

Samuel Clarke's second Boyle Lectures (excerpt)

A
DISCOURSE
Concerning the
Unalterable obligations
OF
NATURAL RELIGION,
AND THE
Truth And Certainty
OF THE
Christian Revelation.

Being the Substance of Eight SERMONS, Preach'd in the Year 1705, at the Lecture Founded by the Honourable ROBERT BOYLE Esq;

The Introduction.

HAVING in a *former Discourse* endeavour'd to lay firmly the first Foundations of Religion, in the certainty of the Existence and of the Attributes of God; by proving, severally and distinctly:

THAT Something *must needs have existed from Eternity*, and how great soever the Difficulties are, which perplex the Conceptions and Apprehensions we attempt to frame of an *eternal Duration*; yet they neither ought nor can raise in any Man's Mind any Doubt or Scruple concerning the truth of the Assertion itself, that *Something has really been eternal.*

THAT there must have existed from Eternity *some One Unchangeable and Independent Being*; because, to suppose an eternal succession of merely dependent Beings, proceeding one from another in an endless progression without any original Independent Cause at all, is supposing things that have in their own Nature no Necessity of Existing, to be *from Eternity* caused or produced by nothing; which is the very same Absurdity and express Contradiction, as to suppose them produced by Nothing at *any determinate time.*

THAT That unchangeable and independent Being, which has existed from eternity, without any external Cause of its existence; must be *Self-existent*, that is, *Necessarily-existing.*

THAT it must of necessity be *Infinite* or every where present; a Being most *Simple, Uniform, Invariable, Indivisible, Incorruptible*, and infinitely removed from all such Imperfections, as are the known Qualities and inseparable Properties of the *Material World.*

THAT it must of necessity be but *One*; because, to suppose two, or more, different Self-Existent independent Principles, may be reduced to a direct contradiction.

THAT it must necessarily be an *intelligent* Being.

THAT it must be a *Free and Voluntary*, not a *Necessary* Agent.

THAT this Being must of necessity have *Infinite Power*, and that in this Attribute is included, particularly, a Possibility of creating or producing Things, and also a Possibility of communicating to Creatures the *Power of Beginning Motion*, and a Possibility of inducing them with *Liberty or Freedom of Will*; which Freedom of Will is *not inconsistent* with any of the *Divine Attributes.*

THAT He must of Necessity be infinitely *Wise.*

And lastly, *That* He must necessarily be a Being of infinite *Goodness, Justice, and Truth*, and all other moral Perfections; such as become the Supreme Governour and Judge of the World.

IT remains now, in order to complete my design of proving and establishing the Truth and Excellency of the whole Superstructure of our most Holy Religion; that I proceed, upon this Foundation of the certainty of the *Being and Attributes of God*, to demonstrate in the next place the *unalterable Obligations of Natural Religion*, and the certainty of *Divine Revelation*; in opposition to the vain arguings of certain vitious and profane Men, who, merely upon account of their Incredulity, would be thought to be strict Adherers to Reason, and sincere and diligent Inquirers into Truth; when indeed on the contrary there is but too much cause to fear, that they are not at all sincerely and really desirous to be satisfied in the true State of Things, but only seek, under the pretence and cover of Infidelity, to excuse their Vices and Debaucheries; which they are so strongly inslaved to, that they cannot prevail with themselves upon any account to forsake them: And yet a rational Submitting to such Truths, as just Evidence and unanswerable Reason would induce them to believe, must necessarily make them uneasy under those Vices, and self-condemned in the practice of them. It remains therefore (I say) in order to finish the Design I proposed to my self, of establishing the Truth and Excellency of our Holy Religion, in opposition to all such vain Pretenders to Reason as these; that I proceed at this time, by a continuation of the same method of arguing, by which I before demonstrated the Being and Attributes of God, to prove distinctly the following Propositions.

I. *THAT* the same necessary and eternal *different Relations*, that different Things bear one to another; and the same consequent *Fitness or Unfitness* of the Application of different Things or different Relations one to another, with regard to which the Will of God always and necessarily *does* determine it self to choose to act only what is agreeable, to Justice, Equity, Goodness and Truth, in order to the Welfare of the whole Universe; *ought* likewise constantly to determine the Wills of all subordinate rational Beings, to govern all their actions by the same Rules, for the Good of the Publick in their respective Stations. That is; these eternal and necessary differences of Things, make it *fit* and *reasonable* for Creatures so to act; they cause it to be their *Duty*, or lay an *Obligation* upon them, so to do; even separate from the consideration of these Rules being the *positive Will or Command of God*; and also antecedent to any respect or regard, expectation or apprehension, of any *particular, private and personal Advantage or Disadvantage, Reward or Punishment*, either present or future, annexed either by natural consequence, or by positive appointments, to the practising or neglecting those Rules.

II. *THAT* though these eternal moral Obligations are indeed of themselves incumbent on all rational Beings, even antecedent to the consideration of their being the positive Will and Command of God; yet that which most strongly confirms, and in practice most effectually and indispensably enforces them upon us, is this; that both from the Nature of Things, and the Perfections of God, and from several other collateral considerations, it appears, that as God is himself necessarily Just and Good in

the exercise of his infinite Power in the Government of the whole World, so he cannot but likewise positively *Require* that all his rational Creatures should in their Proportion be so too, in the exercise of each of their Powers in their respective Spheres. That is; As these eternal moral Obligations are really in perpetual Force merely from their own Nature and the abstract Reason of things; so also they are moreover the express and unalterable *Will, Command, and Law of God* to his Creatures, which he cannot but expect should, in Obedience to his Supreme Authority, as well as in compliance with the Natural Reason of Things, be regularly and constantly observed through the whole Creation.

III. *THAT*, therefore, though these eternal moral Obligations are also incumbent indeed on all rational Creatures, antecedent to any respect of particular Reward or Punishment; yet they *must* certainly and necessarily be attended with *Rewards and Punishments*. Because the same Reasons, which prove God himself to be necessarily Just and Good; and the Rules of Justice, Equity, and Goodness, to be his unalterable Will, Law and Command, to all created Beings; prove also that he cannot but *be pleased with* and *approve* such Creatures as imitate and obey him by observing those Rules, and be *displeased* with such as act contrary thereto; and consequently that he cannot but some way or other make a *suitable Difference* in his Dealings with them; and manifest his Supreme Power and absolute Authority, in finally supporting, maintaining, and vindicating effectually the Honour of these his Divine Laws; as becomes the Just and Righteous Governor and Disposer of all things.

[...]

To proceed therefore to the proof of the *Propositions* themselves.

I. *The same necessary and eternal different relations that different things bear one to another, and the same consequent fitness or unfitness of the application of different things or different relations one to another, with regard to which the will of God always and necessarily does determine itself, to choose to act only what is agreeable to justice, equity, goodness, and truth, in order to the welfare of the whole universe, ought likewise constantly to determine the wills of all subordinate rational beings, to govern all their actions by the same rules, for the good of the public, in their respective stations, that is, these eternal and necessary differences of things make it fit and reasonable for creatures so to act; They cause it to be their duty, or lay an obligation upon them so to do, even separate from the consideration of these rules being the positive will or command of God, and also antecedent to any respect or regard, expectation or apprehension, of any particular private and personal advantage or disadvantage, reward or punishment, either present or future, annexed either by natural consequence, or by positive appointment, to the practising or neglecting of those rules.*

THE several Parts of this Proposition may be proved distinctly, in the following manner.

That there are eternal and necessary differences of things.

1. *THAT* there are *Differences* of things; and *different Relations, Respects* or *Proportions*, of some things towards others; is as evident and undeniable as that one *magnitude* or *number*, is greater, equal to, or smaller than another. That from these *different Relations* of different things, there necessarily arises an *agreement* or *disagreement* of some things with others, or a *fitness* or *unfitness* of the application of different things or different relations one to another; is likewise as plain as that there is any such

thing as *Proportion* or *Disproportion* in *Geometry* and *Arithmetick*, or *Uniformity* or *Diformity* in comparing together the respective *Figures* of *Bodies*. Further, that there is a *Fitness* or *Suitableness* of certain *Circumstances* to certain *Persons*, and an *Unsuitableness* of others; founded in the *nature of Things* and the *Qualifications of Persons*, antecedent to all *positive* appointment whatsoever; Also that from the different relations of *different Persons one to another*, there necessarily arises a fitness or unfitness of certain *manners of Behaviour* of some persons towards others: Is as manifest, as that the Properties which flow from the Essences of different *mathematical Figures*, have different *congruities* or *incongruities* between themselves; or that, in *Mechanicks*, certain *Weights* or *Powers* have very different *Forces*, and different Effects one upon Another, according to their different *Distances*, or different *Positions* and *Situations* in respect of each other. For *instance*: That *God* is infinitely superior to *Men*; is as clear, as that *Infinity* is larger than a *Point*, or *Eternity* longer than a *Moment*. And 'tis as certainly *Fit*, that Men should honour and worship, obey and imitate God, than on the contrary in all their Actions endeavour to dishonour and disobey him; as 'tis certainly *True*, that they have an entire dependence on *Him*, and *He* on the contrary can in no respect receive any advantage from *Them*; and not only so, but also that his Will is as certainly and unalterably *just* and *equitable* in giving his Commands, as his Power is *irresistible* in requiring submission to it. Again; 'Tis a thing absolutely and necessarily *Fitter* in it self, that the Supreme Author and Creator of the Universe should govern, order and direct all things to certain and constant *regular Ends*, than that every thing should be permitted to go on at Adventures, and produce uncertain Effects merely *by chance* and in the utmost *confusion*, without any determinate View or Design at all. 'Tis a thing manifestly *Fitter* in it self, that the All-powerful Governor of the World, should do always what is *Best* in the whole, and what tends most to the universal *Good* of the whole Creation; than that he should make the Whole continually *miserable*; or that, to satisfy the unreasonable desires of any particular depraved Natures, he should at any time suffer the Order of the Whole to be *altered* and *perverted*. Lastly, 'tis a thing evidently and infinitely more *Fit*, that any one particular *innocent and good Being*, should by the Supreme Ruler and Disposer of all things, be placed and preserved in an *easy and happy Estate*; than that, without any fault or demerit of its own, it should be made *extremely, remedilessly, and endlessly miserable*. In like manner; in *Mens* dealing and conversing one with another; 'tis undeniably more *Fit*, absolutely and in the Nature of the thing itself, that all Men should endeavour to promote the *universal good and welfare of All*; than that all Men should be continually contriving the *ruin and destruction of All*. 'Tis evidently more *Fit*, even *before* all positive Bargains and Compacts, that Men should deal one with another according to the known Rules of *Justice and Equity*, than that every Man for his own present Advantage, should without scruple disappoint the most *reasonable and equitable Expectations* of his Neighbours, and *cheat and defraud, or spoil by violence*, all others without restraint. Lastly, 'tis without dispute more *Fit* and reasonable in itself, that I should *preserve the Life* of an innocent Man, that happens at any time to be in my Power; or deliver him from any imminent danger, tho' I have never made him any promise so to do; than that I should suffer him to perish, or *take away his Life*, without any reason or provocation at all.

The absurdity of those who deny the eternal and necessary differences of things.

THESE things are so notoriously plain and self-evident, that nothing but the extremest stupidity of Mind, corruption of Manners, or perverseness of Spirit, can possibly make any Man entertain the least doubt concerning them. For a Man indued with *Reason*, to deny the Truth of these Things; is the very same thing as if a Man that has the use of his *Sight*, should at the same time that he beholds the *Sun*, deny

that there is any such thing as *Light* in the World; or as if a Man that understands *Geometry* or *Arithmetic*, should deny the most obvious and known *Proportions* of *Lines* or *Numbers*, and perversely contend that the *Whole* is not *equal to all its parts*, or that a *Square* is *not double to a triangle* of equal base and height. Any Man of ordinary capacity, and unbiassed judgment, plainness and simplicity; who had never read, and had never been told, that there were Men and Philosophers, who had in earnest asserted and attempted to prove, that there is no natural and unalterable difference between *Good* and *Evil*; would at the first hearing be as hardly persuaded to believe, that it could ever really enter into the Heart of any Intelligent Man, to deny all natural difference between *Right* and *Wrong*; as he would be to believe, that ever there could be any *Geometer* who would seriously and in good earnest lay it down as a first Principle, that a *crooked Line* is as *straight* as a *right* one. So that indeed it might justly seem altogether a needless undertaking, to attempt to prove and establish the *eternal difference* of *Good* and *Evil*; had there not appeared certain Men, as Mr *Hobbes* and some few others, who have presumed, contrary to the plainest and most obvious reason of Mankind, to assert, and not without some Subtlety indeavoured to prove, that there is no such real Difference *originally, necessarily, and absolutely* in the Nature of Things, but that all Obligation of *Duty to God*, arises merely from his absolute *irresistible Power*; and all *Duty towards Men*, merely from *positive Compact*: And have founded their whole Scheme of Politics upon that Opinion. Wherein as they have contradicted the judgment of all the Wisest and soberest part of Mankind, so they have not been able to avoid contradicting themselves also. For, (not to mention now, that they have no way to show how *Compacts* themselves come to be *obligatory*, but by inconsistently owning an eternal *original Fitness* in the thing itself, which I shall have occasion to observe hereafter: Besides This, I say,) if there be *naturally* and *absolutely* in things themselves, no difference between *Good* and *Evil*, *Just* and *Unjust*; then in the State of Nature, before any Compact be made, 'tis equally as good, just and reasonable, for one Man to destroy the Life of another, not only when 'tis necessary for his own Preservation, but also arbitrarily and without any provocation at all, or any appearance of advantage to himself; as to preserve or save another Man's Life, when he may do it without any hazard of his own. The consequence of which, is; that not only the first and most obvious way for every particular Man to secure himself effectually, would be (as Mr *Hobbes* teaches) to endeavour to prevent and cut off all others; but also that Men might destroy one another upon every foolish and peevish or arbitrary Humour, even when they did not think any such thing necessary for their own preservation. And the Effect of this practice must needs be, that it would terminate in the destruction of all Mankind. Which being undeniably a great and insufferable Evil; Mr *Hobbes* himself confesses it reasonable, that, to prevent this Evil, Men should enter into certain compacts to preserve one another. Now if the destruction of Mankind by each other's Hands, be such an Evil, that, to prevent it, it was *fit* and *reasonable* that Men should enter into Compacts to preserve each other; then, *before* any such Compacts, it was manifestly a thing *unfit* and *unreasonable* in itself, that Mankind should all destroy one another. And if so, then for the same reason it was also *unfit* and *unreasonable*, antecedent to all Compacts, that *any one Man* should destroy another *arbitrarily* and without any provocation, or at any time when it was not *absolutely* and *immediately* necessary for the preservation of himself. Which is directly contradictory to Mr. *Hobbes's* first Supposition, of there being no natural and absolute difference between Good and Evil, Just and Unjust, antecedent to positive Compact. And in like manner All others, who upon any pretence whatsoever, teach that Good and Evil depend originally on the Constitution of *positive Laws*, whether *Divine* or *Humane*, must unavoidably run into the same Absurdity. For if there be no such thing as Good and Evil in the Nature of Things, antecedent to all Laws; then

neither can any one Law be better than another; nor any one thing whatever, be more justly established, and inforced by Laws, than the contrary; nor can any reason be given, why any Laws should ever be made at all: But all Laws equally, will be either arbitrary and tyrannical, or frivolous and needless; because the contrary might with equal Reason have been established, if before the making of the Laws, all things had been alike indifferent in their own Nature. There is no possible way to avoid this Absurdity, but by saying, that out of things in their own Nature absolutely indifferent, those are chosen by wise Governors to be made obligatory by Law, the practice of which they judge will tend to the public benefit of the Community. But this is an express Contradiction in the very Terms. For, if the practice of certain things tends to the public benefit of the World, and the contrary would tend to the public disadvantage; then those things are not in their own nature indifferent, but were good and reasonable to be practised before any Law was made, and can only for that very reason be wisely enforced by the Authority of Laws. Only here it is to be observed, that by the public Benefit must not be understood the interest of any *one* particular *Nation*, to the plain injury or prejudice of the rest of Mankind; any more than the interest of *one City* or *Family*, in opposition to their Neighbours of the same Country: But those things only are truly good in their own Nature, which either tend to the universal benefit and welfare of *all Men*, or at least are not destructive of it. The true State therefore of this Case, is plainly this. Some things are in their own nature *Good* and *Reasonable* and *Fit* to be done; such as *keeping Faith*, and *performing equitable Compacts*, and the like; And these receive not their obligatory power, from any Law or Authority; but are only declared, confirmed and inforced by penalties, upon such as would not perhaps be governed by right Reason only. Other things are in their own nature *absolutely Evil*; such as *breaking Faith*, *refusing to perform equitable Compacts*, *cruelly destroying those who have neither directly nor indirectly given any occasion for any such treatment*, and the like; And these cannot by any Law or Authority whatsoever, be made fit and reasonable, or excusable to be practised. Lastly, other things are in their own Nature *Indifferent*; that is, (not *absolutely* and *strictly* so; as such trivial Actions, which have no way any tendency at all either to the public welfare or damage; For, concerning *such* things, it would be childish and trifling to suppose any Laws to be made at all; But they are) such things, whose tendency to the public benefit or disadvantage, is either so *small* or so *remote*, or so *obscure and involved*, that the generality of People are not able of themselves to discern on which side they ought to act: And these things are made obligatory by the Authority of Laws; Though perhaps every one cannot distinctly perceive the reason and fitness of their being in-joined: Of which sort are many particular *penal Laws*, in several Countries and Nations. But to proceed.

An Answer to the Objection drawn from the Variety of the Opinions of learned Men, and the Laws of different Nations, concerning right and wrong.

THE principal thing that can, with any colour of Reason, seem to countenance the Opinion of those who deny the natural and eternal difference of Good and Evil; (for Mr. *Hobbes's* false Reasonings, I shall hereafter consider by themselves;) is the *difficulty* there may sometimes be, to define exactly the bounds of right and wrong: the *variety of Opinions*, that have obtained even among understanding and learned Men concerning certain Questions of just and unjust, especially in political Matters: and the *many contrary Laws* that have been made in divers ages and in different Countries, concerning these Matters. But as, in *Painting*, two very different Colours, by diluting each other very slowly and gradually, may from the highest intenseness in either extreme, terminate in the midst insensibly, and so run one into the other, that it shall not be possible even for a skilful eye to determine exactly where the one ends, and

the other begins; and yet the Colours may really differ as much as can be, not in degree only but entirely in kind, as red and blue, or white and black: So, though it may perhaps be very difficult in some nice and perplexed Cases (which yet are very far from occurring frequently,) to define exactly the bounds of Right and Wrong, Just and Unjust; and there may be some latitude in the judgment of different Men, and the Laws of divers Nations; yet *Right* and *Wrong* are nevertheless in themselves totally and essentially different; even altogether as much, as *White and Black*, *Light and Darkness*. The *Spartan Law* perhaps, which permitted their Youth to *Steal*, may, as absurd as it was, bear much dispute whether it was absolutely *Unjust* or no; because every Man having an absolute Right in his own Goods, it may seem that the Members of any Society may agree to transfer or alter their own Properties upon what Conditions they shall think fit. But if it could be supposed that a Law had been made at *Sparta*; or at *Rome*, or in *India*, or in any other part of the World; whereby it had been commanded or allowed, that every Man might Rob by *Violence*, and *Murder* whomsoever he met with; or that *no Faith* should be kept with any Man, nor any *equitable Compacts* performed; no Man, with any tolerable use of his Reason, whatever diversity of Judgment might be among them in other matters, would have thought that such a Law could have authorised or excused, much less have justified such Actions, and have made them become good: Because 'tis plainly not in mens Power to make *Falsehood* be *Truth*, though they may alter the *Property of their Goods* as they please. Now if in *flagrant Cases*, the natural and essential difference between Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, cannot but be confessed to be plainly and undeniably evident; the difference between them must be also essential and unalterable in all even the smallest and nicest and most intricate Cases, though it be not so easy to be discerned and accurately distinguished. For if from the difficulty of determining exactly the bounds of Right and Wrong in many *perplexed* Cases, it could truly be concluded that Just and Unjust were not essentially different by Nature, but only by positive Constitution and Custom; it would follow equally, that they were not really, essentially, and unalterably different, even in the *most flagrant Cases* that can be supposed. Which is an assertion so very absurd, that Mr. *Hobbes* himself could hardly vent it without blushing, and discovering plainly, by his shifting Expressions, his secret Self-condemnation. There *Are* therefore certain *necessary and eternal differences* of things; and certain consequent *fitnesses* or *unfitnesses* of the application of different Things or different Relations one to another; not depending on any positive Constitutions, but founded unchangeably in the nature and reason of things, and unavoidably arising from the differences of the things themselves. Which is the first Branch of the general Proposition I proposed to prove.

That the Will of God always determines itself to act according to the eternal reason of things.

2. Now what these eternal and unalterable *Relations, Respects, or Proportions* of things, with their consequent *Agreements or Disagreements, Fitnesses or Unfitnesses*, absolutely and necessarily *Are* in themselves; *That* also they *appear to be*, to the *Understandings* of all Intelligent Beings; except those only, who *understand* things to be what they are not, that is, whose *Understandings* are either very imperfect, or very much depraved. And by this Understanding or Knowledge of the natural and necessary relations, fitnesses, and proportions of things, the *Wills* likewise of all Intelligent Beings are constantly directed, and must needs be determined to act accordingly; excepting those only, who *Will* things to be what they are not and cannot be; that is, whose *Wills* are corrupted by particular Interest or Affection, or swayed by some unreasonable and prevailing Passion. Wherefore since the *natural* Attributes of *God*, his infinite Knowledge, Wisdom and Power, set *Him* infinitely above all possibility

of being *deceived by any Errour*, or of being *influenced by any wrong affection*; 'tis manifest *His* Divine Will cannot but always and necessarily determine itself to choose to Do what in the whole is absolutely Best and Fittest to be done; that is, to act constantly according to the eternal Rules of infinite Goodness, Justice, and Truth. As I have endeavoured to show distinctly in my former Discourse, in deducing severally the *Moral* Attributes of God.

That all rational Creatures are obliged to govern themselves in all their Actions, by the same eternal rule of Reason.

3. AND now, that the same *Reason of Things*, with regard to which the Will of God always and necessarily *Does* determine itself to act in constant conformity to the eternal Rules of Justice, Equity, Goodness, and Truth; *ought* also constantly to determine the Wills of all Subordinate Rational Beings, to govern all *Their* Actions by the same Rules; is very evident. For, as 'tis absolutely *impossible in Nature*, that *God* should be *deceived by any Errour*, or *influenced by any wrong Affection*: So 'tis very *unreasonable and blame-worthy in Practice*, that any *Intelligent* Creatures, whom God has made so far like unto himself, as to indue them with those excellent *Faculties* of *Reason* and *Will*, whereby they are enabled to *distinguish* Good from Evil, and to choose the one and refuse the other, should either *negligently* suffer themselves to be *imposed upon and deceived* in Matters of Good and Evil, Right and Wrong; or *wilfully and perversely* allow themselves to be over-ruled by *absurd Passions*, and *corrupt* or *partial Affections*, to act contrary to what they know is Fit to be done. Which two Things, *viz. negligent Misunderstanding* and *wilful Passions or Lusts*, are, as I said, the only Causes which can make a reasonable Creature act contrary to Reason, that is, contrary to the eternal Rules of Justice, Equity, Righteousness, and Truth. For, was it not for these inexcusable corruptions and depravations; 'tis impossible but the same Proportions and Fitnesses of things, which have so much Weight and so much Excellency and Beauty in them, that the All-powerful Creator and Governour of the Universe, (who has the absolute and uncontrollable Dominion of all things in his own Hands, and is accountable to none for what he does, yet) thinks it no diminution of his Power to make this *Reason of Things* the unalterable Rule and Law of his own Actions in the Government of the World, and does nothing by mere Will and Arbitrariness; 'tis impossible (I say,) if it was not for inexcusable corruption and depravation, but the same eternal *Reason of Things* must much more have Weight enough to determine constantly the Wills and Actions of all Subordinate, Finite, Dependent and Accountable Beings. For originally and in reality, 'tis as *natural* and (morally speaking) *necessary*, that the *Will* should be determined in every Action by the *Reason of the thing*, and the *Right of the Case*; as 'tis *natural* and (absolutely speaking) *necessary*, that the *Understanding* should submit to a *demonstrated Truth*. And 'tis as absurd and blame-worthy, to *mistake negligently* plain *Right* and *Wrong*, that is, to *understand* the Proportions of things in Morality to be what they are not; or *wilfully to act contrary* to known Justice and Equity, that is, to *will* things to be what they are not and cannot be; as it would be absurd and ridiculous for a Man in Arithmetical Matters, ignorantly to believe that *Twice Two is not equal to Four*; or wilfully and obstinately to contend, against his own clear Knowledge, that *the whole is not equal to all its Parts*. The only difference is, that *Assent* to a plain speculative *Truth*, is not in a Man's Power to withhold; but to *Act* according to the plain *Right and Reason* of things, this he may, by the natural Liberty of his Will, forbear. But the One he *ought* to do; and 'tis as much his plain and indispensable *Duty*; as the other he *cannot but do*, and 'tis the *Necessity* of his Nature to do it. He that wilfully refuses to *Honour and obey God*, from whom he received his Being, and to whom he continually owes his Preservation; is really guilty of an equal

Proved from the original Nature of things

absurdity and inconsistency in Practice; as he that in Speculation denies the *Effect to owe any thing to its Cause*, or the *Whole to be bigger than its Part*. He that refuses to *deal with all Men equitably*, and with every Man as he desires *they* should deal with *him*: is guilty of the very same unreasonableness and contradiction in one Case; as he that in another Case should affirm one *Number* or *Quantity* to be *equal* to another, and yet *That other* at the same time *not to be equal* to the first. Lastly, he that acknowledges himself obliged to the practice of certain *Duties* both towards *God* and towards *Men*, and yet takes no care either to preserve his own Being, or at least not to preserve himself in such a state and temper of Mind and Body, as may best enable him to perform those Duties; is altogether as inexcusable and ridiculous, as he that in any other matter should *affirm* one thing at the same time that he *denies* another, without which the former could not possibly be *true*; or *undertake* one thing, at the same time that he obstinately *omits* another, without which the former is by no means *practicable*. Wherefore all rational Creatures, whose Wills are not constantly and regularly determined, and their Actions governed, by right Reason and the necessary differences of Good and Evil, according to the eternal and invariable Rules of Justice, Equity, Goodness, and Truth; but suffer themselves to be swayed by unaccountable arbitrary Humours, and rash Passions, by Lusts, Vanity, and Pride; by private Interest, or present sensual Pleasures; These, setting up their own unreasonable Self-will in opposition to the Nature and Reason of Things, endeavour (as much as in them lies) to make things be what they are not, and cannot be. Which is the highest Presumption and greatest Insolence, as well as the greatest Absurdity, imaginable. 'Tis acting contrary to that Understanding, Reason, and Judgment, which God has implanted in their Natures on purpose to enable them to discern the difference between good and evil. 'Tis attempting to destroy that Order, by which the Universe subsists. 'Tis offering the highest affront imaginable to the Creator of all things, who made things to be what they are, and governs every thing himself according to the Laws of their several Natures. In a word; All wilful wickedness and perversion of Right, is the very same Insolence and Absurdity in *Moral Matters*; as it would be in *Natural Things*; for a man to pretend to alter the certain Proportions of Numbers, to take away the Demonstrable Relations and Properties of Mathematical Figures; to make Light Darkness, and Darkness Light; or to call Sweet Bitter, and Bitter Sweet.

And from the Sense, that all even wicked Men unavoidably have, of their being under such an Obligation.

FURTHER: As it appears thus, from the *abstract* and *absolute* Reason and nature of things, that all rational Creatures *Ought*, that is, *are obliged* to take care that their Wills and Actions be constantly determined and governed by the eternal rule of Right and Equity: So the certainty and universality of *that Obligation* is plainly confirmed, and the force of it particularly discovered and applied to every Man, by This; that, in like manner as no one, who is instructed in Mathematicks, can forbear giving his Assent to every Geometrical Demonstration, of which he understands the Terms, either by his own Study, or by having had them explained to him by others; so no man, who either has patience and opportunities to examine and consider things himself, or has the means of being taught and instructed in any tolerable manner by Others, concerning the necessary relations and dependencies of things; can avoid giving his *Assent* to the fitness and reasonableness of his governing all his Actions by the Law or Rule before mentioned, even though his *Practice*, through the prevalence of Brutish Lusts, be most absurdly contradictory to that *Assent*. That is to say: By the Reason of his mind, he cannot but be compelled to own and acknowledge, that there is really such an *Obligation* indispensably incumbent upon him; even at the same time that in the *Actions of his Life* he is endeavouring to throw it off and despise it. For the

Judgment and Conscience of a Man's own Mind, concerning the Reasonableness and Fitness of the thing, that his Actions should be conformed to such or such a Rule or Law; is the truest and formallest *Obligation*; even more properly and strictly so, than any opinion whatsoever of the Authority of the Giver of a Law, or any Regard he may have to its Sanction by Rewards and Punishments. For whoever acts contrary to this sense and conscience of his own mind, is necessarily self-condemned; And the greatest and strongest of all *Obligations* is that, which a Man cannot break through without condemning himself. The dread of superior Power and Authority, and the Sanction of Rewards and Punishments; however indeed absolutely necessary to the Government of frail and fallible Creatures, and truly the most effectual means of keeping Them in their Duty; is yet really in itself, only a *secondary* and *additional* Obligation, or *Inforcement* of the first. The original *Obligation* of all, (the ambiguous use of which Word as a *Term of Art*, has caused some perplexity and confusion in this matter,) is the eternal *Reason* of Things; *That Reason*, which God himself who has no Superior to direct him, and to whose Happiness nothing can be added nor any thing diminished from it, yet constantly *obliges himself* to govern the World by: And the more excellent and perfect (or the freer from Corruption and Depravation) any Creatures are, the more cheerfully and stedily are their Wills always determined by this *Supreme Obligation*, in conformity to the Nature, and in imitation of the most perfect Will of God. So far therefore as Men are conscious of what is right and wrong, so far they *Are* under an *Obligation* to act accordingly; and consequently That eternal Rule of Right, which I have been hereto describing, 'tis evident *Ought* as indispensably to govern mens Actions, as it *Cannot but* necessarily determine their Assent.

And from the judgment of Mens Consciences upon their own past Actions.

Now that the Case is truly thus; that the eternal differences of Good and Evil, the unalterable Rule of Right and Equity, do necessarily and unavoidably determine the Judgment, and force the Assent of all Men that use any Consideration; is undeniably manifest from the universal *Experience* of Mankind. For no Man *willingly and deliberately* transgresses this Rule, in any *great and considerable* Instance; but he acts contrary to the Judgment and Reason of his own Mind, and secretly reproaches himself for so doing. And no Man observes and obeys it stedily, especially in Cases of *difficulty and Temptation*, when it interferes with any present Interest, Pleasure or Passion; but his own Mind commends and applauds him for his Resolution, in executing what his Conscience could not forbear giving its assent to, as just and right. And this is what *St Paul* means, when he says, (*Rom. ii. 14, 15.*) that *when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves; which show the work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conscience also bearing witness, and their Thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another.*

Of that natural knowledge, which Plato thought to be reminiscence.

IT was a very wise Observation of *Plato*, which he received from *Socrates*; that if you take a young Man, impartial and unprejudiced, one that never had any Learning, nor any Experience in the World; and examine him about the *natural relations and proportions* of things, [or the *moral differences of Good and Evil*.] you may only by asking him Questions, without teaching him any thing at all directly, cause him to express in his Answers just and adequate Notions of *Geometrical Truths*, [and true and exact determinations concerning *Matters of Right and Wrong*.] From whence *He* thought it was to be concluded, that all Knowledge and Learning is nothing but Memory, or only a recollecting upon every new occasion, what had been before known in a state

of Præ-existence. And some Others both Ancients and Moderns, have concluded that the *Ideas* of all first and simple Truths, either natural or moral, are *Innate* and originally *impressed* or *stamped* upon the Mind. In their inference from the Observation, the Authors of Both these Opinions seem to be mistaken. But thus much it proves unavoidably; That the differences, relations, and proportions of things both natural and moral, in which all unprejudiced Minds thus naturally agree, are certain, unalterable, and real *in the things themselves*; and do not at all depend on the variable Opinions, Fancies, or Imaginations of Men prejudiced by Education, Laws, Customs, or evil Practices: And also that the Mind of Man naturally and unavoidably gives its *Assent*, as to natural and geometrical Truth, so also to the moral differences of things, and to the fitness and reasonableness of the Obligation of the everlasting Law of Righteousness, whenever fairly and plainly proposed.

***The most profligate Men, not utterly insensible
of the difference of Good and Evil.***

SOME Men indeed, who, by means of a very evil and vitious Education, or through a long Habit of Wickedness and Debauchery, have extremely corrupted the Principles of their Nature, and have long accustomed themselves to bear down their own Reason, by the force of Prejudice, Lust, and Passion; that they may not be forced to confess themselves self-condemned, will confidently and absolutely contend that they do not really see any natural and necessary difference between what we call *Right* and *Wrong*, *Just* and *Unjust*; that the Reason and Judgment of their own Mind, does not tell them they are under any such indispensable Obligations, as we would endeavour to persuade them; and that they are not sensible they ought to be governed by any other Rule, than their own Will and Pleasure. But even these Men, the most abandoned of all Mankind; however industriously they endeavour to conceal and deny their self-condemnation; yet they cannot avoid making a discovery of it sometimes when they are not aware of it. For Example: There is no Man so vile and desperate, who commits at any time a Murder and Robbery, with the most unrelenting Mind; but would choose, if such a thing could be proposed to him, to obtain all the same profit or advantage, whatsoever it be that he aims at, *without* committing the Crime, rather than *with* it; even though he was sure to go unpunished for committing the Crime. Nay, I believe, there is no Man, even in Mr *Hobbes's* State of Nature, and of Mr *Hobbes's* own Principles; but if he was equally assured of securing his main end, his Self-preservation, by either way; would choose to preserve himself rather *without* destroying all his Fellow-creatures, than *with* it; even supposing all Impunity, and all other future conveniences of Life, equal in either Case. Mr. *Hobbes's* own Scheme, of Mens agreeing by Compact to preserve one another, can hardly be Supposed without this. And this plainly evinces, that the Mind of Man unavoidably acknowledges a natural and necessary difference between Good and Evil, antecedent to all arbitrary and positive Constitution whatsoever.

***Mens natural Sense of eternal moral Obligations,
proved from the Judgment they all pass upon the Actions of Others.***

But the Truth of this, that the Mind of Man naturally and necessarily Assents to the eternal Law of Righteousness; may still better and more clearly and more universally appear, from the Judgment that Men pass upon each *Others* Actions, than from what we can discern concerning their Consciousness of their *Own*. For Men may dissemble and conceal from the World, the judgment of their own Conscience; nay, by a strange partiality, they may even impose upon and deceive *Themselves*; (For who is there, that does not sometimes allow himself, nay, and even justify himself in that, wherein he condemns Another?) But Mens Judgments concerning the Actions of

Others, especially where they have no relation to Themselves, or repugnance to their Interest, are commonly impartial; And from this we may judge, what Sense Men naturally have of the unalterable difference of Right and Wrong. Now the Observation which every one cannot but make in this Matter, is This; that *Virtue* and true *Goodness*, *Righteousness* and *Equity*, are things so truly noble and excellent, so lovely and venerable in themselves, and do so necessarily approve themselves to the Reason and Consciences of Men; that even those very Persons, who, by the prevailing Power of some Interest or Lust, are themselves drawn aside out of the Paths of Virtue, can yet hardly ever forbear to give it its true Character and Commendation in *Others*. And this Observation holds true, not only in the generality of Vitious Men, but very frequently even in the worst sort of them, *viz.* those who persecute others for being better than themselves. Thus the Officers who were sent by the *Pharisees* to apprehend our Saviour, could not forbear declaring that *he spake as never Man spake*: [Joh. vii. 46.] And the *Roman* Governour, when he gave Sentence that he should be Crucified, could not at the same instant forbear openly declaring, that he *found no fault in him*. [Job. xviii. 38.] Even in This case, Men cannot choose but think well of those Persons, whom the *dominion of their Lusts* will not suffer them to imitate, or whom their *present Interest* and the *Necessity of their Worldly Affairs* compels them to discourage. They cannot but desire, that they themselves were the Men they are not; and wish with *Balaam*, that though they *imitate not the life*, yet at least they might *die the death of the Righteous*, and that their *last end* might be like theirs. And hence it is that *Plato* judiciously observes, that even the worst of Men seldom or never make so wrong Judgment concerning *Persons*, as they do concerning *Things*; there being in Virtue an unaccountable and as it were *divine* force, which, whatever confusion, Men endeavour to introduce in *Things* by their vitious Discourses and debauched Practices, yet almost always compels them to distinguish right concerning *Persons*, and makes them admire and praise Just and Equitable, and Honest Men. On the contrary; *Vice* and *Injustice*, *Profaneness* and *Debauchery*, are things so absolutely odious in their own Nature, that, however they *insinuate* themselves into the *practice*, yet they can never gain over to themselves the *judgment* of Mankind. They who *Do* evil, yet *See* and *Approve* what is good; and condemn in *others*, what they blindly allow in *themselves*; nay, and very frequently condemn even *themselves* also, not without great disorder and uneasiness of Mind, in those very things, wherein they allow themselves. At least, there is hardly any wicked Man, but when his own Case is represented to him under the Person of another, will freely enough pass Sentence against the wickedness he himself is guilty of; and, with sufficient severity, exclaim against all Iniquity. This shows abundantly, that all variation from the eternal Rule of Right, is *absolutely* and *in the nature of the thing itself* to be abhorred and detested; and that the unprejudiced mind of Man, as naturally *disapproves injustice* in moral matters, as in natural things it cannot but *dissent from falsehood*, or *dislike incongruities*. Even in reading the Histories of past and far distant Ages, where 'tis plain we can have no concern for the *events of things*, nor prejudices concerning the *Characters of Persons*; Who is there, that does not praise and admire, nay highly esteem and in his imagination love (as it were) the Equity, Justice, Truth, and Fidelity of some Persons; and with the greatest indignation and Hatred, detest the Barbarity, Injustice, and Treachery of others? Nay further; When the prejudices of corrupt Minds lie all on the side of Injustice; as when we have obtained some very great profit or advantage through Another Man's Treachery or Breach of Faith; yet who is there, that upon That very occasion does not (even to a Proverb) dislike the *Person* and the *Action*, how much soever he may rejoice at the *Event*? But when we come *our selves* to suffer by Iniquity, *Then* where are all the Arguments and Sophistries, by which Unjust Men, while they are oppressing others, would persuade themselves that they are not sensible of any natural dif-

ference between good and evil? When it comes to be these Mens *own* Case, to be oppressed by Violence, or over-reached by Fraud; where *Then* are all their Pleas against the eternal distinction of Right and Wrong? How, on the contrary, do they *Then* cry out for Equity, and exclaim against Injustice! How do they *Then* challenge and object against Providence, and think neither God nor Man severe enough, in punishing the Violators of Right and Truth! Whereas, if there was no natural and eternal difference between Just and Unjust; no man could have any reason to complain of Injury, any other than what Laws and Compacts made so; which in innumerable Cases will be always to be evaded.

An Answer to the Objection drawn from the total ignorance of some barbarous Nations in matters of Morality.

THERE is but one thing that I am sensible of, which can here with any Colour be objected against what has been hitherto said concerning the Necessity of the Mind's giving its Assent to the eternal Law of Righteousness; And that is, the *total Ignorance*, which some whole Nations are reported to lie under, of the nature and force of these moral Obligations. I am not satisfied the Matter of Fact is true. But if it was; yet *mere Ignorance* affords no just Objection against the *Certainty* of any Truth. Were there upon Earth a *Nation of rational and considerate* Persons, whose Notions concerning *moral Obligations*, and concerning the *Nature* and *Force* of them, were universally and directly *contrary* to what I have hitherto represented; this would be indeed a *weighty* Objection. But *Ignorance* and *Stupidity* are no Arguments against the *Certainty* of any thing. There are many Nations and People almost totally ignorant of the plainest Mathematical Truths; as, of the proportion, for Example, of a *Square* to a *Triangle* of the same Base and Height: And yet these Truths are such, to which the mind cannot but give its assent necessarily and unavoidably, as soon as they are distinctly proposed to it. All that this Objection proves therefore, supposing the Matter of it to be true, is only this; not, that the mind of man can ever dissent from the rule of Right; much less, that there is no necessary difference in nature, between moral Good and Evil; any more than it proves, that there are no certain and necessary proportions of Numbers, Lines, or Figures: But this it proves only, that Men have great need to be taught and instructed in some very plain and easy, as well as certain Truths; and, if they be important Truths, that then men have need also to have them frequently inculcated, and strongly enforced upon them. Which is very true: And is (as shall hereafter be particularly made to appear) one good Argument for the reasonableness of expecting a *Revelation*.

Of the principal Moral Obligations in particular.

4. THUS it appears *in general*, that the mind of Man cannot avoid giving its *Assent* to the eternal Law of Righteousness; that is, cannot but acknowledge the reasonableness and fitness of Men's governing all their Actions by the Rule of Right or Equity: And also that this *Assent* is a *formal Obligation* upon every Man, actually and constantly to conform himself to that Rule. I might now from hence deduce *in particular*, all the several Duties of Morality or Natural Religion. But because this would take up too large a portion of my intended Discourse, and may easily be supplied abundantly out of several late excellent Writers; I shall only mention the three great and principal Branches, from which all the other and smaller instances of duty do naturally flow, or may without difficulty be derived.

Of Piety, or Mens Duty towards God.

First then, in respect of *God*, the Rule of Righteousness is; that we *keep up constantly in our Minds, the highest possible Honour, Esteem, and Veneration for him; which must*

express it self in proper and respective influences upon all our Passions, and in the suitable direction of all our Actions: That we worship and adore Him, and Him alone, as the only Supreme Author, Preserver, and Governor of all things: That we employ our whole Beings, and all our Powers and Faculties, in his Service, and for his Glory; that is, in encouraging the practice of universal Righteousness, and promoting the Designs of his Divine Goodness amongst Men, in such way and manner as shall at any time appear to be his Will we should do it: And finally, that, to inable us to do this continually, we pray unto him constantly for whatever we stand in need of, and return him continual and hearty Thanks for whatever good things we at any time receive. There is no Congruity or Proportion, in the uniform disposition and correspondent order of any Bodies or Magnitudes; no Fitness or Agreement in the application of similar and equal Geometrical Figures one to another, or in the comparing them one with another; so visible and conspicuous, as is the Beauty and Harmony of the exercise of God's several Attributes, meeting with suitable returns of Duty and Honour from all his rational Creatures throughout the Universe. The consideration of his *Eternity* and *Infinity*, his *Knowledge* and his *Wisdom*, necessarily commands our highest *Admiration*. The Sense of his *Omnipresence*, forces a perpetual *awful* Regard towards him. His *Supreme Authority*, as being the *Creator, Preserver, and absolute Governor* of all Things, obliges us to pay him all possible *Honour* and *Veneration, Adoration, and Worship*; And his *Unity* requires, that it be paid to *Him alone*. His *Power* and *Justice* demand our *Fear*. His *Mercy* and *Placableness*, encourage our *Hope*. His *Goodness* necessarily excites our *Love*. His *Veracity* and *Unchangeableness* secure our *Trust* in him. The sense of our having *received our Being and all our Powers from him*, makes it infinitely reasonable that we should *employ our whole Beings and all our Faculties in his Service*. The Consciousness of our continual *Dependence* upon him, both for our Preservation and the Supply of every thing we want; obliges us to constant *Prayer*. And *every good thing we enjoy*, the Air we breathe, and the Food we eat, the Rain from Heaven, and the fruitful Seasons, all the Blessings and Comforts of the *present time*, and the Hopes and Expectations we have of *what is to come*; do all demand our heartiest *Gratitude and Thanksgiving* to him. The Suitableness and Proportion, the Correspondency and Connexion of each of these things respectively, is as plain and conspicuous as the shining of the Sun at Noon-day; And 'tis the greatest Absurdity and Perverseness in the World, for Creatures indued with *Reason*, to attempt to break through and transgress this necessary Order and Dependency of things. All *Inanimate* and all *Irrational* beings, by the *Necessity* of their Nature, constantly obey the Laws of their Creation; and tend regularly to the Ends, for which they were appointed. How monstrous then is it, that *Reasonable Creatures*, merely because they are not Necessitated, should abuse that glorious privilege of *Liberty*, by which they are exalted in dignity above the rest of God's Creation, to make themselves the alone *Unreasonable* and disorderly part of the Universe! That a *Tree* planted in a fruitful Soil, and watered continually with the Dew of Heaven, and cherished constantly with the kindly warmth and benign influence of the Sun-beams, should yet never bring forth either *Leaves* or *Fruit*, is in no degree so irregular, and contrary to Nature; as that a *Rational Being*, created after the Image of God, and conscious of God's doing every thing for him, that becomes the *Relation* of an infinitely good and bountiful *Creator* to his *Creatures*, should yet never on *His* part make any return of those Duties, which arise necessarily from the *Relation of a Creature* to his *Creator*.

Of Righteousness, or the Duty of Men one towards another.

Secondly. IN respect of our *Fellow-Creatures*, the Rule of Righteousness is; *that in particular we so deal with every Man, as in like Circumstances we could reasonably expect he should deal with Us; and that in general we endeavour, by an universal Benevolence, to*

promote the welfare and happiness of all Men. The former Branch of this Rule, is *Equity*; the latter, is *Love*,

Of Justice and Equity.

AS to the former, *viz. Equity*: The Reason which *obliges* every Man in *Practice*, so to deal always with another, as he would reasonably expect that *Others* should in like Circumstances deal with *Him*; is the very same, as That which *forces* him, in *speculation* to affirm, that if one Line or Number be equal to another, That other is reciprocally equal to It. *Iniquity* is the very same in *Action*, as *Falsity* or *Contradiction* in *Theory*; and the same cause which makes the one *absurd*, makes the other *unreasonable*. Whatever relation or proportion one Man in any Case bears to another; the same That Other, when put in like Circumstances, bears to Him. Whatever I judge reasonable or unreasonable for *another* to do for *Me*; That, by the same Judgment, I declare reasonable or unreasonable, that I in the like Case should do for *Him*. And to deny this either in Word or Action, is as if a Man should contend, that, though *two and three* are equal to *five*, yet *five* are not equal to *two and three*. Wherefore, were not Men strangely and most unnaturally corrupted, by *perverse and unaccountably false opinions*, and *monstrous evil customs and habits*, prevailing against the clearest and plainest reason in the World: It would be impossible that universal Equity should not be practised by all Mankind; and especially among *Equals*, where the proportion of Equity is simple and obvious, and every Man's own case is already the same with all others, without any nice comparing or transposing of Circumstances. It would be as impossible that a Man, contrary to the eternal Reason of things, should desire to gain some small profit to Himself, by doing violence and damage to his Neighbour; as that he should be willing to be deprived of Necessaries himself, to satisfy the unreasonable Covetousness or Ambition of another. In a word; it would be impossible for Men not to be as much ashamed of *Doing Iniquity*, as they are of *Believing Contradictions*. In considering indeed the Duties of *Superiours* and *Inferiours* in various Relations, the proportion of Equity is somewhat more complex; But still it may always be deduced from the same Rule of *doing as we would be done by*, if careful Regard be had at the same time to the *difference of Relation*: That is, if, in considering what is fit for you to do to another, you always take into the account, not only every Circumstance of the *Action*, but also every Circumstance wherein the *Person* differs from you; And in judging what you would desire that Another, if your Circumstances were transposed, should do to you; you always consider not what any unreasonable Passion or private Interest would prompt you, but what impartial Reason would dictate to you to desire. For example: A *Magistrate*, in order to deal equitably with a *Criminal*, is not to consider what *Fear* or *Self-Love* would cause Him, in the Criminal's case, to *desire*; but what *Reason* and the *publick Good* would oblige him to *acknowledge* was fit and just for him to *expect*. And the same Proportion is to be observed, in deducing the Duties of *Parents* and *Children*, of *Masters* and *Servants*, of *Governours* and *Subjects*, of *Citizens* and *Foreigners*; in what manner every person is obliged, by the Rule of Equity, to behave himself in each of these and all other Relations. In the regular and uniform Practice of all which Duties among all Mankind, in their several and respective Relations, through the whole Earth; consists That *Universal Justice*, which is the Top and Perfection of all Virtues: *Which*, if, as *Plato* says, it could be represented visibly to mortal Eyes, would raise in us an inexpressible Love and Admiration of it: *Which* would introduce into the World such a glorious and happy State, as the ancient Poets have attempted to describe in their Fiction of a golden Age: *Which* in it self is so truly beautiful and lovely, that, as *Aristotle* elegantly expresses it, the Motions of the heavenly Bodies are not so admirably regular and harmonious, nor the brightness of the Sun and Stars so ornamental to the visible fabrick of the World, as the universal

practice of this illustrious Virtue would be conducive to the glory and advantage of the rational part of this lower Creation: *Which*, lastly, is so truly noble and excellent in its own Nature, that the wisest and most considering Men have always declared, that neither Life it self, nor all other possible enjoyments in the World, put together; are of any value or esteem, in comparison of, or in competition with, that right temper and disposition of Mind, from which flows the practice of this universal Justice and Equity. On the contrary: *Injustice* and *Iniquity*, Violence, Fraud, and Oppression; the universal confusion of right and wrong, and the general neglect and contempt of all the Duties arising from mens several Relations one to another; is the greatest and most unnatural corruption of God's Creation, that 'tis possible for depraved and rebellious Creatures to introduce: As they themselves, who practise iniquity most, and are most desirous to defend it, yet, whenever it comes to be their own turn to suffer by it, are not very backward to acknowledge. To comprise this Matter therefore in one word: What the Sun's forsaking that equal Course, which now by diffusing gentle warmth and light, cherishes and invigorates every thing in a due proportion through the whole System; and on the contrary, his burning up, by an irregular and disorderly Motion, some of the Orbs with insupportable heat, and leaving others to perish in extream cold and darkness: What this, I say, would be to the *natural World*; That very same thing, Injustice and Tyranny, Iniquity and all Wickedness, is to the *moral and rational* part of the Creation. The only difference, is this: That the one is an *obstinate and wilful* Corruption, and most *perverse* deprivation of Creatures made after the Image of God; and a violating the *eternal and unalterable* Law or Reason of Things, which is of the utmost Importance: Whereas the other would be only a revolution or change, of the *arbitrary and temporary* frame of Nature.

Of universal mutual Benevolence.

THE Second Branch of the Rule of Righteousness, with respect to our Fellow-creatures, I said, was *universal Love or Benevolence*; that is, not only the doing barely what is just and right, in our dealings with every man; but also a constant endeavouring to promote in general, to the utmost of our power, the welfare and happiness of all men. The Obligation to which duty also, may easily be deduced from what has been already laid down. For if (as has been before proved) there be a natural and necessary difference between Good and Evil; and that which is Good is fit and reasonable, and that which is Evil is unreasonable to be done; and that which is the greatest Good, is always the *most* fit and reasonable to be chosen: Then, as the Goodness of God extends it self universally over all his Works through the whole Creation, by doing always what is absolutely best in the whole; so every rational Creature *ought* in its Sphere and Station, according to its respective powers and faculties, to do all the Good it can to all its Fellow-creatures. To which end, *universal Love and Benevolence* is as plainly the most direct, certain, and effectual means; as in Mathematicks the *flowing of a Point*, is, to produce a *Line*; or in Arithmetick, the *Addition of Numbers*, to produce a *Summ*; or in Physicks, *certain kind of Motions*, to *preserve certain Bodies*, which other kinds of Motions tend to corrupt. Of all which, the Mind of Man is so naturally sensible, that, except in such men whose Affections are prodigiously corrupted by most unnatural and habitual vicious practices, there is no Duty whatsoever, the performance whereof affords a man so ample pleasure and satisfaction, and fills his mind with so comfortable a sense, of his having done the greatest Good he was capable to do, of his having best answered the ends of his Creation, and nearest imitated the Perfections of his Creator, and consequently of his having fully complied with the highest and principal Obligations of his Nature; as the performance of this one Duty, of *universal Love and Benevolence*, naturally affords. But further: The Obligation to this great Duty, may also otherwise be deduced from the

Nature of Man, in the following manner. Next to that natural *Self-Love*, or Care of his own Preservation, which every one necessarily has in the first place for *himself*; there is in all Men a certain natural Affection for their *Children* and *Posterity*, who have a dependence upon them; and for their near *Relations* and *Friends*, who have an intimacy with them. And because the Nature of Man is such, that they cannot live comfortably in independent Families, without still further Society and Commerce with each other; therefore they naturally desire to increase their dependences, by multiplying Affinities; and to enlarge their Friendships, by mutual good Offices; and to establish Societies, by a communication of Arts and Labour: Till by degrees the Affection of *single Persons*, becomes a Friendship of *Families*; and this enlarges it self to society of *Towns* and *Cities* and *Nations*; and terminates in the *agreeing Community of all Mankind*. The Foundation, Preservation, and Perfection of which universal Friendship or Society, is *mutual Love and Benevolence*. And nothing hinders the World from being *actually* put into so happy a state, but perverse Iniquity and unreasonable want of mutual Charity. Wherefore since Men are plainly so constituted by Nature, that they stand in need of each other's assistance to make themselves easy in the World; and are fitted to live in Communities; and Society is absolutely necessary for them; and mutual Love and Benevolence is the only possible means to establish this Society in any tolerable and durable manner; and in This Respect All Men stand upon the same level, and have the same natural wants and desires, and are in the same need of each others help, and are equally capable of enjoying the benefit and advantage of Society: 'Tis evident every Man is bound by the Law of his Nature, and as he is also prompted by the Inclination of his uncorrupted Affections, to look upon himself as a part and member of that one universal body or community, which is made up of all Mankind; to think himself born to promote the public good and welfare of all his Fellow-creatures; and consequently obliged, as the necessary and only effectual means to that End, to embrace them All with universal Love and Benevolence: So that he cannot, without acting contrary to the Reason of his own mind, and transgressing the plain and known Law of his Being, do willingly any hurt and mischief to any Man; no, not even to those who have first injured him; but ought, for the publick benefit, to endeavour to appease with gentleness, rather than exasperate with retaliations; and finally, to comprehend all in one word, (which is the top and compleat Perfection of this great Duty,) ought to *Love all others as himself*. This is the Argumentation of that great Master, *Cicero*: Whose knowledge and understanding of the true state of Things, and of the original Obligations of human Nature, was as much greater than Mr. *Hobbes's*; as his helps and advantages to attain that knowledge, were less.

***Of Sobriety, or mens Duty towards themselves,
and of the Unlawfulness of Self-murder.***

Thirdly. WITH respect to *our selves*, the Rule of Righteousness is; that *every Man preserve his own Being, as long as he is able, and take care to keep himself at all times in such temper and disposition both of Body and Mind, as may best fit and enable him to perform his Duty in all other Instances. That is, he ought to bridle his Appetites, with Temperance; to govern his Passions, with Moderation; and to apply himself to the business of his present Station in the World, whatsoever it be, with Attention and Contentment*. That every Man ought to preserve his own Being as long as he is able, is evident; because what he is not himself the Author and Giver of, he can never of himself have just Power or Authority to take away. He that sent us into the World, and alone knows for how long time he appointed us our Station here, and when we have finished all the business he intended we should do; can alone judge when 'tis fit for us to be taken hence, and has alone Authority to dismiss and discharge us. This Reasoning has been admirably applied by *Plato*, *Cicero*, and others of the best Philosophers. So that though the

Stoicks of old, and the *Deists* of late, have in their ranting Discourses, and some few of them in their rash Practice, contradicted it; yet they have never been able, with any colour of reason, to answer or evade the force of the Argument: Which indeed, to speak the Truth, has been urged by the forementioned Philosophers, with such singular Beauty, as well as invincible Strength, that it seems not capable of having any thing added to it. Wherefore I shall give it you, only in some of their own Words. *We Men*, (says *Plato* in the person of *Socrates*;) *are all, by the appointment of God, in a certain Prison or Custody, which we ought not to break out of, and run away. We are as Servants, or as Cattle, in the hand of God. And would not any of Us, saith he, if one of our Servants should, contrary to our direction, and to escape out of our Service, kill himself, think that we had just reason to be very angry, and, if it was in our Power, punish him for it?* So likewise *Cicero*: *God*, says he, *the Supreme Governour of all things, forbids us to depart hence without his Order: And though, when the divine Providence does it self offer us a just occasion of leaving this World, (as when a Man chooses to suffer Death rather than commit Wickedness,) a wise Man will then indeed depart joyfully, as out of a place of Sorrow and Darkness into Light; yet he will not be in such haste, as to break his Prison contrary to Law; but will go when God calls him, as a Prisoner when dismissed by the Magistrate or lawful Power*. Again: *That short remainder of Life*, saith he, *which old Men have a prospect of, they ought neither too eagerly to desire, nor yet on the contrary unreasonably and discontentedly deprive themselves of it: For, as Pythagoras teaches, 'tis as unlawful for a Man, without the command of God, to remove himself out of the World, as for a Soldier to leave his Post without his General's Order*. And in another Place: *Unless That God*, saith he, *whose Temple and Palace this whole World is, discharges you himself out of the Prison of the Body; you can never be received to his Favour. Wherefore you, and all pious Men, ought to have patience to continue in the Body, as long as God shall please, who sent us hither; and not force yourselves out of the World, before he calls for you; lest you be found Deserters of the Station appointed you of God*. And to mention no more; That Excellent Author, *Arrian*: *Wait*, saith he, *the good pleasure of God: When He signifies it to be his Will, that you should be discharged from this Service, then depart willingly; But in the meantime, have Patience, and tarry in the place where he has appointed you: Wait, and do not hurry yourselves away wilfully and unreasonably*. The Objections, which the Author of the *Defence of Self-murder* prefixed to the *Oracles of Reason*, has attempted to advance against this Argument; are so very weak and childish, that 'tis evident he could not, at the time he wrote them, believe in earnest that there was any force in them: As when he says, that the reason why 'tis not lawful for a Centinel to leave his station without his Commander's Order, is because he entered into the Service *by his own Consent*; as if God had not a just Power to lay any Commands upon his Creatures, without *their own Consent*: Or when he says, that there are many lawful ways to seek Death in; as if, because a Man may lawfully venture his Life in many public Services, therefore it was lawful for him directly to *throw it away* upon any foolish discontent. But the Author of that Discourse has since been so just, as to confess his Folly, and retract it publicly himself. Wherefore, to proceed. For the same reason, that a Man is obliged to preserve his own Being at all; he is bound likewise to preserve himself, as far as he is able, in the right Use of all his *Faculties*: that is, to keep himself constantly in such temper both of Body and Mind, by regulating his Appetites and Passions, as may best fit and inable him to perform his Duty in all other instances, For, as it matters not whether a Soldier deserts his Post, or by Drunkenness renders himself incapable of performing his Duty in it: So for a Man to disable himself by any Intemperance or Passion, from performing the necessary Duties of Life; is, at least for that time, the same thing as depriving himself of Life. And neither is This all. For great Intemperance and ungoverned Passions, not only incapacitate a Man to perform his Duty; but also expose him to run headlong into the commission of the greatest Enormities: There being no

Violence or Injustice whatsoever, which a Man who has deprived himself of his Reason by Intemperance or Passion, is not capable of being tempted to commit. So that all the additional Obligations which a Man is any way under, to forbear committing the most flagrant Crimes; lie equally upon him to govern his Passions and restrain his Appetites: Without doing which, he can never secure himself effectually, from being betrayed into the commission of all Iniquity. This is indeed the great difficulty of life, to subdue and conquer our unreasonable Appetites and Passions. But 'tis absolutely necessary to be done: And 'tis moreover the bravest and most glorious Conquest in the World. Lastly: For the same Reason that a Man is obliged not to depart wilfully out of this Life, which is the *general Station* that God has appointed him; he is obliged likewise to attend the Duties of that *particular Station* or condition of life, whatsoever it be, wherein Providence has *at present* placed him; with diligence, and contentment: Without being either uneasy and discontented, that Others are placed by Providence in different and superiour Stations in the World; or so extremely and unreasonably solicitous to change his State *for the future*, as thereby to neglect his *present Duty*.

FROM these three great and general Branches, all the smaller and more particular Instances of Moral Obligations may (as I said) easily be deduced.

The law of nature eternal, universal, and absolutely unchangeable.

5. AND now this, (This eternal Rule of Equity, which I have been hitherto describing,) is That *right Reason*, which makes the principal Distinction between *Man* and *Beasts*. This is the *Law of Nature*, which (as *Cicero* excellently expresses it) is of *universal extent, and everlasting duration; which can neither be wholly abrogated, nor repealed in any part of it, nor have any Law made contrary to it, nor be dispensed with by any Authority: Which was in force, before ever any Law was written, or the Foundation of any City or Commonwealth was laid: Which was not invented by the Wit of Man, nor established by the Authority of any People; but its Obligation was from eternity, and the Force of it reaches throughout the Universe: Which being founded in the Nature and Reason of Things, did not then begin to be a Law, when it was first written and enacted by Men; but is of the same original with the eternal Reasons or Proportions of things, and the Perfections or Attributes of God himself; So that if there was no Law at Rome against Rapes, at that time when Tarquin offered violence to Lucretia, it does not therefore follow that he was at all the more excusable, or that his Sin against the eternal Rule of Equity was the less heinous.* This is that *Law of Nature, to which the Reason of all Men every where as naturally and necessarily assents, as all Animals conspire in the Pulse and Motion of their Heart and Arteries, or as all Men agree in their Judgment concerning the whiteness of Snow, or the Brightness of the Sun.* For though in some nice Cases, the Bounds of *right* and *wrong* may indeed (as was before observed,) be somewhat difficult to determine; and in some few even plainer Cases, the Laws and Customs of certain barbarous Nations may be contrary one to another; (which Some have been so weak as to think a just Objection against there being any natural difference between Good and Evil at all;) yet in reality, *this no more disproves the natural Assent of all mens unprejudiced Reason to the Rule of Right and Equity, than the difference of mens Countenances in general, or the deformity of some few Monsters in particular, proves that there is no general Likeness or Uniformity in the Bodies of Men. For, whatever difference there may be in some particular Laws, 'tis certain as to the main and principal branches of Morality, there never was any Nation upon Earth, but owned, that to Love and Honour God, to be grateful to Benefactors, to perform Equitable Compacts, to preserve the Lives of innocent and harmless Men, and the like; were things fitter and better to be practiced, than the contrary.* In fine: This is that *Law of Nature*, which, being founded in the eternal Reason of Things, is as absolutely unalterable, as *natural Good and Evil, as Mathematical or Arithmetical Truths, as Light and Darkness, as*

Sweet and Bitter, as Pleasure and Pain. The *Observance* of which, *tho' no man should commend it, would yet be truly commendable in itself.* Which *to suppose depending on the Opinions of Men, and the Customs of Nations; that is, to suppose that What shall be accounted the Virtue of a Man depends merely on Imagination or Custom to determine, is as absurd as it would be to affirm, that the Fruitfulness of a Tree or the Strength of a Horse, depends merely on the Imagination of those who judge of it.* In a word; 'Tis *That Law*, which if it had its original from the Authority of Men, and could be changed by it, then *all the Commands of the cruellest and most barbarous Tyrants in the World, would be as just and equitable, as the wisest Laws that ever were made; and to murder Men without distinction, to confound the Rights of all Families by the grossest Forgeries, to rob with unrestrained Violence, to break Faith continually, and defraud and cheat without reluctance, might by the decrees and ordinances of a mad Assembly be made lawful and honest. In which matters if any man thinks that the Votes and Suffrages of Fools have such Power, as to be able to change the Nature of Things, why do they not likewise decree (as Cicero admirably expresses himself) that poisonous things may become wholesome; and that any other thing, which is now destructive of Mankind, may become preservative of it.*

Eternal Moral Obligations, antecedent in some respect, even to this consideration, of their being the Will and Command of God himself.

6. FURTHER yet: As this *Law of Nature* is infinitely superior to all authority of *Men*, and independent upon it; so its obligation, primarily and originally, is antecedent also even to *this Consideration*, of its being the positive Will or Command of God himself. For, *as the Addition of certain Numbers, necessarily produces a certain Sum; and certain Geometrical or Mechanical Operations, give a constant and unalterable Solution of certain Problems or Propositions: So in moral Matters, there are certain necessary and unalterable Respects or Relations of Things, which have not their Original from arbitrary and positive Constitution, but are of eternal necessity in their own Nature.* For Example: *As in Matters of Sense, the reason why a thing is visible, is not because 'tis Seen; but 'tis therefore Seen, because it is visible: So in Matters of natural Reason and morality, that which is Holy and Good (as Creatures depending upon and worshipping God, and practising Justice and Equity in their dealings with each other, and the like,) is not therefore Holy and Good, because 'tis commanded to be done, but is therefore commanded of God, because 'tis Holy and Good.* The *Existence* indeed of the *Things themselves*, whose Proportions and Relations we consider, depends entirely on the mere arbitrary Will and good Pleasure of God; who can create Things when he pleases, and destroy them again whenever he thinks fit. But when things are created, and so long as it pleases God to continue them in Being; their *Proportions*, which are *abstractly* of eternal Necessity, are also in the *Things themselves* absolutely unalterable. Hence *God himself*, though he has no *Superior*, from whose *Will* to receive any law of his Actions; yet disdains not to observe the Rule of Equity and Goodness, as *the Law* of all his Actions in the Government of the World; and condescends to appeal even to Men, for the Equity and Righteousness of his Judgments [Ezek. xviii.]. To *this Law*, the infinite Perfections of his Divine Nature make it necessary for him (as has been before proved,) to have constant regard: And (as a learned Prelate of our own has excellently shown,) not barely his infinite Power, but the Rules of this eternal Law, are the true Foundation and the Measure of his Dominion over his Creatures. (For if *infinite Power* was the *Rule and Measure of Right*, 'tis evident that *Goodness* and *Mercy* and all *Other* Divine Perfections, would be *empty words* without *any Signification* at all.) Now for the same Reason that *God* who hath no *Superiour* to determine him, yet constantly directs all his own Actions by the eternal Rule of Justice and Goodness; 'tis evident all *Intelligent Creatures* in their several Spheres and Proportions, *ought* to obey the same Rule according to the Law of their Nature; even though it could be supposed separate

from that additional Obligation, of its being the positive Will and Command of God. And doubtless there have been many Men in all Ages in many parts of the heathen World, who not having Philosophy enough to collect from mere Nature any tolerably just and explicit Apprehensions concerning the *Attributes of God*; much less having been able to deduce from thence any clear and certain knowledge of his *Will*; have yet had a very great sense of *Right* and *Truth*, and been fully persuaded in their own Minds, of many unalterable Obligations of *Morality*. But this Speculation, tho' necessary to be taken notice of in the distinct Order and Method of Discourse, is in itself too dry, and of less use to *Us*, who are abundantly assured that all moral Obligations are moreover the plain and declared Will of God; As shall be shown particularly, in its proper place.

***The Law of Nature obligatory, antecedent to
all consideration of particular Rewards and Punishments.***

7. Lastly, *This Law of Nature* has its full obligatory Power, antecedent to all Consideration of any particular private and personal *Reward or Punishment*, annexed either by natural Consequence, or by positive Appointment, to the Observance or Neglect of it. This also is very evident: Because, if Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, Fitness and Unfitness of being practised, be (as has been shown) originally, eternally, and necessarily, in the nature of the Things themselves, 'tis plain that the view of *particular Rewards or Punishments*, which is only an After-consideration, and does not at all alter the nature of Things, cannot be the original Cause of the Obligation of the Law, but is only an additional Weight to enforce the practice of what men were before obliged to by right Reason. There is no Man, who has any just Sense of the difference between Good and Evil, but must needs acknowledge, that Virtue and Goodness are truly amiable, and to be chosen for their own sakes and intrinsick worth; though a man had no prospect of gaining any particular Advantage to himself, by the Practice of them: And that on the contrary, Cruelty, Violence and Oppression, Fraud, Injustice, and all manner of Wickedness, are of themselves hateful, and by all means to be avoided; even though a Man had absolute Assurance that he should bring no manner of inconvenience upon Himself by the Commission of any or all of these Crimes. This likewise is excellently and admirably expressed by *Cicero*: *Virtue, saith he, is that, which, though no Profit or Advantage whatsoever, was to be expected to a Man's self from the Practice of it, yet must without all Controversy be acknowledged to be truly desirable for its own sake alone. And accordingly all good Men love Right and Equity; and do many things without any prospect of Advantage at all, merely because they are just and right, and fit to be done.* On the contrary; *Vice is so odious in its own Nature, and so fit to be avoided, even though no Punishment was to ensue, that no Man, who has made any tolerable Proficiency in Moral Philosophy, can in the least doubt, but, if he was sure the thing could be for ever concealed entirely both from God and Men, so that there should not be the least Suspicion of its being ever discovered; yet he ought not to do any thing unjustly, covetously, wilfully, passionately, licentiously, or any way wickedly, Nay, if a good Man had it in his Power to gain all his Neighbour's Wealth by the least Motion of his Finger, and was sure it would never be at all suspected either by God or Man, unquestionably he would think, he ought not to do it. And whoever wonders at this, has no Notion what it is, to be really a good Man.* Not that any such thing is possible in Nature, that any Wickedness can be indeed concealed from God; But only, upon such a Supposition, the natural and necessary difference between Justice and Injustice, is made to appear more clearly and undeniably.

Yet it does not from thence at all follow, either that a good Man ought to have no respect to Rewards and Punishments, or that Rewards and Punishments are not absolutely necessary to maintain the practice of Virtue in this present World.

THUS far is clear. But now from hence it does not at all follow, either that a good Man ought to have no respect to Rewards and Punishments, or that Rewards and Punishments are not absolutely necessary to maintain the practice of Virtue and Righteousness in this present World. 'Tis certain indeed, that Virtue and Vice are eternally and necessarily different; and that the one truly deserves to be chosen for its own sake, and the other ought by all means to be avoided, though a Man was sure for his own particular, neither to gain nor lose any thing by the practice of either. And if this was truly the state of Things in the World; certainly That Man must have a very corrupt Mind indeed, who could in the least doubt, or so much as once deliberate with himself, which he would choose. But the Case does not stand thus. The Question Now in the general practice of the World, supposing all expectation of Rewards and Punishments set aside, will not be, whether a Man would choose Virtue for *its own sake*, and avoid Vice; But the practice of Vice, is accompanied with great Temptations and Allurements of Pleasure and Profit; and the practice of Virtue is often threatned with great Calamities, Losses, and sometimes even with Death itself. And this alters the Question, and destroys the practice of that which appears so reasonable in the whole Speculation, and introduces a necessity of Rewards and Punishments. For though Virtue is unquestionably *worthy to be chosen for its own sake*, even without any expectation of Reward; yet it does not follow that it is therefore intirely *Self-sufficient*, and able to support a Man under all kinds of Sufferings, and even Death itself, for its sake; without any prospect of future recompense. Here therefore began the Error of the *Stoicks*, who taught that the bare practice of Virtue, was itself the chief Good, and able of itself to make a Man happy, under all the Calamities in the World. Their defence indeed of the Cause of Virtue, was very brave: They saw well that its excellency was intrinsick, and founded in the Nature of Things themselves, and could not be altered by any outward Circumstances; That therefore Virtue must needs be desirable for its own sake, and not merely for the Advantage it might bring along with it; And if so, then consequently neither could any external Disadvantage, which it might happen to be attended with, change the intrinsick worth of the Thing itself, or ever make it cease to be truly desirable. Wherefore, in the Case of Sufferings and Death for the sake of Virtue; not having any *certain* knowledge of a future state of Reward, (though the wisest of them did indeed hope for it, and think it highly *probable*;) they were forced, that they might be consistent with their own Principles, to suppose the practice of Virtue a sufficient Reward to itself in all Cases, and a full compensation for all the Sufferings in the World. And accordingly they very bravely indeed taught, that the Practice of Virtue was not only infinitely to be preferred before all the sinful Pleasures in the World; but also that a Man ought without Scruple to choose, if the Case was proposed to him, rather to undergo all possible sufferings with Virtue, than to obtain all possible worldly Happiness by Sin. And the suitable Practice of some few of them, as of *Regulus* for instance, who chose to die the cruellest Death that could be invented, rather than break his Faith with an Enemy; is indeed very wonderful and to be admired. But yet, after all this, 'tis plain that the general Practice of Virtue in the World, can never be supported upon this Foot. The Discourse is admirable, but it seldom goes further than meer Words: And the Practise of those few who have acted accordingly, has not been imitated by the rest of the World. Men never will generally, and indeed 'tis not very reasonably to be expected they should, part with all the Comforts of Life, and even Life itself; without expectation of any future Recompense. So that, if we suppose no future state of Rewards; it will follow that God has endued Men with such

Faculties, as put them under a necessity of approving and choosing Virtue in the Judgment of their own Minds; and yet has not given them wherewith to support themselves in the suitable and constant Practice of it. The Consideration of which inexplicable Difficulty, ought to have led the Philosophers to a firm belief and expectation of a future state of Rewards and Punishments, without which their whole Scheme of Morality cannot be supported. And, because a thing of such necessity and importance to Mankind, was not more clearly and directly and universally made known; it might naturally have led them to some farther Consequences also, which I shall have occasion particularly to deduce hereafter.

THUS have I endeavoured to deduce the *original Obligations of Morality*, from the *necessary and eternal Reason and Proportions of Things*. Some have chosen to found all *Difference of Good and Evil*, in the mere *positive Will and Power of God*: But the Absurdity of This, I have shown elsewhere. Others have contended, that all *Difference of Good and Evil*, and all *Obligations of Morality*, ought to be founded *originally* upon Considerations of *Public Utility*. And true indeed it is, in the whole; that the *Good of the universal Creation*, does always *coincide* with the *necessary Truth and Reason of Things*. But otherwise, (and separate from *This Consideration*, that *God will certainly cause Truth and Right to terminate in Happiness*;) what is for the *Good of the whole Creation*, in very many Cases, none but an *infinite Understanding* can possibly judge. *Publick Utility*, is *one thing to One Nation*, and the *contrary to Another*: And the *Governours* of every Nation *will and must be Judges of the Publick Good*: And by *Publick Good*, they will generally mean the *Private Good* of that *Particular Nation*. But *Truth and Right* (whether *Publick* or *Private*) founded in the *eternal and necessary Reason of Things*, is what *every Man* can judge of, when laid before him. 'Tis *necessarily One and the Same*, to *every man's Understanding*; just as *Light* is the *Same*, to *every man's Eyes*.

HE who thinks it *Right* and *Just*, upon account of *Publick Utility*, to *break Faith* (suppose) with a *Robber*; let him consider, that 'tis *much more useful* to do the same by a *Multitude of Robbers*, by *Tyrants*, by a *Nation of Robbers*: And then, *all Faith* is evidently at an end. For, — *mutato nomine, de Te* — What *Fidelity* and *Truth* are, is understood by *every Man*; but between two *Nations* at War, *who shall be Judge, which of them are the Robbers?* Besides: To *rob* a *Man* of *Truth* and of *eternal Happiness*, is worse than *robbing* him of his *Money* and of his *temporal Happiness*: And therefore it will be said that *Hereticks* may even *more justly*, and with much greater *Utility to the Publick*, be deceived and destroyed by *Breach of Truth and Faith*, than the most cruel *Robbers*. Where does this terminate?

The manifold Absurdities of Mr Hobbes's Doctrines concerning the original of Right, shown in particular.

AND now, from what has been said upon this Head, 'tis easy to see the Falsity and Weakness of Mr *Hobbes's Doctrines*; That *there is no such thing as Just and Unjust, Right and Wrong, originally in the Nature of Things*; That *Men in their natural State, antecedent to all Compacts, are not obliged to universal Benevolence, nor to any moral Duty whatsoever; but are in a state of War, and have every one a Right to do whatever he has Power to do*; And that, in *Civil Societies*, it depends wholly upon *positive Laws or the Will of Governours*, to define what shall be *Just or Unjust*. The contrary to all which, having been already fully demonstrated; there is no need of being large, in further disproving and confuting particularly these Assertions themselves. I shall therefore only mention a few Observations, from which some of the greatest and most obvious Absurdities of the chief Principles, upon which Mr *Hobbes* builds his whole Doctrine in this Matter, may most easily appear.

1. FIRST then; the Ground and Foundation of Mr *Hobbes's Scheme*, is this; that *All Men, being equal by nature, and naturally desiring the same things, have every one a Right to every Thing; are every one desirous to have absolute Dominion over all others; and may every One justly do whatever at any time is in his Power, by violently taking from Others either their Possessions or Lives, to gain to himself that absolute Dominion*. Now this is exactly the same thing, as if a man should affirm, that a *Part* is equal to the *Whole*, or that *one Body* can be present in a *Thousand Places at once*. For, to say that one man has a *full Right* to the same individual things, which another man at the same time has a *full Right* to; is saying that two *Rights* may be contradictory to each other; that is, that a thing may be *Right*, at the same time that 'tis confessed to be *Wrong*. For Instance; If every Man has a *Right* to preserve his own Life, then 'tis manifest I can have no *Right* to take any man's Life away from him, unless he has first forfeited his *own Right*, by attempting to deprive me of mine. For otherwise, it might be *Right* for me to do That, which at the same time, because it could not be done but in breach of another Man's *Right*, it could not be *Right* for me to do: Which is the greatest Absurdity in the World. The true State of this Case therefore, is plainly this. In Mr *Hobbes's State* of Nature and Equality; every man having an *equal right* to preserve his own Life, 'tis evident every man has a right to an equal proportion of all those things, which are either necessary or useful to Life. And consequently so far is it from being true, that any One has an original right to possess *All*; that, on the contrary, whoever first attempts, without the *consent* of his Fellows, and except it be for some *publick Benefit*, to take to himself more than his *Proportion*, is the beginner of Iniquity, and the Author of all succeeding Mischief.

2. To avoid this Absurdity therefore, Mr *Hobbes* is forced to assert in the next place, that since every Man has confessedly a right to preserve his own Life, and consequently to do every thing that is necessary to preserve it; and since in the State of Nature, men will necessarily have *perpetual jealousies and suspicions of each other's in-croaching*, therefore *just precaution gives every one a Right to endeavour, for his own Security, to prevent, oppress, and destroy all others, either by secret Artifice or open Violence, as it shall happen at any time to be in his Power; as being the only certain means of Self-preservation*. But this is even a plainer Absurdity, if possible, than the former. For (besides that according to Mr *Hobbes's Principles*, Men, before positive Compacts, may *justly* do what mischief they please, even without the pretence of *Self-preservation*;) what can be more ridiculous, than to imagin a *War of All Men against All*, the directest and certainest Means of the *Preservation* of all? Yes, *says he*, because it leads Men to a necessity of entring into *Compact* for each other's Security. But then to make these *Compacts* obligatory, he is forced (as I shall presently observe more particularly) to recur to an antecedent *Law of Nature*: And this destroys all that he had before said. For the same *Law of Nature* which obliges Men to *Fidelity*, after having made a *Compact*; will unavoidably, upon all the same Accounts, be found to oblige them, *before* all Compacts, to *Contentment* and mutual *Benevolence*, as the readiest and certainest Means to the Preservation and Happiness of them All. 'Tis true, men by entering into *Compacts* and making *Laws*, agree to Compel one another to do what perhaps the mere sense of Duty, however really obligatory in the highest degree, would not, without such Compacts, have force enough of itself to hold them to in Practice: And so, Compacts must be acknowledged to be *in fact* a great Addition and Strengthening of Mens Security. But this Compulsion makes no alteration in the *Obligation itself*; And only shows, that That *entirely lawless State*, which Mr *Hobbes* calls the *State of Nature*, is by no means truly *Natural*, or in any sense suitable to the Nature and Faculties of Man; but on the contrary, is a State of extremely *unnatural and Intolerable Corruption*: As I shall presently prove more fully from some other Considerations.

3. ANOTHER notorious Absurdity and Inconsistency in Mr *Hobbes's* Scheme, is this: That he all along supposes Some particular Branches of the Law of Nature, (which he thinks necessary for the Foundation of some parts of his own Doctrine,) to be originally obligatory from the bare Reason of Things; at the same time that he denies and takes away innumerable others, which have plainly in the Nature and Reason of things the same Foundation of being obligatory as the former, and without which the obligation of the former can never be solidly made out and defended. *Thus* he supposes that in the State of Nature, before any Compact be made, *every Man's own Will is his only Law*; that *nothing a Man can do, is Unjust*; and that *whatever Mischief one Man does to another, is no Injury nor Injustice, neither has the Person, to whom the Mischief is done, how great soever it be, any just Reason to complain of Wrong*; (I think it may here reasonably be presumed, that if Mr *Hobbes* had lived in such a State of Nature, and had happened to be himself the Suffering Party, he would in this case have been of another Opinion:) And yet at the same time he supposes, that in the same State of Nature, Men are by all means obliged to *seek Peace*, and to *enter into Compacts* to remedy the fore-mentioned Mischiefs. Now if Men are obliged by the original reason and nature of things to *seek terms of Peace*, and to *get out of the pretended natural State of War*, as soon as they can; how come they not to be obliged originally by the same reason and nature of things, to live from the beginning in *universal Benevolence*, and *avoid entering into the State of War at all*? He must needs confess they would be obliged to do so, did not *Self-preservation* necessitate them every man to War upon others: But this cannot be true of the *first Aggressor*; whom yet Mr *Hobbes*, in the place now cited, vindicates from being guilty of any Injustice: And therefore herein he unavoidably contradicts himself. *Thus* again; in *most* instances of Morality, he supposes *Right and Wrong, Just and Unjust* to have no Foundation in the Nature of Things, but to depend entirely on positive Laws; that *the Rules or Distinctions of Good and Evil, Honest and Dishonest, are mere civil Constitutions; and whatever the Chief Magistrate Commands, is to be accounted Good; whatever he forbids, Evil*; that 'tis *the Law of the Land only, which makes Robbery to be Robbery; or Adultery, to be Adultery*; that *the Commandments, to Honour our Parents, to do no Murder, not to commit Adultery; and all the other Laws of God and Nature, are no further obligatory, than the Civil Power shall think fit to make them so*: nay, that *where the Supreme Authority commands men to worship God by an Image or Idol, in Heathen Countries*, (for in this instance he cautiously excepts Christian ones,) 'tis *lawful and their Duty to do it*: and (agreeably, as a natural Consequence to all This,) that 'tis *mens positive Duty to obey the Commands of the Civil Power in all things, even in things clearly and directly against their Conscience*, (that is, that 'tis their positive Duty to do That, which at the same time they know plainly 'tis their Duty not to do.) *Keeping up indeed always in their own Minds, an inward desire to observe the Laws of Nature and Conscience, but not being bound to observe them in their outward Actions, except when 'tis safe so to do*: (He might as well have said, that Humane Laws and Constitutions have Power to make *Light be Darkness, and Darkness Light*; to make *Sweet be Bitter, and Bitter Sweet*: And indeed, as one Absurdity will naturally lead a Man into another, he *does* say something very like it: namely that *the Civil Authority is to judge of all Opinions and Doctrines whatsoever; to determine Questions Philosophical, Mathematical; and, because indeed the signification of Words is arbitrary, even Arithmetical ones also; as, whether a man shall presume to affirm that Two and Three make Five or not*;) And yet at the same time, *Some particular things*, which it would either have been too flagrantly scandalous for him to have made depending upon humane Laws; as that *God is to be Loved, Honoured, and Adored*; that *a man ought not to Murder his Parents*; And the like: Or else, which were of necessity to be supposed for the Foundation of his own Scheme; as that *Compacts ought to be faithfully performed, and Obedience to be duly paid to Civil Powers*: The Obligation of *These Things*, he is

forced to deduce intirely from the internal Reason and Fitness of the Things themselves; *antecedent* to, *independent* upon, and *unalterable* by all Humane Constitutions whatsoever. In which matter, he is guilty of the grossest Absurdity and Inconsistency that can be. For if those greatest and strongest of all our Obligations; to *Love and Honour God*, for instance, or, *to perform Compacts faithfully*; depend not at all on any Humane Constitution, but must of Necessity (to avoid making Obligations reciprocally depend on each other in a Circle) be confessed to arise originally from, and be founded in, the eternal Reason and unalterable Nature and Relations of Things themselves; And the nature and force of these Obligations be sufficiently clear and evident; so that he who *Dishonours God*, or *wilfully breaks his Faith*, is (according to Mr *Hobbes's* own Reasoning) guilty of as great an Absurdity in *Practice*, and of as plainly contradicting the right reason of his own Mind, as he who in a *Dispute* is reduced to a necessity of asserting something inconsistent with itself; And the original Obligation to these Duties, can from hence only be distinctly deduced: Then, for the same reason, all the other Duties likewise of natural Religion; such as *universal Benevolence, Justice, Equity*, and the like; (which I have before proved to receive in like manner their *Power of obliging*, from the eternal Reason and Relations of Things;) must needs be obligatory, antecedent to any consideration of *positive Compact*, and unalterably and independently on all *Humane Constitutions* whatsoever: And consequently Mr *Hobbes's* whole Scheme, (both of a State of Nature at first, wherein there was no such thing as Right or Wrong, Just or Unjust, at all; and of these things depending afterwards, by virtue of Compact, wholly and absolutely on the positive and arbitrary determination of the Civil Power;) falls this way entirely to the Ground, by his having been forced to suppose *some particular things* obligatory, originally, and in their own nature. On the contrary: If the Rules of Right and Wrong, Just and Unjust, have *none of them* any obligatory force in the State of Nature, *antecedent* to positive Compact; Then, for the same Reason, neither will they be of any force *after* the Compact, so as to afford men any certain and real Security; (Excepting only what may arise from the *Compulsion of Laws, and Fear of Punishment*; which therefore, it may well be supposed, is all that Mr *Hobbes* really means at the bottom.) For if there be no Obligation of *Just and Right* antecedent to the *Compact*; then *Whence* arises the Obligation of the *Compact itself*, on which he supposes all other Obligations to be founded? If, *before* any Compact was made, it was no Injustice for a man to take away the Life of his Neighbour, not for his own Preservation, but merely to satisfy an arbitrary humour or pleasure, and without any reason or provocation at all; How comes it to be an Injustice, *after* he has made a Compact, to break and neglect it? Or *What* is it that makes *breaking one's Word*, to be a greater and more unnatural Crime, than *killing a Man merely for no other reason, but because no positive Compact has been made to the contrary*? So that this way also, Mr *Hobbes's* whole Scheme is intirely destroyed.

4. THAT State, which Mr *Hobbes* calls the *State of Nature*, is not in any sense a Natural State; but a State of the greatest, most unnatural, and most intolerable *Corruption* that can be imagined. For *Reason*, which is the proper Nature of Man, can never (as has been before shown) lead men to any thing else than *universal Love and Benevolence*: And Wars, *Hatred*, and *Violence*, can never arise but from extreme *Corruption*. A Man may sometimes, 'tis true, in his own Defence be necessitated, in compliance with the Laws of Nature and Reason, to make war upon his Fellows: But the first Aggressours, who upon Mr *Hobbes's* Principles, (that all Men have a natural *Will* to hurt each other, and that every one in the State of Nature has a *Right* to do whatever he has a *Will* to;) The first Aggressours, I say, who upon these Principles assault and violently spoil as many as they are superior to in Strength, without any regard to Equity or Proportion; these can never, by any colour whatsoever, be excused from having *utterly devested themselves of Humane Nature*, and having introduced into the

World, contrary to all the Laws of Nature and Reason, the greatest Calamities and most unnatural Confusion, that Mankind by the highest Abuse of their natural Powers and Faculties, are capable of falling under. Mr *Hobbes* pretends indeed, that one of the first and most natural Principles of humane Life, is a Desire necessarily arising in every man's Mind, of having Power and Dominion over Others; and that this naturally impels men to use Force and Violence to obtain it. But neither is it true, that Men, following the dictates of Reason and uncorrupted Nature, desire disproportionate Power and Dominion over others; neither, if it was natural to desire such Power, would it at all follow, that it was agreeable to nature to use violent and hurtful means to obtain it. For since the only natural and good reason to desire Power and Dominion (more than what is necessary for every man's Self-preservation) is, that the Possessor of such Power may have a larger compass and greater Abilities and Opportunities of doing good, (as is evident from *God's* exercise of perfectly *Absolute Power*;) 'tis plain that no man, obeying the uncorrupted Dictates of Nature and Reason, can desire to increase his Power by such destructive and pernicious Methods, the prevention of which is *the only good reason* that makes the Power itself truly desirable. All Violence therefore and War are plainly the Effects, not of natural Desires, but of unnatural and extreme Corruption. And this Mr *Hobbes* himself unwarily proves against himself, by those very Arguments, whereby he endeavours to prove that War and Contention is more *natural* to *Men*, than to *Bees* or *Ants*. For his Arguments on this Head, are all drawn from Men's using themselves (as the Animals he is speaking of, cannot do,) to *Strive about Honours and Dignities, 'till the Contention grows up into Hatred, Seditions, and Wars, to separate each one his private Interest from the publick, and value himself highly above others, upon getting and engrossing to himself more than his Proportion of the things of Life, to find fault with each other's management, and, through Self-conceit, bring in continual Innovation and distractions, to impose one upon another, by Lyes, Falsifying, and deceit, calling good evil, and evil good; to grow envious at the prosperity of others, or proud and domineering when themselves are in ease and plenty; and to keep up tolerable Peace and Agreement among themselves, merely by artificial Compacts, and the compulsion of Laws.* All which things, are so far from being truly the *Natural* Effects and result of mens *reason* and other Faculties; that on the contrary they are evidently some of the grossest Abuses and most *unnatural* Corruptions thereof, that any one who was arguing on the opposite side of the question, could easily have chosen to have instanced in.

5. *Lastly:* THE chief and principal Argument, which is one of the main Foundations of Mr *Hobbes's* and his Followers System; namely, that *God's* irresistible Power is the *only foundation* of his *Dominion*, and the *only measure of his Right* over his Creatures; and consequently, that every Other Being has just so much *Right*, as it has *natural Power*; that is, that 'tis naturally *Right* for every thing to do whatever it has *Power* to do: This Argument, I say, is of all his others the most notoriously false and absurd. As may sufficiently appear, (besides what has been already said, of *God's* Other Perfections being as much the measure of his *Right*, as his *Power* is,) from this single Consideration. Suppose the *Devil*, (for when men run into extreme impious assertions, they must be answered with suitable Suppositions;) Suppose, I say, such a Being as we conceive the *Devil* to be; of extreme malice, cruelty, and iniquity; was indued with supreme absolute Power, and made use of it only to render the World as miserable as was possible, in the most cruel, arbitrary, and unequal manner that can be imagined: Would it not follow undeniably, upon Mr *Hobbes's* Scheme; since *Dominion* is founded on *Power*, and *Power* is the measure of *Right*, and consequently *Absolute Power* gives *Absolute Right*; that such a Government as this, would not only be as much of Necessity indeed to be submitted to, but also that it would be as *Just* and *Right*, and *with as little reason to be complained of*, as is the present Government of

the World in the Hands of the *Ever-blessed and infinitely Good God*, whose Love and Goodness and tender Mercy appear everywhere over all his Works.

HERE Mr *Hobbes*, as an *unanswerable* Argument in defence of his Assertion, urges; that the only Reason, why Men are bound to obey *God*, is plainly nothing but *Weakness* or *Want of Power*; because, if they themselves were All-powerful, 'tis manifest they could not be under any Obligation to obey; and consequently *Power* would give them an undoubted *Right* to do what they pleased. That is to say: if Men were not created and dependent Beings, 'tis true they could not indeed be obliged to the *proper Relative Duty of created and dependent Beings*, viz. to *obey* the Will and Command of Another in things *Positive*. But from their Obligation to the Practice of *Moral Virtues*, of Justice, Righteousness, Equity, Holiness, Purity, Goodness, Beneficence, Faithfulness and Truth, from which Mr *Hobbes* fallaciously in this Argument, and most impiously in his whole Scheme, endeavours to discharge them; from this they could not be discharged by any addition of Power whatsoever. Because the obligation to these things, is not, as the obligation to obey in things of *arbitrary and positive* Constitution, founded only in the Weakness, Subjection, and Dependency of the *Persons* obliged; but also and chiefly in the eternal and unchangeable Nature and Reason of the *Things* themselves. For, these Things are the Law of *God himself*; not only to his *Creatures*, but also to *Himself*, as being the Rule of all his own Actions in the Government of the World.

I HAVE been the longer upon this Head, because *Moral Virtue* is the Foundation and the Sum, the Essence and the Life of all true Religion: For the Security whereof, all positive Institution was principally designed: For the Restoration whereof, all revealed Religion was ultimately intended: And inconsistent wherewith, or in opposition to which, all Doctrines whatsoever, supported by what pretence of Reason or Authority soever, are as certainly and necessarily false, as *God* is true.