

An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reported between brackets in normal-sized type.—Shaftesbury divided the work into Books, Parts and Sections, but all their titles are added in this version.—This work is the fourth of the five Treatises in Shaftesbury’s *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*.

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Glossary

affection: In the early modern period, ‘affection’ could mean ‘fondness’, as it does today; but it was also often used, as it is in this work, to cover every sort of pro or con attitude—desires, approvals, likings, disapprovals, dislikings, etc.

amiable: This meant ‘likable’, ‘lovable’, ‘very attractive’. A good deal stronger than the word’s normal meaning today.

art: In Shaftesbury’s time an ‘art’ was any human activity that involves techniques or rules of procedure. ‘Arts’ in this sense include medicine, farming, and painting.

bad: With one exception (noted when it occurs), every occurrence of ‘bad’ in this work replaces Shaftesbury’s ‘ill’.

evil: This replaces Shaftesbury’s ‘ill’ when that is used as a noun. It means merely ‘something bad’. It is customary in English to use ‘evil’ for this purpose (e.g. ‘pain is an evil’, and ‘the problem of evil’ meaning ‘the problem posed by the existence of bad states of affairs’). Don’t load the word with all the force it has in English when used as an adjective.

generous: It had today’s sense of ‘free in giving’ but also the sense of ‘noble-minded, magnanimous, rich in positive emotions’ etc.

lot: ‘What is given to a person by fate or divine providence; esp. a person’s destiny, fortune, or condition in life.’ (OED)

luxury: This meant something like: *extreme* or *inordinate* indulgence in sensual pleasures. A ‘luxurious’ person was someone wholly given to the pleasures of the senses—mostly but not exclusively the pleasures of eating and drinking.

mischief: This meant ‘harm, injury’—much stronger and darker than the word’s meaning today.

monster: A monster is an organism that is markedly and disturbingly different from what is normal for its species.

moral: In early modern times, ‘moral’ could mean roughly what it does today, but also had a use in which it meant ‘having to do with intentional human action’.

motion: ‘An inner prompting or impulse; a desire, an inclination; a stirring of the soul, an emotion.’ (OED)

object: In early modern usage, anything that is aimed at, wanted, loved, hated, thought about, feared, etc. is an *object* of that aim, desire, love, etc. *Anything*: it could be a physical object, but is more likely to be a state of affairs, a state of mind, an experience, etc.

occasion: It is often used to mean the same as ‘cause’ (noun or verb), but it began its philosophical career in opposition to ‘cause’. According to the ‘occasionalist’ theory about body-mind relations: when you are kicked, you feel pain; what causes the pain is not the kick but God, and the kick comes into it not as *causing* God to give you pain (because nothing causes God to do anything) but as the ‘occasion’ for his doing so. Perhaps a signal or a trigger. Writers who weren’t obviously pushing the occasionalist line still used ‘occasion’ sometimes without *clearly* meaning anything but ‘cause’.

principle: Shaftesbury uses this word a few times in a sense, once common but now obsolete, in which ‘principle’ means ‘source’, ‘cause’, ‘driver’, ‘energizer’, or the like. (Hume’s *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* is, as he explicitly tells us, an enquiry into the *sources in human nature* of our moral thinking and feeling.)

sensible: This means 'relating to the senses', and has nothing to do with being level-headed, prudent, or the like.

set: The phrase 'set or suite of passions' on page 40 is analogous to 'a set of cutlery', 'a suite of bedroom furniture'.

speculative: This means 'having to do with non-moral propositions'. Ethics is a 'practical' discipline, chemistry is a 'speculative' one.

temperament: This is always a replacement for Shaftesbury's 'temper'.

theism: Someone who 'believes in a reigning mind, sovereign

in nature and ruling all things with the highest perfection of goodness, as well as of wisdom and power' (Shaftesbury, page 22).

ugly, ugliness: These words don't occur in the original version of this work; in the present version they replace 'deformed' (and 'deformity'), which have a stronger and nastier sense today than they did in early modern times.

vice, vicious: Morally wrong conduct, not necessarily of the special kind that we reserve 'vice' for these days, or the different special kind that we label as 'vicious'.

BOOK I

What is virtue?

Part 1: Introductory

Section 1: What prompts this inquiry

Religion and virtue seem in many respects to be so nearly related that they are generally presumed to be inseparable companions. We are so willing to think well of their union that we hardly allow it to be permissible to speak or even think of them separately. But it may be questioned whether this attitude can be theoretically justified. We certainly do sometimes encounter cases that seem to go against this general supposition. We have known people who have the appearance of great zeal in religion but have lacked even the common affections of humanity, and shown themselves extremely degenerate and corrupt. Others who have paid little regard to religion and been considered as mere atheists have been seen to practise the rules of morality and in many cases to act with such good meaning and affection towards mankind that one seems forced to admit that they are virtuous. [And, Shaftesbury says, in our everyday lives our willingness to have dealings with someone may depend on his answer to ‘What are his morals?’, whereas the answer to ‘Is he religious and devout?’ doesn’t interest us.]

This has led to the questions:

- What is honesty or virtue, considered by itself?
- How is it influenced by religion?
- To what extent does religion necessarily imply virtue?
- Is it true, what they say, that an atheist can’t possibly be virtuous or have any real honesty or merit?

This topic hasn’t been much examined, and is a matter of delicate and dangerous speculation; so you shouldn’t be surprised if my approach to it strikes you as somewhat unusual. Religiously inclined people have been so alarmed by some recent writers, creating so much protective fervour surrounding religion, that nothing an author suggests in favour of religion will be accepted if he allows the least advantage to any other principle [see Glossary]. On the other side, men who go in for wit and teasing, and enjoy nothing so much as exposing the weak sides of religion, are so desperately afraid of being drawn into any serious thoughts about it that when someone who has the manner of a free-thinking-writer nevertheless shows some respect for the principles of natural religion they see him as guilty of foul play! They are apt to give as little quarter as they receive [i.e. to show as little mercy as is shown to them], and are resolved to think as badly of the morals of their antagonists as their antagonists can possibly think of theirs. Neither side, it seems, will allow the least advantage to the other. It’s as hard to persuade one side that there’s any virtue in religion as to persuade the other that there is any virtue outside their particular community. So an author who dares to plead for religion and moral virtue without lessening the force of either is bound to have a bad time of it at the hands of both groups; but by allowing to each its proper range and status he will be hindering their being made enemies by belittling each other.

Be that as it may: if within the intended scope of this inquiry I am to throw the least new light, or explain anything effectively, I'll have to go pretty deep. I'll need to devise some short scheme to represent the origin of each opinion, whether natural or unnatural, relating to the deity. If we can happily get clear of this thorny part of our philosophy, the rest, I hope, will be more plain and easy.

Section 2: The state of opinions

In the totality of things (i.e. in the universe) either •everything conforms to an order that is good and the most agreeable to a general interest or •there's something that is otherwise, something that could have been better constituted, designed more wisely and with more advantage to the general interest of beings as a whole.

If every thing that exists conforms to an order that is good and for the best, then it necessarily follows that there's no such thing as real badness in the universe, nothing that is bad with respect to the whole.

Anything that *couldn't* really have been better or in any way better ordered is perfectly good. Anything in the order of the world that can be called bad must be such that it could have been better designed or ordered. . . .

Anything that is really bad must be caused or produced either •by design (i.e. with knowledge and intelligence) or •by mere chance.

If anything in the universe is bad from design, then that which governs all things is not •one •good designing principle. Either [not good:] there is one designing principle but it is itself corrupt, or [not one:] there is also some other principle, a bad one, operating against it.

If there is any bad in the universe from mere chance, then it is not the case that all things are caused by a

designing principle, i.e. a mind, whether good or bad. [that is Shaftesbury's only use of 'bad' in this work.] Thus, if there is a designing principle who causes only good things but cannot prevent the evil that happens by chance or from a contrary bad design, then there can't be in reality any such thing as a •truly• superior good design or mind, but only one that is impotent and defective—one that •can't totally exclude everything bad or that •doesn't want to.

Anything that is in some degree superior over the world, ruling in nature with discernment and a mind, is what all men agree in calling 'God'. If there are several such superior minds, they are so many gods; but if the single God or the several gods are not in their nature necessarily good, they are called 'daemons'.

To believe that everything is governed, ordered, or regulated for the best by a designing principle—i.e. a mind—that is necessarily good and permanent is to be a perfect **theist**.

To have no belief in any designing principle or mind, or in any cause, measure, or rule of things other than chance, so that in nature no interests of the whole or of any particulars is in the least designed, pursued, or aimed at, is to be a perfect **atheist**.

To believe that there are two or more designing principles or minds, all in their nature good, is to be a **polytheist**.

To believe that the governing mind or minds are not absolutely and necessarily good—aren't confined to what is best, but are capable of acting according to mere will or fancy—is to be a **daemonist**.

·I shall return to some of these opinions starting on page 12·. Not many people think always consistently, or according to one particular hypothesis, on any subject as abstruse and intricate as *the cause of all things, and the workings or government of the universe*. It's clear that the most devout people (and they even admit this) find that

sometimes their faith hardly can support them in the belief of a supreme wisdom; and that they are often tempted to be dubious about providence and a fair administration of the universe.

So nothing should be called a man's opinion unless it's the one that is most habitual to him, and comes to him on most occasions. That makes it hard to say for certain that a given man 'is an atheist'; because unless his thoughts are at all seasons and on all occasions steadily bent against any supposition of design in things he isn't a perfect atheist. Similarly, if a man's thoughts are not at all times steady and resolute against any supposition of chance, fortune, or bad design in things he isn't a perfect theist. But this is a matter of degree. A man can be more an atheist than a theist, or more a daemonist than a theist, depending on which of the relevant opinions predominates in his thought.

There can also be *mixtures* of daemonism, polytheism, atheism, and theism.¹ Religion excludes only perfect atheism. Religion undoubtedly contains some perfect daemonists, because we know whole nations who worship a devil or fiend to whom they sacrifice and offer prayers and supplications, really just because they fear him. And we know very well that in some religions there people who don't proclaim any idea of God except that of a being who is arbitrary, violent, a cause of bad, and condemning people to misery—which amounts to substituting a daemon or devil in place of God.

So there we have it: there are several different opinions concerning a superior power; and there may be some people who have no formed opinion on this subject—through scepticism, failure to think about the matter, or confusion of judgment. And the question before us is: how can any of these opinions, or this lack of any certain opinion, be consistent with virtue and merit or be compatible with an honest or moral character.

¹ •Theism with Daemonism: One chief mind or sovereign being is divided between a good and a bad nature, being the cause of bad as well as good; or there are two distinct principles, one the author of all good, the other of all bad.

•Daemonism with Polytheism: There are several corrupt minds who govern. This could be called Polydaemonism.

•Theism with Atheism: Chance is not excluded, but God and chance divide.

•Daemonism with Atheism: An evil daemon and chance divide.

•Polytheism with Atheism: Many minds and chance divide.

•Theism (as opposed to Daemonism, denoting goodness in the superior Deity) with Polytheism: There are two or more principal minds, which agree in good, having one and the same will and reason.

•The same Theism or Polytheism with Daemonism: The same system of deity or corresponding deities exists along with one or more contrary principles or governing Minds.

•Daemonism and Atheism: Things are governed by one or more bad principles [see Glossary] together with chance.

Part 2: Qualifying as virtuous

Section 1: Parts and wholes

When we reflect on any ordinary frame or constitution—whether of an artifact or a natural thing—and consider how hard it is to give the least account of any particular part without enough knowledge of the whole, we won't be surprised to find ourselves at a loss over many questions concerning the constitution and frame of nature herself. With respect to many things, even whole species of things, the question 'What are they *for*? What *purpose* do they serve?' will be hard for anyone to answer properly; and yet when such questions are raised about the proportions and shapes of *parts* of many creatures, we can with the help of study and observation answer with great exactness.

[In this paragraph it is Shaftesbury who refers to the creature in question as 'he' rather than 'it'.] We know that every creature has a private good and interest of his own, which nature has compelled him to seek. . . . We know that there is in reality a right and a wrong state of every creature; and that his right state is forwarded by nature and affectionately sought by himself. And because every creature has a certain •interest or •good, there must be also a certain •end or purpose to which everything in his constitution must naturally be related. If anything in his appetites, passions, or affections runs contrary to this end, we must count it as being bad for him. In this way he can be bad with respect to himself; just as he is certainly bad with respect to others of his kind when any of his appetites or passions make him any way injurious to them. Now, if by the natural constitution of a rational creature the same irregularities of appetite that make him bad to others also make him bad to himself; and if the same

regularity of affections

the next clause: which causes him to be good in one sense, causes him to be good also in the other,

which could mean: which causes him to be good to others causes him to be good also to himself,

or it could mean: which causes him to be good to himself causes him to be good also to others,

then the goodness by which he is thus useful to others is a real good and advantage to himself. And thus virtue and interest may eventually be found to agree.

I'll come to this in more detail later on. But first I want to see if we can clearly determine what the quality is that we call 'goodness' or 'virtue'.

Suppose a traveller describes to us a certain creature of a more solitary disposition than ever was yet heard of—he had

- neither mate nor fellow of any kind;
- nothing *like* him towards which he was well-affected or inclined;
- nothing beyond himself for which he had the least passion or concern

—we would hardly hesitate to say that this was doubtless a very melancholy creature, and that in this unsociable and sullen state he was likely to have a very disconsolate kind of life. But if we were assured that despite all appearances the creature enjoyed himself extremely, had a great liking for life, and wasn't lacking in anything needed for his own good, we might accept that the creature wasn't a monster, and wasn't absurdly constituted in himself. But we still wouldn't want to say that he was a *good* creature. But then might be urged against us: 'Such as he is, the creature is still

perfect in himself, and therefore to be regarded as *good*; for what does he have to do with others?' We might be forced to admit that in this sense he was a good creature if he could be understood to be absolute and complete in himself, with no real relation to anything else in the universe. We would be right to insist on that condition. For if there should be anywhere in nature a *system* of which this living creature was to be considered as a part, then he certainly couldn't be regarded as good, because he plainly seemed to be a part that would tend to the harm rather than the good of the system or whole in which he was included.

So if in the structure of this or any other animal there's anything that points beyond himself, and through which he is clearly seen to have a relation to some other being or nature besides his own, then this animal will undoubtedly be regarded as a part of some other system. For instance, if an animal has the proportions of a male, that shows he has relation to a female. And the respective proportions of both male and female will have a joint relation to another existence and order of things beyond themselves. Thus, both those creatures are to be considered as parts of another system, namely that of a particular race or species of living creatures, who have some one common nature, or are provided for by some one order or constitution of things co-existing and co-operating towards their survival and support.

Similarly, if a whole species of animals contributes to the existence or well-being of some other species, then that whole species is a part of some other system.

For instance, the existence of the fly is absolutely necessary for the existence of the spider. The random flight, weak frame, and tender body of the fly fit him to be prey, just as the rough structure, watchfulness, and cunning of the spider fit him for predation. The spider's web and the fly's wing are suited to each other. And the structure of

each of these animals relates to the other animal as perfectly as our of limbs and organs relate to each other, or as in the branches or leaves of a tree relate to each other, and of all of them to one root and trunk.

In the same way flies are also necessary to the existence of other creatures—birds and fish—and other species or kinds are subservient to yet others, as being parts of a certain system, and included in one and the same order of beings. So there's a system of all animals, an animal order or economy according to which animal affairs are regulated.

Now, if the whole system of animals, plants and all other things in this lower world is properly contained within one system of a globe or earth, and if this globe or earth itself appears to have a real dependence on something beyond it (e.g. the sun, the galaxy, or its fellow planets), then it—the earth—really is only a part of some other system. And if there is similarly a system of all things, and a universal nature, every particular being or system must be either good or bad in that general system of the universe. What about something insignificant and useless? That would be an imperfection, and so would be bad in the general system.

Therefore, a being can't be wholly and really bad except by being bad with respect to the universal system; and in that case the system of the universe is bad or imperfect. But if the evil of one private system is the good of others, if it contributes still to the good of the general system (as when

- one creature lives by the destruction of another,
- one thing is generated from the corruption [= 'rotting'] of another, or
- one planetary system or vortex swallows up another)

then the evil of that private system is not really bad in itself; any more than the pain of cutting new teeth is bad in a system or body which is so constituted that without this episode of pain it would suffer worse by being defective.

So we can't say of any being that it is wholly and absolutely bad unless we can show for certain that what we are calling bad isn't also good in some other system or in relation to some other order or economy.

But if the world contained one species of animals that were destructive to every other species, that could rightly be called a bad species, because it is bad in the animal system. And if in any species of animals (for example the human species) one man has a nature that makes him pernicious to the rest, then he can in this respect rightly be called a bad man.

We don't, however, say of anyone that he is a bad man because he has the plague spots on him, or because he has convulsive fits that make him strike and wound anyone who comes close to him. [Here, as almost everywhere, 'bad' replaces 'ill'. Of course the man with plague is 'ill' in your and my sense; but Shaftesbury's point is that he's not a *bad* man although he is contagious and thus a potential source of harm to others.] Nor do we say on the other side that someone is a good man if his hands are tied so that he can't do the mischief [see Glossary] that he plans to do, or if he abstains from carrying out his bad plan through fear of punishment or the attraction of a reward. [Shaftesbury says that the reward/punishment scenario 'is in a manner the same' as the tied-hands one.]

So that in a sentient creature something that isn't done through any affection at all doesn't constitute either good or bad in the nature of that creature. The creature counts as good or bad only when the good or bad of the system to which he is related is the immediate object of some passion or affection moving him.

Therefore, since it is only through his affections that a creature is judged to be good or bad, natural or unnatural, our task is to examine which affections are good and natural, and which are bad and unnatural.

Section 2: Goodness (creatures in general)

[In this section Shaftesbury is talking about 'creatures' in general, not human beings in particular. He does use personal pronouns with 'creature' but doesn't explicitly mention humans except in some of his examples.] If a creature has an affection towards something he thinks is a private good though really it isn't, this affection is in itself vicious and bad, even in respect of the private interest or happiness of the creature who has it, because it is superfluous and detracts from the force of other affections that will do him some good.

If it's conceivable that a creature might have an affection towards his own good that really is (in its natural degree) conducive to his private interests while also inconsistent with the public good, this can indeed still be called a vicious affection. . . . But if the affection is injurious to the society only when it is immoderate, and is not injurious when it is moderate, duly tempered, and damped down, then the immoderate degree of the affection is truly vicious but not the moderate one. Thus, if we find in any creature a more than ordinary concern for his own private interests, this being inconsistent with the interests of the species or public, this must be regarded as in every way a bad and vicious affection. This is what we commonly call 'selfishness' and disapprove of so much in any creature we happen to find having it.

On the other side, if the affection towards private or self-good, however selfish it may be seen as being, is not merely consistent with public good but in some measure contributing to it—e.g. if it would be good for the species in general if every individual shared it—then so far from being bad or in any way blameable it must be acknowledged as absolutely necessary to make a creature good. Consider the affection towards self-preservation: because a general

lack of this would be injurious to the species, a creature is as bad and unnatural from not having this affection as much as from the lack of any other natural affection. That would be your view if you saw a man who didn't care about any precipices that lay in his way and didn't care about food, diet, clothing, or anything else related to his health and survival. The same would be said of any man whose disposition •turned him against any relations with women and therefore •made him unfit (through badness of temperament and not merely through a defect of constitution) for the propagation of his species.

So an affection towards self-good may be a good affection or a bad one. If this private affection is too strong (as when *excessive* love of life unfits a creature for any generous act) then it's undoubtedly vicious; in which case the creature who is moved by it is viciously moved, and will always be somewhat vicious when moved by that affection. If some creature's earnest and passionate love of life leads him accidentally to do some good. . . .he isn't a good creature because of this good he does, any more than a man is made honest or good man for pleading a just cause or fighting in a good cause merely for the sake of his fee.

If an action motivated purely by an affection towards self-good happens to be advantageous to the species, that implies goodness in the creature only to the extent that the affection itself is good. However much good he does by one particular act, if it came solely from that selfish affection then he is in himself still vicious. And the same holds for any creature whose passion towards self-good, however moderate it is, is his real motive in doing something that he ought to have been led to by a natural affection for his kind.

And whatever external helps a badly disposed creature may find to push him on towards performing a good action, none of this will make him *good* until his temperament

changes and he is led *directly* towards good and against bad—led by some immediate affection, not accidentally.

For instance: when a species is thought to be by nature tame, gentle, and favourable to mankind, and a member of it is fierce and savage contrary to his *natural* constitution (i.e. the constitution that is natural to his species), we instantly notice the breach of temperament and agree that the creature is unnatural and corrupt. If later on the same creature comes—through good fortune or proper management—to lose his fierceness, becoming tame, gentle, and treatable like the rest of his species, we'll agree that the creature thus restored becomes good and natural. But if his tame and gentle conduct comes only from his fear of his keeper, and would instantly change if that fear were lost, then his gentleness is not his real temperament, and he. . . .is still as bad as ever.

Because nothing is properly either goodness or badness in a creature except what comes from its natural temperament, we have this result:

- A good creature is one who is through his natural temperament or the slant of his affections carried primarily and immediately, and not secondarily and accidentally, to good and against bad.
- A bad creature is one who lacks the right affections of the force needed to carry him directly towards good and against bad; or who is carried by other affections directly towards bad and against good.

When all the affections or passions are suited to the public good, i.e. the good of the species, then the natural temperament is entirely good. If on the contrary any required passion is lacking, or if there's any passion that is idle or weak or in any way unserviceable or contrary to that main end, then the natural temperament is to some extent corrupt and bad, as is the creature himself.

You don't need me to go through envy, malice, ill-temperament, or other such hateful passions to show how each is bad and makes the creature that has them bad. But perhaps I should point out that even kindness and love of the most natural sort (e.g. a creature's love for its offspring) is vicious if it is immoderate and beyond a certain degree of intensity. Why? Because excessive tenderness destroys the effect of love, and excessive pity makes us incapable of giving help. Thus, excessive motherly love is a vicious fondness; excessive pity is effeminacy and weakness; undue concern for self-preservation is meanness and cowardice; having too little concern for self-preservation, or none at all, is rashness; and the opposite concern (namely a passion leading to self-destruction) is a mad and desperate depravity.

Section 3: Virtue or merit (humans in particular)

Let us move on now from what is judged to be mere *goodness*, which any sentient creature might have, to what is called 'virtue' or 'merit', and is attributable only to man.

In a creature capable of forming general notions of things, affections can have as their objects [see Glossary] not only •external things that present themselves to the senses but also •the very •mental• actions themselves, and the affections of pity, kindness, gratitude and their contraries that are brought into the mind by reflection [see Glossary]. By means of this looking into our ourselves we have another kind of affection, namely one towards affections that have already been felt and now become the object of a new liking or dislike.

It's the same with mental or moral [see Glossary] objects as with ordinary bodies, i.e. the ordinary things we perceive by our senses. The shapes, motions, colours, and proportions of bodies being presented to our eye, there necessarily results a beauty or ugliness, depending on the different

measure, arrangement and disposition of their various parts. Similarly with behaviour and •mental• actions: when they are presented to our understanding, a certain difference •between beauty and ugliness• must appear, depending on the regularity or irregularity of the subjects.

The mind, which is spectator or auditor of other minds, must have its eye and ear, so as to discern proportion, distinguish sound, and scan each sentiment or thought that comes before it. It can't let anything escape its judgment. It feels the soft and harsh, the agreeable and disagreeable, in the affections; and it finds a fair and foul, a harmonious and dissonant, as really and truly here as in any piece of music or in the external shapes and appearances of sensible [see Glossary] things. And it can't withhold its admiration and ecstasy, its aversion and scorn, any more in what relates to one than in what relates to the other of these subjects. There is a common and natural sense of what is sublime and beautiful in things; and someone who denies this won't be taken seriously by anyone who has attended properly to the facts.

With objects of the sensible kind, the images of bodies, colours and sounds are perpetually moving before our eyes and acting on our senses, even when we're asleep; so also with objects of the moral and intellectual kind, the forms and images of things are always just as actively working on the mind, even when the real objects themselves are absent.

Among these wandering characters or pictures of manners, which the mind is compelled to present itself with and carry around with it, the heart can't possibly remain neutral. It constantly takes sides. However false or corrupt the heart may be within itself, it finds the difference in beauty and comeliness between •one heart and another, •one turn of affection and another, •one action and another, •one sentiment and another; so that in any case in which

its own interests aren't involved it must have some approval of what is natural and honest, and disapproval of what is dishonest and corrupt.

Thus the various motions [see Glossary], inclinations, passions, dispositions, and consequent . . . behaviour of creatures are represented to the mind in various perspectives; the mind easily distinguishes good from bad towards the species or public; and this gives rise to a new trial of the heart, which must either •rightly and soundly like what is just and right and dislike what is contrary, or •corruptly like what is bad and dislike what is worthy and good.

We don't call any creature 'worthy' or 'virtuous' unless it can have the notion of a public interest, and can have organised theoretical knowledge of what is morally good or bad, admirable or blameworthy, right or wrong. We may in common speech call a bad horse 'vicious', but we never say of a good-natured horse—or of any mere beast, idiot, or changeling—that he is worthy or virtuous.

Thus, if a creature is generous, kind, constant and compassionate, but can't

reflect on what he himself does or sees others do, so as to take notice of what is worthy or honest and make the worth and honesty that he notices or thinks about an object of his affection,

he doesn't count as being virtuous, because that's the only way he can have a sense of right or wrong—a sentiment or judgment that something that happens did, or that it didn't, arise from just, equal, and good affection. [Shaftesbury wrote 'make that notice or conception of worth and honesty an object of his affection', but this was presumably a slip.]

Anything done through any unequal affection is iniquitous, wicked, and wrong. If

•the affection from which the action is performed is equal, sound, and good, and

•the person who has the affection could at some time rightly be on the receiving end of such an action or the object of such an affection,

then this must make the action equal and right. What makes an action wrong is not simply its being the cause of harm, because a dutiful son who aims at an enemy but by mistake or bad luck happens to kill his father doesn't do wrong. An action is wrong if it is done through insufficient or unequal affection—e.g. when a son shows no concern for his father's safety, or the father needs help and the son instead helps an indifferent person [here = 'helps some stranger'].

[In a syntactically difficult sentence, Shaftesbury says that unsatisfactory conduct isn't wrong, and doesn't make the person wrong, if his thinking and his attitudes are perfectly all right and the trouble comes purely from:] weakness or imperfection in his **senses**. If a man whose **reason and affections** are sound and entire has such a depraved constitution of body that natural objects are falsely conveyed and misrepresented by his sense-organs, as though through glasses with the wrong prescription, it will soon be seen that he can't in himself be regarded as iniquitous or unjust, because his failure is not in his **principal or leading part**.

It's a different story when we come to opinion, belief, or theory. Judgments or beliefs can go far astray—so far that in some countries even monkeys, cats, crocodiles, and other vile or destructive animals have been regarded as holy and worshipped as though they were gods. If a believer in one of those countries thought that it is better to save a creature such as a cat than to save one of his parents, and that anyone who didn't also have this religious opinion should be treated as an enemy until he is converted, this would certainly be wrong and wicked in the believer, and everything he did on the basis of this belief would be iniquitous, wicked, and vicious.

Thus, anything is the occasion [see Glossary] of wrong if it causes a misconception or misapprehension of something's worth or value that lessens an appropriate affection or raise an inappropriate, irregular, or unsocial one. So someone who loves a man because of something ·about him· that is widely regarded as honourable but is really vicious, is himself vicious and bad. We often see the beginnings of such corruption—e.g. when. . . an ambitious man by the fame of his high attempts, or a pirate by his boasted enterprises, creates in someone else a respect and admiration of an immoral and inhuman character which deserves disgust. When that happens, the hearer becomes corrupt, when he secretly approves of the evil that he hears about. But a man isn't vicious or corrupt because he loves and respects someone whom he believes to be a philanthropist though really he is a pirate.

In short: a mistake of •fact can't be a cause of vice [see Glossary] because it isn't a cause or a sign of any bad affection; but a mistake of •right is the cause of unequal affections, and so it must be the cause of vicious action in every thinking being.

It often happens that a question of right is hard to answer confidently, even for very discerning people; and it's not a slight mistake ·in a matter· of *this* kind that can destroy the character of a virtuous or worthy man. But when superstition or bad customs lead to very gross mistakes in what affections are had towards what objects—

mistakes that are intrinsically so gross, or so complicated and frequent, that the creature who makes them can't live well in a natural state, and can't have appropriate affections that are compatible with human society and civil life

—then the creature can't be counted as virtuous.

This shows us how far worth and virtue depend on having enough knowledge of right and wrong and enough use of reason to ensure a right application of the affections. That involves ensuring that

- nothing horrible or unnatural,
- nothing unexemplary,
- nothing destructive of the natural affection by which the species or society is upheld

will *ever* be pursued or valued as a good and proper object of esteem, through any principle or notion of honour or religion. For any such principle must be wholly vicious; and anything that is done because of it must be vicious and immoral. So if there's anything that teaches men treachery, ingratitude or cruelty •as permitted by God or •as bringing present or future good to mankind; if there's anything that teaches men

- to persecute their friends 'through love',
- to torment captives of war in sport,
- to offer human sacrifice,
- to torment, macerate, or mangle themselves in religious zeal before their 'god', or
- to commit any sort of barbarity or brutality. . . .to be applauded by the populace or permitted by religion,

this isn't and can't ever be virtue of any kind or in any sense. It will always be horrible depravity, no matter what support it gets from fashion, law, custom, or religion. Any of these may be bad and vicious in themselves, but they can't ever alter the eternal standards and unchangeable independent nature of worth and virtue.

Section 4: Wholly good? Wholly bad?

As for creatures that are only capable of being moved by **sensible** objects: their status as good or vicious depends on the state of their sensible affections, ·their affections towards sensible objects·. It's not like that with creatures capable of thinking about and valuing **rational** objects of moral good. For someone like this, it could happen that •his sensible affections were all wrong, but that •they didn't prevail because of his other affections—the rational ones I have just spoken of. If that happens, it's clear that the person's temperament still holds good in the main, and everyone rightly respects him as virtuous.

If someone's temperament is passionate, angry, fearful, amorous, but he resists these passions and despite their force sticks to virtue, we ordinarily say in such a case that the person's virtue is the greater; and we are right to say that. But if what restrains the person and holds him to behaviour that looks virtuous is an affection not towards goodness or virtue itself but merely towards his own private good, then he isn't really more virtuous, as I showed earlier. But it's still clear to us that if, voluntarily and without external constraint, an angry temperament subsides or an amorous one refrains, so that no cruel or immodest action can be forced from such a person, however strongly he is tempted by his constitution, we applaud his virtue more highly than we would if he were free of this temptation and these propensities. But of course no-one will say that a propensity to vice can be an *ingredient* in virtue or any way necessary to complete a virtuous character.

So there seems to be some kind of difficulty in the case, but it amounts only to this. If one part of the temperament contains •bad passions or affections while in another part the affections towards moral good are such as absolutely

to dominate the attempts of •their antagonists, this is the best possible proof that a strong principle of virtue lies at the bottom and has taken charge of the natural temperament. If there are no bad passions stirring, the person may be indeed virtuous more cheaply; that is, he may conform himself to the known rules of virtue without sharing as much of a virtuous principle as another person ·who also acts virtuously by overcoming bad passions etc.·. But if that other person, who has the principle of virtue so strongly implanted, eventually loses those obstacles to virtue that we have stipulated in him, that doesn't make him *less* virtuous. On the contrary, by losing only what is vicious in his temperament he is left more entirely to virtue, and has it in a still higher degree.

That is how rational creatures can differ in *how* virtuous they are. Well, I'm really talking about creatures who are *called* rational, but who fall short of the sound and well established reason that alone can constitute a just affection, a uniform and steady will and resolution. So vice and virtue are found variously mixed and alternately prevalent in the various characters of mankind. My inquiry so far seems to make it evident that

- however bad the temperament or passions may be with respect to sensible or moral objects,
- however passionate, furious, lustful, or cruel a creature becomes,
- however vicious his mind is or whatever bad rules or principles it goes by,

still if he has *any* flexibility or favourable inclination towards *the least* moral object, the least appearance of moral good (as though recognising that *there is* such a thing as kindness, gratitude, bounty, or compassion), there is still something of virtue left in the person so that he's not wholly vicious and unnatural.

For example, a ruffian who from some sense of fidelity and honour refuses to betray his associates, preferring instead to endure torments and death, certainly has *some* principle of virtue, however he may misapply it. Similarly with the malefactor who chose to be executed with his companions when his only alternative was to serve as their executioner.

In brief: just as it seems hard to say that any man is 'absolutely an atheist', it seems to be equally hard to say

that any man is 'absolutely corrupt or vicious', because there are few, even of the most horrible villains, who don't have *something* of virtue in this imperfect sense. There's an old saying: *It's as hard to find a wholly bad man as to find a wholly good one*, and there's nothing truer than that. . . .

Now, having considered what virtue is in itself, I now turn to the question of how virtue relates to opinions concerning a deity.

Part 3: The causes of vice

Section 1: Lack of moral sense

As I have said, the nature of virtue consists in a certain just disposition, or appropriate affection, of a rational creature towards the moral objects of right and wrong. In a rational creature, what can possibly exclude a principle of virtue or make it ineffectual? For this to happen, something must **(1)** take away the natural and just sense of right and wrong, or **(2)** bring error into the creature's sense of right and wrong, or **(3)** causes the unerring sense of right and wrong to be opposed by contrary affections.

(And for something to assist or advance the principle of virtue, it must **(1)** in some way nourish and promote a sense of right and wrong, or **(2)** keep that sense genuine and uncorrupt, or **(3)** cause it to be obeyed by subduing contrary affections.)

Our next concern is to consider how any of the opinions about a deity that I mentioned on page 2 might lead to any

of these three effects—loss of moral sense, perversion of moral sense, victory of opposing affections. Let us start with the first of them.

You'll surely understand that I'm not talking about the loss of the *notion of* what is good or bad for the species or for society. No rational creature can possibly be unaware of the reality of such a good and bad. Everyone sees and acknowledges a public interest, and is conscious of what affects his community. So when we say of a creature 'He has wholly lost the sense of right and wrong' we mean that although he can discern the good and bad of his species he has no concern for either, no sense of excellence or baseness in any moral action involving one or the other. Apart from what involves his own narrowly conceived self-interest, we are saying that in this creature there is no liking or dislike of ways of behaving, no admiration or love of anything as morally good or hatred of anything—however unnatural or ugly—as morally bad.

Every rational creature knows that when he voluntarily offends or harms anyone, he is bound to create •an apprehension and fear of similar harm, and consequently •resentment and hostility in every creature who observes him. So the offender *must* be aware that he is liable to such treatment from everyone, as though he had to some degree offended everyone.

So offence and injury are always known to be punishable by everyone; and good behaviour—known as *merit*—is universally known to be rewardable by everyone. Even the wickedest creature alive must have a sense of this. So if there's any further meaning in this 'sense of right and wrong'—if there really is any sense of this kind that an absolutely wicked creature doesn't have—it must consist in a real antipathy or aversion to injustice or wrong, and in a real affection or love towards justice and right, for its own sake and just because of its own natural beauty and worth.

It's impossible to conceive of a **sentient** creature who is basically so badly constituted, so unnatural, that from the moment he comes into interaction with **sensible** objects he doesn't have a single good passion towards his kind, doesn't have any foundation of pity, love, kindness, or social affection. It's equally impossible to conceive that a **rational** creature coming into his first interaction with **rational** objects, receiving into his mind the images or representations of justice, generosity, gratitude, or other virtues, might have no liking for these or dislike of their contraries—being absolutely indifferent towards anything of this sort that is presented to him. A soul might as well be without sense as without admiration for things of which it has any knowledge. Coming therefore to an ability to see and admire in this new way, it *must* find beauty and ugliness actions, minds and temperaments as well as in shapes, sounds, or colours. If there's no •real amiableness [see Glossary] or ugliness in moral

acts there is at least an •imaginary one of full force. Even if the thing itself didn't exist in nature, the imagination or fancy of it is entirely natural; and it would take skill and strong endeavour, together with long practice and meditation, to overcome the mind's natural disposition to distinguish right from wrong.

Because a sense of right and wrong is as natural to us as natural affection itself, and is a first principle in our make-up, there is no theory, opinion, persuasion or belief that can immediately or directly exclude or destroy it. If something is basic and purely natural, it can't be displaced by anything except contrary habit and custom (•which create• a second nature). And *this* affection is a basic one—one of the first to arise in the 'affectionate' part of the soul—so that nothing except frequent blocking and control by contrary affections can destroy it altogether or even diminish it.

If we have an oddity of facial expression or gesture that is either •natural to us and a result of our **bodily** constitution, or •accidental and acquired through habit, we know that we can't get rid of it by our immediate disapproval of it or by strenuously trying to avoid it. Such a change can only be brought about by extraordinary means, the intervention of art [see Glossary] and method, strict attention, and repeated self-correction. And even with all this, we find that nature is hardly mastered, but lies sullen and ready to revolt at the first opportunity. This is even more so in the case of the **mind** in respect of the natural affection and anticipating fancy [Shaftesbury's phrase] that makes the sense of right and wrong. It's impossible for this to be effaced, deleted from the natural temperament, instantly or without much force and violence, even by means of the most extravagant belief or opinion in the world.

Thus, neither theism nor atheism, nor daemonism, nor any religious or irreligious belief of any kind can operate

immediately or directly in this case. For any such belief to affect someone's moral sense, it would have to do so indirectly, by stirring up opposing or favouring affections casually excited by any such belief. I'll come to that in section (3).

Section 2: Defective moral sense

As for the second case, namely an erroneous sense of what is right and wrong: this can only come from the force of custom and education in opposition to nature. We can see this happen in countries where custom or political institution bring it about that certain actions that are naturally foul and odious are repeatedly applauded and regarded as honourable. In some parts of the world a man may force himself to eat the flesh of his enemies, conduct that goes against his stomach and against his nature, thinking it a right and honourable service to his community because it can advance the name and spread the terror of his nation.

But now let us come to our topic—the question of whether and how opinions relating to a deity can affect the content of someone's sense of right and wrong. It doesn't seem that **atheism** can directly contribute to someone's having false views about right and wrong. Customs and activities favoured by atheism could lead a man to lose much of his natural moral sense; but it doesn't seem that atheism could by itself cause anyone to judge to be fair, noble, and deserving something that was the contrary. For example, atheism could never make anyone think that eating man's flesh or committing bestiality is good and excellent in itself. But corrupt religion, i.e. superstition, *can* cause many horribly unnatural and inhuman things to be accepted as excellent, good, and praiseworthy in themselves.

Whenever something that is in its nature odious and abominable is advanced by religion as the will or pleasure of a supreme deity, if that doesn't make it look any less bad or odious to the believer, then the deity must bear the blame and be regarded as a naturally bad and odious being, however much courted and solicited through mistrust and fear. But that's just what religion, in the main, forbids us to imagine! It always prescribes esteem and honour in company with worship and awe. So whenever it teaches the love and admiration of a deity who has any apparent bad qualities, it teaches at the same time a love and admiration for that badness, and causes to be regarded as good and amiable something that is in itself horrible and detestable.

For instance, if Jupiter is regarded with awe and reverence, and if his history reports him as amorously inclined and permitting his desires of this kind to wander in the loosest manner, his worshippers, believing this history to be literally and strictly true, will be taught a greater love of amorous and wanton acts. If there's a religion that teaches awe and love towards a god whose character is like this:

- he is quarrelsome, resentful, given to anger, furious, revengeful;
- when he is offended he gets revenge on people other than those who gave the offence;
- he has a fraudulent disposition, and encourages deceit and treachery amongst men;
- he favours a few, though for slight causes, and is cruel to everyone else;

it's obvious that when such a religion is strongly enforced it is bound to create even approval and respect for vices [see Glossary] of this kind, and to breed in its followers a suitable disposition—a capricious, biased, vengeful, and deceitful temperament. . . .

If in the worship of such a deity there is nothing but going through the motions, nothing except what comes from mere example, custom, constraint, or fear; if basically the worshippers *hearts* are not in this, and no real esteem or love is involved, then a worshipper may not be much misled in his notions of right and wrong. If in obeying the commands of his supposed god, or in doing what he judges necessary to satisfy his deity, he is compelled only by fear, and makes himself perform an act that he secretly detests as barbarous and unnatural, then he still has a sense of right and wrong, and is aware of evil in the character of his god—however cautious he may be about saying this aloud or even thinking it as an explicit theological opinion. But if this happens:

as he proceeds in his religious faith and devout worship, he very gradually comes to be more and more reconciled to the malignity, arbitrariness, bias and vengeance of the deity he believes in,

his reconciliation with these qualities themselves will soon grow proportionately; and by the power of this example the most cruel, unjust, and barbarous acts will often be considered by him not only as just and lawful but as divine and worthy of imitation.

For anyone who thinks there is a god, and explicitly claims to believe that he is just and good, must think that there is independently such a thing as justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, right and wrong, according to which he declares that God is just, righteous, and true. Some will try to avoid this result by claiming that the mere will, decree, or law of God constitutes right and wrong, so that God's righteousness etc. don't involve any independent moral standard. But if that were right, then the words 'right' and 'wrong' would be meaningless. . . . If one person were sentenced to suffer for someone else's fault, that sentence

would be just and fair. If arbitrarily and without reason some beings were destined to endure perpetual evil and others as constantly to enjoy good, this would also count as just and fair. But to call something 'just' on a basis like that is to say nothing, to speak without a meaning.

And so we see that where a real devotion and heart-felt worship is paid to a supreme being who is represented as something other than really and truly just and good, this is sure to lead to a loss of rectitude in the believer, a disturbance of his thought and a corruption of his temperament and conduct. His honesty will inevitably be supplanted by his zeal while he is in this way unnaturally influenced and made immorally devout.

One thing needs to be added. Just as a god's bad character harms men's affections and spoils their natural sense of right and wrong, so also a god's good character—

a god who is always and in all accounts of him represented as being a true model and example of the most exact justice, and the highest goodness and worth

—will contribute greatly (nothing could contribute more) to the fixing of a sound judgment or sense of right and wrong in the minds of those who worship him. Such a view of divine providence and generosity, extended to everyone and expressed in a constant good affection towards the whole, *must* draw us into acting within our own sphere with a similar principle and affection. And once we have focused on the good of our species or public as our end or aim, there's no way we can be led astray by any false apprehension or sense of right or wrong.

That completes the second case. We have found that religion is capable of doing great good, or great harm, depending on what kind of religion it is; and that atheism does nothing positive in either way. It may indirectly lead to men's losing

a good and sufficient sense of right and wrong; but atheism as such can't lead to anyone's setting up a false kind of 'right and wrong'. Only false religion, or fantastical opinion produced by superstition and credulity, can do that.

Section 3: Opposition from other affections

Now we come to the third and last possible cause of vice, namely the opposition that other affections bring against the natural sense of right and wrong.

It's obvious that a creature having any degree of this kind of ·moral· sense, or good affection, must act according to it whenever it happens not to be opposed either by •some settled calm affection towards a conceived private good, or by •some sudden, strong and forcible passion—e.g. of lust or anger—which may not only subdue the sense of right and wrong but even the sense of private good, overruling the most familiar and accepted opinions about what conduces to self-interest.

But I am not concerned here with examining •the many ways in which this corruption ·of the moral sense· is introduced or increased. My topic the question of how •opinions concerning a deity can make a difference to this in one way or another.

It will hardly be questioned that a creature capable of using reflection could have a liking or dislike for moral actions, and thus a sense of right and wrong, before having any settled notion of a god. We don't expect it to happen—indeed it couldn't happen—that a human child slowly and gradually rising to various levels of reason and reflection will from the outset be taken up with speculations, or more refined sort of reflections, on the topic of God's existence.

Let us suppose a creature who lacks reason and can't reflect, but who has many good qualities and affections, such

as love for his kind, courage, gratitude, pity. If you give this creature a capacity to reflect, he will at the same instant *approve of* gratitude, kindness, and pity, be pleased with any show or representation of the social passion—i.e. the passion for doing good to the public—and think that nothing is more amiable than this or more odious than its contrary. This will be his becoming capable of virtue, and having a sense of right and wrong.

Thus, before a creature can have any positive view, one way or the other, on the subject of a god, he can be supposed to have a sense of right and wrong, and to be possessed of virtue and vice in different degrees. We know this from our experience of people whose place and way of life led to their never having any serious thoughts of religion, yet who greatly differ from one another in their characters of honesty and worth: some being naturally modest, kind, friendly, and consequently lovers of kind and friendly actions; others proud, harsh, cruel, and consequently inclined to admire rather the acts of violence and mere power.

As for the belief in a deity, and how men are influenced by it: we should first think about *why* men give their obedience to such a supreme being. It must be either

- (a) because of his power, and the associated thought of him as a possible source of disadvantage or benefit, or
- (b) because of his excellence and worth, and the associated thought of him as the best thing on which to try to model oneself.

(a) If there's a belief or conception of a deity who is considered only as having power over his creatures and enforcing obedience to his absolute will by particular rewards and punishments; and if it's only on this account—the hope for reward, or fear of punishment—that the creature is incited to do the good that he hates or restrained from doing the

evil to which he is not otherwise in the least averse; then, I repeat, there is in him no virtue or goodness whatsoever. The creature, despite his good conduct, is intrinsically no better, morally, than if he had acted in his natural way when under no dread or terror of any sort. There's no more rectitude, piety or sanctity in that creature than there is meekness or gentleness in a tiger that is strongly chained, or innocence and sobriety in a monkey disciplined by a whip. . . . The moral quality of the deity or the man with the whip doesn't affect this. Indeed, the more perfect the deity is, the *worse* it is for the creature to obey him solely in hope of reward or fear of punishment.

(b) If there's a belief or conception of a deity who is considered not merely as powerful and knowing but also as worthy and good, and admired and revered as such; . . . and if this sovereign and mighty being is represented or historically described as having a high and eminent regard for what is good and excellent, a concern for the good of all, and an affection of benevolence and love towards the whole; such an example must undoubtedly raise and increase the affection towards virtue, and help to submit and subdue all other affections to that alone; ·which is to say that it does affect the moral quality of the believers·.

And this good effect doesn't come merely from the example ·set by the deity·. Someone who entirely and perfectly believes in this deity must have a steady opinion of the superintendency of a supreme being, a witness and spectator of human life who is conscious of everything that is felt or done in the universe. This believer, even in his deepest solitude, must always have a sense of someone remaining with him—*someone* whose presence must be more important than that of the most august assembly on earth. In such a presence, obviously, the shame of guilty actions must be the greatest of any and so must the honour be of well-doing,

even when people wrongly condemn it. This shows how a perfect theism [see Glossary] must be conducive to virtue, and how powerless atheism is in this respect.

If in addition to that belief there is *also* a fear of future punishment and hope for future reward, what can this hope and fear contribute towards virtue? Well, what I have already said shows that neither this fear nor this hope can possibly count as *good* affections of the sort that are agreed to be the springs and sources of all truly good actions. Furthermore, as I have already indicated, if this fear or hope is either •essential to or •a considerable motive to some act that ought to have been caused solely by some better affection, then the fear or hope doesn't really consist with virtue or goodness. [He means something like 'isn't really consistent with virtue or goodness', but not exactly that. His point is that in any particular episode where virtue and hope-or-fear are both at work, the hope-or-fear doesn't give a shove in the same direction as the virtue, fitting in with it and helping it along. The following paragraph moves from the individual episode to the general way of life.]

It may go further than that. In *this* this sort of 'religious' discipline, the principle of self-love, which is naturally so strong in us, is actually made stronger every day through the exercise of the passions in a person whose self-interest has an ever wider range. There's reason to fear that this aspect of his temperament will extend itself through all the parts of his life. For if the habit—

·meaning: the habit of approaching questions of the form 'Should I do this?' in terms of hopes for reward and/or fear of punishment·

—has the effect of making the person maintain a steady concern for his own good, his own interests, it must gradually •diminish his affections towards public good, i.e. the interests of society, and •introduce a certain narrowness of spirit. Some people contend that such narrowness of spirit is

conspicuous in devout believers and zealots of almost every religious persuasion.

And there's no getting away from this: if true piety involves loving God for his own sake, the undue concern about private good expected from him *must* diminish piety. Why? Because when God is loved only as the cause of the believer's private good, he is being loved in just the same way that any other instrument or means of pleasure can be loved by any vicious creature. And the more there is of this violent affection towards one's own private good, the less room there is for the other sort of affection, namely affection towards goodness itself, or towards any good and deserving object that is worthy of love and admiration for its own sake—which is what God is acknowledged to be by everyone or at least by all civilized or refined worshippers.

It's in this respect that a strong desire for and love of life may also be an obstacle to piety as well as to virtue and public love. For the stronger this affection is in a person, the less capable he will be of true resignation, i.e. submission to the rule and order of the deity. And if what the believer calls 'resignation' depends solely on his expectations regarding infinite retribution or infinite reward, he isn't showing any more worth or virtue here than in any other bargain of interest [= 'than in any other profitable deal that he makes']. All there is to his 'resignation' is this: he resigns his present life and pleasures on condition that this brings him something that he admits is vastly more valuable, namely eternal life in a state of highest pleasure and enjoyment.

Despite this way in which the increase of the selfish passion can harm the principle of virtue, the fear of future punishment and hope for future reward, however mercenary or servile it may be, is in many circumstances a great advantage, security, and support to virtue.

To see how, remember my point that even with someone who has implanted in his heart a real sense of right and wrong, a real good affection towards the species or society, this good affection may often be controlled and overcome by the violence of rage, lust, or any other counterworking passion. If nothing in his mind can make such bad passions the objects of its aversion, causing it to oppose them earnestly, it's clear how much a good temperament must eventually suffer from them, and how a character must gradually change for the worse. But if religion steps in with a belief that a deity is opposed to such bad passions. . . ., this belief is bound to be a useful remedy against vice, and to be in a particular way helpful to virtue. That is because a belief of this kind will calm the mind down considerably, getting the person to pull himself together and more strictly conform to the good and virtuous principle that draws him wholly onto its side as long as he attends to it.

And this belief in future rewards and punishments, as well as helping a believer not to stray, can also provide help to those who have already strayed. When bad opinion and wrong thought have turned someone's mind against the honest course, and brought it down to the level of valuing and deliberately preferring a vicious one, the belief in question may be the only relief and safety.

Consider someone who has much goodness and natural rectitude in his temperament, but also a softness or effeminacy that unfits him to bear poverty, crosses or adversity. If he has the bad luck to meet with many trials of this kind, that must certainly bring a sourness and distaste into his temperament, and make him exceedingly hostile to what he may wrongly think has led to such calamity. Now, if his own thoughts or the corrupt insinuations of others lead him often to think **(a)** 'My honesty is what led to this calamity; if I could get rid of this restraint of virtue and honesty, I might be much

happier', it's obvious that his respect for honesty and virtue must diminish by the day, as his temperament becomes uneasy and quarrels with itself. But if he opposes to **(a)** the thought **(b)** 'Honesty carries with it an advantage—if not a present then at least a future one—that will compensate me for this loss of private good', then this may prevent **(a)** from harming his good temperament and honest principle, so that his love or affection towards honesty and virtue remains as it was before.

·And here's another way in which the reward-or-punishment thought can serve the cause of virtue·. Consider a person or society that is outright hostile to what is good and virtuous (e.g. because leniency and forgiveness are despised, and revenge is highly thought of and beloved). If this further thought enters the picture: 'Leniency is rewarded in such a way as to bring greater self-good and enjoyment than can be found in revenge', that very affection of leniency and mildness may come to be industriously nourished, and the contrary passion suppressed. In this way temperance, modesty, candour, benignity, and other good affections, however despised they were at first, may eventually come to be valued for their own sakes, the contrary affections rejected, and the good and proper object be loved and pursued without any thought of reward or punishment.

So we see that in a civil state a virtuous administration and a fair distribution of rewards and punishments is of the highest service. Not only by restraining the vicious and forcing them to act in ways that are useful to society, but also by causing virtue to be visibly in everyone's interests. This removes all prejudices against virtue, creates a fair reception for it, and leads men into a virtuous path that they can't ever easily quit. Think of a people who are •raised from barbarity or despotic rule, •civilised by laws, and •made virtuous by a long course of lawful and just government; if

they happen to fall suddenly under any misgovernment of unjust and arbitrary power, this will stir them into an even stronger virtue in opposition to this violence and corruption. And even if through long and continued arts [see Glossary] of a prevailing tyranny such a people are at last totally oppressed, the scattered seeds of virtue will for a long time remain alive, even to a second generation, before the utmost force of misapplied rewards and punishments can bring them down to the abject and compliant state of slaves who have become accustomed to their condition.

But although a proper distribution of justice in a government is such an essential cause of virtue, what chiefly •influences mankind and •forms the character and disposition of a people is *example*. A virtuous administration has to be accompanied by virtue in the legal system. Otherwise it couldn't have much effect, and couldn't last long. But where it [i.e. such an administration] is sincere and well established, virtue and the laws must be respected and be loved. The effectiveness of punishments and rewards, then, comes not so much from •the fear or expectation that they raise as from •a natural esteem for virtue, and detestation of villainy, which are both awakened and energised by these public expressions of mankind's approval (or hatred) ·of the conduct that is being rewarded (or punished)·. In public executions of the greatest villains, we see generally that •the infamy and odiousness of their crime and •the shame of it before mankind contribute more to their misery than all the rest of the situation; and that what creates so much horror in the sufferers and the spectators is not the immediate pain, or death itself, but the ignominy of suffering a death that is inflicted for public crimes and violations of justice and humanity.

Reward and punishment have the same role in private families as they do in public states. Slaves and paid servants

who are restrained and made orderly by punishment and the severity of their master are not made good or honest by this. But the same master of the family teaches his children goodness by the use of proper rewards and gentle punishments; and this helps to instruct them in a virtue that in later years they practise on other grounds, with no thought of a penalty or bribe. And this way of handling the young is what we call a liberal education and a liberal service; the contrary service and obedience, whether towards God or man, is illiberal, and unworthy of any honour or commendation.

Religion, however, is a special case. If by 'the hope of reward' we mean 'the love of and desire for virtuous enjoyment, or for the exercise of virtue in another life', this expectation or hope is so far from being harmful to virtue that it is evidence of our loving it the more sincerely and for its own sake. And this principle can't fairly be called 'selfish'; for if the love of virtue is not mere self-interest, the love and desire for life for virtue's sake can't be regarded as self-interested either. But if the desire for life comes purely from the violence of the natural aversion to death—if it comes from the love of something other than virtuous affection, or from an unwillingness to part with some such thing—then it is no longer a sign or sample of real virtue.

Thus, a person who loves life for life's sake and doesn't love virtue at all may, by the promise or hope of life and the fear of death or some other evil, be induced to •practise virtue and even to •try to be truly virtuous through a love of what he practises. But this attempt isn't virtuous: the man may intend to be virtuous, but he hasn't succeeded because this intention is motivated by love of the reward for virtue. But as soon as he comes to have any affection towards what is morally good, and can like such good for its own sake, as good and amiable [see Glossary] in itself, *then* he is in some

degree good and virtuous—but not until then.

Such are the advantages or disadvantages that thoughts about private good or self-interest bring to virtue. Advantages to virtue? Yes, because although the habit of selfishness and the multiplicity of self-interested views do little to help real merit or virtue, if virtue is to survive it must be thought to have no quarrel with true self-interest, and self-enjoyment.

Thus, anyone who believes that in general

- virtue causes happiness and vice causes misery carries with him the required security and assistance for virtue. Now consider someone who has no such belief, and who can't believe that virtue is really in his interests (as a matter of health and sanity, or of external success); still, if he believes that

- some supreme power is attending to the present affairs of mankind and immediately intervening on behalf of the honest and virtuous against the impious and unjust,

this belief will serve to preserve in him the proper esteem for virtue that might otherwise considerably diminish. Then think about someone who doesn't believe in the immediate intervention of Providence in the affairs of this present life, but who believes that

- there is a God dispensing rewards to virtue and punishments to vice in a future life;

he carries with him the same advantage and security—for as long as his belief is steady, with no wobble or doubt in it.

Here is why I included that last condition. Expecting and depending on something as miraculous and great as this—i.e. as the reward or punishment or virtue or vice in the next life—is naturally bound to sap the energy of inferior dependencies and encouragements. When infinite rewards are insisted on and the imagination is strongly turned towards

them, the other common and natural motives to goodness are apt to be neglected and to weaken through disuse. For as long as our mind is thus transported in the pursuit of a high advantage and self-interest, so narrowly confined within ourselves, we'll hardly bother even to think about other interests. All affections towards friends, relations, or mankind will have little respect because they'll be seen as 'worldly' and as minor in comparison with the interests of our soul. Many devout people give so little thought to any immediate satisfaction arising from such everyday good deeds that they zealously decry all temporal advantages of goodness, all natural benefits of virtue. They magnify the happiness one can get from being vicious, and declare that if it weren't for the sake of future reward and fear of future punishment, they would immediately shed all their goodness and freely allow themselves to be immoral and profligate. It seems from this that in some respects nothing can be more fatal to virtue than a weak and uncertain belief in future rewards and punishments. If the stress is put wholly *there*, then if this foundation fails there's no further prop or security for men's morals; and thus virtue is supplanted and betrayed.

Now, as for atheism: when atheism leads someone to a wrong judgment about the happiness of virtue, he is wrong, *incurably* wrong; but atheism doesn't necessarily cause any such wrong judgment. It could happen that someone who doesn't absolutely assent to any hypothesis of theism sees and accepts the advantages of virtue and forms a high opinion of it. Admittedly, though, the natural tendency of atheism is—as I explain in the next two paragraphs—in a different direction.

It is. . . impossible to have any great opinion of the happiness of virtue without having high thoughts of the satisfaction that comes from admiring and loving it; and no-one is

likely to believe in this satisfaction if he hasn't himself loved virtue. So the chief basis for this opinion of *happiness in virtue* must come from •the powerful feeling of this generous [see Glossary] moral affection, and •the knowledge of its power and strength. But this is certain:

In anyone who thinks that •there is neither goodness nor beauty in the ·universe as a· whole, and that •there is no example or precedent of good affection in any superior being ·such as God·, these beliefs can't much strengthen his moral affection, or greatly support him in the pure love of goodness and virtue.

Such beliefs must tend rather to wean his affections away from anything amiable or intrinsically worthy, and to suppress ·in him· the ordinary habit of admiring natural beauties, i.e. anything in the natural order of things that exhibits just design, harmony, and proportion. If someone thinks that the universe itself a pattern of disorder, he won't be much disposed to love or admire as orderly anything *in* the universe. Think how unapt he will be to reverence or respect any particular subordinate beauty of a •part when he thinks that the •whole is imperfect—is indeed only a vast and infinite ugliness!

There's no sadder thought than that of living in a chaotic universe from which many evils may arise, with nothing good or lovely presenting itself, nothing that it's good simply to think about or that can raise any passion except contempt, hatred, or dislike. Such an opinion as this ·regarding the universe· may gradually embitter the person's temperament, and not only reduce his feeling of love of virtue but also help to impair and ruin the natural and kind affections that are the very principle of virtue.

Consider now a person who firmly believes in a God whom he doesn't merely call 'good' but of whom he really does believe nothing but real good, nothing but what is

truly appropriate to the most precise character of benignity and goodness. Believing in rewards or punishments in another life, this person must believe them to be tied to real goodness and merit, real villainy and baseness, and not to any accidental [here = 'casual'] qualities or circumstances. . . . (If the latter were the case, these wouldn't strictly qualify as 'rewards' or 'punishments'; they would merely be whimsical distributions of happiness or unhappiness to creatures.) These are the only terms on which the belief in a world to come can influence the believer to good effect. And on these terms and by virtue of this belief, a man can perhaps retain his virtue and integrity even when he has the hardest thoughts of human nature if bad circumstance or false doctrine have brought him to that unfortunate opinion of virtue's being naturally an enemy to happiness in life.

But this opinion ·about human nature· can't be regarded as consistent with sound theism. Whatever a man thinks regarding a future life, or about the rewards and punishments in such a life, if he is a sound theist he believes in a reigning mind, sovereign in nature and ruling all things with the highest perfection of goodness, as well as of wisdom and power. So he *must* believe virtue to be naturally good and advantageous. For what could more strongly imply an unjust order, a blot and imperfection in the general constitution of things, than to suppose that virtue is the natural evil and vice [see Glossary] the natural good of any creature?

And now, last of all, we have to consider yet another advantage to virtue that theism has over atheism. . . .

According to what I have already shown, any creature who has any affection or aversion in a stronger degree than is suitable •to his own private good, or •to the good of the system to which he belongs must be *bad* in some degree. For in either case the affection is bad and vicious. Now, if a rational creature has the degree of aversion that is needed to

arm him against some particular misfortune, and alarm him against the approach of some calamity, this is regular and good. But if after the misfortune has happened, his aversion continues and his passion actually *grows* in him, while he rages at the event and exclaims against his particular fortune or lot [see Glossary], this will be acknowledged to be vicious both in present, and for the future; because it will affect his temperament and disturbs the easy course of the affections on which virtue and goodness so much depend. On the other hand, patiently enduring the calamity and bearing up under it must be acknowledged to be virtuous right now and preservative of virtue ·for the future·. Now, according to the hypothesis of those who exclude a universal mind, ·i.e. according to atheism·, nothing can happen that would deserve either our admiration and love, or our anger and abhorrence. Still, just as there can be no satisfaction, at the best, in thinking about what atoms and good luck produce, so on disastrous occasions involving calamity and bad luck it's hardly possible to prevent a natural kind of abhorrence and rage that will be kept alive by

the rest of the sentence: the imagination of so perverse an order of things.

what Shaftesbury is getting at: the pretend-thought that the universe is organized against one (something that an atheist can't seriously believe).

But on another hypothesis (that of perfect theism) it is understood that *whatever the order of the world produces is mainly just and good*. Therefore in the course of events in this world, whatever hardship may seem to force from any rational creature a hard censure of his private condition or lot, he can still through reflection come to have patience and to acquiesce in it. And that's not all. He may take this reconciliation ·with the universe· a step further, and from

the same principle may acquire a good affection towards his lot itself, while trying to maintain this generous [see Glossary] obedience and retaining a good attitude to the laws and government of his higher country, ·i.e. the universe·.

Such an affection is bound to create the highest constancy in any state of suffering, and to make us in the best manner support whatever hardships have to be endured for virtue's sake. And just as this affection is bound to cause a greater acquiescence and acceptance with respect to bad events, bad men, and injuries, so also it can't fail to produce greater evenness, gentleness, and benignity in the temperament. So this affection must be a truly good one, and a creature must be made the more truly good and virtuous by possessing it. . . .

This too is certain: the admiration and love of order, harmony and proportion of whatever kind is naturally improving to the temperament and to social affection, and extremely helpful to •virtue—which is itself nothing but •the love of order and beauty in society. Even in the most low-down and minor things in the world, the appearance of order impresses itself on the mind and draws affection towards it.

But if the order of the world itself appears just and beautiful, the admiration and esteem for order must run higher, and the elegant passion—i.e. the love of beauty that so greatly supports virtue—must be the all the more improved by being aimed at such a vast and magnificent object. . . .

Now, if the object and basis of this divine passion is not really just or adequate—i.e. if the hypothesis of theism is false—the passion is still in itself sufficiently natural and good to be an advantage to virtue and goodness, according to what I have shown; and if the object of this passion really is adequate and just—because theism is true—then the passion is also just, and becomes absolutely due and requisite in every rational creature.

So we can settle accurately the relation that virtue has to piety, namely: virtue is not complete unless it is accompanied by piety, because where piety is lacking there can't be the same benignity, firmness, or constancy, the same good composure of the affections, or uniformity of mind.

So the perfection and height of virtue must be due to the belief in a god.

BOOK II

Why be virtuous?

Part 1: The mind—an owner’s manual

Section 1: An extraordinary hypothesis

We have considered what virtue is, and who is entitled to be called ‘virtuous’. Our remaining question is: what obligation is there to virtue? what reason is there to embrace it?

We have found that for a creature to deserve the label ‘good’ or ‘virtuous’ all his inclinations and affections, his dispositions of mind and temperament, must be •suitable and in line with the good of his kind or of the system that he is a part of. To be well affected in this way—to have one’s affections right and complete in respect not only of one’s self but also of society and the public—this is rectitude, integrity, or virtue. And to be lacking in any of these, or to have their contraries, is depravity, corruption, and vice.

I have already shown that the passions and affections of particular creatures constantly relate to the interests of a species. . . . This has been demonstrated in the case of

- natural affection,
- parental kindness,
- zeal for posterity,
- concern for the propagation and nurture of the young,
- love of fellowship and company,
- compassion,
- mutual help,

and the rest of this kind. No-one will deny that this affection of a creature towards the good of his species. . . .is as proper and natural for him as it is for any organ. . . .of an animal body to do its familiar work in aiding the animal’s growth. . . .

In a creature that has **(a)** such affections as those towards the species to which he belongs and also **(b)** other affections that concern himself as an individual, it will appear that in following **(a)** the creature must often contradict and go against **(b)**. If he didn’t, how could the species be preserved? And what would the point be of the implanted natural affection by which a creature through so many difficulties and dangers preserves its offspring and supports its kind?

This may lead some people to think that there is a plain and absolute opposition between these two habits or affections. They may presume that **(a)** pursuing the common interest or public good through affections of one kind must be a hindrance to **(b)** the attainment of private good through affections of the other kind. Anyone who thinks this will be taking it for granted that dangers and hardships of any sort are naturally the evil of the private state, and combining this with something that is certainly true, namely that it’s the nature of **(a)** those public affections to lead often to the greatest hardships and dangers of every kind. ·From these two premises· they rapidly infer that it’s in the creature’s interests to have no **(a)** public affection whatsoever.

We know for certain that **(a)** all social love, friendship, gratitude, and everything else of this generous kind •does by its nature take the place of **(b)** the self-interested passions, •draws us out of ourselves, and •makes us unconcerned about our own convenience and safety. It follows from this, according to a certain well-known view about self-interest,

that (a) anything of a social kind in us should be abolished. Thus kindness of every sort, indulgence, tenderness, compassion, and in short all natural affection should be industriously suppressed and—as mere folly and weakness of nature—be resisted and overcome; so as to bring it about that there nothing remains in us that. . . . might stand in opposition to a steady and deliberate pursuit of the most narrowly confined self-interest.

According to this extraordinary hypothesis it must be taken for granted that

in the system of a kind or species, the interests of any private nature are directly opposite to those of the common nature, the interests of individuals directly opposite to those of the public in general.

A strange constitution! It contains much disorder and clumsiness, unlike what we see elsewhere in nature. As if in any plant or animal body a part or member could be supposed to be, itself, in a good and prosperous state while there's something unnatural about the state of the organism of which it is a part.

I'll try to show that this is entirely false, so as to convince you of the following:

What men represent as a bad order and constitution in the universe, by making moral rectitude appear an evil for the creature who has it, and depravity a good or advantage for the creature, has the truth of the matter precisely backwards. Having good affections towards the public interest is not only •consistent with having them towards one's own interests, but is •inseparable from it; so that moral rectitude or virtue must be to the advantage of every creature, and vice must be harmful and disadvantageous.

Section 2: The misery of immorality

Consider a creature devoid of natural affection and wholly without any communicative or social principle [see Glossary]: I don't think that many people who know this about him will also suppose him to be reasonably happy either in himself or in his relations with his fellow-creatures, his species. It is generally thought that a creature like this feels little joy in life, and finds little satisfaction in the mere sensual pleasures that remain with him after the loss of social enjoyment and whatever can be called humanity or good-nature. We know not only that •such a creature as this is apt to be morose, rancorous and malignant, but that •a mind or temperament thus deprived of mildness and benignity *must inevitably* go the opposite way and be worked on by passions of a different kind. Such a heart as this must be a continual nest of perverse inclinations and bitter aversions, arising from a constant bad humour, sourness, and disquiet. The creature's awareness that it has a nature that is so much hated by mankind, and by all beings that approach it, must cause its mind to be overclouded with dark suspicion and jealousy, alarm it with fears and horror, and raise in it a continual disturbance—even in the most sunny and secure state of fortune and in the highest degree of outward prosperity.

This is what men notice, unprompted, about the •completely immoral state. Where there is this •absolute degeneracy—this •total abandonment of all candour, fairness, trust, sociableness, or friendship—nearly everyone can see and acknowledge the misery that results from it. Such extreme cases, with immorality at its worst, are seldom misunderstood. Unfortunately, though, we don't attend to milder degrees of this depravity and think about *their* consequences for the person in question. We don't think that

the calamity for the person is necessarily proportional to his degree of immorality—as though being •absolutely immoral and inhuman is indeed the greatest misfortune and misery, whereas to be only •slightly so is no misery or harm at all! Accepting this is just as reasonable as accepting that it's the greatest evil for a body to be in the utmost manner distorted and maimed but that to lose the use only of one leg. . . . is not an inconvenience or evil worth mentioning.

The parts and proportions of the mind, their mutual relations and dependencies, the connection and structure of the passions that constitute the soul or temperament, are easy to understand for anyone who thinks it worth his while to study this inner anatomy. It is certain that the order or symmetry of this inner part is no less real and exact than that of the body. But it's obvious that few of us try to become anatomists of this sort, and no-one is ashamed of being deeply ignorant about such a subject. It is generally accepted that •the greatest misery and evil is caused by disposition and temperament, and that •temperament can change and actually does often change in ways that harm us; and yet we don't inquire into how such changes are brought about. . . . The notion of *whole and parts* is not taken seriously in our thoughts about the mind. We don't know what the effect is of straining an affection, indulging a wrong passion, or relaxing a proper and natural habit or good inclination. We can't conceive how a particular action could have such a sudden influence on the whole mind that it makes the person an immediate sufferer. So we hold an alternative view: we suppose that a man can violate his faith, commit any wickedness that is new to him, engage in any vice or villainy, without the least harm to himself or any misery naturally following from the bad action.

So we often hear things like this: 'So-and-so has indeed acted badly, but how is he the worse for it?' Yet when we

are speaking of someone whose nature is thoroughly savage, cursed, and malignant, we say truly 'So-and-so is a plague and torment to himself', and we accept that through certain moods or passions—simply from his temperament—a man may be completely miserable, however fortunate his outward circumstances are. These different judgments show well enough that we aren't accustomed to thinking with much coherence on these moral [see Glossary] subjects; and that our notions about them are confused and contradictory.

If the fabric of the mind or temperament appeared to us as it really is; if we saw that it's impossible to remove from it any one good or orderly affection—or introduce any bad or disorderly one—without contributing somewhat to the dissolute state that is agreed to be so miserable out at the extreme; *then* it would undoubtedly be generally accepted that because

no bad, immoral, or unjust action could be committed without either inflicting a new violence on the temperament and passions or intensifying a violence that had already started,

anyone who acted in some way that went against his integrity, good-nature, or worth would be acting with greater cruelty *towards himself* than someone who didn't hesitate to swallow poison or with his own hands to mangle or wound some part of his body.

Section 3: Tuning the passions

I have shown that no animal can be said properly to *act* except through affections or passions of a kind that only an animal can have; for when a creature strikes himself or others in a convulsive fit, what is at work is a simple mechanism, an engine, a piece of clockwork—it's not an *action* by the animal. . . .

And just as it's necessary that a stronger affection will overcome a weaker one, so also it's necessary that where the affections or passions are mainly the strongest and provide *in general* the most considerable input, either by their force or number, that's the direction in which the animal must •incline and. . . •be governed and led to action.

The affections or passions that must influence and govern the animal are either **(1)** the **natural** affections, which lead to the good of the public, **(2)** the **self**-affections, which lead only to the good of the individual, or **(3)** affections that tend not to public or to private good but to public or private evil, so that we can rightly call them **unnatural** affections.

A creature is virtuous or vicious, good or bad, depending on which of these affections it has. It's obvious that **(3)** are wholly vicious. **(1)** and **(2)** can be vicious or virtuous, depending on their degree of intensity.

It may seem strange to speak of natural affections as too strong, or of self-affections as too weak. But I have already gone into this, explaining that natural affection can in some cases be excessive, unnaturally intense—for example •when pity is so overwhelming as to destroy its own end, and prevent the support and help that is needed, or •when love to the offspring goes so far that it destroys the parent, and consequently the offspring itself. And although it may seem harsh to describe as 'unnatural and vicious' something that is only an extreme of some natural and kind affection, it's certain that when any single good affection of this sort is too intense it must be harmful to the other affections and detract somewhat from their force and natural operation. A creature that has such an immoderate degree of a passion is bound to allow too much to that one and too little to others of the same sort that are equally natural and potentially useful. . . .

There are other cases of the same kind of thing. Even religion—considered as a passion not of the selfish but of the

nobler kind—can in some characters be strained beyond its natural strength and be said also to be too intense. The purpose of religion is to make us more perfect and accomplished in all moral duties and performances; if by the intensity of devout ecstasy and contemplation we are actually disabled in this respect and made less fit for the real duties of civil life, it can be said that in that case religion is indeed too strong in us. •And I do mean *religion*, not *superstition*•. For we can't possibly call this 'superstition' when the object of the devotion is acknowledged to be proper and the faith to be orthodox. . . .

Now, just as in some cases public affection may be too intense, so private affection can sometimes be not intense enough. If a creature is self-neglectful and careless about danger, or if he has a very low intensity of some passion that is useful to preserve, sustain, or defend himself, this must certainly be regarded as *wrong* in relation to the design and end of •nature. •She herself reveals this in her known methods and established rules of operation. Her provisional care and concern for the whole animal *must* at least be equal to her concern for a single part or organ. Now, we see that she has given to the different parts proper affections, suitable to their interests and security, so that they act in their own defence and for their own benefit and preservation, even without our awareness of what is going on. [The defensive shutting of eyes, Shaftesbury says, achieves something we couldn't do quickly enough if it were left to our decision. He continues:] So it would be a defect in any part of the organism if it lacked its own special set of self-preserving affections; and it surely wouldn't be a *lesser* defect—a lesser vice and imperfection—if the principal part (the soul or temperament) lacked *its* special affections, the ones that concern the good of the whole constitution.

So the affections towards private good become necessary and essential to goodness. For although no creature can be called ‘good’ or ‘virtuous’ merely because it has these affections, they are necessary (though not sufficient) for virtue. A creature that really doesn’t have them is really lacking, to some extent, in goodness and natural rectitude, and can thus be regarded as vicious and defective.

So we may say of a creature, as a gentle reproof, that he is ‘too good’, when •his affection towards others is so warm and zealous as to carry too far or when •he goes too far not through too warm a passion of that sort but through an over-cool one of another sort, or through a lack of some self-passion to restrain him within due bounds.

Here’s an objection that may occur to you:

It may sometimes happen that the only cause of a creature’s acting honestly and in moral proportion is **(i)** his having natural affections that are too strong (where the self-affections are over-much so) or **(ii)** his having self-affections that are defective or weak (where the natural affections are also weak) . That is because **(ii)** someone who is too regardless of •risks to• his life, may with the smallest degree of natural affection do everything that could be expected from the intense social love or zealous friendship. And because **(i)** a creature who is excessively timid may do things that the most perfect courage could inspire, because he has an excessively high degree of natural affection.

The answer to this is that whenever we criticise any passion as ‘too strong’ or ‘too weak’ we ought to be saying this in relation to the constitution or economy of the individual or species that is in question. If a passion that leads to some right end is more serviceable and effective because it is strong—and if we are sure that its strength won’t lead to any internal disturbance or any disproportion between itself

and other affections—then the passion can’t be condemned as vicious, however strong it is. •The qualification about ‘disproportion’ is important•. If the creature’s constitution can’t support its having all the passions in equal proportion, so that only some passions are raised to this height while others can’t be worked up to being on its level, then those strong passions—although they are of the better kind—can be called excessive. Being out of proportion to the other affections, and causing a bad balance in the over-all affective aspect of the creature, they must as a matter of course lead to inequality in the conduct, inclining the creature to act immorally.

I’ll show in more detail what is meant by the ‘economy of the passions’, using examples from species that are below us. Consider creatures to whom nature hasn’t given any power or means to defend themselves against violence, nor any way of making themselves formidable to any who injure or offend them; what they need is an extraordinary degree of fear, but little or no animosity (which might lead them to resist, or delay their escape). This strong passion of fear is their safety device: it serves them by keeping their senses on the alert and holding the spirits in readiness to give the start.

Thus, timidity and an habitual strong passion of fear may fit well into the economy of a particular creature, both with respect to himself and to the rest of his species. And courage may be contrary to his economy, and therefore vicious. Even within a single species nature arranges this differently for different sexes, ages, and growths. The tamer creatures of the grazing kind, who live in herds, are different from the wilder creatures who don’t herd but rather live in pairs only, apart from company, as is natural and suitable for their life as predators. Yet even among the inoffensive herding kinds of animals, courage at a time of danger is distributed differently in proportion to their make [i.e. their physical constitution] and

strength. When the whole herd flees, the bull alone faces off against the invading predator and shows himself to be aware of his own make. Even the female of this ·grazing· kind is to some extent armed to resist violence, so as not to flee a common danger. As for a hind or doe or any other inoffensive and defenceless creature, it isn't in the least unnatural or vicious, when the enemy approaches, to desert their offspring and flee for safety. But as for creatures that can resist, and are armed offensively by nature—even if they are the poorest insect species, such as bees or wasps—it's natural to them to be roused with fury, and at the risk of their lives oppose any enemy or invader of their species. That's because knowledge of this passion in the creature deters potential predators. . . . And man is in this sense the most formidable of all creatures; because if a man thinks it would be right and would set a good example to do this, he may on his own or his country's behalf have revenge for harm done on anyone living; and by throwing away •his own life (if he is resolute enough for that) he is almost certain to be master of someone else's life, however strongly that person may be guarded. Examples of this nature have often served to restrain those in •power from using •it to the utmost extent. . . .

The situation of affections or passions in an animal's constitution is like that of the cords or strings in a musical instrument. Even if the strings are perfectly tuned to one another, if they are strained too much it is more than the instrument will bear: the lute or lyre is abused, and its effect is lost. On the other hand, if some of the strings are properly tightened while others are left a little slack, then the instrument is again in disorder and a bad performer. The various species of creatures are like different sorts of instruments. . . . Men—who are the most easily affected with pain or pleasure—need the strongest influence or force of other affections such as tenderness, love, sociableness,

compassion, in order to preserve a proper balance and to maintain them in their duty, . . . while others who are of a cooler blood or lower key don't need the same counter-weight, and aren't made by nature to feel so strongly those tender and endearing affections.

We could expect it to be agreeable to inquire in this way into the different tunings of the passions [Shaftesbury's phrase], the various mixtures by which men become so different from one another. For just as •the highest improvements of temperament are made in human kind, so also •the greatest corruptions and degeneracies are to be found in this race. In the other species of creatures around us, there is always found an exact proportionality, constancy and regularity in all their passions and affections:

- no failure in the care of the offspring or of the society to which they belong,
- no selling of their services to unworthy employers,
- no intemperance or excess of any kind.

The smaller creatures like bees and ants who live in cities, so to speak, continue the same harmonious course of life and are never false to the affections that move them to operate towards their public good. Even predators who live the furthest out of society maintain a conduct towards one another that is just right for the good of their own species. Whereas man, despite the assistance of religion and the direction of laws, is often found to live in less conformity with nature, and is often made *more* barbarous and inhuman—by religion! Marks are set on men; distinctions are formed; opinions are decreed, under the severest penalties; antipathies are instilled, and aversions raised in men against the general run of their own species. So that it's hard to find in any region a human society that has humane laws. No wonder if in human societies it's so hard to find a man who lives naturally and as a man.

Having now shown what is meant by a passion's being too intense or not intense enough. . . ., I now come to the plainer and more essential part of vice—the only part that deserves to be considered as vicious—namely when

- the public affections are weak or deficient,
- the private and self-affections are too strong, or
- affections arise that are not of either of those kinds, and don't tend even slightly to support either the public or the private system.

It's only when one of those is the case that a creature can be bad or vicious. So if I can prove that it is not really in a creature's interests to be viciously affected in any of those ways, and that it *is* in its interests *not* to be thus affected, that will amount to a proof that *it is in a creature's interests to be wholly good and virtuous*, because in a wholesome and sound state of his affections, such as I have described, he

can't possibly be other than sound, good and virtuous in his behaviour.

So this is what I have to prove:

A. To have •the natural, kindly, or generous affections strong and powerful towards the good of the public is to have •the chief means and power of self-enjoyment, and that to lack them is certain misery and evil.

B. To have the private or self-affections too strong, not sufficiently subordinate to the kindly and natural affections, is also miserable.

C. To have the *unnatural* affections (i.e. ones that aren't based on the interests of •the species or public or •the private person or creature himself, is to be miserable in the highest degree.

·Those propositions will receive a section each; the second and third will start on pages 42 and 49 respectively.·

Part 2: Affections and happiness

Section 1: Natural affections

A. To be proved: to have the natural affections (such as are rooted in love, contentment, good will, and sympathy with the kind or species) is to have the chief means and power of self-enjoyment; and that to lack them is certain misery and evil. To get into this we should first ask: What *are* those items that we call 'pleasures' or 'satisfactions' from which happiness is generally computed? Well, they are commonly divided into satisfactions and pleasures of the body and satisfactions and pleasures of the mind.

Most people would agree that the satisfactions of the mind are the greatest, and here is evidence for that. Whenever the mind, having formed a high opinion of the value of some action or line of conduct,

receives the strongest satisfaction of this sort and is worked up to the highest pitch or degree of passion towards the action,

at such a time it

sets itself above all bodily pain as well as pleasure, and can't be diverted from its purpose by flattery or terror of any kind.

Thus we see Indians, barbarians, wrong-doers, and even the most appalling villains •accept all kinds of hardship and •defy torture and death—all for the sake of a particular gang or society, or through some cherished notion of honour or gallantry, revenge, or gratitude. Contrast that with a person who is immersed in bodily enjoyment, surrounded with everything that can allure or charm the senses, when something goes amiss inside him: the moment he has the thought of some internal ailment or disorder. . . .enjoyment instantly ceases, the pleasure of the senses is at an end. . . .
 •From here to page 38 I shall be discussing mental pleasure; at that point, below the asterisks, I'll switch to bodily ones•.

Granted, then, that the mind's pleasures are superior to the body's, it follows that

Whatever can create in a thinking being a constant flowing series of mental enjoyments or pleasures of the mind does more for his happiness than anything that can create in him a similar series of sensual enjoyments, i.e. pleasures of the body. [Shaftesbury's italics]

Now the mental enjoyments are either **(i)** the natural affections themselves in their immediate operation or **(ii)** wholly the effects of such affections.

If that is right, it follows that a rational creature's settled natural affections, being the only means to his having a constant series of mental enjoyments, are the only means to his having certain and solid happiness. •To reach that conclusion I have needed only the premise '**(i)** or **(ii)**', so that a proof of either one would suffice; but I choose to defend both•.

(i) The first task is to show how greatly the natural affections are in themselves the highest pleasures and enjoyments. There's not much need to prove this to anyone who has ever known the mind's condition when there is a lively affection of love, gratitude, generosity, pity, helpfulness,

or whatever else is of a social or friendly sort. Anyone who has *any* knowledge of human nature is aware of what pleasure the mind experiences when it is touched in this generous [see Glossary] way. The difference we find between solitude and company, between ordinary company and that of friends; the connection of almost all our pleasures to mutual converse, and their dependence on society either present or imagined—all these are evidence for my thesis.

How much better the social pleasures are than any others can be known by visible tokens and effects. The outward features, the marks and signs that accompany this sort of joy, are expressive of a more intense, clear, and undisturbed pleasure than those that accompany the satisfaction of thirst, hunger, and other strong appetites. But the superiority of the social pleasures can be even better known from the actual prevalence and ascendancy of this sort of affection over all others. Wherever it presents itself with any advantage, it silences. . . .every other motion [see Glossary] of pleasure. No mere joy of the senses can be a match for it. Anyone in a position to judge regarding both kinds of pleasure will always give the preference to the social kind. But to be able to judge both one must have a sense of each. An honest man can indeed judge regarding sensual pleasure, and knows its utmost force. His temperance—his moderation in his use of appetites—doesn't reduce his taste for them or dull his senses; on the contrary, it makes them more intense and clear. But an immoral and profligate man can't be accepted as a good judge of social pleasure, because his nature makes him a stranger to it.

[Then a paragraph about fairly bad people who have good affections, but of low intensity and rare appearances. If the intensity were raised enough, Shaftesbury says, *then* those people would discover what they have been missing, and would reform.]

Thus the charm of kind affection is superior to all other pleasures, because it has the power to draw one away from every other appetite or inclination. Consider one example out of thousands that could be given: in a person's love for his offspring, the charm operates so strongly on •his temperament that in the midst of other temptations •it is susceptible to this passion alone—the master-pleasure and conqueror of the others.

Anyone who knows anything of mathematics has found that in exercising his mind on the discoveries he makes there, though they are merely of speculative [see Glossary] truths, he receives a pleasure and delight superior to that of the senses. When we thoroughly investigate this contemplative delight we'll find that it doesn't have any relation to the person's private interests. . . . The admiration, joy, or love turns wholly on what is exterior and foreign to ourselves. . . . It results solely from the love of truth, proportion, order, and symmetry in things outside us; so it ought really to be classified as a *natural* affection. Having no object within range of the private system, it must either be •regarded as superfluous and unnatural (as having no tendency towards the advantage or good of anything in nature) or •be judged to be what it truly is, namely *a natural joy in the contemplation of the numbers, and the harmony, proportion, and concord that supports the universal nature and is essential in the constitution and form of every particular species*. [On page 27 'natural affection' was defined in terms of 'the good of the public', but now Shaftesbury is using the phrase as a catch-all for any affection that isn't in the 'self-' or 'unnatural' categories.]

But this speculative pleasure, however considerable and valuable it may be, and however much better than any motion of the mere senses, must yet be far surpassed by virtuous motions and the exercise of benignity and goodness. Where *those* occur, there is both •a most delightful affection

of the soul and •a pleasing assent and approval of the mind to what is *done* in this good disposition. . . .

In the passion of love between the sexes, where along with •the vulgar affection there is also •an ingredient of kind and friendly affection, the feeling of •the latter is really superior to •the former. Why? Because through this affection, and for the sake of the beloved person, the greatest hardships have been accepted and even death itself voluntarily embraced, with no prospect of compensation. •No expectation of reward? None!• For *where* could such recompense be expected to occur? Not here in this world, surely, for death puts an end to everything. And not hereafter in some other world, for who ever thought of providing a heaven or future recompense for the suffering virtue of lovers?

Something else in favour of the natural affections: it's not only when joy and sprightliness are mixed in with them that they bring a real enjoyment better than that of the sensual kind. The very disturbances involved in natural affection, though you might think they are wholly contrary to pleasure, actually produce a contentment and satisfaction greater than the pleasures of satisfied senses. And when a series of tender and kind affections can be carried on—even through fears, horrors, sorrows and griefs—the emotion of the soul is still agreeable. We continue to get pleasure from •virtue, even when viewed in this melancholy way. •Her beauty supports itself under a cloud and in the midst of surrounding calamities. When by mere illusion, as in a •theatrical• tragedy, passions of this kind are skilfully aroused in us, we prefer this entertainment to any other of equal duration. We discover for ourselves that

- moving our passions in this mournful way,
- engaging them on behalf of merit and worth, and
- exercising whatever social affection and human sympathy we have,

is of the highest delight; and provides a greater enjoyment (of the thought-and-sentiment kind) than anything of the senses-and-common-appetite kind can do. And this shows us *how much the mental enjoyments are actually the natural affections themselves.*

(ii) [That numeral refers to the i-ii passage on page 31.] The next task is to explain how the mental enjoyments **come from** the natural affections as their natural effects. The first point to note is this: the mental-pleasure effects of love or kind affection are *an enjoyment of good through*

(a) *receiving it by reflection, so to speak, or by sharing in the good of others; and*

(b) *a pleasing awareness of the actual love, deserved esteem or approval of others towards oneself.*

How considerable a part of happiness arises from **(a)** will be easily grasped by anyone who isn't exceedingly bad-natured! Think many pleasures there are in sharing contentment and delight with others, receiving it in fellowship and company, and gathering it from •the pleased and happy states of those around us, from •reports of such happinesses, from •the faces, gestures, voices and sounds of creatures whose signs of joy and contentment we can recognize even if the creatures aren't human. . . .

As for the other effect of social love, namely **(b)** the awareness of deserved kindness or esteem, it's not hard to perceive how large a part this plays in mental pleasure, constituting the chief enjoyment and happiness of people who are in the narrowest sense voluptuous [= 'given to enjoying sensual pleasure']. It is so natural for the most selfish of us to be continually getting some sort of satisfaction from our character, and pleasing ourselves with the fantasy of deserved admiration and esteem! Even if it really is just fantasy, we try to believe that it's true, and we do our best to flatter ourselves with the thought of merit of some kind, and the conviction that we

deserve well from at least a few people who happen to know us better and more intimately.

What tyrant—what robber or flagrant violator of the laws of society—doesn't have a companion or particular set of companions. . . .with whom he gladly shares his good, in whose welfare he delights, and whose joy and satisfaction he makes his own? What person in the world is there who isn't affected by the flattery or kindness of those who are on familiar terms with him? Almost all our actions are connected in some way with this soothing hope and expectation of friendship. It goes through our whole lives and is mixed in even with most of our vices. [He cites vanity, ambition, luxury [see Glossary], unchaste love, 'and many other disorders of our life'.] If pleasure were measured in the same way as other things usually are, it could properly be said that more than nine tenths of life's enjoyments come from these two branches—namely **(a)** community, i.e. sharing in the pleasures of others, and **(b)** the belief that one deserves to be treated well by others. . . .

Because natural affection or social love can be perfect or imperfect, so can the contentment and happiness depending on it. Effects mirror their causes.

Don't think that

A lower intensity of natural affection, i.e. an imperfect partial concern of this sort, can make up for the lack of a complete, sincere, and truly moral one;

that is, don't think that

A small tincture of social inclination is sufficient to satisfy the goal of pleasure in society, and can give us the enjoyment of participation and community that is so essential to our happiness.

If you are tempted to go that way, I have two points that should hold you back.

(a) Firstly: Partial •affection or •social love, without concern for a complete society or whole, is in itself an inconsistency which implies an absolute contradiction. . . . If it really is an affection of the natural sort, and is imperfect only in being applied to some *part* of society or species and not to the species or society itself, there can't be a coherent account of what is going on in it, any more than there can of the most odd, capricious, or mood-dependent passion that may arise. So the person who is conscious of having this affection can't be conscious of any merit or worth on the account of it. And the persons on whom this capricious affection has chanced to fall can't be at all confident of its continuance or force. It has no foundation in reason, so it must be easily removable or alterable without reason. Now, the variableness of a passion that depends solely on whim and mood, and undergoes frequent switches from hatred to love, aversion to inclination, *must*

- create continual disturbance and disgust,
- dilute what is immediately enjoyed in the way of friendship and society, and eventually
- extinguish, in a way, the very inclination towards friendship and human commerce.

[That is presumably Shaftesbury's reason for the charge of 'contradiction'.] In contrast with that, an entire affection (which is the source of the word 'integrity') is •answerable •only to itself, •appropriate, and •rational, which makes it unbreakable, solid, and durable. [The rest of this paragraph departs more than usual from Shaftesbury's formulations; but that's just to cope with an unduly complex sentence; the meaning is not changed.] •If someone has a social affection towards some but not all—an affection that has no rule or order—every time he thinks about this it will look bad to him, and thus lessen his enjoyment. If someone has a complete or perfect social affection, his awareness of behaving well towards mankind in general

will give him good thoughts about each friendly affection in particular, and will raise his enjoyment of friendship even higher. [Shaftesbury calls the incomplete social affection 'partiality or vicious friendship', and the complete one 'integrity.']

(b) Secondly: just as partial affection can yield only a brief thin enjoyment of the pleasures of sympathy or sharing feelings with others, so also it can't provide much enjoyment from the other principal branch of human happiness, namely awareness of having and deserving the esteem of others. What could this esteem be based on? There can't be much merit when the affection is so precarious and uncertain. How can anyone *trust* a mere casual inclination or whimsical liking? Who can depend on a friendship founded on no moral rule but capriciously assigned to some one person or small part of mankind, to the exclusion of the rest of the society?

Also, it seems impossible for someone who esteems or loves on any basis other than that of virtue to place his affection on anyone that he esteem or love for long. It will be hard for him find among his so beloved friends any in whom he can heartily rejoice or whose reciprocal love or esteem he can sincerely prize and enjoy. And there can't be anything lasting about the pleasures that are gathered from self-flattery and the false conviction that one is esteemed and loved by others—others who are incapable of any real esteem or love. So we see how much the men of narrow or partial affection must be losers in this way, and necessarily fall short in this second principal part of mental enjoyment.

On the other side, entire affection has all the opposite advantages. It is equal, constant, accountable to itself, always satisfactory and pleasing. It draws applause and love from the best men and—except when self-interest comes into it—from the very worst men also. We can fairly say of it that it carries with it an awareness of deserved love and approval from all society, and from all thinking creatures. . . .

The satisfaction that accompanies entire affection is full and noble, in proportion to its final object, which contains all perfection. . . . To have this entire affection or integrity of mind is to live according to •nature and •the dictates and rules of supreme wisdom. This is morality, justice, piety, and natural religion.

This argument may strike you as too scholastically stated, and as using terms and phrases that aren't in common use. So I'll try to restate it in plainer terms.

* * * * *

Think hard about the pleasures that you get either •in private retirement, contemplation, study, and converse with yourself or •in fun, jollity, and entertainment with others; and you'll find that these pleasures are wholly based •on an easy temperament that is free of harshness, bitterness, or distaste, and •on a mind or reason that is well composed, quiet, easy within itself, and such as doesn't shrink from inspecting itself. And this kind of mind, this kind of temperament. . . .*must* be a result of natural and good affections.

As regards the temperament, look at it this way. There is no state of outward prosperity or flowing fortune where inclination and desire are always satisfied, fancy and mood always pleased. Almost *hourly* there are obstacles or disappointments for the appetite—external events of some kind, or something from within, to block the free run of the indulged affections. They can't always be satisfied by mere indulgence! And when a life is guided solely by whims, there are plenty of causes of their being thwarted or upset. We know that very ordinary cases of

- weariness, uneasiness, and defect of disposition in the soundest body,
- interruptions in the flow of the bodily fluids or spirits in the healthiest people, and
- accidental mishaps that occur in every constitution,

are often sufficient to create uneasiness and dislike. And this •uneasiness• must in time become habitual, where there's nothing to oppose its progress and block it from prevailing on the temperament. Now, the only sound opposite to such badness of temperament is natural and kind affection. For whenever the mind, after looking in on itself, •decides to suppress this disturbance that has already arisen in the temperament, and •sets about this reforming work vigorously and in good earnest, the only way it can succeed is by introducing into the affectionate part •of the mind• some gentle feeling of the social and friendly kind, some enlivening motion [see Glossary] of kindness, fellowship, satisfaction, or love to soothe and convert that contrary motion of impatience and discontent.

You might say that in the present case religious affection or devotion is a sufficient and proper remedy. I reply that it might be, depending on what *kind* of religious affection. If it's of the pleasant and cheerful kind, it is an affection of the natural sort that I am talking about. If it's of the dismal or fearful kind—if it brings along with it any affection opposite to manhood, generosity, courage, or freedom of thought—it can't possibly be any help, and the 'remedy' will undoubtedly turn out to be worse than the disease. •When we are trying to improve a temperament that has gone sour•, the severest •reflections on our duty and •thoughts about what we are commanded to do by authority and under penalties won't *at all* serve to calm us. The more dismal our thoughts are on such a subject, the worse our temperament will be, and the readier to reveal itself as harsh and judgmental. The person may have reasons—of compulsion or fear or whatever—to *behave* differently from that, and perhaps even to *say* things that aren't harsh etc. But there won't have been any basic change. The face may be adjusted but the heart will be the same. . . .

You may want to object:

‘Although in melancholy circumstances a sour mood may prevail, when a person is outwardly prosperous and at the height of good fortune, it’s not likely that anything will occur that would thus sour the temperament in the way you have suggested.’

I reply that the more indulged and pampered a person’s state is, the *more* likely it is to be disturbed by every disappointment or smallest trouble. And if in the most indulged state of will and mood it is easiest to raise provocations, and the passions of anger, offence, and enmity are the highest, then there’s all the more need for input from social affection, to preserve the temperament from running into savageness and inhumanity. For proof of this, look at tyrants and most unlimited potentates.

[Shaftesbury now devotes most of a page to the following point. Any creature that *reasons* must also *reflect*, i.e. look in on himself. Various bad frames of mind also cause this kind of reflection, which is pretty well inevitable for all of us. For someone who has ‘thrown off natural affection’, the view he gets of himself in this ‘home survey’ is bound to be ‘grievous’.]

There are two things that a rational creature, ·looking into himself·, must find horribly offensive and grievous: **(a)** The awareness of an unjust action or ·course of· behaviour that he knows to be naturally odious and ill-deserving. **(b)** ·The awareness of· a foolish action or ·course of· behaviour which he knows to be prejudicial to his own interest or happiness. ·I shall come to **(b)** on page 37·.

(a) It is only the former of these that is properly called ‘conscience’, whether in a moral or a religious sense. You don’t need conscience to have awe and terror of the deity! No-one is regarded as more conscientious because of his fear of evil spirits, conjurations, enchantments, or whatever

may come from an unjust, capricious, or devilish nature. To •fear God in any way except as a consequence of some blameworthy act of which one is guilty is •to fear a devilish nature, not a divine one. [Shaftesbury then repeats the point in application to ‘the fear of hell’.]

Thus, religious conscience presupposes moral or natural conscience. Religious conscience may be understood to carry with it the fear of divine punishment, but its *force* comes from awareness of having committed some morally ugly and odious act in the presence of God, to whom natural veneration is due. In such a presence, the shame of villainy or vice must have its force, independently of any further thought God’s magisterial role and his handing out of particular rewards or punishments in a future state.

I have already said that no creature can maliciously and intentionally act wrongly without being aware at the same time that he deserves punishment. [In the original, Shaftesbury’s writes that someone who ‘does ill’ is aware that he ‘deserves ill’.] And in this respect every sensible creature can be said to have a conscience. For it will always be true of everyone that *they fear and expect from everyone whatever they know they deserve from everyone*; and so suspicions and bad thoughts must arise, with terror both of men and of God. But besides this every rational creature must also have a further conscience, namely his awareness of the ugliness of his wrong and unnatural actions and a consequent shame or regret concerning them.

Perhaps there isn’t—perhaps there *can’t* be—any creature who isn’t upset by the consciousness of villainy, who isn’t moved or affected by the thought of something wicked that he has done. If there is such a one, it’s obvious that he must be absolutely indifferent towards moral good or evil. And you’ll agree that he can’t be capable of natural affection; in which case he also can’t be capable of any social pleasure or

mental enjoyment (I showed this earlier); but on the contrary, he must be subject to all sorts of horrible, unnatural, and bad affections. Thus, to lack conscience, i.e. a natural sense of the odiousness of crime and injustice, is to be most of all miserable in life; but if a person has a conscience—i.e. a sense of the sort I have been discussing—anything that he does that's in conflict with it *must*...be continually shameful, grievous and offensive.

A man who in a passion happens to kill [Shaftesbury's phrase] his companion relents immediately when he sees what he has done. His vengefulness changes into pity, and his hatred is turned against himself; this comes about merely through the power of the object, i.e. it is caused by the sight of his victim's dead body. Because of this event he suffers agonies;...and he has constant bad memories and an unpleasant state of awareness of what he has done. If on the other hand he doesn't relent or suffer any real concern or shame, then either

- he has no sense of the ugliness of crime and injustice, no natural affection, and thus no happiness or peace within, or
- any sense of moral worth or goodness that he has must be of a confused and contradictory kind.

In the latter case, he must pursue an inconsistent notion, idolize some false species of virtue, honouring irrational and absurd conduct as noble, gallant, or worthy. It's easy to imagine how tormenting this must be to him, because such a phantom as this false virtue can't be fixed into any certain form, can't be held steady in one shape. [Shaftesbury calls it a 'Proteus of honour'; Proteus was a minor Greek god who could and did frequently change his shape.] The pursuit of it can only be vexatious and confusing. As I have shown, real virtue is the *only* thing that can possibly be proportionate to esteem, approval, or good conscience. Someone who has learned,

from false religion or prevailing custom, to esteem or admire as virtuous anything that isn't really so must fall into one of two categories:

- (i) Because of the inconsistency of such esteem, and the perpetual immoralities it leads to, he eventually loses all conscience and is therefore miserable in the worst way; or
- (ii) He retains some conscience, but it's of a kind that is never satisfactory and can never bring contentment.

It is impossible that a cruel fanatic or bigot, a persecutor, a murderer, a hired thug, a pirate, or any lesser villain—someone who is false to the society of mankind in general, and contradicts natural affection—should have any fixed principle at all, any real standard or scale by which to regulate his esteem, or any solid reason for approving of any one moral act. So...the more he relates to any morally bad and vicious action by loving or admiring it as great and glorious, the more contradiction and self-disapproval he must incur. That's because there's nothing more certain than this: *No natural affection can be contradicted, and no unnatural one can be advanced, without doing some harm to all the person's natural affections, so that the encouragement of unnatural affections causes a growth in inner ugliness.* From this it follows that the more a person's mind is dominated by a false principle of honour, a false religion, or a superstition, the more there is to make him unhappy when he looks into himself. . . . This complete (a), which began on page 36.

(b) Now for the other part of conscience, namely the memory of something that one did unreasonably and foolishly, against one's own interests or happiness. . . . [Shaftesbury's handling of this is pretty hard to follow. The gist of it is that this 'other part of conscience' kicks in whenever someone knows that he has acted wrongly. Even if he doesn't care about wrongness as such (so that the first part of conscience

is silent) he has to see his wrong conduct as unreasonable, foolish, contrary to his interests. Even if he keeps God out of his thoughts, he ‘must suffer a very sensible loss in the friendship, trust, and confidence of other men’. In short, when someone has acted in a morally wrong way,] there must be disturbance from conscience of this sort, namely from a sense of what has been done imprudently and contrary to the person’s real interest and advantage.

From all this we can easily see how greatly our happiness depends on natural and good affections. •The chief happiness comes from mental pleasures; and •the chief mental pleasures are, as I have said, based on natural affection; so it follows that •to have the natural affections is to have the chief means and power of self-enjoyment, the highest possession and happiness of life.

* * * * *

·Back on page 30 I distinguished mental pleasures from bodily ones, and since then I have been dealing with the former. It’s time now to face up to bodily pleasures.· Now, as to the pleasures of the body, and the satisfactions belonging to mere sense, it’s obvious that they can’t possibly have their effect or provide any pleasure worth having unless that is mediated by social and natural affections.

For some people *living well* is merely *eating and drinking well*. When we adopt their way of speaking and say that that these people who are supposed to live well are ‘living fast’, we’re carelessly conceding too much to them. As if the •fastest livers were those who took the most trouble to enjoy the •least of life! ·The *least*? Yes·, for if my account of happiness is right, life’s greatest enjoyments are of a sort that these men pass over in their haste.

... The high idea of voluptuous living that men of pleasure have owes a great deal to shows of elegance, a certain competitiveness, and a concern to *excel* in this sumptuous

art of living. If from the voluptuous scene you removed the table, the company, the uniformed servants, the services, and the rest of the management, there would remain hardly any pleasure worth having, even in the opinion of the most debauched themselves.

The very notion of a *debauch* (which is a dash into whatever can be imagined of pleasure and voluptuousness) carries with it a plain reference to society or fellowship. If the excess were committed in isolation from any society or fellowship, it might be called a ‘surfeit’ or ‘an excess of eating and drinking’ but it would hardly qualify as a *debauch*. And someone who abuses himself in this way is often called a ‘sot’, but never a ‘debauchee’. Courtesans, and even the commonest of women who live by prostitution, know very well how necessary it is that everyone they entertain with their beauty should believe that there are satisfactions on both sides, and that pleasures are given as well as received. If this idea of the situation were wholly taken away, the remaining pleasure would seem almost worthless, even to men of the grosser sort.

Who can enjoy anything thoroughly, or for long, when he is alone, completely separate—even in his thoughts—from everything belonging to society? Who wouldn’t in these conditions quickly find any sensual indulgence cloying? Who wouldn’t soon start disliking his pleasure, however exquisite it was, until he found some way to impart it, making it truly pleasant to him by sharing it with at least one other person? Let men imagine what they please; let them suppose themselves to •be extremely selfish or to • have an intense desire to follow the dictates of the narrow principle by which they try to bring nature under restraint: nature will still break out, using agonies, upsets, and illness to make perfectly clear the bad consequence of such violence, the absurdity of such a tactic, and the punishment that

belongs to such a monstrous and horrible endeavour. [This use of ‘violence’ reflects Aristotle’s distinction between ‘natural motion’ and ‘violent motion’, where ‘violent’ simply means ‘not natural’. When a stone falls to the earth, that is natural; when you throw it upwards, that is violent. Shaftesbury is saying here that the desire for society, the desire to share, is profoundly natural, so that anything going against it—such as the attempt to live a life of solitary selfishness—is violent.]

So it’s not only the pleasures of the mind that depend on natural affection. The pleasures of the body depend on it too, in that when natural affection is lacking, those pleasures don’t just lose their force but are in a way converted into dislike and disgust. The sensations that should naturally provide contentment and delight instead provide discontent and sourness, and make the person weary and restless. We can see this in the perpetual inconstancy, the love of change, that is so conspicuous in those who have nothing communicative or friendly in their pleasures. . . . Those who passionately pursue pleasure are setting themselves up for satiety, perpetual disgust, and feverishness of desire. It’s those who work to regulate their passions who have the best enjoyment of pleasure. It’s absolutely impossible for anything sensual to please or provide contentment if it doesn’t depend on something friendly or social, something combined with and linked to kind or natural affection.

* * * * *

Before I conclude this section on social or natural affection, I’ll offer a general view of it, and put it—once for all—onto the scales, to test what kind of balance it helps to make within the person who has it, and what the consequence may be of its deficiency or light weight.

Everyone knows that without action, motion, and employment, the body becomes feeble and oppressed; the food it absorbs turns into disease; the animal spirits, not having external work to do, help to consume the parts within; and

nature preys on herself, so to speak. In the same way the sensing and living part of the person, the soul or mind, lacking *its* proper and natural exercise, is burdened and diseased. Its thoughts and passions, being unnaturally withheld from their appropriate objects, turn against the mind itself, and create the highest impatience and bad humour.

In lower animals and other creatures that don’t have the use of reason and reflection (at least not in the way men do) it is so ordered in nature that their daily search for food and their attention to the business of their livelihood or the affairs of their species take up almost all their time, and they find full employment for their passions. . . . If one of these creatures is taken out of his natural laborious state and placed where he can satisfy all his appetites and wants with no trouble at all, we can see that as his circumstances grow thus luxuriant so do his temperament and passions. If he comes to have his needs met at a cheaper and easier rate than nature intended for him, he is made to pay dearly for them by losing his natural good disposition and the orderliness of his species.

I don’t have to support this by citing examples. Anyone who has the least knowledge of natural history, or has been an observer of the various breeds of creatures and their ways of life and propagation, will easily understand this difference of orderliness between wild and tame members of the same species. The tame ones acquire new habits, and deviate from their basic nature. They even lose the common instinct—the ordinary ingenuity—of their species, and they can’t get it back while they continue in this pampered state; but when they are returned to taking care of themselves out in the world, they regain the natural affection and intelligence of their species. They learn to form tighter groups, and grow more concerned for their offspring. They provide against the

seasons, and make the most of every natural advantage for the support and maintenance of their species against foreign and hostile species. Thus, as they become busy they become regular and good. They lose their bad temper and vice along with their idleness and ease.

It happens with mankind that while some are confined to labour—confined by *necessity*—others are provided with an abundance of everything by the pains and labour of inferiors. Now, if among the superior and easy sort there isn't some sort of work they can do in place of the ordinary labour and toil that they are spared; if instead of •working at something that has a good and honest end in society (letters, sciences, arts, husbandry, public affairs, economy, or the like) they •thoroughly neglect of all duty or employment and settle into idleness and inactivity; this is bound to result in an extremely slack and dissolute state—it must produce a total disorder of the passions and break out in the strangest irregularities imaginable.

We see the enormous growth of luxury [see Glossary] in capital cities that have for many years been the seat of empire. We see how vice of every kind flourishes when numbers of men are maintained in lazy opulence. It's not like that with men who are taken up in honest and appropriate employment, and have been used to it from their youth. We see this in the •hardy remote provincials, the •inhabitants of smaller towns, and the •industrious sort of common people; where it's rare to meet with any instances of the irregularities that are known in courts and palaces and in the rich foundations of comfortable and pampered priests.

If. . . it's true that •nature works by a sound order and regulation as much in the passions and affections as in the limbs and organs, and if we see that •she has constituted this inward part in such a way that

- nothing is as essential to it as exercise, and
- no exercise is as essential as that of social or natural affection,

it follows that when this affection is removed or weakened, the inner part of the person is bound to suffer and be impaired. If idleness, indifference, or numbness of feeling is worked on as an art, or cultivated with the utmost care, the passions that are thus restrained will break out of their prison and in one way or another get their liberty and find full employment. They'll be sure to create for themselves unusual and unnatural exercises in which they are cut off from natural and good ones. In that way in place of orderly and natural affection new and unnatural affection must spring up, and all inner order and economy will be destroyed.

You would have to have a very imperfect idea of how nature orders things in the formation and structure of animals to imagine that such a great principle [see Glossary]—such a fundamental part—as natural affection could possibly be lost or damaged without any inner ruin or subversion of the temperament and frame of mind.

Anyone who knows *anything* about this moral [see Glossary] kind of architecture will find the inner structure so adjusted and the whole thing so precisely built that merely extending a single passion a little too far, or continuing it a little too long, can cause irrecoverable ruin and misery. He will find examples of this in ordinary cases of mental derangement, where the mind dwells too long on one subject (happy or sad) and sinks under the weight of it, showing how necessary it is to have a proper balance, and counterpoise in the affections. He will find that each sex in every species has its own special order and set [see Glossary] or suite of passions, suitable to the kind of life it leads and the different functions and capacities assigned to each. Just as the operations and effects are different, so also are the springs and causes in each

system. The inside work is fitted to the outward performance. So when habits or affections are dislodged, misplaced, or changed—where habits or affections belonging to one species are intermixed with those belonging to another—there is bound to be confusion and disturbance within.

We can easily see this by comparing the more perfect natures with the imperfect ones that are imperfect from their birth, having suffered violence within, in their earliest form, in the womb. We know how it is with monsters [see Glossary] such as are compounded of different species or different sexes. Well, those who are misshapen or distorted in an inner part are equally monsters. The ordinary animals appear unnatural and monstrous when they lose their proper instincts, forsake their species, neglect their offspring, and pervert the functions or capacities that nature has given them. How wretched it must be, therefore, for man—of all creatures—to lose the sense and feeling which is •proper for him as a man, and •suitable to his character and intellect! How unfortunate it must be for a creature whose dependence on society is greater than those of any other species to lose the natural affection by which he is prompted to the welfare and interest of his species and community! Man has such a large natural share of this affection that he is plainly less able than any other creature to bear solitude. Every man has naturally a degree of social affection that inclines him to seek the familiarity and friendship of his fellows. . . . Someone who. . . .is unsociable, and *voluntarily avoids* society or relations with the world, is bound to be gloomy and ill-natured. And someone who is *prevented from having* such relations—prevented by force or by circumstances—finds in his temperament the bad effects of this restraint. The inclination •to seek society•, when suppressed, breeds discontent; whereas when it is set free to act with its full scope it provides a healing and enlivening

joy. We can see this especially when after a time of solitude and long absence the heart is opened, the mind disburdened, and the secrets of the breast unfolded to a close friend.

Even more remarkable examples can be seen in persons in the most elevated stations—even in princes, monarchs, and others whose condition seems to put them above ordinary human relationships and who adopt a sort of distant strangeness towards the rest of mankind. But they don't act in the same with all men. The wiser and better sort are indeed often held at a distance, as unfit for their intimacy or secret trust. But to compensate for this, intimacy is granted to others who, though they have the least merit and may be the most vile and contemptible of men, are sufficient to serve the purpose of an imaginary friendship, and can become official court 'favourites'. These are what the humanity of a great man—a king, for example—exercises itself upon. For these favourites we often see a king concerned and in pain; in these he easily confides; to these he can with pleasure communicate his power and greatness, be open, free, generous, confiding, and bountiful. . . . But where neither the love of mankind nor the passion for a favourite prevail, the tyrannical temperament is certain to show itself in its true colours, with all the bitterness, cruelty and mistrust that belong to the solitary and gloomy state of uncommunicative and unfriendly greatness. . . .

So we see how predominant natural affection is; how it is joined to us and implanted in our natures; how interwoven it is with our other passions; and how essential it is to the regular course of our affections, on which our happiness and self-enjoyment so immediately depend.

So I have demonstrated this: *To have the natural and good affections is to have the chief means and power of self-enjoyment, To lack such affections is certain misery and evil.*

Section 2. Self-affections

B. By having self-passions that are too intense or strong a creature becomes miserable.

To approach this in a methodical way I should first list the home-affections [Shaftesbury's term] that relate to the creature's private interests or individual economy, such as

- (1) love of life,
- (2) resentment of injury,
- (3) pleasure in (or appetite towards) nourishment and the means of generation,
- (4) desire for the conveniences by which we are well provided for and maintained,
- (5) competitiveness or love of praise and honour,
- (6) idleness or love of ease and rest.

These are the affections relating to the private system, and constituting what we call ·self·-interestedness or self-love.

When these affections are moderate—kept within certain limits—they are neither harmful to social life nor a hindrance to virtue. But in their extreme form they become

- (1) cowardice,
- (2) vengefulness,
- (3) luxury [see Glossary] ·and lust·.
- (4) avarice,
- (5) vanity and ambition,
- (6) sloth;

and in these forms they are acknowledged to be vicious and bad in relation to human society. How they are bad also in relation to the person who has them, and are to his own disadvantage as well as that of the public, we'll see as we examine them separately.

·(1) COWARDICE·

If any of these self-passions might, for the good and happiness of the creature whose passion it is, be opposed to

natural affection and allowed to over-balance it, the desire for and love of life would be the best candidate. But it may be that no passion leads to more disorder and misery when it is unleashed.

We all know that life can sometimes be a misfortune and a misery. When a creature is reduced to such extremity, it's regarded as the greatest cruelty to enforce the continuance of his life. Although religion forbids each of us to be his own reliever, if by some fortunate accident death offers itself it is embraced as highly welcome. For this reason the deceased person's nearest friends and relatives often rejoice at the release of someone they entirely loved, even if he himself was so weak as turn down the chance of dying and do his utmost to prolong his own undesirable state.

Therefore, since

- life can often be a misfortune and a misery, and
- it naturally becomes so when it is prolonged to the infirmities of old age, and
- yet very often life is over-valued, and purchased at a cost that is certainly too high,

it obviously follows that the passion itself—the love of life, and dread of death—if it becomes too intense and throws off the balance in a creature's temperament, it will lead him directly against his own interests, turning him into his own greatest enemy and making him act accordingly.

But now suppose it is in some creature's interests to preserve his life by all courses and means, in any circumstances, at any cost. It will still be against his interests to have this passion in a high degree, because a very intense desire to live is not always conducive to survival. I needn't give examples, because it is common knowledge that excessive fear delivers one into danger instead of saving one from it. It's impossible for anyone to act sensibly and with presence of mind, even in preserving and defending himself, when he is strongly

pressed by such a passion. In all extraordinary emergencies, courage and resolution are what save us, while cowardice robs us of the means of safety. . . .

Even if the consequences of this passion were less harmful than I have described them as being, you have to admit that the passion itself is bound to be miserable—if it is misery to feel cowardice, and to be haunted by the spectres and horrors that are typical of the character of anyone who has a thorough dread of death. It's not only when dangers happen and risks are incurred that •this sort of fear oppresses and distracts. If •it ever so slightly gets the upper hand, it has no mercy even at the safest stillest hour of retreat and quiet. Every object prompts some thought that it can work on. It operates when it is least observed by others; and it enters at all times into the pleasantest parts of life, corrupting and poisoning all enjoyment and satisfaction. It's safe to say that many a life that has all the features that make it look happy would on closer and more inward inspection be found to be thoroughly miserable, simply through this passion •of chronic fear of death•. But when we add to this the *low* behaviour that comes from such a passionate concern for living—when we consider how it drives us to actions that we can never view without dislike, and forces us gradually away from our natural conduct into still greater crookednesses and perplexity [Shaftesbury's phrase]—we see something that no-one, surely, is so dishonest as to deny, namely that life on those terms becomes a poor purchase, and is passed with little freedom or satisfaction. For how can this *not* be so when everything generous and worthy, and even. . . .happiness, is for life's sake abandoned and renounced?

So it seems evident that it's against a creature's interests and contrary to his happiness and good to have this affection of desire and love of life too intensely.

•(2) VENGEFULNESS•

There's another passion—very different from fear—which at a certain intensity-level is preservative to us and conduces to our safety. Just as fear is serviceable in prompting us to avoid danger, so this next one serves us by fortifying us against danger and enabling us to •repel injury and •resist violence when it is offered. It's true that. . . .in a wise and virtuous man whose affections are properly regulated such efforts towards action don't amount to passion or commotion, rightly so-called. A courageous man may be cautious without real fear; and a temperate man may resist or punish without anger. But in ordinary characters there's bound to be some mixture of the real passions themselves, though they can in the main allay and moderate one another. And so anger becomes, in a way, necessary. It's by this passion that one creature threatening violence to another is deterred from carrying it out, when he sees how the attempt affects the other, and knows by the signs that accompany this rising motion [see Glossary] that if he carries through with this it won't pass easily or with impunity. And it's also this passion which, after violence and hostility have occurred, arouses the victim in opposition, and helps him to return similar hostility and harm to the invader. •Actually *help* him? Yes•, because as the victim's rage and despair increase he becomes still more terrible: being urged •by his anger• to the greatest extremity, he finds a degree of strength and boldness that he has never before experienced, and that he wouldn't have *now* if it weren't for how highly he has been provoked.

So this affection, despite its immediate aim's being the harm or punishment of someone else, is clearly one of the ones that tend to the advantage of the self-system, the animal himself [Shaftesbury's phrase]; and it also contributes in other ways to the good and interests of the species. But you hardly need me to explain how damaging and self-destructive anger

is, if it's what commonly understand by 'anger'—a passion that is rash and violent in the instant of provocation, or one that imprints itself deeply and causes an eager pursuit of a planned revenge. It's no wonder that so much is done in mere revenge and under the pressure of deep resentment, given that the relief and satisfaction found in acting on that resentment is. . . .alleviates the most weighty and pressing sensation of misery. When this misery of the victim is for a while removed or alleviated by his success in doing something bad to someone else, the result is the sense of a delicious ease, an overflowing of soft and pleasing sensation. Yet this is really no better than torture on the rack. [The remainder of this paragraph will depart more than usual from Shaftesbury's original. As a precaution, the original—as given in the Cambridge U.P. edition of the work (1999)—is tacked on at the end of this document.] Anyone who has experienced racking pains knows how he has been affected by a sudden ending or interruption of the pain. Well, that effect is comparable with the rather disgraceful delights that you can get from a poisonously vengeful disposition when it is given free rein: they are merely repeated soothings of anger that is repeatedly renewed. That was about angry bursts of vengefulness. In some people the passion doesn't arise so suddenly, but once it has been aroused it isn't so easily quietened. Once the sleeping capacity for vengefulness has been aroused and worked up to its highest pitch, it won't die down until it achieves its end, and when that has been achieved it calms down and rests. The relief that this brings is all the more enjoyable because the preceding anguish was so long-lasting and bitter. Thus, either way—with vengefulness that is angrily explosive or vengefulness that is slower and deeper and more deliberate—the 'delights' come only from the cessation of something utterly nasty. . . .

There's no need for me to go through the bad effects that this passion can have on our minds, our bodies, our private condition, or the circumstances of our life. That would be tedious. These are topics of the moral sort that are commonly joined with religion, and treated so rhetorically and with such enforced repetition that people are apt to think they have heard more than enough of it. What I have said here may be enough to make it evident that to be subject to a passion of the kind under discussion here is actually to be very unhappy, and that the habit itself is a disease of the worst sort, from which misery is inseparable.

(3) LUXURY AND LUST

Now, as for luxury [see Glossary] and what the world calls 'pleasure': if it were true (and I have proved that it isn't) that the most considerable enjoyments were those merely of the senses, and if it were also true that those sensual enjoyments lay in certain external things that could always supply a due and certain portion of pleasure depending on their degree and quality, it would then follow that the sure way to get happiness would be to procure a good supply of the things to which happiness and pleasure were thus infallibly annexed. But however fashionably we may apply the notion of 'good living', it won't be found that our inner faculties can keep pace with these outward supplies of a luxuriant fortune. And if the natural disposition and aptness **from within** doesn't play its part, it will be in vain to exercise great skill in accumulating these pleasure-giving things **from outside** .

Someone who has taken in so much of a substance x that he dislikes its taste and is nauseated by it may nevertheless have a constant a craving for x, an eagerness of stomach [Shaftesbury's phrase] for it. But this kind of appetite is false and unnatural—like thirst arising from a fever. . . . Now, the

plain satisfactions of the natural appetite are infinitely better than the indulgences of the most refined and elegant luxury. The luxurious themselves often perceive this. People brought up in the sumptuous way,

using food to get in ahead of •appetite instead of letting
•it happen and responding to it by eating food,

when some turn of events puts them onto a more natural course, or for a while (as on a journey or a day of sport) happened

to experience the sweetness of a plain diet, recommended by due abstinence and exercise,

they have freely admitted that this gave them the highest satisfaction and delight that a table could possibly provide.

[Shaftesbury adds that people who have moved from a plain life to a luxurious one miss the plainness, regret losing it, and don't think much of luxury. This, he says, has often been noticed. He continues:] It's clear that the keenness of the natural sensations is lost when you put pressure on nature, force the appetite, and incite the senses. And even if through vice or bad habits the same objects of appetite are sought more eagerly every day, they give less satisfaction. The impatience of not having them may grow, but the pleasure of having them shrinks. The bouts of gloom and nausea that continually intervene are sensations of the worst and most hateful kind. Hardly anything is tasted that is wholly free of this nasty taste caused by a surfeited sense and a ruined appetite. So that instead of a constant and flowing delight provided by such a state of life, the very state itself is actually a sickness and infirmity, a corruption of pleasure, and destructive of every natural and agreeable sensation. That's how far it is from being true that in this licentious course we enjoy life best. . . .

As for the consequences of this kind of indulgence—how fatal to the body through diseases of many kinds, and to the

mind through sottishness and stupidity—you don't need me to explain this.

The consequences for our interests are plain enough. Such a state of impotent and unrestrained desire increases our wants and thus increases our dependence on others. It becomes harder for our private circumstances, however affluent or easy they may be, to satisfy us. . . . The injuries we do ourselves by excess and impatience become apparent when, through an impotence of this sort and our lack of self-control, we do things that we ourselves declare to be destructive to us. . . . From what I have said here—indeed from a part of what I have said—it's easy to conclude that luxury, riot, and debauch are contrary to real interests and to the true enjoyment of life.

[This is where Shaftesbury starts to discuss what he has earlier called 'the passion of love between the sexes'. He does it in guarded language, and neither 'sex' nor 'lust' occurs anywhere in this section.] There's another luxury superior to the kind I have been discussing, and ·although I take it up here· it can scarcely be called a self-passion, since its sole end is the advantage and promotion (not of *the self* but) of *the species*. But ·it isn't a typical social affection either·: all the other social affections bring only **mental** pleasure, and are based on mere kindness and love; whereas this one has more added to it and brings a **sensual** pleasure. Nature has shown such concern and care for the support and continuation of the various species that they—the members of the species—are made to have a concern for the propagation of their kind, a concern driven by a certain •need and •necessity in their natures, Let us now consider whether it is in the interests of an animal to feel this need more intensely than is natural and ordinary.

. . . .For every other ·kind of· pleasure there's a level of appetite-intensity that can't be exceeded without harming

the creature, even harming his ability to experience pleasure. If you agree about that, you're likely to think that this other appetite—the one of the amorous kind—also has a certain limit or proper boundary. There are other sorts of ardent sensations. . . .which we find pleasant and acceptable while they stay within certain limits, but which become oppressive and intolerable as they increase. Laughter provoked by tickling grows an excessive pain even while retaining the same features of delight and pleasure. . . .

Anyone who is bred to a natural life, accustomed to honest industry and sobriety and not to anything immoderate or intemperate, is found to have his appetites and inclinations of this sort at command. And their moderation doesn't make them less able to deliver the pleasure or enjoyment of each kind. On the contrary, being more sound, healthy, and unharmed by excess and abuse, his appetites and inclinations must provide him with proportionate satisfaction. So if we go to experience for a comparison between these two—

(a) the sensations that go with the virtuous conduct of someone who lives a natural and regular life;

(b) the sensations that go with the vicious course of someone who is slack and dissolute;

comparing them just in respect of the sensual pleasure that each involves, leaving consequences out of it, there's no room for doubt that judgment would be given in favour of (a).

As for the consequences of this vice with respect to the health and vigour of •the body: there's no need for me to go into that. The harm it does to •the mind, though less noticed, is greater. The holding back of all improvement, the wretched waste of time, the effeminacy, sloth, feebleness, the disorder and looseness of a thousand passions through such a slackening and enervating of the mind are all effects that will be obvious to the person if he looks into himself.

You don't need me to go on about the disadvantages of this intemperance in respect of the interests of the person himself, society, and the world, or about the advantages of a contrary sobriety and self-control. It's well known there can be no slavery greater than what comes from being governed by such a passion. It is the passion that •is least manageable by favour or concession, and •grabs the most when it is indulged. What it costs us in the modesty and nobility of our natures, and in the faith and honesty of our characters, is easy to grasp by anyone who will look into himself. And so we reach the conclusion that there is no passion whose extravagance and excess more certainly lead to disorder and unhappiness.

•(4) AVARICE•

As for the passion that. . . .has for its aim the possession of wealth and what we call a 'settlement' or 'fortune' in the world: when this is moderate and not unreasonably intense, when it doesn't lead to any passionate pursuit, or raise any burning desire or appetite, it is perfectly compatible with virtue and is even suitable and beneficial to society. The *work* that this affection causes brings benefit to the public as well as the private system. But if it eventually grows into a real passion, the harm and damage it does to the public is not greater than what it does to the person himself. Such a person is actually a *self*-oppressor, and lies more heavily on himself than he can ever do on mankind.

You surely don't need me to explain how miserable it is to have a coveting or avaricious temperament. Everyone knows how small a portion of worldly goods is sufficient for a man's personal use and convenience, and how much his needs and wants might be reduced if he set himself to be frugal, and pursued temperance and a natural life with •even• half the concentration, work and skill that are spent on •pursuing•

sumptuousness and luxury! Well, if temperance really is so advantageous, and the practice as well as the consequences of it so pleasing and happy, . . . there's little need for me to go through the miseries that come with covetous and eager desires for things that have no bounds or rule. ·No bounds or rule? Yes, because· they are out of nature, and beyond nature there can be no limits to desire. For where shall we stop, once we have passed this boundary? How shall we fix or ascertain something that is wholly unnatural and unreasonable? . . .

That is why covetous and eager minds are so restless. . . . This condition doesn't bring any thorough or real satisfaction, but only a kind of insatiableness. There *can't* be any real enjoyment except in ·the satisfaction of· a natural and just appetite. 'What about the enjoyment of wealth and honours by a person who has coveted them?' That's not what we call 'enjoyment', when through covetousness or ambition the desire is still uppermost and can't ever be satisfied with its gains. But ·I needn't go on about this·: the vice of covetousness is already widely criticised. . . . In short: A covetous temperament, a miserable temperament—two names for the same thing!

·(5) VANITY AND AMBITION·

There is equally widespread criticism of that other aspiring temperament—the one that exceeds honest emulation or love of praise, and even goes beyond the limits of vanity and conceit. This is the passion that breaks out into an enormous pride and ambition. Now, if we just think about

the ease, happiness, and security that come with a modest disposition and quiet mind—the sort of mind that can easily bring itself under self-control, is fitted to every rank or position in society, and can adjust itself to any reasonable circumstances whatsoever—

we'll see right away that this is a most agreeable and winning character. And after we have done this, it won't be necessary for us to call to mind •the excellence and good of moderation, or •the harm and self-injury of immoderate desires and conceited foolish fantasies of personal advantage in such things as titles, honours, precedencies, fame, glory, or vulgar astonishment, admiration, and applause.

Another obvious point: just as desires of this kind intensify and become impetuous and out of our control, so also the corresponding aversions and fears grow strong and violent, so that the temperament becomes suspicious, jealous, fault-finding, subject to fears from all events, and unable to bear the least set-back or ordinary disappointment. And so we can conclude that all

•rest and security about the future, and all

•peace, contentedness and ease about the present,

is forfeited by the aspiring passions of this envious kind, and by having the appetites towards glory and outward appearance thus transported and out of control.

·(6) SLOTH·

There is a certain temperament that is often treated as a kind of opposite of the ·two· eager and aspiring aims that I have been talking about. It doesn't really exclude either **(4)** covetousness or **(5)** ambition; but it does hinder their effects and keeps them from breaking out into open action. This passion soothes the mind and softens it into an excessive love of rest and idleness; so it makes vigorous attempts impracticable, and represents as insuperable the difficulties of a painful and laborious course towards wealth and honours. Now, although an inclination to ease and a love of moderate respite and rest from action is as natural and useful to us as the inclination we have towards sleep, still an excessive love of rest and a focused aversion to action

and employment must be a disease in the mind equal to that of lethargy in the body.

We can tell how necessary action and exercise are to the body from •the difference we find between the constitutions that are accustomed it and those that have nothing to do with it, and from •the difference between the bodily health and tone created by labour and due exercise and the bodily condition we see resulting from an indulged state of idleness and rest. And the lazy habit isn't ruinous only to the body. The languishing disease corrupts all the enjoyments of a vigorous and healthy sense, and carries its infection into the mind, where it spreads a worse contagion. •Why worse?• Because the body may hold out for a while, but the mind in which this distemper is seated can't escape without an *immediate* affliction and disorder. The habit •of idleness• creates a state of boredom and anxiety, which influences the whole temperament and converts •the unnatural rest into •an unhappy sort of activity, bad humour, and irritability. I have already said enough about this in discussing the lack of proper balance in the affections.

When the body has no labour or natural exercise, the •animal• spirits being deprived of their proper employment turn against the constitution and find destructive work for themselves. Similarly when a soul or mind isn't exercised, and languishes because of its lack of proper action and employment, the thoughts and affections, being obstructed in their proper course and deprived of their natural energy, create disquiet and stir up a rancorous sharpness and tormenting irritation. This makes the temperament more impotent in passion, more incapable of real moderation, and like prepared fuel it catches fire from the least spark.

[Shaftesbury has a short paragraph about how a person's interests are harmed by sloth. He rightly says that 'all this is obvious'.]

* * * * *

So we have now considered the self-passions, and the consequences of their rising beyond a moderate degree •of intensity•. We see these affections, though they are self-interesting, can often become contrary to our real interests. They betray us into most misfortunes, and into the worst kind of unhappiness, that of a profligate and abject character. As they become •imperious and •high, they lead to the creature's being correspondingly •mean and •low. [Those four adjectives are Shaftesbury's.] They are the source of what we call 'selfishness', and give rise to that sordid disposition of which I have already spoken. It seems that there couldn't be anything so miserable in itself or so wretched in its consequences as to be thus impotent in temperament, thus mastered by passion, and by means of it brought under the most servile subjection to the world.

It is obvious that as this selfishness increases in us, so must its natural accompaniment—a certain craftiness and acting skill in our conduct. In this way we lose the open straightforwardness of our natures, the ease and freedom of our minds; all trust and confidence lost; and suspicions, jealousies, and envies multiplied. . . . And the more we are thus cut off from society and our fellows, the more hostile we'll be towards the *uniting* passions that would bind us in strict alliance and friendship with others. On these terms we must, as a matter of course, try to silence and suppress our natural and good affections; because they would carry us to the good of society, against what we foolishly believe to be our private good and interest.

If these selfish passions, besides what other evil they lead to, are also the certain means of depriving us of •our natural affections, then—given what I showed earlier—they must be the certain means of depriving us of •the chief enjoyment of life, and arousing in us the horrible *unnatural* passions, and

the savageness of temperament that creates the greatest of miseries and the most wretched state of life. That last point is what I now have to explain.

Section 3: Unnatural affections.

C. The last passions that we have to examine are the ones that don't lead to a public or a private good, and don't bring any advantage to the species in general or to the creature in particular. I call these the 'unnatural affections', to distinguish them from the 'social' (or 'natural') affections and from the 'private' affections.

(a) Of this kind is the unnatural and inhuman delight in beholding torments, and getting a special joy and pleasure from viewing distress, calamity, blood, massacre and destruction. This has been the dominant passion of many tyrants and barbarous nations; and some degree of it belongs to temperaments that have thrown off the courteousness of behaviour that retains in us a proper reverence for mankind and prevents the growth of harshness and brutality. Wherever civility or affable manners have any place, however small, this passion doesn't occur. It is in the nature of 'good breeding', as we call it, that even in the midst of many other corruptions it won't allow inhumanity or savage pleasure. To get cruel delight from an enemy's suffering may come from intense anger, vengefulness, fear, or some other extreme self-passion; but to delight in the torture and pain of other creatures even-handedly—natives or foreigners, human or of some other species, related to us or not, known or unknown—to feed on death (so to speak), and to be entertained with dying agonies, can't be explained in terms of self-interest or private good, but is wholly and absolutely unnatural, as well as being horrible and miserable.

(b) Another affection, nearly related to this, is a cheerful and frolicsome delight in what is harmful to others; a sort of wild mischievousness and pleasure in what is destructive; a passion that is usually encouraged in children instead of being restrained, so that it's no wonder that the effects of it are felt in the adult world. . . . There is no foundation in nature for this passion, as I have explained.

(c) Malice, malignity, or ill-will that isn't based on any self-consideration, and doesn't come from anger or jealousy or anything else to provoke or cause such a desire of doing harm to someone else—this also is a passion of this unnatural kind.

(d) Envy too, when it arises from another creature's prosperity or happiness that isn't in any way interfering with ours, is a passion of that same kind.

(e) There is also among these unnatural passions a sort of hatred of mankind and society; a passion that has been known to be utterly dominant in some men, and has had its own special name given to it, namely 'misanthropy'. A large share of this belongs to people who have for years indulged themselves in a habitual gloom, or who through bad nature and bad upbringing have contracted such a reverse of friendliness and civil manners that to see or meet a stranger is offensive to them. The very *look* of mankind is a disturbance to them, and they are sure always to hate at first sight. This type of disorder is sometimes to be found not merely in individuals but in nations, especially the more savage ones; it is a plain characteristic of uncivilized manners, and barbarity. It is the direct opposite of the noble affection that in an ancient language was called 'hospitality', i.e. extensive love of mankind and relief of strangers.

(f) We can include among the unnatural passions all those that come from superstition (I mentioned this before), and from the customs of barbarous countries: all of which are

too horrible and odious in themselves to need any proof of their being miserable.

(g) I could add to the list—e.g. •unnatural lusts for creatures of other species, and •perversions of amorous desire within our own species. But I needn't add anything here regarding these depravities of appetite, given what I have already said about the more natural passions.

It's only affections or passions like these that we can strictly call unnatural, bad, and having *no* tendency to favour any public or private good. There are others that do have *some* such tendency but are

- so extravagantly demanding,
- so beyond the common range of any ordinary self-passion, and
- so utterly contrary and abhorrent to all social and natural affection,

that they are generally called 'unnatural' and 'monstrous', and can reasonably be regarded as so.

Among these we can count

- enormous pride or ambition, arrogance and tyranny, that would willingly leave nothing outstanding or free of prosperous in the world;
- anger that would sacrifice everything to itself;
- vengefulness that will never be extinguished and will never be satisfied without the greatest cruelties;
- deep-seated hostility that looks for opportunities to exert itself, and lays hold of the least subject, so that the weight of its malevolence often falls on creatures that are merely objects of pity and compassion.

Treachery and ingratitude are strictly speaking merely negative vices; they don't involve any real passions, and they aren't connected with any particular aversion or inclination. Their source is the lack of unsoundness or corruption of the affections in general. But when these vices become

noticeable in someone's character, and arise in a way from inclination and choice; when they are so forward and active that they appear of their own accord with nothing significant calling for them; then it's clear that they are borrowing something from the mere unnatural passions, and are derived from malice, envy, and deep hostility.

It may be objected here that •these passions, though unnatural, still carry a sort of pleasure with them; and that •what is found in exercising pride, tyranny, revenge, malice, or cruelty *is* a pleasure and satisfaction, even if a barbarous one. [The gist of Shaftesbury's obscure response to this is that *that* kind of satisfaction is a relief from preceding misery—the misery of having some unnatural affection. He compares it with the temporary relief a victim may feel when his torture is stopped for a while. In defence of his thesis that it is miserable to have any unnatural passion, Shaftesbury says that a decent mild-natured man may sometimes have brief bouts of such a passion, and will see for himself how nasty this is; so think about what it would be like to have a more intense version of it, continuously! Shaftesbury then goes on about how unnatural affections harm •the social situation of the person who has them, and •do to his thoughts and feelings about his fellow-men. He sums up:]

Thus at last the mind becomes a wilderness where everything is laid waste, everything fair and good removed, and nothing left standing except what is savage and ugly. Now, if banishment from one's country, removal to a foreign place, or anything that looks like solitude or desertion, is so hard to endure, what must it be like to feel this inward banishment, this real estrangement from human interactions, and to be in this way in a desert and in the most horrible of solitudes, even when in the midst of society? What must it be like to live in this disagreement with everything, this irreconcilable opposition to the order and government of the universe?

So we find that the greatest of miseries accompanies the state that results from the loss of natural affection; and that to have those horrible, monstrous, and unnatural affections is to be miserable in the highest degree.

Conclusion

Thus I have tried to prove what I undertook to prove. And since in the common and accepted sense of 'vice' and 'badness' no-one can be vicious or bad except **(A)** by the deficiency or weakness of natural affections or **(B)** by the violence of the selfish affections or **(C)** by affections that are plainly unnatural, it must follow, that if each of these puts the creature into the most complete state of misery, to be wicked or vicious is to be miserable and unhappy. . . .

On the other side: the happiness and good of virtue has been proved from the contrary effect of other affections, ones that are fit with •nature and •the economy of the species or kind. We have totalled up all the particulars from which (as though by addition and subtraction) the main sum or general account ·or bottom line· of happiness is either augmented or diminished. And if there are no errors in the input in this system of moral arithmetic, this subject can be said to have ·results that have· as high a level of self-evidentness as results in arithmetic or geometry. However far we carry scepticism—even if we doubt everything •around us—we can't have doubts concerning what happens •within ourselves. Our passions and affections are known to us. *They* are certain, whatever the objects may be that they are employed on. It makes no difference to my argument what the situation is regarding these external objects; whether they are realities or mere illusions, whether we are awake or dreaming. For bad dreams will be just as disturbing. And a good dream—if that's all there is to life—will be easily and happily passed. In this dream of

life, therefore, my demonstrations have the same force: our balance and economy hold good, and our obligation to virtue is in every respect the same.

Over-all, then, I don't think there is the least degree of uncertainty in what I have said about how greatly the mental pleasures are preferable to the sensual; and among the sensual pleasures, how •those that are accompanied by good affection and are under a temperate and right use are preferable to •those that aren't restrained in any way and aren't supported by anything social or affectionate.

And what I have said about the united structure and fabric of the mind, and about the passions that constitute the temperament or soul and are the immediate source of its happiness or misery, are equally evident. I have shown that •in this constitution the impairing of any one part must instantly tend to produce disorder and ruin in other parts and in the whole itself, through the necessary connection and balance of the affections; that •the passions that make men vicious are *themselves* a torment and disease; that •anything that is done in the knowledge that it is bad must come from a bad ·state of· consciousness; and that •to the extent that an act is bad it must impair and corrupt social enjoyment, and destroy both the capacity for kind affection and the consciousness of meriting any such affection. So that we can't •participate in joy or happiness with others or •receive satisfaction from the mutual kindness or imagined love of others—and those are basis for the greatest of all our pleasures.

If this is how things stand with moral delinquency, and if the state arising from this defection from nature is the most horrible, oppressive and miserable, we see that to yield or consent to anything bad or immoral is a breach of ·self-· interest and leads to the greatest evils; and that everything that is an improvement of virtue, or an establishment of right

affection and integrity is an advancement of ·self-interest, and leads to the greatest and most solid happiness and enjoyment.

Thus the wisdom of what rules and is first and chief in nature [i.e. the wisdom of God] has made it be in everyone's private interest and good to work towards the general good, so that if a creature ceases to promote the public good he is to that extent letting himself down and ceasing to promote his own happiness and welfare. This makes him directly his own enemy. He can't be good or useful to himself in any way except continuing to be good to •society and to •the whole of which he is himself a part. So that virtue, a single quality—that is

- the chief and most amiable [see Glossary] of all excellences and beauties,
- the prop and ornament of human affairs;
- something that upholds communities, maintains union, friendship, and harmony among men,
- something by which countries as well as private families flourish and are happy, and
- something the lack of which ruins and kills everything good-looking, conspicuous, great and worthy

—is beneficial to all society and to mankind in general, and turns out to be •equally a happiness and good for each individual creature, and •the only means to man's being happy.

And thus virtue is everyone's good, vice is everyone's evil.

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The difficult passage on page 44

For whoever has experienced racking pains can tell in what manner a sudden cessation or respite is used to affect him. From hence are those untoward delights of perverseness, forwardness and an envenomed malignant disposition acting at its liberty. For this is only a perpetual assuaging of anger perpetually renewed. In other characters, the passion arises not so suddenly or on slight causes, but being once moved is not so easily quieted. The dormant fury, revenge, being raised once and wrought up to her highest pitch, rests not till she attains her end and, that attained, is easy and reposes, making our succeeding relief and ease so much the more enjoyed as our preceding anguish and incumbent pain was of long duration and bitter sense. Certainly if among lovers and in the language of gallantry, the success of ardent love is called the assuaging of a pain, this other success may be far more justly termed so. However soft or flattering the former pain may be esteemed, this latter surely can be no pleasing one; nor can it be possibly esteemed other than sound and thorough wretchedness, a grating and disgustful feeling, without the least mixture of anything soft, gentle, or agreeable.