Happiness than that of *one Person*: and consequently, if Men desire Happiness, they must have stronger Desires toward the *greater Sum*, than toward the *less*.” This Reason still supposes an *Instinct toward Happiness* as previous to it: And again, To *whom* is the Happiness of a *System* a greater Happiness? To one *Individual*, or to the *System*? If to the *Individual*, then his Reason exciting his Desire of a *happy System* supposes *Self-Love*: If to the *System*, then what Reason can excite to desire the greater *Happiness of a System*, or any *Happiness* to be in the Possession of *others*? None surely which does not presuppose *publick Affections*. Without such *Affections* this Truth, “that an hundred Felicities is a greater Sum than one Felicity,” will no more excite to study the Happiness of the *Hundred*, than this Truth, “an hundred Stones are greater than one,” will excite a Man, who has no *desire of Heaps*, to cast them together.

The same may be observed concerning that *Proposition*, assigned by some as the *ultimate Reason* both *exciting* to, and *justifying* the Pursuit of publick Good, *viz.* “*It is best that all should be happy.*” *Best* is most good: Good to whom? To the *Whole*, or to each *Individual*? If to the *former*, when this Truth excites to Action, it must presuppose *kind Affections*; if it is good to each *Individual*, it must suppose *Self-Love*.

The true
Meaning of
Reasons excit-
ing to Actions,
and reasonable
Actions.

Let us once suppose *Affections*, *Instincts* or *Desires* previously implanted in our Nature: and we shall easily understand the *exciting Reasons* for Actions, *viz.* “These Truths which shew them to be conducive toward some *ultimate End*, or toward the *greatest End* of that kind in our
5 Power.” He acts *reasonably*, who considers the various Actions in his Power, and forms *true Opinions* of their *Tendencies*; and then chuses to do that which will obtain the highest Degree of *that*, to which the *Instincts* of his Nature incline him, with the smallest Degree of those things to [224] which the *Affections* in his Nature make him averse.

[227] More particularly, the *exciting Reasons* to a Nature which had only *selfish Affections*, are those Truths which shewed “what Object or Event would occasion to it the greatest Quantity of *Pleasure*.” these would excite to the Prosecution of it. The *exciting Truths* about *Means*, would be only those which pointed out some Means as more certainly
15 effectual than any other, or with less *Pain* or *Trouble* to the *Agent*. *Publick Usefulness* of *Ends* or *Means*, or *publick Hurtfulness* would neither excite nor dissuade, farther than the *publick State* might affect *that* of the *Agent*.

If there is any Nature with *publick Affections*: The Truths exciting to
20 any *End* in this Order, are such as shew, “that any Event would promote the Happiness of others.” That *End* is called most *reasonable*, which our Reason discovers to contain a greater Quantity of *publick Good*, than any other in our power.

When any Event may affect both the *Agent* and *others*, if the *Agent*
25 have both *Self-Love* and *publick Affections*, he acts according to that Affection which is *strongest*, when there is any *Opposition* of Interests; [225] if there be no *Opposition*, he follows both. If he discovers this Truth, that “his constant [228] pursuit of *publick Good* is the most probable way of promoting his *own Happiness*,” then his Pursuit is truly reason-
30 able and constant; thus both Affections are at once gratify’d, and he is consistent with himself. Without knowledge of that Truth he does not act *reasonably* for his own Happiness, but follows it by *Means* not tending effectually to this *End*: and must frequently, from the Power of *Self-Love*, neglect or counteract his other *End*, the *publick Good*. If there

be also a *moral Sense* in such an Agent, while yet he is inadvertent to the *Connexion of private Happiness* with the *Study of the publick*; he must be perpetually yet more uneasy, either thro' the apprehended *Neglect of private Interest* when he serves the Publick; or when he pursues only *private Interest*, he will have perpetual *Remorse* and *Dissatisfaction* with his own *Temper*, thro' his *moral Sense*. So that the Knowledge of this *Connexion* of private Interest, with the Study of publick Good, seems absolutely necessary to preserve a constant *Satisfaction* of Mind, and to prevent an *alternate Prevalence* of seemingly contrary Desires. 5

Should any one ask even concerning these two *ultimate Ends, private Good* [226] and *publick*, is not the latter more *reasonable* than the former?—What means the Word *reasonable* in this Question? If we [229] are allowed to presuppose *Instincts* and *Affections*, then the Truth just now supposed to be discoverable concerning our State, is an *exciting Reason to serve the publick Interest*, since this Conduct is the most *effectual Means* to obtain both ends. But I doubt if any Truth can be assigned which *excites* in us either the Desire of *private Happiness* or *publick*. For the *former* none ever alledged any *exciting Reason*: and a *benevolent Temper* finds as little *Reason exciting* him to the latter; which he desires without any view to *private Good*. If the meaning of the Question be this, “does not every *Spectator approve* the Pursuit of publick Good more than private?” The Answer is obvious that he does: but not for any *Reason* or *Truth*, but from a *moral Sense*. 10 15 20

This leads to consider *Approbation* of Actions, whether it be for *Conformity to any Truth*, or *Reasonableness*, that Actions are ultimately approved, independently of any *moral Sense*? Or if all *justifying Reasons* do not presuppose it? 25

Justifying Reasons suppose a moral Sense.

If *Conformity to Truth*, or *Reasonable*, denote nothing else but that “an Action is the *Object of a true Proposition*,” ’tis [227] plain, that all Actions should be approved [230] equally, since as many Truths may be made about the worst, as can be made about the best. See what was said above about exciting Reasons. 30

But let the *Truths* commonly assigned as *justifying* be examined.

Here 'tis plain, "*A Truth shewing an Action to be fit to attain an End,*" does not justify it; nor do we approve a *subordinate End* for any Truth, which only shews it to be fit to promote the *ultimate End*; for the worst Actions may be conducive to their *Ends*, and *reasonable* in that Sense.

5 The *justifying Reasons* then must be about the *Ends* themselves, especially the *ultimate Ends*. The Question then is, "Does a *Conformity to any Truth* make us *approve* an *ultimate End*, previously to any *moral Sense*?" For example, we approve *pursuing the publick Good*. For what *Reason*? or what is the *Truth* for Conformity to which we call it a *reasonable End*? I fancy we can find none in these Cases, more than we
10 could give for our liking any *pleasant Fruit*.*

The Reasons assigned are such as these; "*'Tis the End proposed by the DEITY.*" But why do we *approve* concurring with [231] the divine Ends? This Reason is given, "*He is our Benefactor.*" But then, for [228]
15 what *Reason* do we approve *Concurrence with a Benefactor*? Here we must recur to a *Sense*. Is this the Reason moving to *Approbation*, "*Study of publick Good tends to the Advantage of the Approver.*" Then the Quality moving us to *approve* an Action, is its being *advantageous to us*, and not *Conformity to a Truth*. This Scheme is intelligible, but not true in
20 fact. Men *approve* without Perception of *private Advantage*; and often do not *condemn or disapprove* what is plainly pernicious; as in the Execution of a *just Sentence*, which even the Criminal may *approve*.

If any allege, that this is the *justifying Reason* of the *Pursuit of publick Good*, "*that it is best all be happy,*" then we approve Actions for their
25 *Tendency to that State which is best*, and not for *Conformity to Reason*. But here again, what means *best*? *morally best*, or *naturally best*? If the *former*, they explain the same Word by itself in a Circle: If they mean the *latter*, that "it is the most happy State where all are happy;" then, *most happy*, for whom? the *System*, or the *Individual*? If for the *former*,
30 what Reason makes us *approve the Happiness of a System*? Here we must

*This is what *Aristotle* so often asserts that the *προαιρετὸν* or *βουλευτὸν* is not the End, but the Means.

[[This note was added in the third edition. See *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1111b27.]]

recur to a *Sense* or *kind Affections*. Is [232] it most happy for the *Individual*? Then the Quality moving *Approbation* is [229] again *Tendency to private Happiness*, not *Reasonableness*.

Obligation
supposes either
Affections or a
moral Sense.

There are some other *Reasons* assigned in Words differing from the former, but more confused, such as these: “ ’Tis our *Duty to study publick Good. We are obliged to do it. We owe Obedience to the Deity. The whole is to be preferred to a Part.*” But let these Words *Duty, Obligation, Owing*, and the meaning of that Gerund, *is to be preferred*, be explained; and we shall find our selves still at a Loss for *exciting Reasons* previously to *Affections*, or *justifying Reasons* without recourse to a *moral Sense*. 5
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The meaning
of Obligation.

When we say one is obliged to an Action, we either mean, 1. *That the Action is necessary to obtain Happiness to the Agent, or to avoid Misery*: Or, 2. *That every Spectator, or he himself upon Reflection, must approve his Action, and disapprove his omitting it, if he considers fully all its Circumstances.* The former Meaning of the Word *Obligation* presupposes *selfish Affections*, and the *Senses of private Happiness*: The latter Meaning includes the *moral Sense*. Mr. *Barbeyrac*, in his Annotations upon *Grotius*,* [230/233] makes *Obligation* denote an *indispensable Necessity to act in a certain manner*. Whoever observes his Explication of this *Necessity*, (which is not *natural*, otherwise no Man could act against his Obligation) will find that it denotes only “such a Constitution of a powerful Superior, as will make it impossible for any Being to obtain *Happiness*, or avoid *Misery*, but by such a Course of Action.” This agrees with the former Meaning, tho sometimes he also includes the latter. 15
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Many other confused Definitions have been given of Obligation, by no obscure Names in the learned World. But let any one give a distinct Meaning, different from the two above-mentioned. To pursue them all would be endless; only let the *Definitions* be substituted in place of the Word OBLIGATION, in other parts of each Writer, and let it be observed whether it makes good Sense or not.† 30

* *Lib J. Chap. I. Sect. 10.*

† The common Definition, *Vinculum Juris que necessitate astringimur alicujus rei*

Arguments for
some Standard
of Morals
prior to a
Sense consid-
ered.

Before we quit this Character *Reasonableness*, let us consider the Arguments brought to prove that there must be some Standard of moral Good antecedent to any Sense. Say [234] they, "*Perceptions of Sense* are deceitful, we must have some Perception or Idea of *Virtue* more stable and certain; this must be *Conformity to Reason*: *Truth* discovered by our Reason [231] is certain and invariable: *That* then alone is the Original Idea of *Virtue*, *Agreement with Reason*." But in like manner our *Sight* and *Sense of Beauty* is deceitful, and does not always represent the true *Forms* of Objects. We must not call that *beautiful* or *regular*, which pleases the *Sight*, or an *internal Sense*; but *Beauty* in external *Forms* too, consists in *Conformity to Reason*. So our *Taste* may be vitiated: we must not say that *Savour* is perceived by *Taste*, but must place the original Idea of *grateful Savours* in *Conformity to Reason*, and of *ungrateful* in *Contrariety to Reason*. We may mistake the real *Extent* of Bodies, or their *Proportions*, by making a Conclusion upon the first sensible Appearance: Therefore *Ideas of Extension* are not originally acquired by a *Sense*, but consist in *Conformity to Reason*.

If what is intended in this *Conformity to Reason* be this, "That we should call no Action *virtuous*, unless we have some *Reason* to conclude it to be virtuous, or some *Truth* shewing it to be so." This is very true; but then in like manner we should count no Action *vicious*, unless we [235] have some *Reason* for counting it so, or when 'tis *Truth* "that it is vicious." If this be intended by *Conformity to Truth*, then at the same rate we may make *Conformity to Truth* the original Idea of *Vice* [232] as well as *Virtue*; nay, of every Attribute whatsoever. That *Taste* alone is

praestandae, is wholly metaphorical, and can settle no Debate precisely.

[[This note was added in the third edition. This definition of obligation derives from Justinian, *Institutes*, III.1—"De Obligationibus." Cumberland renders it "*That bond of the Law, by which we are tied with the necessity of paying any thing*" (Richard Cumberland, *De Legibus Naturae*, V §11). It is commonly cited by the natural lawyers. For a discussion, see Pufendorf, *Of the Law of Nature and Nations*, I.vi.4, and Barbeyrac's n. 2. It seems likely that Hutcheson is deriving this from Cumberland's discussion, as Cumberland dismisses Justinian's definition in favor of Papinianus's definition (which rests not on the particular laws of a polity—Rome—but on "the bond of equity" and remarks "it breeds *obscurity*, that he uses *Metaphorical* words, which are generally of *doubtful* meaning," *Ibid.*.)

sweet, which there is *Reason* to count *sweet*; that *Taste* alone is *bitter*, concerning which 'tis *true* that it is *bitter*; that *Form* alone is *beautiful*, concerning which 'tis true that it is *beautiful*; and that alone *deformed*, which is truly *deformed*. Thus *Virtue*, *Vice*, *Sweet*, *Bitter*, *Beautiful*, or *Deformed*, originally denote *Conformity to Reason*, antecedently to Perceptions of any *Sense*. The *Idea of Virtue* is particularly that concerning which 'tis *Truth*, that it is *Virtue*; or *Virtue* is *Virtue*; a wonderful Discovery!

So when some tell us, "that *Truth* is naturally pleasant, and more so than any *sensible Perception*; this must therefore engage Men more than any other Motive, if they attend to it." Let them observe, that as much *Truth* is known about *Vice* as *Virtue*. We may *demonstrate* the publick *Miseries* which would ensue upon *Perjury*, *Murder*, and *Robbery*. These Demonstrations would be attended with that *Pleasure* which is peculiar to *Truth*; as well as the Demonstrations of the publick *Happiness* to [236] ensue from *Faith*, *Humanity* and *Justice*. There is equal *Truth* on both sides.

Whence it is
that *Virtue* is
called reason-
able and not
Vice.

[233] We may transiently observe what has occasioned the Use of the Word *reasonable*, as an Epithet of only *virtuous Actions*. Tho we have *Instincts* determining us to desire *Ends*, without supposing any previous *Reasoning*; yet 'tis by use of our *Reason* that we find out the Means of obtaining our *Ends*. When we do not use our *Reason*, we often are disappointed of our *End*. We therefore call those *Actions* which are *effectual* to their *Ends*, *reasonable* in one Sense of that Word.

Again, in all Men there is probably a *moral Sense*, making publicly useful *Actions* and kind *Affections* *grateful* to the Agent, and to every Observer: Most Men who have thought of human *Actions*, agree, that the *publickly useful* are in the whole also *privately useful* to the Agent, either in this *Life* or the next: We conclude, that all Men have the *same Affections and Senses*: We are convinced by our *Reason*, that 'tis by publicly useful *Actions* alone that we can promote *all our Ends*. Whoever then acts in a contrary manner, we presume is *mistaken*, *ignorant of*, or *inadvertent* to, these *Truths* which he might know; and say he acts *unreasonably*. Hence some have [237] been led to imagine, some *Reasons*

either exciting or [234] justifying previously to all *Affections* or a *moral Sense*.

Two Arguments are brought in defense of this Epithet, as antecedent to any Sense, *viz.* "That we judge even of our *Affections* and *Senses* themselves, whether they are *morally Good* or *Evil*."

The second Argument is, that "if all *moral Ideas* depend upon the *Constitution* of our *Sense*, then all *Constitutions* would have been alike reasonable and good to the DEITY, which is absurd."

Objections from our judging even of our *Affections* and *Senses* themselves.

As to the first Argument, 'tis plain we judge of our own *Affections*, or those of others by our *moral Sense*, by which we approve kind *Affections*, and disapprove the contrary. But none can apply *moral Attributes* to the very *Faculty* of perceiving *moral Qualities*; or call his *moral Sense* *morally Good* or *Evil*, any more than he calls the *Power of Tasting*, *sweet*, or *bitter*; or of *Seeing*, *strait* or *crooked*, *white* or *black*.

I. That we judge our *Senses* themselves.

Every one judges the *Affections* of others by his own *Sense*; so that it seems not impossible that in these *Senses* Men might differ as they do in *Taste*. A *Sense* approving *Benevolence* would disapprove [235] *that Temper*, [238] which a *Sense* approving *Malice* would delight in. The *former* would judge of the *latter* by his *own Sense*, so would the *latter* of the *former*. Each one would at first view think the *Sense* of the other perverted. But then, is there no difference? Are both *Senses* equally *good*? No certainly, any *Man* who observed them would think the *Sense* of the *former* more desirable than of the *latter*; but this is, because the *moral Sense* of every *Man* is constituted in the former manner. But were there any Nature with no *moral Sense* at all observing these two Persons, would he not think the State of the *former* preferable to that of the *latter*? Yes, he might: but not from any Perception of *moral Goodness* in the one *Sense* more than in the other. Any rational Nature observing two Men thus constituted, with *opposite Senses*, might by reasoning see, not *moral Goodness* in one *Sense* more than in the contrary, but a *Tendency to the Happiness of the Person himself*, who had the former *Sense* in the one Constitution, and a *contrary Tendency* in the opposite *Consti-*

Answered.

Natures have seen something *reasonable* in one Constitution more than in another?" They might no doubt have *reasoned* about the various *Constitutions*, and foreseen that the *present one* would tend to the *Happiness* of Mankind, and would evidence *Benevolence* in the DEITY: So also they might have *reasoned* about the *contrary Constitution*, that it would make Men miserable, and evidence *Malice* in the Deity. They would have *reasoned* about *both*, and found out *Truths*: are both Constitutions alike *reasonable* to these Observers? No, say they, "the *benevolent one* is *reasonable*, and [247] the *malicious unreasonable*." And yet these Observers *reasoned* and *discovered Truths* about both: An Action then is called by us *reasonable* when 'tis *benevolent*, and *unreasonable* when *malicious*. This is plainly making the Word *reasonable* denote whatever is *approved* by our moral Sense, without Relation to *true Propositions*. We often use that Word in such a confused Manner: But these *antecedent Natures*, supposed without a *moral Sense*, would not have *approved* one Constitution of the DEITY as *morally* better than another.

Had it been left to the Choice of these *antecedent Minds*, what *manner of Sense* [242] they would have desired for Mankind; would they have seen no *difference*? Yes they would, according to their *Affections* which are presupposed in all *Election*. If they were *benevolent*, as we suppose the DEITY, the *Tendency of the present Sense to the Happiness of Men* would have excited their Choice. Had they been *malicious*, as we suppose the Devil, the *contrary Tendency of the contrary Sense* would have excited their *Election* of it. But is there nothing *preferable*, or *eligible* antecedently to all *Affections* too? No certainly, unless there can be *Desire* without *Affections*, or *superior Desire*, *i. e.* *Election* antecedently to all *Desire*.

Reasons for
Election differ-
ent from those
for Approba-
tion.

[248] Some do farther perplex this Subject, by asserting, that "the same *Reasons* determining *Approbation*, ought also to excite to *Election*." Here, 1. We often see *justifying Reasons* where we can have no *Election*; *viz.* when we observe the *Actions of others*, which were even prior to our *Existence*. 2. The Quality moving us to *Election* very often cannot excite *Approbation*; *viz.* *private usefulness*, not publicly pernicious. This both does and *ought* to move *Election*, and yet I believe few will say, "they *approve* as virtuous the *eating a Bunch of Grapes*, taking a *Glass of Wine*,

or *sitting down* when [243] one is tired.” *Approbation* is not what we can *voluntarily* bring upon our selves. When we are contemplating Actions, we do not *chuse* to approve, because *Approbation* is pleasant; otherwise we would always approve, and never condemn any Action; because this
 5 is some way uneasy. *Approbation* is plainly a *Perception* arising without previous *Volition*, or Choice of it, because of any *concomitant Pleasure*. The Occasion of it is the *Perception of benevolent Affections* in our selves, or the discovering the like in others, even when we are incapable of any *Action* or *Election*. The *Reasons* determining *Approbation* are such as shew
 10 that an Action evidenced *kind Affections*, and that in *others*, as often as in *our* [249] *selves*. Whereas, the *Reasons* moving to Election are such as shew the *Tendency of an Action to gratify some Affection* in the Agent.

The *Prospect* of the Pleasure of *Self-Approbation*, is indeed often a Motive to *chuse* one Action rather than another; but this supposes the
 15 *moral Sense*, or Determination to *approve*, prior to the *Election*. Were *Approbation* *voluntarily* chosen, from the Prospect of its concomitant Pleasure, then there could [244] be no *Condemnation* of our own Actions, for that is unpleasant.

As to that confused Word [ought] ’tis needless to apply to it again all
 20 that was said about *Obligation*.

SECTION II

25 *Concerning that Character of Virtue and Vice,
 The Fitness or Unfitness of Actions.*

[245/250] We come next to examine some other Explications of Morality, which have been much insisted on of late.* We are told, “that there
 30 are *eternal and immutable Differences* of Things, absolutely and antecedently: that there are also *eternal and unalterable Relations* in the Natures of the Things themselves, from which arise *Agreements* and *Dis-*

The Fitness
and Unfitness
in Morals.

* See Dr. *Samuel Clarke’s Boyle’s Lectures*; and many late Authors.

[[This is a synoptic description of Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse Concerning the*