
LETTERS

BETWEEN

Mrs. COCKBURN,

AND

Several of her Friends.

Now first printed.

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AND

Several of her Friends.

George Burnet of Kemnay, Esq. to Mrs. Trotter.

Paris, Octob. 14, 1701. N. S.

MADAM,

I Hope you will never impute my so long delay either to neglect or forgetfulness, since you know, that you were so long in my table-book before, distinguished as much by your real worth, as by your wit and beauty. I had a thousand things to do after you went away. I left my chamber that very same day you went from London. I had commendations, letters, and packets at my coming away, to three persons here very considerable. I brought away many valuable *English* books of my own, and presents from others to one of the learnedest men in *France*, to the king's library-keeper, and to a learned nobleman, one of the secretaries to the king for the finances in the provinces. It is my misfortune to have found none
of

of them yet in town. I came away from my cousin's house, Mr. Burnet's in *Tbreadneedle-street*, (where I retired to do business more expeditely) upon *Thursday Sept. 21, N. S.* I went, upon my coming here the 9th of *October, N. S.* to the *English* ambassador*, who received me very kindly, and told me he was going for *England* the very morrow after, which accordingly he did the 11th of this, *N. S.* and may be in *England* before it be much known there, his orders coming immediately from *Holland*, as I was told. I have seen no body I know yet, but one Mr. *Marquers*, that frequents *Will's* coffee-house, and the Earl of *Kinoule*, with whom I lodge. I went to see king *James's* mausolee, in a little chapel, in the church belonging to the *English* Benedictine friars, in the *Fauxbourg* of *St. Jacques*, at *Paris*. He is far from lying in state, and it is a mortifying sight to see the splendor of a monarch of three kingdoms shrunk into so small a compass. I did see the coffin itself within the grate, and went round the same, laid my hand on it, and considered every thing distinctly, having had this particular favour indulged me, when the crowd was gone, and the doors of the church shut in the evening, by an obliging *English* friar, who told me other greater preparations were making: that besides king *James's* confessor, the Pope's nuncio, and other foreign *Roman Catholic* ministers were present at his last words; and glorious things are said concerning his patience, charity, forgiveness, mortifications, and piety. I inquired at good hands of the report of his being sent over to *England*, but I heard there was nothing in it. His heart is sent to *Obalot*, to be laid up with his mother's; and I believe the solemn funeral obsequies will not be for a long time.

* The Earl, afterwards Duke of *Manchester*.

Mr.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Burnet.

Salisbury, Dec. 9, 1701.

SIR,

I Fear you begin to accuse me in your thoughts, of forgetting an absent friend, so long it is since you had reason to expect to hear from me: but I assure you, this delay was not for want of the regard I owe to you, or inclination to shew it. And yet I cannot say, it was absolutely for want of time; though whenever I allotted any to write to you, some unexpected company or business has prevented me; and I have so few hours at my command, that I am unwilling to interrupt my constant employment in those I am sure of; which I wholly give to some solid study, and have just finished the *Vindication* you know I designed in answer to the *Remarks* I had from you for that end; though I am conscious, so noble a cause deserves a better advocate. But I found the adversary so weak, I could not doubt of vanquishing him with justice on my side, though I should fail to place the truths I maintain, in all the lustre they are capable of; for which I have not been wanting in care, to the best of my judgment, and yet I am more afraid of appearing before him I defend, than of the public censure; and chiefly, for the honour I bear to him, resolve to conceal myself. A woman's name would give a prejudice against a work of this nature; and truth and reason have less force, when the person, who defends them, is prejudged against. I depend upon your secrecy, and that you will not break it for any one, without my consent; but am irresolute, whether to present it with my name to Mr. *A*— or not. I am most inclined to do so, and have some thoughts of addressing it to him; but of both desire your advice. I fear I must trust some bookseller,

seller, but know not whom; nor how to have it exactly corrected, if I do it not myself; but am sure I shall miss you when in town, where I think to be a little after *Christmas*: but my relations will not part with me before.

The Bishop goes next week, whom I saw last night, being at his palace, to wait on his lady. I am much obliged to them both, and have not a little reason to be vain, upon the advantageous things they have said of my last plays; especially the comedy. At least, I may prefer the judgment of two such persons, to the rash censures of a giddy multitude. My Lord's character is universally known; but give me leave to tell you, upon my particular observation of his lady, what every body, that knows her, does allow; that she has an extraordinary clear and solid judgment, the truest goodness and prudence, and the most charming affability in her behaviour; In short, I have not met with such perfection in any of our sex.

I suppose you know your cousin is returned, I think to *Scotland*.

You desired news from me, but this place affords none; and I keep no correspondence with intelligencers. I can only tell you of an unexpected pleasure I had here. *Abel* came this way to the *Bath*, and complimented the Bishop with a concert, where I was charmed with him enough to ride six miles after him to my Lord *Arundel's* for the same pleasure, which has only encreased my desire of hearing him.

Au reste I have my health very well, for which I have great reason to bless God, amidst all my misfortunes, and heartily wish you the same blessing, which I never fail to beg for you, since you desired my poor prayers. But I think you have no reason to be depressed at the effect of the disorders of your body, which you seemed most grieved for. Doubtless that God, who will be worshipped

in spirit and truth, does not so much regard a warm and affectionate devotion (which depends upon the quicker or slower motion of the blood and spirits) as a sedate and right intention, the effect of a deliberate judgment, which may be preserved, and will be accepted, when the heart is cold, and even the mind incapable of reason; if by a regular disposition and prevailing habit directed to God, who does not judge us by transient acts, such especially, as have outward causes independent of our will. To form and preserve this habit pure and firm, should be the constant business of life, and to approve the sincerity of it by an universal obedience to our great creator's laws, so far as is consistent with human frailty; which is a work so necessary, and requires so much care and application, that it is amazing to see the greatest part of mankind employ most of their time in such studies, as can only gratify their vanity or curiosity; and that those are thought the most wise and learned, who have with much diligence acquired a great deal of useless knowledge. Curious questions even in theology tend very little to edification; and no doubt the best study, and the best religion, is the knowledge and practice of our duty, in the belief of all God has revealed to us: and perhaps it were to be wished, for the unity and peace of *Christians*, that the articles of our faith had never been explained in any other terms than those, in which they were delivered; or not required to be explicitly acknowledged in any other. But if active and turbulent spirits will not be so satisfied; if an *Arius*, or *Socinus*, or *Luther*, will have their interpretations of the word of God published as the true sense of it; it then becomes necessary for the united pastors of the church, to declare the constant tradition in all ages of Christianity. And what are the people to do in this case? Must they, by your rule conclude, the mysteries in dispute

are no articles of *Christianity*, because they are believed by some *Christians*, and denied by others? If so, we may indeed safely communicate indifferently with *Arians*, *Socinians*, *Lutherans*, or those of the church of *England*. But if the divinity of *Jesus Christ* is a necessary article of faith, without the confession of which we cannot be of his church, as you seem to own; then you must grant, there is something necessary to be believed, which is not so clear, as to be known to all, who are alike sincere; for it cannot be doubted, that many of *Socinus's* followers do really think that article is not contained in the Scriptures, who can have no interest in denying it, being private men, who only judge for themselves, and who equally own the divinity of *Christ's* doctrine with those, who believe him to be truly God. And if that be an article of *Christianity*, though not so plain as to prevent all disputes, or doubts of it; how can we determine, that there are no others so? And when such dark passages are differently decided, must not the people submit to the decision of those, who, they think, have the best right to judge? And is it not then unavoidable to join in communion with some one particular church, whilst there are such unhappy divisions among *Christians*? Indeed I know not what you aim at, by saying we are not left to our liberty, to be out of the communion of all faithful *Christians*; nor how to reconcile it with your asserting, that whatever little flock separates from a greater church, that either has not all the essential articles of faith, or adds to them, remains the only true church. That little flock then has the liberty to be out of the communion of the rest, whomever it judges not to have all the articles of faith, or to add more than are necessary; which, I think, will extend the liberty far enough to justify any separation, that is not made upon indifferent forms or ceremonies; unless you will allow some

some other rule to determine essential articles, than their being plain to every one's understanding, and commonly owned alike by all Gospel-teachers; for by that rule, whatever article is denied by any society, cannot be essential: which will give a liberty of separating from all, who hold any article as necessary, that has been at any time denied. And what particular church is there, that does not hold some articles, that are denied by others? Who then are those faithful *Christians*, whose communion we have not the liberty to be out of? I see not how, upon your principles, there can be any restraint to that liberty. To be consistent with yourself, you must establish some surer rule of determining, what are essential articles, and what not; and then we shall know, who those faithful *Christians* are; and you will find those three terms, *Church*, *Faith*, and *Schism*, are not equivocal, though often misapplied. But as for the name of any church, I know indeed none necessary to the being of the church, but that of catholic, nor any form of government, but in obedience to one catholic visible head for unity sake; which if you think not necessary, and that all other differences between particular churches are but indifferent things, there is no occasion for any dispute between us. For I am not fond of such controversies, where going upon different grounds, we are neither of us likely to convince the other. And if you please, I would profit by the reflexion upon the madness of studying the controversial part of religion, rather than the positive and clear. Let our correspondence be on useful and moral subjects, and write as often as your affairs will permit, to

Your very humble servant.

Mr.

*Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.**Paris, Feb. 18, 1702.*

MADAM,

I Received yours from *Salisbury* the 9th of *December* last, than which nothing could be more acceptable to me, but your own presence. I rejoice with you in your good fortune of health and entertainments since you left me. I am glad the Bishop's lady hath approved herself to your judgment. The Bishop's volatile activity will find a just temperament in her phlegm. I am exceedingly glad you have made so good use of your retirement for a contemplative study, and should be yet gladder, to hear you had found opportunity for quitting fictitious and poetical study, for the more serious and solid; especially knowing perfectly the strength of your genius that way; and that particular inclination and fame both together seem to invite you to raise your reputation, by this new and untrodden path. I understand you have wrote an apology for *Mr. Locke*, against one of his animadvertisers. I read these letters, I think, once or twice, but found no great matter in them, but that they were addressed to *Mr. Locke* with modesty and respect enough, at least in the first, and were offered rather as doubts than objections, to which some instructive answers were expected. As to your publishing any thing upon such a nice and important subject, especially from one of your sex, and years, and in defence of such an aged philosopher, and whose notions have not been thought by many to have done the best service to religion, I know not what to say, that may be cautiously enough contrived for taking off all suspicion of vanity, novelty, or too great curiosity of examining sacred things, rather by the principles of philosophy, than by the balance of the sanctu-

sanctuary; for I know not how you have framed that work. Only I think, if you had wrote your own thoughts upon those subjects of common and innate notions, of material and immaterial matter, and spirit, body and soul, thinking and reasoning, and any other subjects you pleased to mix with these as congenious; and at the same time, incidently only, had taken notice of that reflector, and vindicate *Mr. Locke*, it might have had less design appearing in it; and *Mr. Locke* would have had the same obligation to your service: whereas now I think you do that author too much honour in writing professedly against him: besides I know not, if you may not now make a dispute and an adversary both to yourself. In all events I would have you insert something of a strain of orthodox sentiments in theology: otherwise your single silence (upon occasions of mentioning any thing relative to the immateriality and immortality of the soul) may be construed as incredulity. This may be done in a large preface, if there be little divinity sprinkled up and down the work itself: but I am persuaded you would not employ your talent but to the best purposes and uses, and to make true and sound philosophy serve but as a pedestal to exalt the esteem of theology more visibly. You may have a fair opportunity to vindicate *Mr. Locke's* intentions in this, where he hath not been so explicit, as some short-sighted but well-meaning people think; notwithstanding that I ever thought him as good a man as knowing a philosopher, and have it confirmed by all that know him much better. *Mr. Cunningham* of your town can direct you in all this, and is himself of as piercing judgment upon a subject of such kind, as any I ever knew. I am altogether for your encouragement in such a work: only I would have the best method also taken, wherein others will not be wanting, with more proper advice. I have shewn you my

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opinion.

opinion. I am afraid you will find Dr. *Allix's* writing and style too obscure, especially in reflections, that are not vulgarly known. It is not every one's talent to write. *Hammond* was a very learned, judicious, and pious divine as *England* hath had, and yet he labours with obscurity. Dr. *Patrick* I believe is clearer than any of them, and both judicious and learned, if you can dispense with him for not being a metaphysician. I know no better notes upon Scripture in *English*, and I hope you may learn a great deal from them all. Dr. *Whitby's Commentary*, prebend of *Sarum*, I brought with me, and it is highly commended by one here, that is the best judge. I have been charmed mightily with what I read in Mr. *Norris's Theory of the intellectual world*, especially that chapter concerning the comparative certainty betwixt faith and reason. I look upon him to be one of the most pregnant genius's *England* hath, both for delightful and philosophical notions; and pity it were he were not more known, and his study more relished. I gave what account I could of him to father *Mallebranche*, who regrets his being a stranger to our language. The *French* poet, that understood *English*, is gone to *Rome*, and there is but few that understand our prose, and none almost our dramatic. However, I shall have the judgment of one, that is exceeding ingenious, e'er long, concerning your *Fatal Friendship*. There hath been acted at court, *Electre*, a tragedy from *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, and other ancients, which hath been applauded as much as any composition here this many years. It is the most moving piece, that can be seen, and yet love entereth not therein, but only compassion, which moveth so much all spectators. I shall not trouble you at this time, with the good entertainment I have met with here; much less with any new writings here, whereof this place abounds, though never any thing almost, that de-

serves

serves to be read: only I must not omit, that the famous *Madam Dacier* is putting out a work, that will eternise her memory, and enrich the stock of learning also exceedingly. It is a new edition of *Homer*, in *Greek* and *French*, I think, with many learned and critical remarks, which will make the book of two volumes in folio. I had the account from herself, and have been obliged to her own and her husband's acquaintance for one of the best conversations I have had at *Paris*. It is but the least and shortest thing can be said of her, that she never had, nor has her match for a woman in true and useful learning, and that to the highest degree, and is a good reasoner to the boot. I am not able to add much more at present, but intreat to hear from you all your matters, and any thing else, that is entertaining of the alterations and occurrences of the city, any new books, especially *Stillingsfleet's* (if it be come out) for such will be acceptable here; but above all to hear of your own health continuing will exceedingly rejoice,

Madam,

Your real and zealous friend,
and most obsequious servant,

G. BURNET.

P. S. Write as often as you have leisure, addressing your letters for me, *A la maison de Mons. Patrix, Peruquier, vis-à-vis l'hôtel du jardin royal, rue de la Boucherie, à Paris*. My lady *Salisbury* has been here this month, and thinks of going for *Brussels*. My service to the *Throgmortons*, and all acquaintances.

L 2

Mr.

*Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.**Geneva, Jan. 14, 1704, O. S.*

MADAM,

I should be most of all rejoiced to hear it is well with you, and that from your own assurance. In the mean time I will hope the best for yourself, though I know not if I shall be made ever so happy in your company again, as once, by the blessing of God, I might have been, had your heart affected the same way with mine with relation to God and his truth.

I had occasion to mention your *Defence of Mr. Locke* (without naming you) to an excellent friend, who is the best judge of such abstract reasonings of any I know out of *England*. He is the most friendly and engaging adversary, that ever espoused the opinion of a contrary party, and with so much reason on the other side. But I find Mr. *Locke* unwilling to engage in any other writing with him but in compliments.

I would gladly know what Mr. *Cunningham* is doing. He hath too much of a metaphysical brain: his notions are so subtle, that they will spend his days like the silk-working in spinning them out. And his projecting is so vast and wide always, and his conversation and acquaintance so various and numerous, that it is no wonder, that he hath never time for execution.

*Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Burnet.**Salisbury, Feb. 2, 1704.*

S I R,

I Received your obliging letter with much satisfaction, both as it gave me an assurance of

your health, and of your remembrance and concern for me, which, I assure you, I have always had a grateful sense of, and could not hear of a misfortune that befel you, without a very great regret. I enquired frequently of all, who, I hoped could give me any news of you; but had none to my satisfaction, till at *Christmas* last, from my brother *Inglis*, who was told by his brother the doctor, where you were; which I was much rejoiced to know, and in hopes of seeing you soon in *England*; but should have been much better pleased, had your letter encouraged that expectation. Wherever you design to go, God will, I hope, direct you to your best advantage; which I have never failed one day to beg for you, since you was pleased to desire my poor prayers; and I doubt not your piety will instruct you to find some secret mercy under the most afflicting dispensations of providence to you; which I have often experienced in many instances of my own life; as indeed I have also very surprizing deliverances from the same bounty, in a most unexpected time and manner, which has taught me an entire resignation and dependance on the supreme wisdom and goodness.

Having been at *Salisbury* since *May* last, I know very little of what has passed at *London* since that time. When I came from thence a famous *Italian* woman, who has an extraordinary voice, was the chief entertainment of the town; which however did not hinder them from being extremely pleased with *Apel* in making subscriptions for him, the subscribers being all men of considerable quality. I never saw a nobler assembly of both sexes, than at his entertainments of music. This winter, I hear Mrs. *Toft* (whose father belonged to the Bishop of *Salisbury*) sings publicly in the same manner, and is much admired. As for our acquaintances, Mr. *Cunningham* came now and then to see me,

whenever I was in town. His head is still full of his darling scheme; but I believe it has advanced no farther yet, nor do I hear his other project about the civil law is in any great forwardness. Mrs. *Anne Throgmorton* is pretty much in the country, as well as I; but we have met as often as we could, and frequently talked of you. I have been obliged since I saw you to Mr. *Condon*, for the acquaintance of a particular friend of his, who is a physician, a very honest gentleman, of great learning, and of very good judgment, who does me the favour to profess some friendship for me. By his assistance (who furnishes me with globes, books, and maps) I have now a tolerable knowledge in geography, and hardly ever see him without improving one way or other by him. But I had most reason to account my acquaintance with him an happiness in my ill health, which I have had more of these last two years, than in my whole life before; and under that misfortune I not only found him a skilful physician, but an extraordinary friend. I have had no return these seven months of a cholic I had been much subject to, and have pretty well recovered my flesh, which I had strangely lost by my illness; but my strength is very much impaired, and God knows whether I shall ever retrieve it. This weakness of body is a great hindrance to me in the employments of the mind; nor have I finished any thing for the public, since the *Defence of Mr. Locke's Essay*, the fortune of which (since you are pleased to desire an account of what concerns me) I shall give you a relation of. Designing, as you know, to conceal my name, I trusted none with it, till the Bishop of *Salisbury's* lady having heard I was writing, and that it was not poetry, was very desirous to know the subject; which I would not deny to a person of her merit, whom I knew I might safely confide in; and accordingly I found her as concerned

as myself, that the author should not be known. But when she heard the Bishop, and several others of great judgment in such matters, were pleased to say they were very well satisfied with it, and that Mr. *Locke* had given it his approbation, she thought it would be no injury to me to confess the author. After which Mr. *Locke*, not being in town himself, desired a relation of his to make me a visit, and a present of books from him; and when I had owned myself, he honoured me with a very obliging letter. Thus, you see, the matter is no great secret now: most of my friends know it, for such things easily spread; and though I am not officious in owning it, neither can I pretend to deny what has been discovered to so many. I am now writing a tragedy, the subject of which is the last great revolution of *Sweden*, but it will not be ready for the stage till next winter.

As for my other affairs, I can only tell you at this distance, that I have had my share of uneasinesses, which, in the circumstances of my fortune, I must still expect to struggle with: yet I keep a sufficient cheerfulness of spirit, having the comfort of some years experience of the gracious care of providence for me.

I am sorry, Sir, the difference there is between us in the controverted points of religion, should abate any thing of the little happiness you could find in my company. For my part, I consider nothing in the opinions of my friends, but what is likely to influence their morals; and provided they worship the true God, and acknowledge the doctrine and authority of *Jesus Christ*, I think we are sufficiently united in religion for all the ends of friendship. To say the truth, I have of late almost forgot all distinction of churches; for having had some occasion of observing more than before the great growth of infidelity; that there are many, who disbelieve, and more, who doubt, that there

ever was any divine revelation, I have employed myself much in considering the proofs, and defending the truth of the *Christian* religion; which has so entirely engaged my concern, that when I am with those, who sincerely submit to the authority of *Jesus Christ*, what sense soever they understand him in, I am satisfied, and really think myself with one of my own communion. Thus you see, Sir, there will be no obstacle on my part to that satisfaction, which an agreement in matters of religion gives; and I hope the sincere love I have for truth, and charity for those, who differ from me, will atone with you for the errors of my understanding.

London, March 16.

I wrote this, whilst I was at *Salisbury*; but deferred sending it, till I came to town, that I might be better able to inform you of what you desired; yet I should not have kept it so long, had not my eyes been so ill of late, that I durst not write till now.

I did not know, till I came hither, that Mr. *Cunningham* has been this half year in *Holland* with the Duke of *Somerset's* son, which, I hope, will prove a good fortune to him.

I do not wonder Mr. *Locke* is unwilling to engage in controversy with the gentlemen you mention; for, I am informed, his infirmities have obliged him, for some time past, to desist from his serious studies, and only employ himself in lighter things, which serve to amuse and unbend the mind.

There is now abundance of your nobility here, who, they say, are as much offended, as our house of commons, at the proceedings of our Lords about the plot so much talked of; the examination of which, the *Scotch* pretend, ought to be referred to them.

I was

I was this week to visit the Bishop of *Salisbury's* lady, and found her and the family in great trouble for his eldest son, who has had this fortnight a very violent fever. I hasten to tell you just what comes at present into my thoughts, for I find writing still so troublesome to my eyes, that I dare not use them long: so I will only add my thanks for your good wishes to me; yet I cannot forbear repeating my desire to see you in *England*; and that your next may inform me, when you intend to return hither. Pray don't let my example make you slow in answering. I designed it much sooner, as you may see by the first date; but was unavoidably hindered; and to hear from you speedily would be a great satisfaction to,

S I R,

Your sincere friend and

obliged humble Servant,

C. T.

Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.

Leipsic, July 5, 1704, N. S.

Most worthy MADAM,

I Received your last of two dates, one from *Sarum*, and the other from *London*, in good time.

Hitherto, notwithstanding all the efforts the *English* and *Dutch* have done for the common cause, the Jesuits, by their ill counsel to the Emperor, do destroy and throw down as fast, as the rest can repair the breaches of *Europe*. They are good for nothing but mischief, to set God's house on fire, that they may plunder in the mean time, and inherit their own.

I have a long letter from Mr. *Leibnitz*, giving the full story of my imprisonment, and several others

others since confirming the first relation, among other particulars. I have also two most obliging letters, one from the queen of *Prussia*, the other from the Electress her mother, giving me an invitation to visit these courts in coming home.

I would gladly see your apology for Mr. *Locke*, as the best picture of your philosophical mind. I should desire another of your corporeal features of face, done the most like, and otherwise in what attitude you please. I hope you will not refuse me it, of which I shall pay the charges drawing in miniature. I would Monf. *Leibnitz*, or the Electress, saw your apology for Mr. *Locke*, who read *Englisb*; or that it were in *French*.

Wednesday next within three days I intend, God willing, to go on for *Berlin*.

Adieu! Pray hear Mr. *Gastrel* sometimes, and that excellent blind guide Dr. *Lucas*, whom I love much.

Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.

Luxemburgb, July 17, 1704, N. S.

MADAM,

I Wrote to you from *Leipsic*, wherein I shew my longing to hear from you all particulars concerning your health and present circumstances. I know not, if you are to be found now at *London*, by the address you gave me in *Beaufort's Buildings*; and this uncertainty where to find you obliges me to some reserve in writing, which constraint is a great pain to me. However I will recommend this to my cousin Mr. *Obadiab Burnet*, the merchant, as I have done the former, of whose faithfulness I have most assurance. If the multitude of affairs, and the little time he hath to send a let-

a letter from his house to such a distance, does not make him either slow or negligent, I intreat you again, let me hear frequently from you, have all your news, any thing is entertaining; or what you will yourself, which must always please me, who am possessed, ever since I knew you but a little, with the best opinion of you. But I am afraid, that the reason, opinion, and even affections and manner of insinuation of others, do please you better than any thing that comes from me. Whether this may be an effect of the late acquaintance, and new friend you wrote of, or not, I wish you all the world to be your friends as sincerely as I am, and would be. In the mean time, you may think me very happy now, and so I am, in the favourable regard of one of the most excellent ladies in the world, (I am sure) although she were not a queen. Yet I must rejoice but for a season in the light of this royal countenance; and all the honour or favour I receive here, I ought, and shall I hope consider it, as the morning cloud or early dew, that soon passeth away, and so must you and I both. Yet I cannot conceal, that I have the most passionate ardour of mind and soul to cultivate a perpetual friendship with you, and in your personal society and presence, one way or another, so far as may be practicable; and that the very thoughts of any obstacle in you, or alteration of humour in me, which must divide me from your presence and person, is like the figure and scene of death presented to me: for which cause, I dare not enlarge more upon this head; hoping you will contrive things so, that I may have as much of your personal presence, and intimate society, upon my coming to *England*, (when God shall grant it) as I have need of a kind virtuous friend, and as I can put trust and confidence in you, more then in any other of your sex, I know of in *England* of your age. I, for my part, shall never fail to be most

most ready and willing to sympathise in all your concerns, and to serve you both with purse and person, so long as you will continue either God's servant and my friend. You shall share always in any good fortune I may have. But to leave this for this time, I would tell you as a secret, which hath not been much told yet even to friends; *Monf. Leibnitz* is writing a philosophical critique upon *Mr. Locke's Essay*, wherein he will differ from his sentiment many times, notwithstanding the greatest veneration he hath for that work; but he writes me he does it by way of remarks thereupon, as I suggested to him long ago, and not as a stated contradictory antagonist. The Remarks are almost finished: for which reason, and the bigness of your own merit in itself, and its dearness to me, I wish extremely *Monf. Leibnitz* had seen your apology, of which I spoke to him long ago, without discovering either name, kindred, or sex of the author, which I find he hath not yet seen. I am sure if he did, he would cause it to be translated, if you will not. I can write but in general and in short, till you let me know where you will be for some time, and whom I may trust to address mine to. Though I have nothing to write you, but what may be both to your honour and mine, yet I desire you may speak nothing yet of *Mr. Leibnitz's* work to any; neither do I desire you to impart much of what I write to any *Popish* or *Jacobite* acquaintances, whom God knows (though *I hate* none) I have not reason to like well; and *I wish* you may not continue to be the only miracle of that religion, to wit, *that a philosopher of your sense* should not leave those of that way, that are all either ignorant, or given to a reprobate sense. *Te Deum* was sung in music, at the court chapel at *Berlin* last Sunday, with a noble discharge three times of more than 100 pieces of cannon, and great mortars upon the towers, and in the court of the

palace,

palace, with one volley of musket shot of several battalions of grenadiers excellently performed, and this for the victory over the *French* and-Elector of *Bavaria* at *Donawert*, with the taking thereafter the town itself, whereby the Duke of *Marlborough* and the *English* have acquired great honour, (it being one of the boldest attempts either for contrivance or execution,) whether my Lord *Marlborough* (having now entered thereby into the heart of *Bavaria*) be able to push his conquest or not, which no doubt the *French* will prevent by joining the Elector in time, before his country be ruined if they can. My Lord, however, is in pursuit towards *Munich*. One of the princesses here has a letter marking, that prince *Louis* was not for pursuing the victory; however he had his part of being wounded in the battle, as had that princess's husband, (the hereditary prince of *Hesse-Cassel*) one of the lights of our *Israel*, and valiant as young *David* for the reformed religion.

I came here the last of *June*, O. S. with the post open waggon, and being two nights and the most of the second day before I came to *Berlin*, and the last night but one with rain, and wind, and want of rest, was extreme weary, yet could not sleep (though I understood the court was not at *Berlin*, but in the country, the queen at her pleasure-house of *Lutzenbourg*, and the king at his called *Skeenhouse*, both the distance of one hour and half from *Berlin*) till I paid my dutiful reverence in person, to that excellent queen, of whose goodness I have so much received. So that finding the opportunity of an *English* gentleman's coach, I went along with him, and had such favourable reception, as fills my heart and thoughts too much to be able to write thereof so soon, and not having room to add more, but

Your humble Servant,

G. BURNET.

I pray

I pray you let me know every thing of your condition and state, whatsoever you can trust me with. How gladly would I recommend you (as myself) here. I wish you were known to *Monf. Leibnitz*, and the *Electrice*, and I shall do what may be done as you let me hear from you, by the address I sent you of *Mr. Obadiab Burnet*, in *Barbican*, by *Cripplegate*.

If my *Lady Napier* be in *London*, pray give her a visit, with my service. I would write to her ladyship: she knows well the politic state of *Scotland* at present, which I would hear largely of.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Burnet.

London, Aug. 8, 1704.

SIR,

I Received both yours of the 5th and 17th of *July*, with much satisfaction to find you keep your health so well, in all the troubles and fatigues you have gone through; and that you remember me so obligingly both in your misfortunes, and in the happiness and honour you receive by the favour of two princesses, whom you with such reason admire. I have all the sense I ought of your concern to secure my friendship, and do assure you, that no new acquaintance has deprived you of the share you had in it; for, as I think there is a due esteem and gratitude for every degree of merit and kindness we observe in our friends, I never suffer one to dispossess another of my friendship, but endeavour to divide it, as impartially as I can, among all, who have the goodness to set any value upon it. It is only that niggard passion, which is distinguished by the name of love, that excludes

excludes all but one object from having a part of it, and is not satisfied without monopolizing the affections of the heart. Friendship is more just and more beneficent; and you may depend upon finding me willing to contribute all I can to your satisfaction; and that I shall always use your confidence in me with the sincerity and faithfulness becoming a friend, and a *Christian*; nor will there be any difficulty for you to visit me, when you please. I know not of any occasion, that will remove me soon from the lodgings I still have in *Beaufort Buildings*, where I am at present (as I shall be all the summer, and perhaps the winter) more alone than I have been of a long time; for my sister and I have not parted in a year and a half, till last *June* she returned to *Sam*, whither she would have had me with her; but I have so little time to myself, when I am in the family, that I found my writing go on very slowly; so resolved to stay, till I have finished what I am about, in a place, where I am as solitary as I can wish; for most of my acquaintance are out of town.

I should willingly send you my *Defence of Mr. Locke*, if I knew how it might be conveyed to you; and am much obliged to your desire of making me known to a person of so much worth, as *Mr. Leibnitz*, whose remarks, I believe, will have little relation to what I have written on that *Essay*, being designed, I suppose, as a philosopher, and not as a divine; for I cannot think any unprejudiced and judicious person can find any thing in *Mr. Locke's* principles, prejudicial to, or defective in the true grounds of morality and religion; on which account alone, I have endeavoured to vindicate the *Essay*. I am told *Mr. Toland* (who I think is now at *Hanover*) has, in a book of his lately published, mentioned that *Defence* with much commendation, and as written by a woman; yet I cannot join with you

you in desiring to have it translated, that (in my opinion) not being fit for a thing of such a nature.

As for my picture, though I would not refuse it to so good a friend, yet as it is generally thought a mark of gallantry, and that it is uncertain what hands it might fall into, or what accidents might happen in sending it so far; I think it would not be worth the hazard for so small a satisfaction as that can give you. Besides, by the time it would arrive at you, I hope you will be preparing to return hither, since you designed it directly, if the princess's letters had not interrupted you; tho' no doubt, you will find temptations to detain you there, much more engaging than the society of a person too unfortunate to be able to make the happiness of any one; nor would I advise you to place too much of yours in me. Absence perhaps may have helped your imagination to form an idea of me, which, on a more intimate converse, will disappoint you. However, there is always danger in desiring very ardently even the greatest good this life affords; and no doubt over-rating the enjoyments of it is the source of most of the miseries we feel. God grant both you and me the wisdom to set a just value on all things, with a pious resignation to the will of him, who is the author and disposer of all.

I shall gladly read any of Dr. *Gastrel's*, or *Lucas's* writings; but it would not be decent for me to hear them: it is not, that I scruple it, but as it gives scandal, and that all churches disown such a *Latitudinarian*. I wish indeed there was no such thing as distinction of churches; and then I doubt not there would be much more real religion; the name and notion of which I am sorry to observe confined to the being of some particular community, and the whole of it, I am afraid, placed by most in a zeal for those points, which make the differences between them, from which mistaken zeal,

no

no doubt have proceeded all the massacres, persecutions, and hatred of their fellow Christians, which all churches have been inclined to when in power; and I believe it is generally true, that those, who are most bigotted to a sect, or most rigid and precise in their forms and outward discipline, are most negligent of the moral duties, which certainly are the main end of religion. I have observed this so often both in private persons, and publick societies, that I am apt to suspect it every where; which, with some things I have heard of the magistracy of *Geneva*, makes me not disposed to think so well of them, as you do. Indeed there is somewhat in the whole manner of the *Calvinists*, their formality of expression, their sanctified appearance, and affectation of Scripture phrases, which I cannot approve. Those things, which were spoke or related by the authors of the holy Scriptures, are there proper, natural, and easy; but, when frequently repeated, seem affected, and constrained. Certainly an easy turn of words, a free action, and chearful countenance, are not inconsistent with religion; and, as far as that will allow, I think all pious *Christians* ought to conform themselves to the air of the world, as the good *St. Paul* became all things to all, well knowing, that men are rebuted by a manner quite different from their own. A precise dress makes religion appear something abstracted from the general offices of life; whereas it ought to be mingled with them all; and therefore should be made as familiar and insinuating as possible, and all the strictness of it worn in our hearts, and in the exactness of our morals. I know not how I have wandered thus from wishing there were no distinction of churches; on which subject I shall only add, that since there are such, I agree with you, that every one ought to join with that, which seems to him most in the right, and am so far of that opinion, that I can by no means ap-

prove the conduct of our occasional conformists; for however lawful it may be in some cases, the occasion of getting an employment does not seem to me a justifiable one for their communicating with a church, which their consciences will not suffer them to continue in.

I have my health very well of late; but my eyes are still weak, which makes me read less than I would, and I am very fond of a valuable book in good print. I have lately read one in great vogue now, called, a *Tale of a Tub*, in which there is so much wit and humour, that every body, that has the least relish that way, must be pleased with it, whether they like the design or not. It is intended a ridicule both of Popery and Calvinism, in a tale of the adventures of three brothers, *Peter, Martin, and Jack*; of whom *Martin* is the author's favourite, by which he means the church of *England*. In fine, no more can be told of it, but that it is very diverting.

Your cousin has been very punctual in sending your letters; so that if you think fit, you may continue to write by him, or directly to me, as you please, and as freely as you desire, for there is no danger, that I know, of their being intercepted. I thank you for your obliging professions of desiring to assist me, and hope I shall always have that merit you require, of sincerely endeavouring to obey the will of God, as I certainly shall the other of being,

S I R,

Your real friend,

and bumble Servant,

C. T.

P. S. I have no acquaintance with Lady Napier, not having seen her since I was a child; and I am not forward to intrude myself officiously without

without a particular recommendation, or on some affair of consequence. Pray let me know, when I may hope to see you here. My eyes are weary of this long epistle; so adieu.

Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.

Berlin, Dec. 5, 1704.

GOOD MADAM,

YOURS of the latter end of summer last was very acceptable to me, and that in a very sad time, when I was attacked with a most violent and searching fever, which seized me all on a sudden about the last days of *August* last. I continued in my little chamber at court at *Lutzenbourg*, not being able to come to town hither in that condition. And the queen thought it would be of no continuance, and sent so often to see where I was, that upon the least ceasing of this fever, I was willing to creep down stairs to the low apartments, where the queen and the court were, to present myself**.

The queen is come to her apartments in town since *St. Martin's*. They are all reformed and new built almost. The palace is great, spacious, and magnificent, but the architecture not beautiful, except it be to a *German* goust.

I have no delight in the hearing or seeing any woman, since I came abroad, like the queen, who, never, I believe, spoke, but with satisfaction to the hearer. Her concern for me is so great, that I am ashamed thereof. It hath made me many open flatterers, and it may be hidden enemies. The other day she sent a footman to the lodging to come to supper; but I was already in bed in a hot fever four hours before. The morrow after, she sent another in the morning, telling me, if I pleased

pleased to come exactly at twelve, I might eat with her maids, (for at dinners she dines publickly with the king every day, when he is in town, where only the princes and princesses are admitted) and after dinner, I might come and read, or talk with her. I could not well go to dinner, being invited elsewhere; but about two o'clock I went, and passed the time till four. Her majesty would have given me chocolate: I prayed rather tea, of which I took three *tasses* only. But upon my coming home, I found myself in a shivering, had the fever till after midnight, and so could not return to sup at court, nor hear excellent music, that was to be that night, of which her majesty had acquainted me graciously before.

The good Lady *Bellamont* (who is prince *Rupert's* wife, as she pretends, and hath been owned and maintained by her Electoral Highness at *Hanover* these many years) was here several weeks, and came and saw me often, would have done any thing for me, and proffered to take me to *Hanover* in her own coach upon her going back, and that she and her sister would set me up with broths and suitable things.

There is in that sealed packet, a bond at least of 100 *l.* sterl. to be paid to you by my heirs executors in case of my death, where all exceptions and excuses are obviated, that I could think of. But besides I have written in my last to my cousin *Obadiab Burnet*, conscientiously (in case of death) to pay the same of the readiest in his hand, after deduction of necessary debts. Pray God I might live to give you much more myself, and to see you still deserve it more. It is like, that if you had not been determined to return to *Salisbury*, and that I feared you would not be flexible to that, which is best, I had not so easily pulled myself from your company.

Berlin,

Berlin, Dec. 8, 1704, N. S.

The Electress of *Hanover** came hither about fourteen days after I fell sick, and passed the time three weeks with the Queen at *Lutzenbourg*, never coming once to *Berlin*. But one day she was invited with the Queen by my Lord *Raby*†, our envoy here, to dinner. This envoy, by the bye, keeps a greater port than any nobleman in *England*, never going abroad without nine or ten after his coach in rich liveries. It is hardly conceivable what he could do more, if ambassador; the reason of which I know not.

During the time the Electress was in the country with her daughter, there were daily messages sent to inquire about my condition from her electoral highness, and all the princesses, and entreating me to return. There were several royal entertainments for her highness, diversion of balls, comedies, where the princesses represented, and in pastorals. There was also a noble opera or two; all which I was deprived of, expiring as it were within the four posts of a bed. However, hearing her highness was returning to *Hanover*, I dressed myself to go three days before her departure, and found her so courteous and obliging, that I said I should die with less regret, that I had seen her royal highness again, and so well, with so little, rather no alteration, that more than eight years absence seemed, as if I had but left her eight days. I added, that as I had not much hopes of my own health, so I hoped it would appear, that she was of a long-living family. Her highness gave me much encouragement, and told me, for herself she had no mind to die yet; but hoped to have time to laugh and be merry with me at *Hanover*. If I had been able to go then, I had been better looked to than in this great inn, where there is so much noise, notwithstanding that the mistress does

* Princess *Sophia*.

† Afterwards Earl of *Stratford*.

many things very extraordinarily, because of the concern she finds her majesty have: but alas! I had not force enough: and God only knows when it will fully return. I must not forget to tell you, that the Electress, though of a good age, seemed really charming, not only for her air and discourse, but in her countenance, dress, and shapes, going as well as her daughter, and also strait as a rush, with the traits of beauty yet left. These diversions never began till supper was over, except the comedies, and the supper was so late as ten o'clock, and her highness did not retire till a good part was over notwithstanding. It is said her Electoral Highness hath a great pleasure in the moon-shine nights, in walking in the gardens at *Hanover* several hours after midnight, which marketh rather her strong constitution, then the rules of health. Yesterday, being *Sunday*, the *Te Deum* was sung for the rendring of *Landau*. There are but two or three *Englisb* here at present, one Mr. *Strickland*, one Mr. *Moleworth*. Mr. *Moleworth* that wrote the state of *Denmark*, his son, and one Mr. *Pouliney*. There is no *Scotch* but myself, and my Lord *Huntley*, the Duke of *Gordon's* only son. My Lord *Marlborough* came here to visit this court, in his return to *England*: nobody knows his particular errand; he staid but five days, wherein he was treated with a ball at court, the bull baiting, and a sight of the arsenal, treasury, and several others. He dined once or twice with the King apart, and once I think only supped with the Queen. The ladies at court think themselves much neglected by such a polite man as he is acknowledged to be, since it is said he did not speak a word to any of the ladies of honour at the queen's court, but the Queen herself, and the princesses. But it is not convenient to vent this, especially your author, though the complaint was made to myself. I told that, having creeped out, to kiss his hand the day before

fore

fore he went away, I went with my Lord *Huntley*, and was most courteously received, and had the honour to entertain him all alone, for almost one hour and a half, wherein he was very free and liberal to both in his discourse. He caused us to see an agraffe or buckle to his hat, wherewith he was presented that morning, with two large diamonds, as big as ordinary hand sleeve buttons, and the rest small ones, with the buckle of gincture about the hat, all valued together at about twenty thousand crowns, as the queen told me, and of most curious work. He hath indeed been as a tutelar angel to this whole large continent of *Germany*, and made a great change, the providence and force of God concurring with his arm. He is gone to *Hanover*, where he will stay but a short time. The prince royal, the king and queen's only son, is begun his travels, and takes this occasion of going to *England* with the duke, having taken the start before two or three days, having a great convoy. It is like you may see him with you shortly. Now lastly, I will tell you of an occurrence, which by the blessing of God would be good example to you: the story is most true, since I have it from the party concerned, and others; but it is not fit to make it much public, being betwixt such illustrious persons, who are no less then the first in the world. The princess of *Anspach*^e, of the *Brandenbourg* family, hath been talked of as a match proposed for the young king of *Spain*, *Charles*, but privately for a long time. She is about eighteen or nineteen years of age. I knew her at this court before, and she came to pass some weeks with the queen just two days before I was brought to town in my sickness. Her wonted bounty and goodness to me seemed to be increased with her years, but especially her wit and other accomplishments of mind. She is almost perfect in music, and sings most

^e Her late Majesty Queen *Caroline*.

sweetly herself, having a most handsome body and engaging air, and such a good face set upon all, that I believe she is the comeliest princess of her age. All this I had occasion to observe surely that day I ventured to come down to table, and to see her highness before I left the court, wherein she was so obliging, as for my entertainment to take me to her chamber, and in the presence of her masters and mistresses, let me see and hear proofs of her accomplishments. About that time I came to town, and was like to be taken away in my fever every day. This young princess was engaged in a great struggle of another nature: a Jesuit was come on purpose, from *Vienna* I suppose, to instruct her to change her religion, in order to conclude the marriage, and qualify her for so great a match: he came every day after dinner up the back stairs leading to her apartment, for several weeks, and was with her to persuade her. He was, it seems, well recommended, for he met not with the least hindrance of any at court, neither did any presume so much as to offer any counsel as I heard to this young princess against so cunning an antagonist, though he was well enough known, notwithstanding his secular habit. But it pleased God, who turneth the hearts of princes and princesses as he pleases, and reached the heart of *Lydia*, to inspire her with the holy courage and resolution one day, when it was least expected, to declare plainly she would not abandon her religion for any crown, and to dismiss her teacher. I told her afterwards, when I saw her again for the last time, (for she went back to *Anspach* four or five days after) at the same time with the Electress, when she was condoling mightily my sufferances, that if I had known, that her highness had been in so much danger at the same time, my fever had been greater; but blessed God for her deliverance, assuring she had made a greater conquest over

over her own passions, a victory preferable to many kingdoms. She was extremely well pleased of the approbation I had given her. *Monf. Leibnitz* has received letters the most obliging and complimenting in kindness, and philosophical in reasoning, that can be seen, from my Lady *Masham*. It is like the hand of *Joab* was in all these: however, *Mr. Leibnitz* has not spared to answer her very home in his last; and had already made out, and caused to be copied many sheets of the things, wherein he differed from *Mr. Locke*. I intreated him to haste for fear of mortality, especially of *Mr. Locke*, and he told me, he expected to have it sent to *Holland* to be printed this winter; and now the late gazettes speak of *Mr. Locke's* death, to the great loss of the reasonable world. I have wrote to you freely and at great length: God knows when I shall be able to write again, but it will be an act of the greatest charity and kindness to write to me often (at least once a week less or more) whatever is diverting; even your own thoughts, when you want matter; it will be entertaining; and I want it much. Let me know the particulars concerning *Mr. Locke's* death, books, news of the town, or others, &c. which enter not the gazette. Adieu!

Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.

Berlin, Dec. 9, 1704, N. S.

MADAM,

I Intreat you let me have often yours, for nothing could be better written. In every subject you write with knowledge and judgment, which delighteth. You know every thing well but religion; which you will never understand truly and surely by any method so well, as by reading
Scrip-

Scripture in any language you understand, and chusing for yourself. You will find there how few things are required to be believed, and how many things have been added and altered by those, that did think the Scripture contrary to their designs, or not sufficient and full enough to answer those designs.

You find fault with *Geneva* very unjustly. Not to speak of unreasonable particular persons every where; *Geneva* is one of the most desirable places in *Europe* for peace, order, policy, sound knowledge, and especially moderation, justice, politeness of conversation, good sense amongst all the people, and civility in a high degree in the magistracy and ministry. The greatest fault is in the worldliness and self-interest of the burghers, merchants, and traders, being the most gripping I ever knew. But the smallness of their territory, and their being surrounded with the *Canaanites* of *French* and *Savoyards*, and having as it were business and commerce with no body but at a great distance, and with difficulty often, because of the wars, they are necessitated to manage, be industrious, and even to take advantage of strangers being with them.

There are three or four as great lights among their ministry as any where, and the youngest I think the greatest. I heard him deliver three discourses at different times, not much above an hour each, which I would purchase in print at their weight in gold. The first was the history of the real presence, where he shewed, as clear as the sun, the ways, means, tricks, and novelty of the introduction of that doctrine, with great sincerity, plainness, order, and judgment. I shall never think after that of it, but as a late intrusion, though it accorded with the Scripture, and design of our Saviour, as it doth not. The second discourse was concerning the Knights Templars, their rise, power,

er, and fall over *Europe*, &c. The third was the story of the popedom of pope *Joan*, where all the reasons were alledged on both sides, weighed and considered, and at last the author concludes, that it was but a fable, with his reasons and answer of objections, following the learned protestant minister *Blondel*, who first discovered to the Papists themselves, that their historians had imposed upon them; and that there was no such thing as a woman pope in the world.

I would know what Mr. *Alexander Cunningham* is doing. My Lord *Marlborough* inquired of me for him, upon the account of his chess playing.

Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.

Hanover, Jan. 28, 1703, N.S.

MADAM,

IT hath pleased God to have given me a reviving again ever since the first of *January*, the fever leaving me, and strength returning to me daily.

I arrived here the same night the queen [of *Prussia*] did, but three or four hours later. I found not only the Electress's favour, but also the Elector's increased towards me, though I had reason to fear, that my merit was much decreased. The Elector^a, who, when heir apparent in his father's time, was as reserved as the king of *France*, is now most conversable with all persons worthy to entertain his highness, and talks with pleasure with those, who can talk understandingly. The electoral prince^b is one of the handsomest princes, that can be seen; hath more life, than is observed in

^a Afterwards King *George I.*
George II.

^b His present Majesty King

the manner of any prince in *France*, speaks *English* already very well; knows the names of public ministers, and situation of affairs over all *Europe*, hath a most prodigious memory, as is said. His sister, the princess electoral, is the greatest beauty, and the best accomplished young lady I ever yet knew. So far I am forced to rebate of what I said of that excellent young princess of *Anspach*, in my former, amongst many other things.

All the *English* here, and I believe all strangers, have their quarters provided them near the court, upon the Elector's expence. I have beside an invitation to come continually to supper and dinner to the Elector's own tables, and to serve myself continually with the chairs belonging to the court, when I go aboard, which have chairmen of the Elector's livery. There are here at present, of strangers of quality, the princess of *Hohen-Zollern*, whose husband is of the *Brandenbourg* family, or rather the king of *Prussia* of his house; the young princess her daughter, and two princesses, sisters of the *Palatine* family of the last race, before it fell to the Dukes of *Newburgh*.

Upon the account of much great company of quality, there are always two tables in the hall of eating, which are equally served and covered, one whereof is for the Queen and Elector, and his mother, and so many more, as is room for; and the other for the electoral prince, princess, the Elector's brother *Christian Lewis*, and other strangers of quality, besides the ordinary tables for the ladies of honour, gentlemen of the court, and other strangers. The diversions are one night ridotto, and masking, and dancing; a second comedy and singing; a third, apartments with gaming and talking. There are six or seven *English* besides myself, and one *Sir Rowland Gwyn*, a noted parliament man.

I have

and several of her friends.

I have seen a most full letter of my Lady *Masbam's* to *Monf. Leibnitz*, concerning *Mr. Locke's* death.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Burnet.

London, Feb. 19, 1704.

SIR,

TILL I received your last letters of the 5th and 9th of *December*, I much wondered; that I had not heard from you in so long a time; but was more troubled to find your illness had been the occasion of it; and that the remains of it hinders your return to *England* so soon, as I hoped, you intended. You will excuse my not answering you sooner, when I tell you I have been so very busy, that I have not had the least leisure at the time of day, in which only my eyes will suffer me to write. Yet I have not neglected your orders, but sent immediately your message to *Mr. Barbani*, by his brother-in-law. I suppose he thought it required no answer to me, for he did not return any.

I was very sensibly touched with the news of *Mr. Locke's* death: all the particulars I hear of it are, that he retained his perfect senses to the last, spoke with the same composedness and indifference on affairs, as usual. His discourse was much on the different views a dying man has of worldly things; and that nothing gives him any satisfaction, but the reflexion of what good he has done in his life. Lady *Masbam* went to his chamber to speak to him on some business, which when he had answered in the same manner he was accustomed to speak, he desired her to leave the room, and immediately after she was gone, turned about, and died. I wish to know on what particular subjects
that

that Lady wrote to Mr. *Leibnitz*; but whatever they were, I wonder you should suspect any other hand than her own in it. It is not to be doubted, that women are as capable of penetrating into the grounds of things, and reasoning justly, as men are, who certainly have no advantage of us, but in their opportunities of knowledge. And as Lady *Masbam* is allowed by every body to have great natural endowments, she has taken pains to improve them; and no doubt profited much by a long intimate society with so extraordinary a man as Mr. *Locke*. So that I see no reason to suspect a woman of her character would pretend to write any thing, that was not entirely her own. I pray be more equitable to her sex, than the generality of yours are; who, when any thing is written by a woman, that they cannot deny their approbation to, are sure to rob us of the glory of it, by concluding 'tis not her own; or at least, that she had some assistance, which has been said in many instances to my knowledge unjustly. Mr. *Locke's* place is given to Mr. *Addison*, (famous for his poetry) and as it is said, in reward of a poem he has wrote to the duke of *Marlborough* on his last glorious campaign. It is hard to tell you the reputation of it; for, as most people's judgments are biased in all things by a party, we have our whig and tory poets too, who are accordingly approved or condemned by different sets of men. Mr. *Philips*, who had written in blank verse, and in imitation of *Milton*, is admired by the tories: I have not read him yet, but there are a few unprejudiced men, that judge only by the merits of a cause, who are of that party, and of another opinion; and I, though not a whig, cannot help liking *Addison's* poem. His numbers are undoubtedly very harmonious; and, I think, his descriptions are fine, the images beautiful, and the expression for the most

most part proper and emphatic, though here and there it may be a little too turgid.

The duke of *Marlborough* is as much esteemed for his modest deportment since his return, as for his great actions abroad. The city invited him to dinner last twelfth day, upon which occasion, having a great deal of company with him, he could not avoid making a public appearance, nor escape the huzza's of the people, which he had all the way going and coming, though he carefully declined it when he came first home, not landing till he was at *Whitehall*, and from thence taking a hackney-chair to *St. James's*. He is indeed every way a truly great man, of which I have such a sense, that I could not forbear paying my little tribute to his merit in some verses on his return from *Germany*, which I sent in writing, doubtful whether I should publish them or not. The answer I received was, that the duke, and dukes, and lord treasurer, and several others, had read my verses; that they all liked them, and that those, who were judges of such things, said there were some lines in them better than any that had been written on the subject. This was sufficient encouragement for me to print them, though they appear very late, not being sent to the press in above a month after they were written.

Some part of this letter has lain by me a pretty while, which I would have sent as it was, had I imagined it would have been so long before I had time to finish it, and having now received another from you, in which you express a concern for not hearing from me, I think myself obliged to be more particular in my apology, as far as is proper at this distance, which is to let you know, that I have been above a month past employed in an affair, in which all the satisfaction of my life, and the establishment of my fortune depends; which so took up my mind and my time, in considering the measures

measures I should take in writing to, and interviews with persons concerned in it, that it was impossible for me to turn my thoughts on any other thing not of immediate necessity.

I had so near a prospect of succeeding in my design, that I thought it sure, but found an obstacle, where I least apprehended it, and am now very uncertain of the good fortune I expected, but have not given over my attempt. This, I hope, will excuse me to you, who know, how much reason I have not to neglect any honourable opportunity of making myself easier in my circumstances, for which a friend must have some concern. That, which you expressed for me, in designing me a legacy, I have a very grateful sense of; though, as I understand the manner you had ordered it, my receiving any advantage of it would have depended entirely on the conscience of your executors; and, as the world goes, very few are to be relied on in things of that kind. However, your friendly intention is the obligation to me, and I heartily rejoice at the recovery of your health, which frees me from any present fears of having an early claim to the most afflicting instance of kindness a friend can receive. The death of a worthy friend is the most irreparable loss our frail state is subject to; yet great as the misfortune is, we have reason to be less surprized, and more resigned in that than any other, reflecting, that death is the certain end of all, and knowing, that our loss is to the advantage of the person we lament. And I fear you will much need reflexions of this nature on so sad an occasion, as the sudden cutting off that good queen, you express so much value for; yet I doubt not your wisdom and piety will assist you to support it, and supply your thoughts with such consolations of your grief, as are best suited to the temper of your own mind. The goodness and wisdom of God ought abundantly to satisfy us in

all

all the unsearchable methods of his providence, to which I commit you, and myself, assured, that he, who can bring good out of evil, conducts all things for the best. I wish the abatement of your satisfaction there may hasten your return to your friends here; the news of which will be extremely welcome to,

S I R,

Your most humble Servant,

C. T.

*Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.**Hanover, July 5; 1705, N. S.*

MADAM,

I was extremely glad to hear from you by your last, which is dated, if I remember right, in *January, or February* last.

I would write you something else in exchange for your news from *England*. But what can I write from this place of public affairs, that you may not hear sooner from other parts? For the affairs of this court, I can only say, that it is a state better regulated, than any part of *Germany*. No debts, no abuses, no delay, nor neglect of justice. The Elector himself is more vigilant in his affairs than any prince upon earth at present, that I know. But for any talking of any thing of what is done in the council, they are yet more upon the reserve, than in *France*. The Electress herself meddles as little with the public affairs here, as you may suppose she would do, if she were in *England*. Besides, at present, all are at the waters of *Pyrmont*, a day's journey from this. The Electress, who at the age she hath of seventy-five, needs no remedy, being as much at health as at seventeen, remains here at her country-house and garden, which is

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extremely pleasant; and I, who have at present more need of the waters, than any living, especially upon the account of obstructions and continual cholics, have delayed hitherto to drink them, that I might wait upon her electoral highness more freely, and write to you before, though at the peril of my life.

I am not able to divine what hath engaged you so far in business, whereupon the *establishment of your comfort of life* so much depends, as you say. If it be the recovery of your father's debts; the acquisition of a new fortune, or that which we call in *Scotland*, a settlement of your person: for the two former, the cost and travel doth many times eat up all the profit: and for the last, it were an easy matter for many an honest man to ease you of any concern about it. They would gladly seek you, if you were to be found in the church of *England*; whereas now they must bring you home like the straying lamb into the mother church of *England*, before they can thus rejoice over you, and lay you in their bosom; and yet you are one of the *wisest virgins* I ever knew.

I know of parties here, that might bring me much honour and comfort, if but little riches, which I hope I can want, as I hitherto have done: but I am afraid of losing your friendship.

Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.

Hanover, July 6, 1705, N. S.

MADAM,

YOU do not intimate to me what accounts from this would please you best. As for myself and my own personal state, I can never expect so much favourable and good reception any where, as I have had both here and at *Berlin*. But considering

dering the sickness I have had these twelve months, the deep and sensible grief I have been subject to since the Queen of *Prussia's* death, the increasing of my enemies, and opposers and traducers; (tho' as little deserved, as the favour of such illustrious friends) I have no reason but to wish, God Almighty would give unto me health, and quietness, with a small table, and cleanly bed; and then I hope contentedness should follow as the greatest blessing upon earth. I have seen too much of the blustering life of the world to be in *love with it*. The late remarkable stroke in the Queen of *Prussia's* death is the most speaking instance of the vanity of all even meridian glory. I heard at the court of *Zell* (where I was with this court ten days, and stayed thereafter three or four more) a great deal of talking concerning the preparatives for the late good Queen's burial at *Berlin*, the 29th of the last month. The princess royal of *Prussia* (who is married to the hereditary prince of *Hesse-Cassel*, the Landgrave, for some years past) was then at *Zell*, where she stayed some days, which was the occasion of the Electress's going there, to see and salute her in the way, as she went to *Berlin*, being sent for, and extremely desired by her father, not only to assist at the funeral, but to comfort him upon such a sad occasion. That princess (like the family she is come out of, and that she is now entered into) besides a great deal of sweetness and good humour (upon which accounts she was so much believed by the late Queen, whom she never almost left, as I observed) is one of the most truly religious princesses alive. All the honours, and entertainments imaginable were done to her at *Zell*. She halted at *Hanover*, and dined there, which occasioned the court here to delay dinner till four of the afternoon that she was arrived, and the court of *Zell* to keep back supper till eleven of the evening, that she arrived there also: all the

cannons of the ramparts were discharged thrice, once upon the first view of the torches without the ports; the second time, at her entering the city; the third time, at her passing the first draw-bridge of the duke of Zell's palace. The Duke himself, notwithstanding of his age of eighty-one years, would not fail to receive her at the last bridge without, and the Elestres and her maids, at the very door of entry, though it was the most tempestuous and cold night I ever knew. But the princess coming upon the ramparts in her coach, came not out thereof, till she came within seven or eight paces of her own apartments, that were prepared for her in the castle. They told me there, the King of *Prussia* had made an incredible expence for the funeral; that the covering of the dome or cathedral alone, where the Queen's body lay, was intirely of the richest velvet, which cost more than two hundred thousand crowns, from which may be judged of the rest. But to speak my own mind of the worth of that incomparable Queen (although I had never been eternally obliged by her) I look upon such sort of expence neither profitable to the living, nor lasting enough to perpetuate the memory of the dead. Otherwise, if the money be wisely laid out, no magnificence in expence could be great enough for a Queen, who was herself so far above all worldly grandeur in the just esteem she had of it. I remember the *Roman* law, in one of the Emperor's sanctions, forbidding private persons, (who are supposed to have but earthly and mercenary souls) though never so rich, to presume to disperse medals of gold or silver, &c. amongst the people (as some were wont upon their marriages and other festivals) gives this emphatic, noble, and *Roman* reason of the statute, to wit, that it became none to scatter gold nor money, but them that could despise it. If this be applied to the late Queen of *Prussia*,
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whether the greatness of her birth, life, or heroic and unparalleled death, be considered; the greatness of her true taste of excellency, especially towards the last years of her life, will still be above all the worldly pomp and glory we can shew at her burial. I know some will say, there are heroicisms of one sort, and another; that there have been wonders of heathenish, as well as Christian philosophers. But I think it was one of the justest as well as one of the greatest of the sayings of the ancients, that none was ever truly great in any excellency, without the assistance of divine aid. There are no doubt many, who will venture their poetical and rhetorical essays on the Queen's memory. *Monf. Leibnitz* tells me, he hath sent a monumental inscription short, and expressive, after the ancient *Roman* way; but he would not communicate it to any, not knowing yet, if it will be made use of, though it was demanded of him. The best thing I have seen on this sad occasion, is an elegy in *Latin*, of *Abbé Hortense*, which, though it be very long, yet is most just in the thoughts over all, and here and there hath most lively fallies of wit and fancy. *Master Rumpton*, the Duke of Zell's, secretary to the dispatches abroad, &c. hath writ another elegy in *French*, which is pastoral, and pleasant enough. but inferior to such a noble subject. A stately mausolee would last longer, and be thought magnificent enough, to lay up her ashes in. A *Pbidias*, or *Apelles*, might (if alive) cut her statue, or paint her features of body lively enough; but the best representation of her mind will be but imperfect. This is one of the pictures, which are still to be left unfinished; which with the want of more room, makes me leave off also.

Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.

Hanover, July 7, 1705, N. S.

MADAM,

I Send you here inclosed a paper, which I have been at pains rather to write, than to digest into order. I am, God knows, not fit to toil myself with much writing more, and am indebted many letters to others, whilst I have ventured to write so much to you. This cover was chiefly designed for a letter of friendship, and to enquire after your health. I know not however what to acquaint you with from this country, since you do not signify to me what accounts would please you best. The other day Mr. *Leibnitz* enquired me about you, if I had any fresh letters. He himself hath so much to do, that I verily believe there is not his fellow in *Europe* now, who studies, travels, writes, talks, and acts more in public matters also, all the year over. He hath, I believe, one hundred letters by him unanswered. I am sorry most, that he delays to write to my lady *Masbam* another letter, and that he seems to decline now the publishing his *Reflections and Remarks on Mr. Locke's Philosophy*; saying, the vulgar will be prepossessed always against what he shall new publish relating to the sentiments of a person who is dead; notwithstanding he neither states himself an adversary, nor has undertaken this work since Mr. *Locke's* death only, but had it all ready in manuscript some months before, as I can witness. However, he says, he may some day send an extract or abridgement of it in *French* to my lady *Masbam*. He hath this year and the last been subject much to swellings and pains in his feet, but otherwise hath a *German* body with a philosopher's head. There is little news here,

here, only they have talked loudly these four months of the coming of a new envoy, one Mr. *How* he is a brigadier of the army, and Mr. *Jack*: *How's* brother. Lodgings they say, are hired for him here of a long time, and yet the present envoy Mr. *Porwley* (who is a wife, discreet, and learned man, and very much liked here) hath had no public notice of it himself, which is very strange. Mr. *How's* lady, they say, is Mrs. *Hugh's* daughter, who, upon that account, and the kindness prince *Rupert* had for her mother, no doubt, would willingly come here, and I doubt not, will be very well received by the electress. The news of this came first from *Zell*. The electress herself told me, my lord *Portland* had given her first notice of Mr. *How* and his lady's coming. I am as weary of staying longer here, as I was desirous of coming hither. I must quit the electress at last, and am very uneasy with the envyings and evil speakings of the *English* against me, only grounded upon the electress's favour for me. It is strange to find such hatred betwixt the *English* and our nation; but her highness knows too well their injustice against many, that are better men than themselves; and besides, does still feel so much of her Grandfather's blood in her, as not to relish any disparagement of *Scotland* or *Scotsmen*. And the last king *James* was so just, as to affirm, he had always remarked the Irish abroad, to speak the best of one another: the Scots to hazard their lives for one another: but, for Englishmen abroad, if any would hear any ill said of them, they need but to ask their neighbour, and one of their own countrymen, and they are sure to have it. I never had any other advantage in *England*, but living quietly in it, and spending my own money; and I have not failed to sustain the shock in behalf of my nation, against all the *English*, that have been here; and I should be very well content to be

misrepresented by them that speak well of no nation, and are much more undervaluing than the impertinence of the *French*, whom they imitate too far. But the misery is, there being but little conversation for the *English* here but with one another, they are necessitated, like school boys, to be picking always little ridiculous quarrels with one another. When I was in big cities, I never had any conversation to displease me all the year over. However, as madame in *France* was the last immediate instrument of my liberty out of prison, so I was glad to have occasion to thank her royal highness therefore, by a letter under the electress's cover, who always writes to her weekly; and a few days since I have been honoured by a most obliging answer of madame's. If it had not been for the late Q. of *Prussia*, the electress, and madame her dear friend and kinswoman, to which three graces the king of *France* could refuse nothing in justice, I might have been in prison to this day (if I had lived so long by my self a close prisoner) without ever having my case so much as once brought to the king's ears, in the way that things are put off, especially where the first minister was not my friend, as I have been told. Judge, if I could do less than acknowledge gratefully under my hand for once a favour I can never forget all the days of my life: And yet this letter, though I know both expected and also desired from me, by the electress, and likewise shewn to, and approved of, by the elector himself, was criticised by our young *English*, who did not think more than myself, it would ever be honoured with an answer. I have not much freedom to write much to you from this so censorious a place, which makes me keep back writing many things. Perhaps I have already troubled you with more than you will care for, which I desire you may pardon in him, who would from his soul,

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in all sincerity, endeavour to please you by any services, and who continues,

Madam,

Your most sincere friend,
and most humble Servant,

G. BURNET of Kemnay.

I should be extremely glad to hear from you oftner. Any thing you would please to write would please me much to read; and any thing, that is witty and ingenious, would recommend you to the electress, if shewn by your leave. Madam writes to her the prettiest stories of new occurrences every week, but little public news but what is to the advantage of *France*, and what is well enough known otherwise. There is nothing prettier than the electress's own letters. I very accidentally met with a copy of one of hers in my voyage through *Switzerland*, which is writ more than thirty years ago, and is admired by all. Mr. *Leibnitz* will insert it in the history of the House of *Brunswick*, and the electress's life. But I find the electress likes rather those points of wit, lively thoughts, and odd stories, than subjects of much thought, and deep reasoning. One must concenter much sense into a point, or say all in a word, (which is very hard to do) otherwise she will not consider it.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Burnet.

London, July 7, 1703.

S I R,

I Received yours dated in July, after having long expected to hear from you, and been in concern for your silence, fearing it might be occasioned by a return of your illness, which I thought the only thing

thing could detain you so long there. I hope you design coming hither when you leave that place, and that I shall find you in town when I return from *Salisbury*, whither I shall go next week to my relations, whom I have not seen these fifteen months, and shall stay with them till about the middle of *October*. Your letters in the mean time may be sent to your cousin, as the last was, and directed for me at Mr. *Inglis's* house in *Salisbury*.

The business I was engaged in, was to obtain a gift by an interest I have at Court, which would have been a settlement for my life; but, though I did not succeed in the particular I aimed at, another favour was done for me, which will make me easier than I was, at least for some time.

I cannot imagine, what concern you suppose I might be in about settling my person. Certainly it is not my part to seek or take any pains for any Affair of that nature; and if I had been much inclined that way, there may have been some, who did not think a perfect agreement in opinion necessary to their happiness in it with me: But as I never had a thought towards it but for one, and that there are many obstacles against that, I believe I shall end my days as I am. Indeed, I have been always very fearful of putting my happiness entirely in the power of any one, though a difference in religion is what I have least apprehended would destroy it, knowing several instances of a very happy union, where there has been no other disagreement, and neither side extremely biggotted. But if there were any uneasiness, methinks it should be on the Romanists side, since to think any one communion absolutely necessary, seems to me not very agreeable to the principles of the reformation, where every one is allowed to be in all points the only judges for themselves. However, though your concern for me is very obliging, I cannot but wonder, that in an engagement of friendship only,

you

you should think the difference between us will deprive you of whatever satisfaction you can propose it; especially since I have so freely declared to you, that I cannot think myself at a great distance from the communion of any *Christians*; esteeming an agreement in the duties of practice, in the worship of one God, and faith in Christ, the only essentials sufficient to establish an union in friendship, though our worship is not performed in the same place, or the same manner, which, as the world is divided, must be confined to some one. This easy principle is one reason, why I am not inclined to engage with any friend in controversy; and if I were, I should not chuse this way, so much has been published and written with long reflection by eminent hands, that I should rather refer to those authors, who have set the subjects in dispute among us in the truest light. But, in my judgment, when one is satisfied, that the church, of which one has professed one's self, teaches all necessary truths, which none can deny of ours; it is better to continue in it, than to make a noise in the world with changing, though one were convinced, that some points were strained a little too high, or some things required more than necessary, unless they were proved dangerous to salvation. For, if every one were obliged to quit every communion, that were not absolutely perfect in all points, it may be there is none in the world, to which one could adhere. I know not whether this reasoning will so far satisfy you, as to excuse my not answering the particulars of your letter; but indeed, the only point I am zealous to have you agree with me in is this one article, that all good *Christians* are of the same religion; a sentiment, which I sincerely confess, how little soever it is countenanced by the generality of the church of *Rome*. And if you could be of the same opinion, there would be no contest between

us.

I am

I am sorry the *English* should give you cause to complain of them; but I believe it is the fortune of all, that are in favour in every court of the world, to find detractors among those, who envy their condition. You, who have no design to make advantage of the honours done you there, need not be much concern'd at little cavils against you; and I hope they will only serve to give you a relish of the less precarious happiness of a private life.

The accounts you give me of the electors's taste in conversation shew me that she very well understands the nature of it. Certainly long grave speeches are very improper and disgusting in a commerce, where the mind should be relieved by dividing its labour, and every one expects an equal part in it. The most solid subjects should not, in my opinion, be treated of in conversation, as one would write of them. There is a certain short and lively manner of speaking on them, which is not only more agreeable and insinuating, but often detects error, and finds out truth, better than a long train of reasonings: whether it be, that the opposition one meets with, gives new vigour to the mind, which, by too long an application, is apt to doze; or however a quick and lively conversation serves both to unbend and try its force, exerts our thoughts, and helps to discern what we have, or have not well digested, and made our own. On this account, I have a great delight in being with those of my friends, who have a talent that way, and wish to imitate them. But, since I cannot in the lively part, I content myself with not being tedious, though sufficiently dull, of which I am too sensible to attempt writing any thing capable of pleasing the electors: for though the charms of agreeable company may perhaps sometimes inspire me with a little gaiety, nature has disposed me more for the *serieux*, to which, when left to myself, I always return.

To

and several of her friends.

To gratify some of those hours, I am very desirous to meet with a book, which yet I have only heard of, *A Commentary upon some of the Epistles*, I think, *St. Paul's*, written by Mr. Locke, which I am the more curious to see, because I imagine he would not write on such a subject, if he did not treat of it in some peculiar way, or with a different view from other commentators: but this is only my conjecture; let me know, if you have heard any thing of it.

You mention a desire of settling your life, which I should think indeed were the best way for one of your temper; though there is always a great hazard of losing the happiness one seeks in the state, which I suppose you mean. But I know not why you apprehend losing my friendship by any thing, that would bring you honour and comfort, unless that by fixing you there, it would prevent a nearer communication of it, without which, I confess, friendship is of little advantage. But you certainly over rate mine, if you put it in any competition with what may be an honour or happiness to you: and to wish, that you may, without any consideration of me, dispose of yourself so, as may be best for you, is the best proof I can give you of being sincerely,

S I R,

Your real Friend, and
most humble Servant,

C. T.

P. S. I doubt not you will consider well, before you make a choice, on which all your earthly happiness will depend. God direct you in it.

I wonder you do not mention, whether you return directly hither or not, when you leave *Hanover*, and how soon I may expect to see you; which, methinks, the friendship you profess for me should hasten; but words cost little pains.

Mrs.

*Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Burnet.**London, Nov. 12, 1705.*

SIR,

I Hope you received my last, which I sent you from *Salisbury*, though I have not heard from you since, but by a message this day the young gentleman brought, who used to bring me your letters, who telling me he should send to you by this post, I would not omit the occasion of writing to you, though I have very little time, which I the less regret, since I hear you design for *England* soon, where we may converse at our leisure with more satisfaction, than at this distance. I need only let you know now, that I am returned to *London*, and am at the same place in *Beaufort Buildings*, to which I give you my address, where I hope to see you about *Christmas*; for at that time the Duke of *Marlborough* is expected, with whom, I hear, you think of coming. I suppose you will meet with my brother *Inglis* there, for he is gone with the Duke to *Vienna*, and returns with him.

I mentioned you to the Bishop of *Sarum's* Lady, when I was in the country, who spoke very well of you. She promised me, when we came to town, a book of Lady *Masham's* writing, and Mr. *Clarke's* Sermons preached at Mr. *Boyle's* lecture; which are highly commended; and I am very impatient to see them, yet have not been to wait on her, though a month since I came to town, so much I am taken up; but design going to-morrow. I read *Norris's Ideal World* lately, against which I think many objections might be made by one, who had leisure, and thought it of consequence enough to be worth the pains. But to oppose another's notions in matters merely speculative, which, whether true or false, are of no necessary

cessary importance to religious or moral truths, is perhaps an employment scarce worthy of a wise person. I dare write no more by candle-light, and must dispatch this: so beg you to accept this hasty paper, as a mark of my respects. It is not by many words friendship approves itself, nor will you, I hope, judge by that measure, how much I am,

S I R,

Your most humble Servant,

C. T.

*Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.**Amsterdam, Dec. 1705.*

MADAM,

I Received the other day your little letter, when I was at *Utrecht*, being glad to hear you was in town.

I am very glad you are soon got out of conceit with those fine notions and speculations of Mr. *Norris*, for all his metaphysical thoughts are but some further wire-drawings from Father *Mallebranche*, who abused all morality and religion with his philosophy. All that he says in metaphysics, is most built on conjectures and fancies: and all that Dr. *Burnet's Theory of the Earth* hath, is mere supposition; and the passages of the ancients, concerning the creation of the world, are incoherent rhapsodies of unintelligible notions falsely cited, or misunderstood, and give no comfort in their knowledge, though they were true.

My Lord *Sbrowbury* is at last at the *Hague*, with his new Lady, whom he hath brought over to his religion; which, if it be done from the truest principle, is the worthiest motive of his engaging in such a match. The Electress told me it more than

than two months ago: but I would not be the first to speak of it.

Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.

Rotterdam, Dec. 29, 1705, N.S.

MADAM,

I Would have you above all books, that ever I yet could find, inquire for a little *Scotch* tract of devotion, which is but little-known in *England* but to those, that knew the incomparable author. The book is intitled, (as if it were named from heaven itself) *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, in 8vo. This discourse of his was the effect of the thoughts and practice of one of the best philosophers, sublimest divines, and most polite men of our country; who was eminent for all the learning, wit, and eloquence, according to the language of the country. His *Latin* is charming, his manners were more. He was a teacher of wisdom and philosophy, (whereof he was public professor, when but a youth) at the time, when others are only at the best fit to be taught; spending his precious life in constant labours from a child almost to instruct others, viz. from sixteen or seventeen to nineteen, professor of philosophy; from nineteen to twenty-three, or twenty-four, in the ministry; and from twenty-four to his death, in teaching, as professor in divinity, in one of our universities, finishing his course before he was yet twenty-eight years of age.

I have read all your mystical writers, and yet really understand as little of the most part of them (even of the best) as I do of the most dark prophetic passages of the *Bible*. You will know the former treatise of the *Life of God in the Soul of Man*, by a treatise of the Bishop of *Salisbury's*,
 I which

and several of her friends.

which the Bishop (who put it forth) did print with it at the same time, which he intitleth, *The Beginnings and Progress of a spiritual Life*. They, that have the true taste, will find the difference, though the Bishop hath put his name to the title page, common to both discourses. The last discourse doth beautify the more the first, as the shades do give a relief to the picture.

I do not trouble you with news here, having all the time I was at the *Hague*, (except a visit or two to Mr. *Stanhope*, and to the *Hanover* envoy) preferred the conversation with Mr. *Cunningham* to all courtship of the great folks. Yet I went to *Leyden*, twice or thrice, to have some conversation with old acquaintance. And had it not been for the advantage of seeing Monf. *Bayle* five or six times, one day had seemed an hundred.

Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.

London, June 17, 1707.

MADAM,

I was glad to hear of your being in a country, where the situation pleaseth so much as you mark in yours I am favoured with. I wish also the solitude you are in, may continue to be still more pleasant to you, and also profitable too; as I wish either business, or retirement from it, may be agreeable or advantageous to myself, who at this time am in a strait betwixt two, whether to depart for *Scots-Britain*, or to remain where I am. Interest and my inclination call contrary ways. It is like reason, at least necessity, will determine me at last. I had wrote to you sooner, if I had been able to give any account of Mrs. *Burnet's* passage, of which I could learn nothing, by any way I endeavoured to know, till going to Madam *Lockhart's*,
 VOL. II. O

bart's, and inquiring of her, she told me she had got safe to *Holland*, and all the family, and were come to the *Hague* with my Lord *Portland*, finding herself already better of the voyage: of all which the Lady *Jekyl* had an account of by a letter from herself. I desired her to carry over some of your papers; she said she would give one to Mr. *Clerc* there, if she could get any e'er she went away. The Bishop went away to *Salisbury*, the morrow after his wife left the town. Since his departure, the Bishop of *Exeter* hath been translated to *Winchester*, the ceremony thereof being performed at *Bow* church in *Cheapside*, and the two Bishoprics of *Exeter* and *Chester* are yet undisposed; but the rumour is, that the filling of these vacancies runs betwixt Sir *William Dawes* and Dr. *Blackball*, and other two candidates I cannot name. Since you went, the good Bishop of *Ely* is also dead, and the Bishop of *Norwich* immediately preferred to that see, and Dr. *Trimnel* (minister of St. *James's* parish, and the late Lord *Sunderland's* chaplain) got immediately the Bishopric of *Norwich*. I only remark, that all the Bishop's enemies here acknowledge now he deserved most of any, &c. and wonder, that at least the see of *Ely* was not given him; both because it is five hundred pound more then *Sarum*, and that at least he should be set over a more willing people and flock. I write no public news, which the news papers, that are in every adjacent village, can inform you better of. And as for private news, I know not how much nor how little more to write to you, (who it may be will think I have already writ too much) except that I am with all sincere humility and duty,

Madam,

*Your most ready and obedient
servant to command,*

G. BURNET of *Kemnay*.

I gave

I gave my Lady *Masbam* one of your books, long e're your letter came.

P. S. My Lady *Masbam* is out of town, and my Lady *Piers*; and every body, that can go, will leave this city, after the term is out. I would gladly know, if there be any convenience to stay a day or two where you are, if one would be so bold to disturb your solitude. I do not pretend to judge of your letters, that are printed, further than that I think, after such reasoning of yours, both upon the positive proofs of infallibility, (such as they are able to find that own it) and also against their arguments of prejudices, objections, and difficulties in not admitting it (which is their indirect way of proving, or rather denying still) the truth, and also boldly affirming falshood, without proving any thing, you have foiled the adversaries so with their own weapons, and have wrested their own arguments out of their own mouths; so that one can hardly understand, how any cannot see the truth defended in them, but those, who shut their eyes, and will not see it; and even they must be silenced, who are not convinced by you, if any sense of shame and reason remain. God grant you may always so overcome all the truth's, and all your own enemies.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Burnet.

SIR,

I Am sorry you should think, the small sheet of paper I sent you, was the pattern of what I was willing to receive from you, as you seem to do by returning me so exact a measure of it, and doubting, whether I should not think I had wrote too much. But I assure you (whatever little raillery may have past) there is no news you could think

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fit

fit to send me, that would not be very acceptable to me; and I am far from desiring short letters from my friends, though sometimes my little infirmities, being weary with writing things of another kind, or want of matter (which was the case in my last) may hinder me from giving them any more than an assurance, that I do not forget, or neglect them, depending on their goodness to accept what my weak capacity can afford. By the complaints you have made of the ill management of your affairs, I am inclined to think your presence may be necessary to them; but as I am not fully acquainted with them, nor with what engages your inclinations here, I cannot pretend to advise; though no body more heartily wishes you may determine for that, which will be most for your good. You do not mention how soon you think of going. I should be glad to see you before you take a journey to a place, where it is likely you will be detained some considerable time, and wish we had any accommodation for you here; but there is no spare room in the house, where we are, and though I would willingly resign mine for two or three nights, I cannot give *Madam de Vere* (the Lady I am with) the inconvenience of a bedfellow in the condition she is, having kept her chamber almost the whole time we have been here, by an illness, that of itself very much disturbs her rest in the night, and sometimes obliges her to keep her bed all day. There are some inns in a village about a mile from us; but I am afraid the inconvenience of lying at such a distance, in a place, where you could have no company, nor any kind of diversion, would be a mortification, that nothing in our solitude could atone for. Mr. *Short-hose* talked of calling to see me, in his way to *Guilford*, which he may easily do on horseback, for we are not a mile out of his road, and may very well be here time enough to dine with us,

and

and stay the best part of the afternoon, having but six miles from hence to his journey's end. I wish, Sir, we could have the same favour from you with as much ease.

The only dissatisfaction I have in this place, is, that we are a mile from the nearest church, and a good deal more from our parish church, where I have been but once since I came, and found the walk thither and back again, in the heat of the day; so great a fatigue, as I durst not venture on again. But last *Sunday* some ladies, who live betwixt us and *Ripley*, made my going thither easy, by obliging me to dine with them, from whence we went to the afternoon sermon, and heard a young divine*, who was related to one of them, and came here but for two or three days. I was much pleased with his discourse, and could not forbear expressing my satisfaction, when we met in the evening at the Lady's house, where I dined. He has since done me the favour to come twice to see me, and as I found his conversation answerable to the expectation his sermon gave me of him, I was very willing to encourage an acquaintance, which he seems desirous to continue, and to confirm, by visiting some of my friends in my name. He goes to *Salisbury* about a month hence, and in a day or two returns to *Chiswick*, which is very near where Lady *Piers* is, to whom he will take the charge of a letter from me. This being the only interruption has been made to my solitude, (except one visit from the ladies I mentioned, which was more obliging than I expected from strangers) is all the account I can give you from hence.

I wish Dr. *Blackball*, and Dr. *Stanhope*, who, I hear, is a candidate for one of the Bishoprics, may both be preferred, if it will not spoil two excellent preachers, for few of them are so diligent in

* Mr. Fenn.

that as our Bishop, who indeed, it is strange, should not be translated.

I am glad you are so well satisfied with the reasoning in my *Letters*, and wish they may be as convincing to those, who need them; but I know too well the power of strong prejudices, to hope for much effect from them, or greatly to wonder, that others do not see what seems sufficiently plain to me. You take no notice of some nonsense in that little book, which I suppose you must observe; and I believe would hardly know, how to correct it, though the words are only misplaced, but so much, that I had some difficulty myself to find, whether any words were left out or not; and to save you the pains of picking out the sense; I will set down here, how the words should be read: page 35. after *disputed expression* line 12. read, "But it seems, that what those terms signify in other places, is not the rule of their meaning here, unless I can prove, that they do not signify something else here, when *Christ* employs them to express his consolatory promises to his sorrowful church. This task of proving, that a thing is not said, or what it does not mean, line 20, the gentleman is frequently, &c." You may, if you please, write this on the margin, and strike out seven lines in the book betwixt line 12. and line 20, and it would not be amiss to give notice of this fault to all you know, who have the book, if it can be without too much trouble, which will not be worth the while to take either for that or the author, though sincerely and with much gratitude,

S I R,

June 27, 1707.

Your most humble servant,

C. T.

Mr.

Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.

MADAM,

I Received yours in answer to the first I sent you. I thought to have come to see you before I wrote back again. But since I could not do that so soon, I have sent still this letter before me, to accompany another from an acquaintance of yours, whom I saw one day with your friends; Mrs. *Squib* and *Newman* at their house; when they inquired also very much for your two letters printed, which they said I was to deliver them by your orders. I told them I had but one left of several I had bought, which were disposed off, and had but one sent me by your orders, which I carried to them the other day.

The town is most desolate and solitary in many places, and more dispeopled in *June* last, then ever I knew it in the latter end of *July* before. This occasions much barrenness of news here. And abroad, the expectations of the motions of Prince *Eugene* one way, and the King of *Sweden* another, keep all motions and actions in *Flanders* in suspense. But if the Duke of *Savoy*, and the *Imperial* army, enter *French* ground with any success, I believe, the Duke of *Marlborough* may give us occasion to speak of him within a little time thereafter. Much talk hath been of late here about the *French* prophets, who have been tried lately at *Guildhall*, before my Lord Mayor, and the Lord Chief Justice *Holt*; but their sentence is delayed till the next term. Two gentlemen of good sense, and more probity, have gone in to them, one of which is named (I think) Justice *Lacy*. The mystics tell very strange things of them. Cousin *Douglas's* father, who hath been with me this afternoon, hath acquainted me of some things befallen some amongst them of late, which seem to be miraculous,

raculous, as the gift of tongues, particularly the *Latin* and *French*, and that in an instant, to persons utterly unacquainted with either. Neither you nor Mr. *Cockburn* have attained so far to perfection in mystical devotion; for I remember you had an instructor in the *Latin*, and you took with you a Grammar for the *French*. I dare not jest upon them, not being assured of the truth or falshood either of their pretended mission into this country: but think there is but too much ground to fear, that the greatest judgments will follow the greatest mercies, where they have not led to repentance and amendment of life, (which is the substance of all their denunciations and warnings, so far as I have heard) especially in such places, as this island, where the light and conviction have been greater.

I told you (I think) of Dr. *Sherlock's* death. Dr. *Blackball* was to preach his funeral sermon; but upon some prudential considerations, which I believe he did suggest himself, it was laid aside. The Deanry is to be given to the provost of *Eaton*, Dr. *Godolphin*. Dr. *Adams*, lecturer of *St. Clement's*, and minister of *St. Alban's Woodstreet*, in the city, is made a Dean. I know not the Dean-ry's name.

Dr. *Higens*, (that was in prison of Newgate) hath printed his famed sermon preached at *Whiteball*: he is now at liberty; but being enjoined to return to *Ireland*, and not to preach much longer here, he preached on *Sunday* last, (sacrament day) at *St. Margaret's Westminster*, his farewell sermon, (as they call it) which I heard myself. He did deliver the same with a very good grace, and as much boldness, as a very bold text could point out to him. On the frontispiece of his printed sermon is a witticism of a sarcasm above any thing either of satyr or jest was ever yet brought from the Scripture, which none can see enough the pertinency of to the purpose it relates, without judg-
ing

ing it to be the properest quotation ever was made. Till I can come, and bring or send the sermon itself, take it in short from chap. vii. of *Amos*, and the verses 10, 12, and 13. His text on *Sunday* last was in the 1st Epist. to the *Philippians*, chap. i. v. 27. and beginning of the 28th, which you can find out sooner than by my writing. There are many things relating to that great man Dr. *Sherlock*, and his incomparable wife *Martha*, (who answered her name completely) as also concerning Dr. *Higgins*, which I would acquaint you at more length, than I can do in the longest letter you will allow me. Mr. *Cockburn's* sister, a very good lass, is come from *Holland*. She goes down to the North of *Britain* in a few days. On *Sunday* last I heard a good sermon in the afternoon, at the new chapel in *Great Queen-street*, which is much enlarged and made very pretty, and large as any in town. Dr. *Hayley's*, his brother, (who is also Doctor of Divinity) preacheth there in the forenoon, and another Doctor lectures in the afternoon.

I have a letter from the *Hague*, which gives hopes the Elector of *Hanover* will venture both his person, and all his troops, at the head of the *Imperial* army, and take the chief command of the Emperor's army upon himself, if the respective princes will furnish him with competent force to act with honour. But at present his highness is at *Pymont*, drinking the waters. This is all I can write for certain of latest news from beyond sea. And what I have written is enough to trouble you with at this time: wherefore I only conclude with Mrs. *Vere Squib's* love to you, and the humble duty of

Madam,

Your most obedient servant,

G. BURNET.

P. S.

London, July 8,
1707.

P. S. Besides the death of Dr. *Sherlock*, and Dr. *Patrick*, and lately Dr. *Mill*, at Oxford, Monf. *Leibnitz* writes to me of the death of Monf. *Cellarius* of *Leipfic*, who was one of the learnedest of the age for * * * History and Geography.

Mr. Burnet to Mrs. Trotter.

Kemnay, Nov. 29, 1707.

MADAM,

I Am reading something of Madam *Bourignon*, and like her, so far as I have read, better than all the mystics. I wonder at the great sense, clearness, divine fancy, and solid judgment (in the greatest matters of theology oftentimes) in a woman, that had neither learning, reading, nor study. I think Dr. *Gairnes's* apology of her elegantly written for the manner, and know him to be as pious as learned. He hath put forth two single sermons of that excellent mystic, the author of the *Life of God in the Soul of Man*, which I have read, and was ravished with. I am really sorry there were no more of that kind found amongst his papers.

If you would be so kind as to convey this letter to my Lady *Masham*, which hath all the news of learning and other kind here, I leave it open, that you may read them.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Burnet.

London, Dec. 13, 1707.

SIR,

I Am afraid you reproach me in your thoughts, for not having writ to you sooner; and I own
you

you have an appearance of reason to do so; but I assure you, it has not been from any neglect of you, but a necessity of employing the little time I can write in these short days, in some things, that require dispatch. Indeed I am always so ill qualified to send you news of any kind (unless what concerns my few friends) that you would easily dispense with my silence, if your goodness did not give you a desire to know, that an insignificant friend of yours is in the land of the living. I go so seldom abroad, and see so few people, that I know very little of what passes in the world, growing every day more disengaged from it, and averse to a hurry of company, or diversions; which the advantage I found of my solitude last summer, has much contributed to. Yet even from thence, I may send you something new; and I believe you will be surprized to know, that the lady, with whom I went to the country, was Mr. *Le Clerc's* sister-in-law, the youngest mistress *Leti*, who is married to my son, and has already made me a Grandmother. He had reasons to conceal his marriage for some time, but he has now owned it to his relations, so that I am at liberty to speak of it. This business took up much of my time last winter, and occasioned some things in my conduct since, which perhaps you might take ill; but I was not mistress of another's secrets, and was obliged to do nothing, that might endanger the discovery of it. She is now gone to *Holland*, where her husband will meet her, and about next *May* I hope they will return here together. I am extremely pleas'd with his choice: she has many virtues, that will greatly supply her want of fortune; which, though the great motive of most marriages, perhaps, oftner hinders, than it makes the happiness of them. Bating that, she is all that I could have wished in a wife for him; and I have a double satisfaction to find in a worthy daughter an agreeable and affectionate friend. Her elder
sister

sister is now at *Hanover*, of whom I hear a great character: Mrs. *Burnet* in particular (who saw her there) says extraordinary things of her. I have seen the bishop's lady twice since her return, and found her wonderfully improved in her looks, as well as in her health; which God grant that excellent person may long preserve. I have not waited on lady *Masbam*, but hear her son has been ill of the small pox, which perhaps has hindered her coming to me. Poor lady *Piers* has had the misfortune to lose her eldest-darling son, which was so surprizing, and so grievous a blow to her, that all her reason, her piety, and the assistance of her tenderest friends could scarce support her mind under it; but, God be praised, she is now pretty well composed. Our family are all now settled at *Chealsea*, but were in the house with me for some time. My mother, and Mr. *Cockburn*, on their first meeting, found out, that he is nearer related to us, than to my brother; so from my cousin I send you a service, who wonders, that he has not had the favour of a letter from you; and only in that expectation has deferred writing to you, though he has often talked of doing it.

I hear a piece of news lately from your part of *Great Britain*, which, if it be no truer than the reports we are used to hear of things much nearer us, will be news to you; and that is, that you are going to marry a Lady there, who was your inclination twenty years ago. If so, I hope she is qualified to your wish, both for the care of your affairs, and for the satisfaction of your fancy, for I cannot see, that prudence and agreeableness are inconsistent; and that a fine mistress may not make a very good wife. However, if beauty should be wanting, I think it may best be spared, for that, of all other charms, a husband grows soonest insensible to; and provided a woman is not disagreeable, a good understanding, with true piety, will make her all ways

ways engaging, and every day a new and solid blessing. Such a happiness, sir, I heartily wish you, and think it would be well, if you could find one, who could assist you in your country affairs; though, I believe, if you applied yourself a little more to them than you care to do, it would be better for your health. The toil and hurry of business are an excellent remedy for the disorders you are subject to, and therefore I cannot be very sorry, that you have found something of that kind there, especially since you have such good conversation, as you say, to fill the vacant intervals. It will extremely please me to hear, that together they have the effect I hope for in your health, which no body wishes you more sincerely than,

S I R,

Your most humble Servant,

C. T.

P. S. My sister sends you her service; and poor Mrs. *How*, who has been very ill of late, desires me to send you her prayers and humblest service.

Mrs. Cockburn to Mr. Burnet, written after her marriage.

London, Sept. 10, 1708.

S I R,

THOUGH you may think I have no right to complain of not hearing from you in so long a time, since I have not answered your last; yet I cannot but lament, that I can have no news of you from any of the friends you use to correspond with, whom I enquire of. None of them have any later account of you, than about the time, in which I had the favour of your last, dated *April* the

the 28th, though all of us were in hopes of seeing you here before now, which was one reason of my deferring to write. It is true, I had many other hindrances, if not sufficient to justify so long a silence, yet I doubt not you will make some allowances for the important changes, that have happened in my affairs, which, I believe, you are before now informed of. Mr. Cockburn desires me to make you his apology for not writing: indeed he has been engaged in so much business upon entering into matrimony, and into orders, and with the charge he is since called to, that he has had no time to spare; though I dare answer for him, as well as for myself, that you have had a great share in his thoughts, as you will always have in both our friendship. You was not, you see, mistaken in apprehending, that our intimacy would turn to love: but, I hope, you was, in supposing it would convert us from the love of God. We are much mistaken in our own hearts, if that was not the ground of our affection for one another; and if our chief aim was not to improve that, and to assist each other in performing the duties, that flow from it, when we engaged in this union. Sure we are, that we had no worldly nor light ends in it; and we are persuaded, that the goodness of our intentions will secure us the blessing of providence. Mr. Cockburn went to *Nayland* (a place near *Colchester*) in *June* last, where his duty engages him; and our affairs have not suffered me to go to him yet; so that we have been separate near three months, except one week, that he was so kind to come and stay with me, when I was ill. I am now pretty well recovered, and am hastening to him as much as I can; but I have a great deal of troublesome business to bustle through, before I can compass it; for we have a house in the country to furnish, and I must buy most things here in order to it, which is a new work to me, and a

very

very expensive one. However, I hope to be at *Nayland* in less than a fortnight. I am sorry, Sir, I cannot expect to see you before I go; but hope we may hereafter meet, and that in the mean time we may have the favour of hearing sometimes from you. Since your two friends are now made one, they may claim a double portion of your friendship and good wishes; and, I hope, mine will not be the less acceptable, for coming under a new name, since I am still the old friend, and very sincerely,

S I R,

Your most humble servant,

C. C.

P. S. I was much surprized at the news of Lady *Masbam's* death, having been in *Hyde-Park* with her not long before, she was then ill indeed, but there was no appearance, as I thought, of her being so near her end. Perhaps so long a journey might hasten it, since she died four days after her coming to the *Bath*. I lament her loss the more now, that I should have been her neighbour, for though we are not in the same county, we are just on the borders of it, and not far, as I am told, from *Oates*; which her conversation would have made a great happiness to me. Mrs. *Burnet* has been ill at the *Bath*, but I have not heard of her very lately. All your friends here of my acquaintance are well.

Dr.

Dr. DENTON NICHOLAS to Mrs.
TROTTER.

Jan. 17, 1703.

MADAM,

THIS I hope will find you preparing for your journey to *London*, where all your friends will be very glad to see you, but none more than myself.

Here is little or no public news. The Duke of *Marlborough* is thought to get this day to *Holland*.

I hope your answer to this will be by word of mouth; and because it is like to be the last I shall send you, before your journey, I will make up my whole epistolary accounts with you, and answer the latter part of your long letter, which I think sets the matter even.

You prove what you endeavour in that letter very unanswerably; and without compliment, I think you have done it more clearly and more effectually in half a sheet, than *Grotius* in a whole volume.

As to oracles, you already know my mind: it is likely, that they were at first invented for gain, and ceased when the cheat began to be found out. I will only add one thing; if it be granted there ever was any real oracle, it will be such a proof of the truth of that religion, in which they were delivered, and such an instance of revelation, as few good *Christians* will allow in the *Pagan* religion.

I think you fully prove the truth of the *Christian* religion from the ignorance of its spreaders, despicableness of them, necessity of revelation, state of morality and learning at that time.

As for the meanness and despicableness of the broachers, and spreaders of the *Christian* religion, it has always been made use of by the enemies of *Christi-*

and several of her friends.

Christianity, as an argument against it, who say, that a prince never makes use of scoundrels, beggars, illiterate, or stupid persons for ministers or ambassadors, but that such persons are the fittest tools for cunning and designing men to work with.

I only disagree with you in one thing, which is your abating some part of the authority of the holy Scriptures, which will necessarily make way for oral tradition, and too much authority of the church.

I assure you, I think you not only the best champion for religion in the world, but the best *Christian* too, and consequently the most willing to forgive; else I had not let part of your letter been so long unanswered.

As for the miracles.

Jan. 27.

I designed to have finished this, and have sent it by the post, that very day that I received yours, which gave me hopes of seeing you in town yesterday, and did not send it afterwards, because I was in hopes you would have been upon the road, before this could have got to *Salisbury*.

I wish you would send me two lines to let me know the occasion of putting off your journey, (for I am uneasy, and shall be so, till I hear from you, for fear some illness or accident should have hindered you) and if you have fixed upon any other time for it. I ought to beg your pardon for the length of this letter, and am afraid of increasing it. So shall only assure you, that

I am,

Your most humble servant, &c.

Dr. Denton Nicholas to Mrs. Trotter.

MADAM,

I Do not remember, that the *Romans* had any oracles in *Italy*, but all the celebrated ones were in
Vol. II. P Greece,

Greece, which perhaps from that branch of its poetry, as much as any thing else, might deserve the common epithet *Græcia mendax*. I call the religion of *Greece* one branch of its poetry, because (as you know better than I do) the old poets were the heathen creed makers, and indeed their whole religion was of the poets making.

Most of the famous stories of oracles, are said to have happened long before the age of *Augustus*, in a time when the world was very credulous, and of which the history is delivered to us with little accuracy, and mixed with abundance of lies and incredible stories.

We find *Cicero*, in his book of divination, complaining, that oracles were ceased before his time, for which that great man endeavours to give a reason, but finds no better than this, that perhaps the inspiring force of the earth was grown old and decayed. From hence, by the bye, you see the falseness of that ridiculous opinion, that they ceased upon our Saviour's birth, for *Cicero* died before our Saviour was born.

Instead of oracles among the *Romans*, were augurs. It is certain, that business was all a cheat, and an honest *Roman*, who was an augur, is famous for a saying upon that subject, *viz.* he wondered how two augurs could keep their countenances when they met.

As for oracles.

From the dubiousness of most of them, of which so many are well known, I need not give any instance.

From the apparent contrivance of some of them to answer a particular occasion.

From the shifting answers.

From the apparent avarice, as when the oracle answered the *Romans*, that they should in time be conquerors over their enemies, and then they must be sure to bring part of the spoils, and consecrate them

them in that temple. So in a war between the *Crotonienses* and *Locrenses*, the first vowed to consecrate a tenth part of the spoils at *Delpbos* to *Apollo*: The last sent to the same oracle to know how they might get the better in the war. The oracle answered, they must promise a greater part of the spoil than their enemies had done; so they devoted a ninth part.

From hence it is my opinion, (and it is our friend's also, whom I talked with upon this subject) that the oracles were cheats of the priests, and there was no danger of their betraying them, for by that craft they lived.

I thought to have written this over again, but I am so tired with it (and so I believe you are too by this time) that I will only tell you,

I am,

your most humble servant, &c.

MRS. TROTTER to Mr. COCKBURN.

Ockham Mills, June 3, 1707.

SIR,

I Sent you a wretched scrawl from *London*, when I was neither provided of tolerable writing tools, nor knew, whether the matter I writ about was a proper proposal to you, or not: but it was enough, that something had been mentioned, that might concern one I profess a friendship for. Whether it did or not, was your part to determine; and when I tell you, that I had very little time to give to *Gustavus* that day, (though the last of seeing him for several months) and that he was with me, when I wrote to you, you will find, that whatever kind of affection I have for him, if it be passion, as you used to say it is, that however I do not suffer it so to fill my mind, as to make me neglect what I owe to myself, or my friends, or I hope any other duty; and whilst we can be thus far master of ourselves, I do not see, that to resolve against pleasure, or taking delight in such persons, as are worthy of our esteem, is any part of *Christian* wisdom. The Stoics indeed, who looked no farther, or had at best but a dim view of a future state, and therefore endeavoured to find their happiness here, had reason to disengage their minds from every thing without them, that so they might not be liable to those disappointments, and afflictions, which are always mingled with the enjoyment of things out of our own power. And because that notwithstanding all their care, they could not avoid some sufferings; and that even some pleasures would force themselves upon them, they were forced by their principles to maintain so great an absurdity, as that none of those things, which do not depend on ourselves, either pleasure, or

pain,

and several of her friends.

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pain, are good or evil. But methinks the *Christian* doctrine leads us to very different conclusions, and gives us notions much better suited to the condition we find ourselves in. We are taught, that the good things of this life are blessings from God, for which we are to praise him, who has given us all things richly to enjoy; and that the losses and afflictions, which we meet with in those things, that we value here, are to be looked on as ratherly chastisements, or trials of our obedience and submission to his will, who gives, and requires them of us, as he thinks fit. But how can the creatures be blessings, or punishments, or occasions of trial to us, if we have no degree of delight in them? And as we find there is inevitable pain annexed to all things, that are destructive of our nature, with an eager desire of being freed from that pain, the accomplishment of which as necessarily gives a proportionable pleasure, which it seems our maker thought proper incitements to that care of our being, which he requires of us, either because reason alone would not be sufficient to set us on our duty, or that in goodness he would sweeten the toil of it to us; why then may he not as well have designed that delight, which we find ourselves inclined to take in persons agreeable to us, for an incitement to the mutual duties of society? It is true, the most unavoidable pleasures often prove a snare, and occasions of the greatest sins, which confirms me in the opinion, that there is no fault in any of them but in the excess; that is, when we are so far transported by them, as to neglect our duty, or to act directly against it, or to set up our rest in them, as all the good we aim at. To keep ourselves from any such excess, is the great business of virtue; which when we do, the delight we take in any of the creatures, seems to me so far from being a fault, that we could have no virtue without it; and when we make them occasions of

P 3

look-

looking up to the hand from whence they came, considering them as transient instances of his goodness, suited to a state of imperfection and suffering, to excite our gratitude for them, and our desires of those far greater and durable pleasures, we may hope for, I doubt not, that we then answer the end, for which those allays of the miseries of life were given us. This is the use I would have *Constantia* make of that tenderness her heart is so much disposed to; and as she is of the same sentiments with me, she hopes to have it always in her power to regulate herself by those principles, though she does not intend to resolve against all pleasure, which she thinks is throwing off human nature, and blames you for persuading *Arwide* to it, though she believes *Christina*, and absence, will effect a great deal more against his inclination for her, than your counsel, or his mistaken wisdom. Since you desire some account of her, I must tell you, that she had a letter from *Arwide* before I came out of town, which gave her some trial of what command she has of herself. She had at first a little impatience to answer it immediately, but I advised her not to give way to it, and she since sends me word, that she has writ to all her absent friends before him. She says, she need not be in haste, for he, that resolves to think very little of her, and to have no delight in her, cannot but be very indifferent what her thoughts for him are; or if he has a curiosity to know them, he may consider, that the sensibility he seemed to have for her, and the pleasure she thought him capable of receiving only from her, was the occasion of all that soltiness she had for him: and then he will be philosopher enough to tell himself, what must become of the effect, when he has taken away the cause; which she believes will not cost his wisdom much pains to accomplish, for his letter, she said, had fully convinced her, that she had made but very slight

impre-

impressions on him, since he could be so much roused, as he owned, at *Christina's* coldness, when he had just left her, and when she had given him most reason to be pleased with her: But that he could think, though only for a moment, that breaking off one engagement would put an end to the other, made it evident, that her part of the passion was a very trifling one, which her heart was too delicate to accept of, a transient pleasure unaccountably raised from the next immediate cause, which having no deeper root, must be very short lived. That sort of fluttering folly she said has its season, and its use, and might sometimes be given way to; but then it should be only as we would dance after a fiddle, to unbend the mind, and recreate the spirits, not to make it the object of our wishes, being unworthy of a moment's thought, much more that the soul should feed on it, and suck in pleasure with greediness, expressions, that shocked *Constantia*, relishing too much of a mind wholly immersed in sense, and she did not blame *Arwide* for despising and resolving against such pleasure, since he could find none of any other kind in her. What turn her mind had taken for him before this letter came, she thought she should now let him know; and I agreed with her in that, though I was not satisfied with all her reasons for it: but thus far I may tell you, that she was perfectly calm, and composed, and the satisfaction she hoped, or rather wished for, was of a solid and lasting nature. More particular I must not be, for you are too much *Arwide's* friend to be trusted with what she would not impart to him. And now it is time to leave our friends, him to his folly under the name of wisdom, and her to some wisdom under the appearance of folly. Let us endeavour to profit by both, and return to ourselves.

I am here in as profound a solitude, as even you could wish for; the place very agreeable, and no-

thing wanting but a tender companion of our unbended hours, to make it perfectly so to me. Letters from my friends may in part supply that want; and since I have no other diversion, it will be obliging in you to write as frequently as you can to,

S I R,

Your very humble Servant,

C. TROTTER.

After this terrible epistle, of a length not very usual from me I assure you, I have yet more to trouble you with, and that not only with the bare pains of reading it. My papers were not out of the press, when I came away; at least I had none of them: but Mr. *West* having since writ to me about them, I have desired, that the bookseller should send a dozen of them to you, in hopes you will excuse the trouble they will put you to. One of them I would have given to Dr. *Inglis*, with my service; another to Mr. *Shortbosc*, and one to Mr. *Burnet*, though, I suppose, he has one before now. If Mr. *Shortbosc* knows of any body, that is going soon to *Salisbury*, he would oblige me in sending one by the first occasion to my mother. Two of them may come by the coach to me, or some other way, as I shall direct; and the rest I desire you to keep by you, till you hear farther from me. If they are not brought to you on *Thursday* next, do me the favour, when it lies in your way, to call at the bookseller's, Mr. *Curchill*, at the *Black Swan*, in *Pater-noster-row*, and ask, if Mr. *West* had given him a direction to send twelve of those papers to your lodgings, as I desired; if not, I suppose he will expect a note from me: so pray let me know, and write all you think upon what I have said, without disguise, and without delay. For fear you should have forgot my ad-

address, I send it here; at Mr. Rountree's, at Ockham Mills near Ripley, in Surry.

If you find *Arwide* inclined to conceal from *Constantia* any thing, that passes betwixt him and *Christina*, or the state of his heart towards either, pray advise him to deal faithfully in it, whatever effect he may apprehend it will have on *Constantia*: for I dare answer for her, that she will not think she has lost any thing, if, instead of a divided lover, she finds in him a sincere entire friend; and that on those terms he may be secure of her friendship, whatever becomes of the softer foolish part. I did not think any thing could draw me to write so long a letter, but don't be frightened, you will not see many such from me.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Cockburn.

Ockham Mills, June 16, 1707.

S I R,

THOUGH I think a sincere friend the most valuable treasure in the world, I have often thought it would be more for one's ease (if it were allowable to consult that alone) never to have any; for friendship has been always with me but another name for suffering, partly for reasons not very commendable, as the apprehension, that my affection is not sufficiently returned, which some say a sublime love should not be disturbed with; but chiefly because I have always added the troubles of a friend to my own, it being impossible for me not to interest myself in all that concerns them. The fears and strugglings I find you labour under, give me no little pain for you; and your apprehension of drawing hatred and persecution on yourself, if you live up to the character you have framed, alarms me

me much; though I can imagine no reasonable ground for it, and must beg of you to explain yourself upon it. All the duties of that character seem to me of such a nature, as, if well discharged, force a reverence and esteem, even from the most profligate. The strictness it requires is, I think, only in abstaining from all that is vicious, or vain, and in the most exact practice possible of every *Christian* virtue; which indeed is an obligation common to all, and very lovely in itself; and that which is their peculiar, the care of instructing others, if it be done with prudence, with meekness, and compassion to their infirmities, it will seldom be ill received, especially coming from one of an exemplary life: an expression, that abates the fear I am inclined to, that the character you have framed, is something too singular, aiming at things, which (if any perfection) are not practicable by all, as what is exemplary must be; but I will not allow myself to conjecture, till you think fit to explain those expressions, that have raised my fears. I am not of opinion, that pleasure is inconsistent with a serious frame of mind; much less, that the satisfaction, which proceeds from friendship, joined with tenderness, (which is indeed what *Constantia* means by pleasure) is unsuitable to your design. For, if it were so, it would never be allowable for one of that character to marry where he could love tenderly; though I agree with you, that there is a kind, or degree, or rather a circumstance of pleasure, that unhinges the mind, by putting it in too great an agitation; but that I believe always proceeds from something new and unexpected, or the continuance of which is uncertain: And when all those circumstances are over, though the pleasure does not cease, yet it leaves the mind firm and composed, and capable of turning immediately to the most serious reflections, which is an observation I have made in all those (who are but few indeed) that, in that state, where they

they may be most secure of each others affection, have retained the tender softest part of it, whose minds are never discomposed by it, or unfitted for any duty, that requires the most attentive frame. And therefore I think you should not absolutely resolve against pleasure, notwithstanding the ill effect you may have found from it, since that is not a necessary consequence of it in all circumstances, and it is not impossible, that you may some time or other meet with one to pass your life with, whose conversation would at once unbend, and strengthen your mind, and whose tenderness would endear the little services, and sweeten your cares, without any danger of transporting you from yourself. This idea, which I have formed for you, is what I believe you could relish so well, that I cannot but be zealous in persuading you not to let your fears, grounded on what you have found from transient pleasures, make you deprive yourself of a satisfaction, rarely met with indeed; but, when it is, certainly the most valuable of any of this world, and what would be most necessary in that retired state you propose to yourself. I will not undertake to convince *Constantia*, that she wronged *Arwide* in her opinion of his affection; for, notwithstanding his excuses, I cannot but see, that she would have a great deal to object, if she thought fit, which I believe she would not, at least as her mind was disposed when I saw her last. She must keep it calm, she said, and rather yield to a rival, than be ever striving against her for the superior parts, which at first she had no reason to think she should have great occasion to do, as she represented the case to me. She told me, that when *Arwide* first spoke of *Christina* to her, it was only as of one, whom he had some inclination for, but so much feared to love, that he never spoke of it to her; so far he was from talking of a prior engagement, or of being counted dishonourable, if he should retire. But she said, if he now designed it a matter

matter of weight, from which he must never retreat, she was sorry she had interrupted an affection of that nature, by indulging in the least his sensibility for her; and must retrieve her fault as far as possible.

I believe she did not doubt the reality of what he felt for her, but thought it a momentary impression, which *Cristina* would easily efface; for she could not imagine it possible to keep a heart so very equally divided, as *Arwide* pretended his was.

She said it was very likely, that she should not be insensible on any considerable trial from *Gustavus*; but whether her kindness was greater, or less, for him, than for *Arwide*, she was most sure, that she should never have had a thought, that the breaking off with one must put an end to the other, which was plainly an effect of *Arwide's* first concern for *Cristina's* coldness, (not of his seriousness) though his next morning thought had more of tenderness for *Constantia* in it, which perhaps should make her amends. To say the truth, I do not find her half so much a riddle as he seems. I easily see which way her heart would most incline, if all things answered her idea and her wishes; but if I were to be *Arwide's* advocate with her, and would advise her to determine herself to his wishes, I believe neither you, nor he, could tell me which way I should direct her. In earnest, I should be glad to know what he would have her do? Can he be so little equitable, as to desire she should indulge any tenderness for one, who, when he is serious, thinks he ought to break off with her? and who, in his softer moments, gives another at least an equal share with her, nay a greater in her absence by his own confession; for *Cristina* has his friendship and his love, and he only could have love for *Constantia* if she were present. Pray what is that love, that ceases, when the subject of it is absent? I confess

fels I do not understand it, and have heard *Constantia* say, that where she could love, absence was so far from abating any degree of her tenderness, that it often served to discover a great deal more of it to herself, than she knew of before. Thus you see, though we thought our two friends sympathized so much, the disposition of their hearts seems now very different; and if it is so, in my opinion it will be best for them not to entertain the least degree of love for one another, but even to forget it ever was named between them, especially if *Arwide* persists to think, when he is serious, that he ought to break it off, for that will always bring into *Constantia's* mind her usual—what is he to me?—this is not to last, and then it shall,—it can be nothing to me. Besides that sentiment is entirely opposed to her's, who finds nothing in her inclinations inconsistent with the most serious frame of mind. Let me know, if you approve of my giving *Constantia* this advice, and whether *Arwide* will dispose himself to follow it, as I doubt not he may easily do, with *Cristina's* help.

I thank you for remembering me in your *Hungary* water, when I had no thought of it: one bottle would have been very sufficient, unless you meant them an emblem of your friendship, of which a double portion might not be unacceptable to one, who, as I told you, is apt to fear her's is not sufficiently returned: but I hope, by your example, to be as wise as you wish.

S I R,

Your very humble Servant,

C. T.

Our making an apology for the length of our letters puts me in mind of our friends, who always condemned themselves for being too long together

gether, and every time they met encreased the fault. But as there is no indiscretion in the length of these epistolary visits, I think we need not constrain ourselves in them: therefore pray don't pretend to make amends for the length of your last, unless it be by a longer. I received a letter yesterday from my brother, by which I find, that one I writ to him five weeks ago about some business of consequence, has miscarried, and therefore I have sent this by another direction, though he has given me none; but I believe he is generally near the Duke of Marlborough. I do not know where the camp is, and must desire you to add what is farther necessary to the address, and your pardon for giving you the trouble of sending it to the post, which goes you know on Tuesdays.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Cockburn.

June 23, 1707.

SIR,

I DON'T know whether my concern for your affairs may occasion me much uneasiness, but I am sure your obliging offer of assisting me in mine, has drawn more trouble on you than I (and perhaps than you) imagined I should give you; and indeed I am sorry it happens so, for I do not love to trespass on the goodness of my friends: but the business in the inclosed is of consequence to me, and if only trusted to a letter, without any body's taking farther care of it, perhaps I should hear no more of it, at least in a long time, and delay might be very prejudicial, which is the reason, that I give you the trouble of the inclosed, and beg the favour of you to endeavour to get an answer to it: It is for Mr. St. John, the secretary of war. I have left it open, that you may be acquainted with the business,

business, in case you should see him yourself, as I hope you will, though I am not sure he is in town, but that you will easily know at his office in Scotland-Yard near Whitehall. I believe his house is there too, which will be the surer place to find him in, for he is scarce ever in his office. I had a letter from my brother lately, which, if it had come a few days sooner, might have saved that, which you sent away for me, which was to supply one I thought had miscarried; but in his last I find he has received it, and upon that, sends me word that the Duke of M. desired I should go to Mr. St. John in his name, &c. which I should have done myself, if I had been in town; but since I must trouble you in my stead, I would fain make it as easy to you as possible. If you find any difficulty to meet with him, you may send the letter, leaving word when an answer shall be called for, or as you find most proper, and least troublesome to yourself. You will put it in another paper, seal and direct it, for Mr. St. John, secretary of war, &c. I have found seven lines of very good nonsense in the little books you sent me, and was long before I could know, whether any words were wanting or not, or how they should be read; so that to be sure it will be much more difficult to another, though the words are only misplaced, and therefore I desire you will let Dr. Inglis and Mr. Sbirthose know, how they ought to be placed, which, to save you the pains of finding out, I will set down here. Page 35, after *disputed expression*, line the 12th read, "But it seems, that what those terms signify in other places, is not the rule of their meaning here, unless I can prove, that they do not signify something else here, when Christ employs them to express his consolatory promises to his sorrowful church. This talk of proving, that a thing is not said, or what it does not mean, line 20, the gentleman, &c." If the book is not yet sent to my mother, I wish you would

would take the pains to write this on the margin of that designed for her, but it must be done with care, for that sort of paper is very apt to sink. In looking back on this letter, I am really ashamed to find it so long, and nothing in it but what is to give you trouble; but I hope, as you say, it will not always be so, or rather, that these may be the worst sort of troubles we may ever occasion each other. Most certainly that universal love, or inclination of doing good to all, which is the true spirit of *Christianity* is by no means inconsistent with particular friendships; nor will either be obstacles to one another, when well placed, and well regulated. We have instances of that in the most perfect example of love, that ever was, our Saviour himself; and there are many engagements of nature, of gratitude, and particular merit, which oblige us to a more peculiar concern for some persons than others, and whether we will or not, the services we can do one another will be contracted to a few objects, which by some of those ties are brought nearest to us: For creatures of such limited capacities, as we are, can give nothing universally to all, but good will, which will never be hindered from exerting itself on any occasion, that offers, by a rational and religious friendship, which I hope ours will always be; and then if it should give us some uneasiness, by interesting us in one another's concerns, those sufferings will be moderated by those very principles, on which they are grounded. I believe you may find by this letter, that my solitude has been interrupted, and my thoughts put in a little confusion, by a hurry of company I was in yesterday, though I had great amends for it in a sermon I heard extremely to my taste, and very *à propos* to the thoughts your letter had put me in that morning. The lady I am with is very ill, whom I have left too long, and must therefore defer what I would have said in answer to some part of your letter

and several of her friends.

ter, till I write again, which shall not be till I hear what *Arwide* says to all I writ of him in my last, as I hope I shall by next post. I did not know your sister designed for *England*, but wish she had come when I was in town, that I might have offered her the civilities, and little services, which a stranger (as I suppose she is there) may need; for to one so near to you I cannot but give a part of that concern, with which I am much

Your humble servant,

C. T.

Pray give my service to Dr. *Inglis*, and let him know his brother sends him his love in two letters I had lately from him.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Cockburn.

July 2, 1707.

SIR,

ONCE more I must give you a trouble much against my inclinations, which the inclosed to Mr. *St. John* will let you know the ground of. If there should be any need of finding Mr. *Potter*, the agent mentioned in it, he lives in *Bedford-court*, just in the angle on the right hand, as one goes into it from *Bedford-street*, *Covent-garden*; but he dines every day very near it, at the *Rummer tavern* in *Henrietta-street*, at which time he is more certain to be found there, than in any hour at home; and a man, may without inconvenience, enquire for him there, but perhaps there will be no occasion for it. I only beg the favour of you to inform yourself from Mr. *St. John*, what he does in this business; and if you can forgive the trouble I may put you to in this, (which I scarce forgive myself) I shall avoid, as much

much as possible, giving you any other, that may take up your time, which I know you have a just value of, and can employ to much better purposes. I wish Mr. *St. John* may not be mistaken in saying, they cannot do what we apprehend; the agent thought my Lord *Rivers* might have given another commission when he was in *Spain*.

I just mentioned in my last to you a sermon, which I was pleased with, not knowing then, that I should have any occasion to speak any more of that, or the divine who preached it: but as you are likely now to be soon acquainted with him, it will be proper to give you some account of the reason of it. It was by accident he preached here that day, being not of this place, but come down the night before to visit some relations of his, who live half a mile from us, and had been so obliging as to find us out in our solitude. Among them I saw him on the *Sunday* evening, and hearing he came from *Chiswick*, which is near the place, where Lady *Piers* is (whom I had not then heard from since I came hither) I could not forbear enquiring, if he knew any thing of her, which, though he did not, he offered to convey a letter to her, being to return in a few days. The *Tuesday* following he favoured me with a visit, and then I happened to say, that the satisfaction I had expressed on hearing his sermon was the greater, by finding it *à propos* to the thoughts, which a letter I had received from a friend that morning, had filled my mind with, the negligent performance of the publick worship, and the hindrances and helps to devotions in it. This drew some questions from him, which insensibly engaged me to talk more of you, and some of the subjects of our correspondence, than I at first designed, whether in necessary answers to him, or that one is apt to overflow in conversation, with what the mind is full of. Amongst the rest, I had said, that this friend was one, who had some

some thoughts of taking orders, which I should not have spoke of (not knowing whether you would have it mentioned or not, till you are determined) if I had apprehended he would enquire farther who this person was. But I thought I had no reason to decline letting him know where to find you, when he told me, that he was desirous to be acquainted with one, who, by what I said of him, he believed to be very good. I do not know whether this was his only motive, or whether he aims at confirming his acquaintance with me, by visiting those, whom I profess most friendship for, and by that means engaging me in a correspondence by letters, which he much desired at parting. But all here tell me I have made a conquest of the young divine, and I cannot say there was no appearance of it, though he said not a word about it, only saw me as often as possible whilst he stayed, which was just a week, professed to have greater satisfaction in my conversation than he ever had in any before, &c. and sent me two books, which, when I talked of returning, I found were designed for presents. One of them is Dr. *Hickes's Devotions*, which I believe I shall like very well. Tell me (if you know it) how it is to your taste. In fine he designs to wait on you, who will be better able than I to make a judgment of his knowledge and capacity, which I could not do in so short an acquaintance. All I can tell you is, that as he is here much esteemed in every respect, he seems to me to have very good inclinations and intentions; which I hope is a sufficient recommendation to you, since I have nothing else but some degree of inclination to good, that can recommend me to a friendship so valuable, and most dear to me. I have promised to answer Mr. *Fenn's* letters (for so he is called) though I am far from expecting that satisfaction from them, which I find in that only person's, whom I ever first proposed a correspondence with. But civility will oblige me to this,

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though

though it should prove some fatigue to me, as writing letters generally is, which you have no great reason to believe, whatever my other friends have; and by the way I hope Mr. Burnet does not know the size of my letters to you. To say the truth, I have always a pleasure in writing to you, even now that I am much out of order by two nights very ill rest, which, whether only occasioned by some disorder of the body, upon my over-walking myself again last *Sunday*, or, that the mind had any share in it, I do not certainly know; but perhaps some thoughts, which forced themselves upon me all the time I lay awake, might contribute to wake me, when my reason was asleep, as I sometimes find they will do, though I have command enough of them in the day.

I designed to tell you in answer to yours of the 21st of *June*, that I had no thoughts of your going seldom to church, when I talked of exemption from ordinances: but I aimed indeed at the conduct of some of your admired mystics; and let me open to a friend, whom I am so tenderly concerned for, one particular of the fears your apprehension of drawing persecution on yourself raised in me. It is, that you may have some design of following too closely those, whom you esteem so much; not only in the regulation of your mind (for that I should not oppose, much less be alarmed at, if you found it helped you best to attain the end of true religion) but I fear the singularities of their outward conduct, which seem to me not only unnecessary, and even inconsistent with their own principles (of allowing so much to the general corruption, and gross notions *Christians* are fallen into) but really a great hindrance to the good they might otherwise do in the world. This is a consideration, that I am sure will be of weight with you: and believe me, how much soever I should be concerned at any inconvenience you might bring on yourself,

yourself, I shall never, I hope, be so weak a friend, as to persuade you on that account to neglect your duty, but rather endeavour to encourage you in it, if it were needful. The natural warmth, which most mystics have, may perhaps have carried some of them beyond their first intentions, and hindered them from seeing, or sufficiently considering, how much more good a conduct imitable by the generality of mankind, and less liable to heighten mens prejudices against religion, might have enabled them to do. But I hope my dear friend's sedate temper, and clearer judgment, will make *Christian* prudence the guide of his zeal, and give him such a condescension to the capacities, and frailties of those he may have to do with, as will render his instructions most useful to them, avoiding every thing, that may gain him the character of a visionary person, one, who teaches impracticable things, or who places religion more in fine speculations, than in good works. How little just these prejudices may be against the mystics, is not to be considered; it is sufficient, that they give some occasion to them, which will make that not only commendable zeal, but indispensable duty, less effectual, I mean that of plainly condemning what is amiss (so far as is necessary, or as at present might be amended) though universally approved; and I believe it would be a very good rule for those, who would cure the diseases of the mind, as well as for the other sort of physicians, to take care, that what they apply for remedies, may be sure if they do no good, not to do any hurt. Forgive these cautions, which one so much superior to me in *Christian* knowledge cannot need, and take them as rather meant to draw some of your thoughts from you, than to give you mine; or as the officious effect of that sincere friendship, which makes me think myself concerned in all you do, or design. This thought grows upon me in my retirement,

where you are become dearer to me, than when I left you; in which I fear we are not on equal terms, nor is there indeed on your side any, at least not the same reason for it, which is of a nature so good, and so justifiable, as gives me no ground to use any reserve in professing it, if I know the motives of my own will, and the motions of my heart, which seem to me, to be only influenced by the prospect I have of being improved and assisted by your friendship, in attaining what we ought chiefly to aim at; and if there is any weakness mingled with this, it appears at least to have the same foundation. I confess I cannot think of your being fixed at a distance from me, without much uneasiness; which certainly is as natural, in that case, to friends, as to lovers, though *Arwide* seems to think otherwise, by designing, on that account, to reduce his love to friendship. There are some such friends as *St. Paul's* left, who sorrowed most of all for his saying, that they should see his face no more. But methinks your design of taking orders is more likely to fix you in *England*, than any other place; and that is a hope I am willing to indulge, though I will not neglect to arm myself against whatever must be.

I am sorry you suppose I could be so unreasonable, as always to expect your letters of the same length. If they bring me your thoughts on what I have writ to you about, and some assurance of the continuance of your friendship, they will answer all my expectation; for though I can never think your letters too long, I assure you I do not value them by length. And if sometimes they should be shortened for want of leisure, I should perhaps be better pleased, than if I waited a post or two the longer. Frequent visits make some amends for their shortness; but in that I would have you follow your own inclinations and convenience, and
hope

hope I shall never give you cause to complain, that I am very unreasonable, though

S I R,

Your most affectionate friend,

and humble servant,

C. T.

In respect to my eyes, I must defer what I have to say to you from *Constantia* to next post, and then you may think me more than just in returning the measure of your letters; but do not delay your answer to this, in expectation of another, which may come sooner or later, as I find myself better than at present.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Cockburn.

July 5, 1707.

S I R,

THOUGH that delight, which one finds in the conversation of a friend, may (as you say) be most properly named satisfaction, when one speaks only of that degree, which gives the mind very little agitation; I used the word pleasure, because I intended to assert (as it is my opinion) that there is no degree of it, that may not be had in some circumstances, without unhinging the mind. For I suppose there may be some moments even of that fluttering agitating pleasure, in that state, where hopes, and fears, and jealousies are removed; and that all the difference is, that when none of those passions are mingled with the pleasure, it will have no effect beyond those moments; neither draw the mind too strongly after it, nor leave it discomposed,
Q 4 especially

especially in such persons as use themselves to recollection. I believe you will agree with me in this. And I own your conclusion to be generally true, that out of that state, the pleasure flowing from love must discompose the mind more or less, because some of those transporting passions will, for the most part, accompany is; though I think it not impossible for single persons, by owning the height of their affection without reserve, and having a mutual assurance of its sincerity, and intireness, to be free from all those causes of discomposure, and so possess a sufficient serenity of mind; unless the danger of separation disturbs their satisfaction. However, this without doubt very rarely happens, and is least likely to be the case of our friends, as *Arwide's* heart is divided: And therefore *Constantia* wishes too, that he had either not given way to any sensibility for her, or had entirely withdrawn from it the other, which would equally have left her mind at peace, and then she had not needed the assistance of her reason to compose it. She thinks the difference *Arwide* finds in his present affections, from what he has known before, is not on the reason *Christina* gives for it, nor yet the effect of his retired reflections, but of his having divided that affection, which hinders it from being truly love for either. And this she judges by what she observes in her own breast, where she finds a great difference too, but easily perceives, that it is not, because her affection is of another kind, or weaker than it was, but that her reason is stronger; a distinction, which may seem trifling, but I believe is not ill founded. *Arwide's* love, by the account he gives of it, ceases of itself, when the object is absent, without the efforts of his reason. But *Constantia* says, she finds it necessary to employ hers, and is not mistress of the first tender motions on any trial, though she has so far profitted by experience, and reflection, that she cannot now suffer her mind to give itself

entirely

entirely up to that passion, nor at all indulge it, as she once has done, without looking forward to the consequences of it, agreeing with you, that (however lawful) it is a great imprudence, and a misfortune, to be engaged in love, without some prospect (if not a near one) of entering into that state, which alone can make the mind perfectly secure, and calm in it: and I hope she will make a right use of the advice, which she thinks *Arwide* gives her plain enough, in saying he cannot tell what to advise her, especially when that is compared with his own resolution. I should be glad to know, if he has told *Christina* what he has resolved, and how she takes his denying himself those freedoms which might be allowed; an effect of his wisdom, which I fancy will not hold long, and why should it, since, after all, he thinks his temper may require a companion to make him support the necessary fatigues of life? or must some third person be found to answer his expectation in that state? which, I suppose is the case, for he seems to intimate, that he has not met with such a one yet (though he doubts not it may be found) by saying, that perhaps it may never be his lot: but as that expression may have another sense, I do not know whether I take it right.

I believe the *Romish* church might have very good ends in forbidding their clergy to marry, but am of opinion, that many of them are much more hindered in discharging their duty, by the consequences of that, than they would have been by a well chosen companion; since they are subject to the same passions with other men, and those, as we are agreed, are most apt to discompose the mind in a single state. However, without doubt the clergy should use the greatest caution in changing that state; though, if the opinion of your company were true, the best and wisest men would have least reason to be careful in their choice. But I am afraid they were too partial in their judgment of our sex.

It

It is too sure, that the best husbands have very often the worst wives; as on the contrary, many very ill men have excellent ones; and I believe all, who put it to the experiment, will find, that a woman, who has not prudence and goodness enough to make herself a good wife, will never be made so by any management.

I gave you an account in my last of a divine, Mr. *Fenn*, who designed to wait on you in town, where he was to be in a day or two after he went from hence last *Monday*; but on *Thursday* morning I was not a little surprized to see him returned with my Lady *Piers*, and some other company she brought with her. He had waited on her on *Tuesday* with a letter from me, and on her proposal readily agreed to be her guide hither, from whence they went home the same night. I believe he is in a little time to do me the same office of conducting me to my lady, who has a mind to divert me from my solitude for a day or two with her at *Hammersmith*. She is to send a chaise for me, and he is very desirous to fetch me in it: so I suppose it will be brought about, for he is so obliging, as to take all occasions of doing me any little service, and I have all the acknowledgment of it, that I ought. I do not know, whether I can be so near *London*, without a desire of seeing those of my friends, who have the same inclination: but what with the temper of some, and the wisdom of others, I doubt much, whether I have any such; and in that case shall endeavour to be as indifferent, or as wise as they, and, without inviting them to me, return with very little tenderness, though I shall be always, with a great deal of sincerity, much,

S I R,

Your humble servant,

C. T.

I have

I have just now received in a letter from Mr. *Fenn*, such a modest, pious, and affectionate declaration of love, grounded on much too favourable an opinion of me, that I shall be not a little puzzled to answer in a manner, that may both suit what his good intentions deserve from me, and the present disposition, or rather indisposition of my heart. But in such cases, I think, one should act wholly by reason, without any regard to the caprices of inclination; and as the first and most valuable effect of my gratitude, I recommend him to your friendship.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Cockburn.

July 25, 1707.

S I R,

YOUR little letter of the 8th instant prepared me for not hearing from you in some days; but I did not imagine it would have been so long. However I have opinion enough of your sincerity (and I hope I may of your friendship) to believe your silence unavoidable; yet I cannot help doubting, that the close of your last may be nothing more than a form. You are of too composed a spirit, especially in absence, to have any uneasiness for want of news from me; and how must I take your deferring to answer my letters, even when you had leisure to write, and your affairs had been over for some days?

I am sure I did not intend to flatter you in any thing I write; but there are few, who observe themselves very much, that may not find defects enough to abate the high thoughts, which a friend's esteem might raise in them; and commendations to such persons (if they should happen to be somewhat more than their due) are not only safe, but,

as

as you say, may have a very good effect. I am not fond of giving, or receiving praises from a friend, and yet I always find them serve to humble me, and to excite my endeavours of being what they think me; an experience of which I have lately had, and could not but be pleased to find the same reflections in your last, which I had just before made (I fear with much more reason than you) upon Mr. *Fenn's* unaccountably high opinion of me. I do not know, whether this good use of it may atone for that unjust pleasure, which I have often been angry at myself for taking in an undeserved esteem, which, in spite of me, will mingle itself with the humiliation, and confusion it gives me. Tell me your thoughts of that as a friend, who, I believe, will take some part in all that concerns me. I would give you an account of all that passes, betwixt my new lover and me, in which I have wanted advice, having been much puzzled how to act. His letters express a great desire of passing his life with me, and that on motives so good, so pious, and so obliging to me, that they have given me a great deal of esteem, and gratitude for him. But my heart stands neuter, and not having seen him, since I knew his inclinations, is not like to determine itself in absence, which made it difficult for me to answer him, when he pressed me earnestly to give him full satisfaction in the case, before he went to *Sarum*. But I declined being positive either way; only assured him of a great share in my friendship, though I disposed him more to believe I should disappoint his desires, than otherwise, and advised him to be prepared for it: yet he is not absolutely without hopes. To say the truth, I find nothing in him, but what my reason is satisfied with; and his profession in one, who would endeavour to live up to it, would suit better than any other, with the way of living I am most inclined to; which is the only

reason,

reason, that I have done more for him, than I ever did for any other (where I had not a foolish inclination). that is, doubt, whether I should comply with his proposal, or not. For, as I have told you, I had never before known any man, that I liked, or liked not, in whose manners, or temper, I did not find something, that would have made me unhappy; and therefore I had long thought it would be best for me to continue as I am. Perhaps I have since believed it not impossible to meet with one, whom I could be perfectly satisfied with; but such a lot, where esteem, inclination, and convenience agree, is not to be expected, which has made my former thoughts return very strongly. Yet if any thing can overcome them, it will be that great esteem Mr. *Fenn* has for me, nothing being more engaging to me, though my consciousness, how far I should fall short of answering the high expectations he has of me, checks that thought with just apprehensions of losing that satisfaction, on his better knowledge of one, whom if you will value for some inclination to be what we ought, it is the most, I fear, that can be in justice done for

Your very humble servant,

C. TROTTER.

I did not understand Mr. *St. John's* answer, for I cannot imagine what should set him on giving new orders, about a business, which he thought required none. But till I know, whether Mr. *Potter* has received any orders from him, or not, I will not write to *Flanders* about it, being loth to give the Duke an unnecessary trouble; though if nothing is yet done in it, so long a delay may be of ill consequence. Pray endeavour to give me information in this, as soon as possible, and forgive your troublesome friend. Let me know, if the book, which was sent to my mother, was corrected on the margin, and how many you have left.

I

Mrs.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Cockburn.

Aug. 4, 1707.

SIR,

I Am sorry, that I had occasion to trouble you with my affairs, when you was engaged in so many; and yet I am not without some satisfaction in it, since it gives me the greater proof of your friendship, by your care of what concerned me, amidst such a hurry; for which I have the greater acknowledgment, and am the more sensible of, having never before employed any friend (when I was absent, or under any other inability of acting for myself) that did not give me cause to complain of their neglect, and to think it a misfortune not to be able to manage all my little affairs without help; which most of my friends have heard me say, but hereafter I will make an exception for you.

I am concerned, that your want of leisure should put your mind so much, as you say, out of order; which makes me greatly fear to lose the fruit I hoped for of this solitude, when I return into the world; for if the reflections you had made, and the habit of mind you had attained in a longer retirement, have not so prepared you for an active life, as in it to retain that habit, and to be in some measure composed, what can I expect, when I come to have trials of that disengagement, and resignation of mind, which I seem now to have in some degree acquired, when I have scarce any other employment of my thoughts, but to confirm myself in that disposition? But I hope by your mind's being quite out of order, you do not mean, that it is in any moral disorder; but only, that you cannot fix it on such subjects, as require abstraction, and great attention, which in the hurry of much business, is, I think, naturally impossible. Indeed I have

have always thought, that to have sufficient leisure for daily intervals of recollection, was the most desirable state of this life, and am of opinion, that such frequent intervals are more useful for the true knowledge of ourselves and the due regulation of our actions (as well as that in such a state we can do more good to others) than long uninterrupted retirements: but of the two extremes, I own entire solitude much the better, and from that, which I now am in, consider yours with pity.

Yesterday I was interrupted here by my Lady Piers, who being disappointed of the means, by which she was to send for me, very agreeably surprised me by coming hither. She has told me several things of Mr. Fenn's affairs and thoughts of me (in both which he has been pretty free with her) that persuade me it was not without good reason he was desirous to know my resolution so soon, some proceedings of his, perhaps, in other matters, depending on it. However, as I have told him, I cannot determine, till I am a little more acquainted with him, and my own heart; though my Lady thinks by all she knows of him and me, that we could not fail of being happy together, and is much pleased with the solid ends, which he seems only to consider in this proposal; such indeed, as ought only to be considered, and which have greatly engaged me to encourage it so far as I have done. This moment I have received a letter from him in the usual strain; but so much generosity, and tenderness, is mixed with that solid piety, that it is impossible not to be a little moved with it, which I own I am in this moment, more than I thought I could have been by him at this distance. But my great endeavour is to keep my heart in such a state, that it may not hinder my being entirely resigned to providence, whose direction I beg in this important affair; which I suppose is what you mean by consulting providence. But I do not know

know what you mean by adding *though even then it can seldom be without some inclination*. Pray, if you remember what it refers to, explain that sentence in your next. I shall be glad of the book you mention. My mother has not yet received mine, which I wonder at: if it lies in your way to ask Mr. *Shortbosc* about it, you may, but give yourself no trouble in the matter. Mr. *Burnet* did not write to me in some time before he went, and perhaps was a little piqued at my declining to have him come here, where he had a mind to stay some days; though we had no accommodation for him, and it would have been very inconvenient, unless he could have made us a visit for a day, as Lady P. does, or called *en passant*, as Mr. *Shortbosc* talked of doing; but I hear nothing of that now. I suppose *Arvide* will think providence much favours his design of disengaging his mind from all passion, which *Constantia's* absence helped him in, as to her part, and *Christina's*, it is likely, will now complete. May we all make the best use of whatever happens to us for our true good, and our inclinations never prove obstacles to our duty. In which prayer and endeavour, I doubt not, you will heartily join with

Your sincere friend and humble servant,

C. TROTTER.

Why do you wish, that it was not so rare to meet with a lot, where our inclination agrees with reason, &c? Methinks upon your principle, that pleasure is to be avoided, inclination should be so too, for that will inevitably give pleasure; and the more solid ends of marriage will be answered by a well grounded esteem, without that softer part. I confess I am for a little of both, having no aversion for pleasure, and believing it may be had without danger in due circumstances.

Mrs.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Cockburn.

Aug. 13, 1707.

SIR,

THIS is chiefly to put you in mind, that you still owe me an answer to two long letters, which neither you nor I having mentioned in our last, perhaps you may have forgot; but I expect full payment, and till you have discharged what is due, I think it best not to give you much more credit. Not that I distrust your honesty, but by running you too far in debt, you may be the less able to clear accounts: therefore I will not send you all my thoughts on your last; only one observation I would not omit.

I argue with you, that the great principle of religion, (or, as you phrase it, the soul of the *Christian*) is such an habitual elevation of the mind to God, as makes him the first intention, and virtually the aim of all our actions, for so I suppose you understand it. But when you say, that the consequence of this is a disengagement of our hearts from all earthly things, if you mean those words strictly, of such a disengagement, as allows them no share at all in our affections, I cannot reconcile that with your asserting afterwards, that marriage ought to be a union of mutual love, and endearments. For explain, or define, or fix that love on any foundation you please, if it is love (which I think must be a wishing or delighting in the being, and well-being of the object) it will be inconsistent with having no attention at all for the creatures. I know you use to say, that our love to them should flow from our love of God, and be grounded on their relation to him, which all serious *Christians* own. But then why do you, and all mystics, affect such a way of speaking, that we must love God alone, and have no degree of affection

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fection to the creatures, since you are forced to explain away the strict meaning of those expressions: for to allow that we may love the creatures in such a manner, or on such a reason, and yet to assert absolutely, that we must not love them at all, is a contradiction in terms. And would it not be better to speak exactly at first what you mean? Which, as far as I can conceive of it, is, that God alone is to be loved absolutely for himself, and all other things with relation to him; that we must not make the creatures our end, or place our ultimate happiness in them; though we may love them as the way, or means, to a superior end. To keep strictly up to this (as I believe it is the utmost of our duty) is of itself difficult enough; and I am apt to think more people would be engaged to attempt it, by giving them some allowances, making some abatements even of this, than by using such terms, as carry their ideas to a height, which they may think impossible to attain: the effect of which I have frequently observed to be, to discourage some, by exacting impracticable things of them, and to prejudice others, by seeming to require what they think inconsistent with their known duties. And I desire you to use no expressions to me, but such as may give me just, and clear ideas; none, that may lead me beyond your precise meaning, which I wish every one would always take care of, especially in matters of religion. To say the truth, if it was the duty of *Christians* to love nothing but God, and that (as *Mallebranche* constantly asserts) all affection to the creatures were sinful, I think solitude would not only be necessary for you, but for all mankind: we should no longer be called social creatures, but all become unfociable hermits. But God, who designed us to be useful, has thought fit to make us agreeable too to one another, to sweeten our cares and services; and has not imposed such hard laws on us, as some

maintain, which I think may be plainly shewn from Scripture, as well as reason. I have enlarged much more than I designed on this subject, but it has some relation to part of one of my former letters, and so may be answered with it, which will give you the less trouble in discharging all your debts to

S I R,

*Your faithful friend,
and humble servant,*

C. TROTTER.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Cockburn.

August 28, 1707.

S I R,

YOURS of the 19th gave me expectation of hearing from you again before now. I wish you may have no evil design in deferring thus, hoping, that my coming to town may entirely release you; which is a deceit I should not easily forgive you, and therefore desire you speedily to discharge your debt, that I may have nothing to reproach you with on my return; which I believe will be in a little time: so you need not send the book you mentioned, but if you omit the long expected answer, I shall seriously take it ill of you. So much by way of caution. But the chief design of this is, according to my custom, to give you some trouble. Pray do me the favour to send any one, that can enquire in *Porter-street*, whether *Lady Piers* is in town yet or not, which if she is, it will hasten me thither, for I am impatient to see her, in the too great affliction I fear she is in, by the death of her eldest darling son. I am desirous too to know, when *Mr. Fenn* is expected to re-

turn, from the journey he is on with Mr. Fox, and when there was any news from them; which may be enquired at Sir Stephen Fox's lodgings in *Whiteball*. I neglected to answer his last letter, which gave me a direction to *Oxford*, where he was to stay but from the fifteenth to the eighteenth of this month; and not having heard from him since, I cannot answer him now, but wonder he has not writ again, and wish he may be well. If you please to enquire, and send me what account you have both of him, and Lady Piers, by *Saturday's* post, the expedition will much heighten the value of the obligation to,

S I R,

Your affectionate bumble servant,
C. TROTTER.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Cockburn.

September 1, 1707.

S I R,

I Received a letter from Mr. Fenn the day after I wrote to you. He is still at *Oxford*, and goes no farther with Mr. Fox, who, he says, will not return till the end of *October*, but he hopes to see me a little, though not long before. It seems he delayed writing, in expectation of an answer from me, imagining it might lie by the way, as sometimes happens. Thus you see Sir, I have put you to unnecessary pains; but it is your lot to have always some trouble from me, and mine to have new occasions of acknowledgment to you.

I am sorry you still complain of the disorder of your mind: but if it has no other cause, than the hurry of business you have been in, it is not a subject of much grief; for the heart and intentions may be very right (which our good God chiefly regards)

regards) notwithstanding any disorders of that kind. If there is any other cause of your disorder, I wish you would impart it to me, as one deeply concerned in all that may afflict you; and perhaps so hearty a concern would inspire me to suggest some reflections to you, that might contribute somewhat to the quiet of your mind. However, you are sure of my poor prayers, which is a part of friendship I never omit; but double them with peculiar earnestness now for you.

If Mr. *Shortbosc* has business at *Guilford*, it will be no great matter for him to come a mile out of his way, to see me a day or two the sooner; but I believe it will scarce be worth your pains to take such a journey on purpose now, for I have thoughts of being in town this very week, and cannot stay here many days; for my relations are to come from *Salisbury* about the middle of this month, and I have some business to dispatch before they come. Yet you may send the promised answer by *Thursday's* post, unless you hear from me that day, as you shall be sure to do, if I am to be in town that night: but if I do not go till *Friday*, I may receive a letter before I set out, which will be at eleven o'clock, and the post comes in much sooner. You see I am resolved not to release you, and I have very good reasons to be so exacting, besides the pleasure of hearing from you, which is always much desired by,

S I R,

Your very bumble servant,

C. TROTTER.

Mrs. TROTTER to the Rev. Mr.
FENN.

Ockham, July 18, 1707.

SIR,

IF I had known, that your deferring to write to me was occasioned by your illness, I assure you I should have been in much concern for it: but since you are so far recovered, as you tell me, I hope this will find you in good health; for I cannot but interest myself in a person, whose good opinion I am so much obliged to. It is very natural to be pleased with the esteem of a worthy friend, though beyond what we deserve, which, it may be, is a little unjust, but not much to be blamed, if it quickens our endeavours to be, what we are thought; which is an effect I promise myself of the satisfaction I take in your thinking so obstinately well of me. Yet I wish you would bound your expectations to that of finding me well disposed, for in that, though in nothing farther, I may hope you will not find yourself mistaken. You see, sir, I write to you, as one, whose esteem I set a great value on, and therefore would not have it placed on such grounds, as might endanger my losing it, expecting much advantage by your friendship, though it should never come to that strict one you desire, to which there may be many obstacles. However, I assure you of a great share in my friendship, which, (though of little worth) is not a bare name with me; for in giving you that I engage myself to have a true concern for your good, and your satisfaction; yet, after all, I cannot now give you the satisfaction you desire. To deal sincerely with you, I cannot answer to myself your question certainly, one way or other. Hearts are, you know, capricious things, which are not always well known to ourselves: a thousand little accidents

accidents (when people are together) serve to discover them to us, after an inclination has been declared on one side; and often a very trifle in a person, that one values, or even their weaknesses, when the effect of love, have more power to raise a reciprocal affection, than all their real merit, nothing of which can happen at this distance. Perhaps you will think such caprices as these ought not to be consulted in a matter of so great importance; and I confess one should not be much influenced by them: but certainly, when that foolish unaccountable tenderness is joined with a well grounded esteem, it adds a great deal of agreeableness to the more solid advantages of a rational companion. However, there are several things of another nature, to be considered, and talked of, before any resolution should be taken in this matter, or your question answered; and therefore I hope you will not expect it, till we have better opportunities of knowing all, that may be necessary, from one another. In the mean time, since I have engaged to be your real friend, and that, as such, you desire my advice, I must not deny it, how little soever you may need it. I believe the best method you can take to keep your heart in good order, whilst thus uncertain, is often to reflect, how little we know what is truly best for us; how frequently we desire such things, as, if obtained, have proved in themselves, or been occasions of great misfortunes to us; and to practice, in this case, that resignation to the will of God, which no doubt you have often resolved on. Perhaps he may know, that what you wish, is not for your good, and therefore deny it to you. Circumstances may not be suited, or accidents may intervene, which you do not foresee; and you will consider, that nothing makes us so unhappy, as letting our desires too eagerly pursue what we are uncertain ever to obtain. I own that very uncertainty, which makes it highly reasonable

to keep our minds composed, makes it too most difficult; yet it is of great use often, to tell our hearts, that what they aim at is uncertain, and we always gain some advantage by combating our desires, though we do not entirely vanquish them.

I doubt not your own reflections will furnish you with much better rules for the management of your heart, than any I can give you: but in this case, their coming from me may add a force to them, because you may believe they proceed (as indeed they do) from a thought, that I may disappoint you of what you aim at; and therefore earnestly wish you to be prepared for it, and that, in case that should happen, you may continue your friendship for me. Whatever I do, I assure you I shall never give you reason to complain, that I dealt ungenerously with you; and perhaps may so act, as to convince you, that your happiness is not so much, as you imagine, in the power of,

S I R,

Your sincere friend,

and humble servant,

C. T.

I must give you great thanks for Dr. *Hickes's* devotions, which I am so well pleased with, as to make my daily companion; but I think some objections may be made against several things in the other book, which I know not how to answer upon his own principles, and need information in. If you design me the favour of going to see my relations at *Sarum*, I shall either trouble you with a letter to my mother, or give her notice of it by the post, as you please. I wonder I have not heard from Lady *Piers* since I saw her.

Mrs.

Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Fenn.

S I R,

IT is very hard indeed for those, who are prejudiced by a strong inclination, to let themselves be persuaded, that it may not be for their good to obtain what they desire: but whilst we preserve our liberty of judgment, methinks it is impossible not to have great fears of such a change, as puts our happiness entirely in the power of another, involves us in a thousand cares, and makes us liable to many misfortunes, which single persons cannot fall into. It is true, all those things may be occasions of virtue to us; but so they may be of our falling from it. And for my own part, I have much more reason to fear, that I might not acquit myself of the important duties of that state, than to desire it as an opportunity of exercising greater virtues, and of being more useful to others, which would raise the account I have to make, much larger; and, if I should fail in it, I should not, as now, be myself the only sufferer by it. Considerations of this kind, with some others, have made me long think it best for me, always to live as I am. It is true, part of my reasons for it (taken from the irregularity of most men's lives, and the ill example they give their families) I cannot at all apprehend in you, who, I doubt not, have that reverence for the sacred character you bear, which Dr. *Hickes* so justly recommends; the peculiar obligations of which, in one, who would endeavour to live up to them, would, I think, better agree, than any other, with the manner of living, which I am most inclined to. But there are other reasons for my preferring to continue as I am, in which you are equally concerned with all others; and, whether they are invincible, or not, I cannot determine. I agree with you, that riches are no

marks

marks of the divine favour; and am so far from expecting happiness by them, that I could never, on the account of fortune, think one moment on any man, in whom I could not propose to find a useful friend, and an agreeable companion; for which I have been much blamed by some of my friends. But I am persuaded, that things of that kind ought to be last (if not least) considered, and no farther, than, as you say, to make one just easy in the world: but so far, I suppose, is necessary to be considered, for though we ought to acquiesce in providence as to our present state (whatever good we may believe we should do with a larger fortune) yet I doubt, whether running ourselves, and those who may depend on us, into unavoidable inconveniences, may not rather be called tempting, or presuming on providence. But, if I do not judge right as to the religious part, in which I am uncertain, I may at least affirm, that it is contrary to to human prudence. Your modesty does not hinder me from seeing your merit, but rather gives me a greater opinion of it. No doubt you deserve much greater happiness than I can be to you; and perhaps my just sense of that (who best know myself) may be no little obstacle to your desire. Nor can I assure myself, that no circumstance can diminish your affections, though I question not the sincerity of your professions: they may have sprung up too suddenly to have taken deep root, and so not be long liv'd. However, do not think what I have said an affected humility, or a fantastic effect of it: there is a real ground for my apprehensions of not being in a capacity to make you happy, and I would not convince you, to your misfortune, of the sincerity of,

S I R,

Your most humble servant,

C. T.

I give

I give you the trouble of the inclosed to my mother, though I shall write to her of you before you are there; and doubt not, both she and my sister will be very glad to see one, whose own worth will much better recommend him, than I can do. Mr. Cockburn sends me word, he was extremely pleased with the favour you did him. I have not been at church since you were here, when your arguments incited to me to try my strength. I believe I want to be chid to it again; but really the excessive heat makes it extremely fatiguing. I shall be glad to hear from you before, or on your journey, whenever you please. Do you return to town on the 11th of next month, or go from Sarum elsewhere?

*Mrs. Trotter to Mr. Fenn.**Ockham, Aug. 31, 1707.*

S I R,

NOT imagining, you were still at Oxford, I had no thoughts of writing to you since the 18th, and wondered I did not hear from you upon your missing a letter then, which gave me some concern, fearing you might not be well, and made my satisfaction the greater on receiving your last. If I should tell you, that the delight and acknowledgment yours of the 12th expressed upon what I had writ, was the occasion of my not answering it, you would think me very capricious, if not ill natured: but really, in pure friendship to you, I have blamed myself for indulging your affection so much, by owning my grateful sense of it, when I had reasons to think it might not end to your satisfaction; and, in that case, the greatest discouragements would be more truly kind to you. With these thoughts, unwilling to confirm the hopes

hopes I had given you, and not very willing intirely to check them, my irrefolution let slip the little time I had to write in; and I satisfied myself with imagining, that on a review of my letter, you would find some abatement of those hopes, by the caution I gave you, and myself, not to forget my just apprehension. But what shall I say to you now? You tell me, it has no ground at all, and that on a reason most obligingly convincing indeed, if it could be depended on: but, when I consider, that you talk at random, and can have no guess at the nature of what I mean, I am forced to answer, that you know not what you say. However, there is something so generous, so tender, in that thought of pursuing your design the more closely, for the difficulties you might then share with me in, that it would be a crime I would not, I cannot, be guilty of, to be insensible to it. No, Mr. Fenn, you have engaged me to own the highest gratitude for you, whatever be the consequence. Whether this deserves any acknowledgment from you, I cannot tell; but it would be a very odd effect of it indeed, to prove an obstacle to any part of your affection for me; since, as that alone could have given me any thoughts to your advantage, of this kind, you may be sure, they would immediately cease with their cause; and therefore I cannot apprehend that effect of what you call vanity, unless you have extremely mistaken the grounds of that impression I owned from you; for gratitude, I think, can be no occasion of ingratitude, nor much a subject of vanity; but perhaps you have interpreted my words a little beyond my intention.

I believe providence may be said to determine such actions, as we are led to by rational motives, &c. But the question is, how we may think it reasonable for us to act, when we come to a nearer and more particular consideration of all that relates

to

to this matter; in which I daily beg direction, and I desire you will join with me in that, and frequently remember me in your prayers.

I have thoughts of going very soon to *London*, but do not determine the day, till I know whether dear Lady Piers is returned from Mrs. Smith's, who obliged her to leave *Hammer Smith* on the sad occasion of her eldest son's death, for which, I fear, she is under the deepest affliction, and I cannot but greatly sympathize with her, which makes me impatient to see her. This news was the more surprising to me, my Lady having brought both her sons to me, perfectly well, in a visit she favoured me with but the week before, which I received with great satisfaction. We talked much of you; and the esteem I find she has of you, did you no ill service with me. I do not know, whether it contributed any thing to what gave you so much satisfaction in my last; but it was writ the very day after she had been here, though I had not time to mention her to you then.

I wonder, that I have not seen Mrs. Fenn, nor Mrs. Sturt, since you was here, only once at church, where they made great apologies for it, which I should have taken for their true reasons, if Lady P. had not told me, that you said the ladies here were afraid of me. Pray on what grounds is this? I believe I must chide you for it, if it be so; for I am sure I past for a very harmless animal among them before, as indeed I am, and much value that character; nor shall easily forgive you, if you have robbed me of it; for I think every thing impertinence in a woman, that makes her unfit for the conversation of her own sex, whatever fine names may be given it. Let me know the truth of this matter, in which I suppose you will plead good intentions; and though that will not wholly excuse you, they may prevail much with one, who

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is less inclined to be a severe judge to you, than to own herself always with great esteem,

S I R,

Your most grateful humble servant,

C. TROTTER.

On the encouragement you gave me, I ventured a walk to *Ockham* church, on one of the hottest days we have had, and after a long fit of more than ordinary weakness; and yet I thank God, I found no ill effect of it, but rather much the contrary.

I am sorry my relations had so little of your company, which they complain of to me. Be pleased to direct your next for me at Mr. *Finn's* house, the second door on the left hand, in *Beaufort-Buildings* in the *Strand*, which is my lodgings at *London*.

Mrs.

Mrs. COCKBURN to her Niece, Mrs. ANNE HEPBURN, now Mrs. ARBUTHNOT, at *Peterhead*.

Aberdeen, Dec. 6, 1731.

DEAR NIECE,

I wished it had been in my power to have given you more substantial proofs of my kindness, which might have better deserved your thanks. But you know my small abilities, and accept the good will for the deed. Whatever advantages you may have acquired by being here, must be chiefly imputed to your own great desire of improvement; which can never fail of succeeding, where there is the least opportunities for it; and I shall be glad to be in any manner assisting to so commendable a disposition.

I do not know, whether I can venture to send out any of Dr. *Clarke's* sermons; there being so many of us to read them separately, and your uncle keeping them so long. I have got no farther than the second volume yet, in which there is scarce a discourse, wherein he does not clear some mistake or difficulty, or confute some error, either of the *Presbyterians*, *Papists*, or mystical *Enthusiasts*. I will give you his own words about a notion of some of the last of these, upon which, I think, you and I had once a little talk. It is in a sermon upon St. *Paul's* precept of *doing all things to the glory of God*; where, after having largely explained, how this duty is to be fulfilled, he concludes with observing, that what he has said, may satisfy the minds of some weak *Christians*, who not having a right notion what the glory of God is, when they read; that *Moses* prayed to God to blot him out of his book, if thereby the children of *Israel* might

might be saved, and that St. Paul even wished himself *accursed from Christ*, if thereby the nation of the *Jews* could be converted, have put the question to themselves (and others have been so weak, as to put it in their writings) "whether a *Christian* ought to be content to perish finally for the "glory of God?" To this he answers, "The "question is absurd and contradictory, and has no "foundation in the texts referred to. *Moses* and "St. Paul, in the circumstances they were then "in, might charitably, and without any extravagancy, be willing to have borne the temporal "curse then coming upon the *Jews*, (which is all, "that their words mean) if thereby it could have "been possible to have saved the whole nation. "But such high expressions of affection are always "well understood in all books, and in all languages, to have not a literal, but a figurative "meaning."

There is another passage in his sermon of *loving God*, which, knowing your regard to his judgment, I am willing to send, because it is directly opposite to an assertion in the discourse on the *Divine Rectitude*, by which the author endeavours to confirm his notion of reducing all the moral attributes of God to the rectitude of his nature, and ascribing all his dealings with his creatures to that, rather than to the distinct attributes of justice, goodness, &c. You may remember he says something to this purpose: That the virtue of a man, who does acts of justice or goodness, merely from a principle of right reason, is greater than his, who does them from the benevolence of his nature; and the more opposition his nature gives to such actions, the more exalted his virtue is in performing them. You may perhaps recollect the words^a

^a The words of Mr. Balguy in this *Divine Rectitude*, p. 9, 10. edit. London 1731. 8vo. are as follow: "When a man is "born with an affectionate disposition and high degrees of be-

better

better than I; but that, I think, is his meaning. To which the following words of Dr. Clarke seem intirely contrary, viz. "Virtue becomes more perfect, when it is made easy by love, and by habitual practise incorporated, as it were, into a "man's very nature and temper: for so the Scripture represents angels as rejoicing and delighting "to perform their Lord's pleasure." This is certainly a more amiable idea of virtue; and I cannot but think a more just one; though the other notion may be in some sense true, it requiring a great strength of virtue to act against a violent bent of nature. However, this can have no place in the divine being, of whose essential goodness we may have proofs from reason, as well as from Scripture, where his love and benevolence to his creatures are frequently urged to excite our gratitude and imitation.

What is much to be admired in Dr. Clarke, is that clearness and strength of judgment, by which, in guarding against one error, he is equally careful not to run into the other extreme, as most parties are apt to do; and which I think the authors of the discourses on the *Divine Rectitude*, and the *Divine Benevolence*^b have both done; one in preju-

"nevolence, this, in itself, is not moral but natural goodness, "or goodness of nature, as we justly call it. If we suppose another person with lower affections, and the same abilities, "equally beneficent, we plainly perceive the moral merit of "the former to be less, in proportion to the betterness of his "natural disposition. If we suppose a third, without any natural affection at all, producing, from a principle of reason "and duty an equal quantity of beneficence, it is manifest, "that his moral worth would exceed that of the two former in "proportion to the excellence of his principle."

^b Printed at London 1731, in 8vo. The whole title is: *Divine Benevolence, or, an attempt to prove, that the principal end of the Divine Providence and government is the happiness of his creatures. Being an answer to a pamphlet, intitled, Divine Rectitude, &c. With a confutation of the notions therein advanced, concerning beauty and order, the reason of punishment, and the necessity of a state of trial antecedent to perfect happiness.*

VOL. II.

S

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dice of the goodness, the other of the justice of God.

I read *Racine's* plays, but cannot say, that I think *Bernice* the best of them. I should rather prefer *Alexandre*, and must own myself of the same opinion with those he mentions, who complained, that it had too few incidents. Those turns, which surprise and keep the mind in agitation, have a great beauty in such pieces, and are not inconsistent with that simplicity he was so fond of, when they all tend to the main action. Besides you know I am no friend to those plays, where the heroes distress is only as they are lovers, though the *French* run much upon such subjects. However, the best use, that can be made of these distresses, is, to represent the lovers sacrificing their most violent passions to some important considerations, as is done in *Bernice* by the emperor. But the other lover, whose name I have forgot, seems to me a very insignificant person. There are two or three *English* tragedies writ with the same view, where lovers voluntarily part for ever to satisfy some weighty obligation: one of them by Lord *Lansdowne*, and far preferable, in my opinion, to *Racine's*, though both tend to that great end of tragedy, to recommend heroic virtue.

I believe you will find *Moliere* very diverting, though he is not always equal to himself. Many of his pieces answer the true design of comedy, which is to expose the vices and follies of men by an agreeable ridicule; or to make virtue appear lovely, and vice infamous. And it were to be wished, that none were read, or allowed to be acted, which are not writ with those views,

— by tender strokes of art
To raise the genius, and to mend the heart.

Prologue to *Cato*.

Though

Though such as are intended merely to divert, as some of *Moliere's* seem to be, when they are perfectly innocent, as his are, may, I think, be as good amusements of a leisure hour, as a game at cards, which many of those, who think it a sin to read a play, make no scruple of. This can only be imputed to prejudice and ignorance of what plays are; for such as are wrote according to their true design (of which we have great numbers) are so far from deserving to be reckoned among sinful pleasures, that they ought to be accounted better than barely innocent diversions, since their chief design is to instruct whilst they delight. As for such, as are written with a different view, that are loose, or set off any vice with false colours (an abuse, which, I think, began in King *Charles* the Second's reign, by a vicious compliance of the poets with the licentiousness of that time) all such are no doubt utterly condemnable. But what is good in itself, should not suffer for the abuse of it. *Moliere* no where trespasses upon the strictest modesty; but some few of his pieces conclude by successful deceits, and represent knavish tricks, as mere pleasantries of wit; and for those of that kind, I am no advocate; but hope the worst of them may help to improve your *French* without hurting your morals,

I am, with much esteem,

dear Niece,

your sincere friend,

and affectionate Aunt,

C. COCKBURN.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

I Should have sent my dear niece the other part of *Moliere*, according to promise, but waited for your uncle's performing his, that it might not come without a word from some of us; and I was then unable to write myself, having been much disordered with a violent cold, and a cough, that did not let me rest in six nights successively, from which I am not yet free; but being less oppressed with it, I would no longer delay giving you this assurance, that you are in my thoughts, though I have nothing new to acquaint you with.

I have been much out of books of late, and have little hopes of sending you any of Dr. *Clarke's*, for I have not been able to get one of them this fortnight, that I have been endeavouring it; but if it be possible to contrive it, I will. I should wonder much, if any one, who has a taste of his, and Mr. *Locke's* clear way of thinking, could have any relish for *Poiret*. For my part I saw so little of solid truth in him, that I could never prevail with myself to go through his *economy*.

When I said, that *Moliere* was not always equal to himself, I had no regard to *Psyche*, which I had not then read; nor should I have made that remark for a piece of such a nature; being an opera, and chiefly designed to introduce the music, machines, and decorations of the stage, which the *French* court, at that time, seem to have been very fond of. But I think *les Fourberies de Scapin*, *l'Amour Medecin*, *l'Amour Peintre*, and some others, far short of his best pieces, and seem intended for mere diversion, without regard to any instruction, though that was generally his chief end. I was much pleased with *l'Avare*, and *les Femmes savantes*; and if I should tell you, that I was not unde-

lighted

lighted with *Psyche*, you would wonder at my taste; but I read it with great curiosity, being a well known subject, and on which there was an *English* opera, which I heard of when a child, as the darling of King *Charles* the Second's court. But you will wonder yet more, when I tell you, that there is an allegory couched under that fable, which made it the more agreeable to me, though I will not answer for it, that the poets, who made an opera of it, had any such view. But there was a clergyman at the time of the great rebellion, who, in his retirement, wrote a large poem upon it, called *Psyche*, or the progress of the soul; (for *Psyche* signifies the soul, as the learned inform us.) I never read the poem, nor know in what manner he has treated the subject; but will give you a little hint from the fable, as it is in *Moliere*, how it may be allegorised.

You may remember *Psyche* is described as a person of great humility and simplicity, of a most sweet and benevolent nature, but perfectly disengaged from all worldly affections, though solicited by the strongest temptations. This is the state of a soul disposed for the divine love; but she is first to go through severe trials, figured by her being taken from all the enjoyments she lived in, and sent to be devoured by a monster; to which sentence she submits with the greatest courage and resignation, refusing all earthly assistance and consolation. The divine love having thus drawn her from the world, manifests himself to her with the greatest transports of heavenly delight, to which she entirely gives herself up; but after some time, she begins to think of her earthly friends, which, though under the most excusable pretences, offends the divine lover, who would have her heart undivided. The suggestions of her envious sisters, who tempt her to doubts, and fears, and curiosity, the fatal consequences of her hearkening to them,

the divine lover withdrawing himself, upon which she loses all her delights, her being exposed to a wild barren desert, the extremest driness and desolation; all this has a spiritual meaning, but it is chiefly upon the mystic notions. The return of the divine love, and his making her immortal, that she might be worthy of him, and enjoy him for ever, is plain enough. And now what think you of your despised *Psyche*?

In my great want of books the *Seasons* have entertained me, and I have amused myself in the evenings with writing out such parts of them, as suit my thoughts best, before I could think of returning them. We have not had the *Craftsman* since you went.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

April 28, 1732.

DEAR NIECE,

I Never heard, that Queen *Anne* discarded Dr. *Clarke*^c; but it is certain, that when he was called before the Convocation on account of his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, he explained himself so, as gave satisfaction to the Bishops; but he never pretended to explain the Trinity, and disapproves of all, who do so; so that if it should be true, that all explanations of the Trinity are heresy, that will not affect Dr. *Clarke*. But, methinks, it would fall hard on the Athanasian Creed. You may ask your Bishop^d, whether that creed be not an

^c Dr. *Clarke* was dismissed from being one of Queen *Anne's* chaplains in ordinary, in 1713, probably on account of the clamor raised against him, for having missed the usual communion in his church on *Trinity Sunday*, to avoid, as it was supposed, reading the *proper preface* for that day. *Whiston's Memoirs of Dr. Clarke*, p. 69, 70.

^d Of the episcopal church of Scotland.

expli-

explication of the Trinity. There is nothing more common, than to condemn men and books upon trust, without knowing what they say; though the contrary is Mr. *Wollaston's* particular good fortune, who, I believe indeed, has many more admirers than readers. But those, who call Dr. *Clarke* an *Arian*, must certainly never have read him; for he, on all occasions, condemns their notions. In his *Scripture Doctrine, &c.* he has collected and ranked in order all the Texts, where any mention is made of either of the three persons separately, or together; and from thence deduced, what he thinks may be safely affirmed of each; which, no doubt, is the best method, that can be taken, to determine our notions of a mystery, which we can know nothing of, but by revelation: nor has he in the least meddled with metaphysical subtleties. But, if so great a man, with all his learning, diligence, and (as we have reason to believe) sincerity, in his search of truth, has erred in so sublime a point, it ought to teach every one modesty and caution, in forming their own, or censuring the opinion of others; and gives us hopes, that mistakes in a matter of such difficulty, that men of the greatest abilities and integrity differ about, will not endanger the salvation of an humble and sincere *Christian*.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

June 9, 1732.

DEAR NIECE,

YOU may be sure I was not a little uneasy about Dr. *Clarke's* Sermons, till I retrieved them; though before your letter to *Kitty*, I had some thoughts you might have lent them to the Bishop, and I wished he might have read these on the Trinity; for I should be glad all prejudices were

were removed against one, whose writings are calculated to do so much good. There is nothing I value more in him, than the attack he continually makes throughout his discourses on all the various superstitions and delusions, by which men place their hopes of salvation in any thing whatsoever, but true virtue, or a sincere obedience to the laws of the gospel; and the care he takes to shew, that faith in the merits of *Christ* will not be available for any *unforsaken sins*; a doctrine, which, I doubt not, will give him the name of a mere moralist, from those, who place the whole of religion in mere faith. I am glad your father is so well pleased with him, and wish to know both his and your thoughts on his two sermons for the 5th of *November*. I know the power of party prejudice, and can give allowance for it. I must say with you, that I am very well satisfied myself with all that he affirms on the Trinity, finding it perfectly agreeable to scripture. But there are some, who own, that he says nothing on it, but what is right, who yet think, that he does not say all that is right; though I have not heard them name any particular texts, which assert more than he does. Their judgments seem to be formed on some deduction of reason, or rather on some long imbibed and commonly received notions; whilst *Dr. Clarke* is cautious of asserting any thing, but what is plainly revealed, on a subject, that can only be known by revelation.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece,

October 6, 1732.

I Will not suppose my dear niece has made any misconstructions of my long silence, since she may be well assured, I have neither indifference enough

enough for her, to neglect her willingly; nor ill nature enough, to design a retaliation of her former delays. The hindrances you have found in your intentions or inclinations of writing may furnish you with excuses for me, to whom you ought in reason to give more allowance.

Sundays being privileged from the needle, I have found time of late to read three short pamphlets in answer to *Christianity as old as the Creation*, by *Dr. Burnet*, which, they say, are the best, that have been written on a subject, that has, for some time, employed all pens and heads; the only question being now, believer? or not believer? It seems, that author's chief argument is, that God gave man all the laws, that are necessary for him at the creation; and that nothing can be necessary now, which was not so then; and, consequently, no law can be a matter of revelation, which is not contained in the law of nature; and reason is sufficient to discover them. To this *Dr. Burnet's* chief answer is, that if man had continued in the state he was created in, the same laws would have been sufficient for him. But different circumstances require a different treatment. Man was created perfect, but is now very imperfect; which change of circumstances revelation all along supposes, and supplies a remedy for; and it is plain by experience, that not one man in a million, or, perhaps, not one man in the world, can now, with any certainty, discover his whole duty, by the light of reason, without the help of revelation; which, indeed, the *Deists* are oblig'd to for all their fine schemes. I send you this account, because infidels are now so busy, that all, who think, should furnish them-

* *Dr. Thomas Burnet*. His pamphlets are intitled, *The argument set forth in a late book, entitled, Christianity as old as the Creation, reviewed and confuted in several conferences.*

selves with the best antidotes they can against their poison.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

October 20, 1732.

DEAR NIECE,

I Return the Bishop and you thanks for the papers, which give great variety of entertainment. How ingenious the *Craftsman* is, in finding mysterious ways of satirizing Sir *Robert*! Who else could have found him out among the heathen Gods? It is a pity we had not that paper^f, of which *Fog* of *August* 5 is the confution, and which I think is very well designed: nor can I imagine, how any party can be so blind, as to dislike principles, which, are equally fences against anarchy, and arbitrary power, the last of which is no less inconsistent with our constitution, than the first. And if princes had been always early taught such maxims, perhaps *England* would not have felt the shock of so many revolutions, as it has done; and it is amazing, that those, who most condemn them, are so little sensible of the true source of them.

If we can find the life of *Atticus*, I will send it you. Whether his conduct was right or not, in avoiding all public employments, I cannot pretend to judge; but he was in the highest estimation of those of his own time, who best knew his reasons, and have preserved his character down to ours, till this late censure of him. And though it may not be fit for our patriots to desert the public, when an evil minister is at the helm; which, no doubt, is what

^f Plan of Education for a young Prince, by the Chevalier *Ramsay*. Printed in *Fog's Journal*, No. 195, 196. for *July* 29, and *Aug*-5, 1732.

Fog

Fog has chiefly in view; yet I think the cases are not parallel enough to justify so severe a criticism on *Addison*. If *Cato* had thought opposition could have been any longer useful, he would not have resolved to kill himself; and it seems not out of character for a man, who thought fit to withdraw himself in that manner from irresistible evils, to advise others to do it, by chusing a private station; which, though it might not become *Cato*, it might those, who were not so far engaged in public affairs; for, to what else could he exhort those, who regretted the loss of their country's liberty? Sure, even the severe *Cato* would not have had them all kill themselves: and if not, what remained, but that they should avoid having any hand in the ills they could not remedy? The only post of honour must in that case be a private station, and the thought seems to me, even more worthy of the *Roman*, than his own last action.

I have only time to add, that a letter from your cousin *Sally* informs me, that she has several times seen your brother *George*, who is well, but his uncle and brother being out of town, he had seen no other of his relations. Adieu: believe me affectionately
Yours, Ca. Cockburn.

Our respects to all; I cannot enlarge, for it is dinner time, and the post may be gone.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

March 2, 1732-3.

DEAR NIECE,

I Was not displeased with your keeping the book so long, since it came before it was demanded of me; and I should be loth to have any thing I send you for the entertainment of your leisure hours, prove a hindrance to your good housewifry, which

which is certainly a very commendable quality (though not the only virtue) in our sex. Nor could I reasonably disallow of your apology, since haste of work is often the only excuse I have for not writing to you so soon as you might expect, which is the case at present; for had I not been very busy, you should have had my thoughts before now on the subject you desire.

Lord Shaftesbury's notions of moral virtue are certainly very noble and very just, perfectly agreeable to Dr. Clarke's doctrine, in his *Evidences of natural religion*, and through all his sermons; which, with some other things you read here on those subjects, would, I thought, have given you before, some notion, how morality may be capable of demonstration, as it is founded on the very nature of things; and our obligation to it on that relation, in which we stand to God and our fellow creatures. This is properly called natural religion, from which indeed morality may be distinguished, when the consideration of the author of our being is left out of the scheme, for that is what makes it religion. But such a scheme will be very defective, because many moral duties arise from our relation to God; nor can virtue have the force of a law without that regard, how highly soever the beauty and tendency of it to the happiness of mankind may be extoll'd and admired. And you see Lord Shaftesbury excuses himself, by his design of giving those, who doubt of a supreme being, some notion first, that there is such a thing as real goodness, that they may be led by that to seek for the perfection of it, the author of order and beauty. However, I am sorry, that many *Christians* have given too great a handle to Deists, to treat of moral virtue, not only as distinct from, but opposite to, religion; which I look upon as the most pernicious error in the world, and what has given rise to the grossest superstitions, and the wildest fanaticisms, that the head of man

is capable of. It was from this notion, that *the will of God might be contrary to morality*, that the enthusiasts in *Cromwell's* time committed the most extravagant outrages, and the blackest villainies, under the pretence of serving the cause of God; and it is not to be doubted, that many of them really believed they were doing his will. But they are not the only sort of men, whom this principle has corrupted. Massacres, and judging men to death for religion, have sprung from the same source; and all those superstitious dependencies on external rites and forms on the one hand, and of mere faith on the other, have the same principle at the bottom, even in the church of *Rome*, where the merit of good works is so much extolled, as well as among those, who decry them as of no worth, though the Apostle has told them, that faith without works is dead. And it is probable, that the *Romanists* esteem their forms the chief of good works, and most acceptable to God, since they are more exact in observing them, than the precepts of moral virtue. But I am rambling too far from my purpose.

You observe very justly, that there is nothing in the New Testament, that seems to clash with morality. On the contrary, all divines, in proving the truth of the *Christian* Revelation, make the purity and excellence of its doctrine one of their arguments; and readily allow, that even the miracles of *Christ* would not have been sufficient to prove his mission divine, if he had taught any thing wicked or vicious, that is, any thing contrary to our natural notions of moral virtue. The reason of this is, that there can be no external evidence of any thing being the will of God, more certain, than we are, that those duties, which arise from the very frame of our nature (which we are sure is his workmanship) must be his will; and therefore nothing can be received for such, that is

contrary to our natural notions of justice, goodness, veracity, &c. since God cannot have two contrary wills; and I dare venture to affirm, that there is nothing in the Old Testament inconsistent with what I have asserted.

The general law given to the *Patriarchs*, and to the *Israelites*, both the moral and judicial, was, without dispute, perfectly agreeable to the law of nature. As to particular commands, on extraordinary occasions, to select persons, no doubt, they had such immediate communication with God, as made them certain, without any possibility of mistake, that what they were directed to, was from him, who has an absolute right to dispose of the lives and goods of all men, as he pleases. *Abraham* was certain, that it was the same God, that commanded him to slay *Isaac*, who had before given him to him, with a promise of a posterity by him; and he exerted an act of great faith, and due obedience, in yielding up his son's life to him, who gave it, who could take, and restore it at his pleasure. This was not so much as a seeming immorality. But this, and such like instances, can be no precedents to us, who have no other way of knowing the will of God, but by the external Revelation of it in his written word, which is a confirmation of the law of nature; and all the mysteries of the gospel are only revelations of what was necessary to restore man to pardon for his failures in the duties of morality, and to enable him the better to perform them for the future; the practice of virtue being indeed the great end of all true religion. And therefore, as all pretensions to immediate revelation, that we know any thing of now, are liable to great delusion, they may be concluded certainly false, if contrary to moral virtue; and all doctrines taught on what pretence soever, must be judged by that rule, because, as I said before, we cannot be more certain of any thing, than we are, that the

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eternal rules of right and wrong are the unalterable will of God. You see I have been very large on this subject, which I think of great importance. If you have still any difficulties, or your objectors urge any thing, that cannot be answered by the principles I have laid down, you may communicate them; for I shall be glad of an occasion to clear my own thoughts from any confusion or ambiguity in such a point; and if it give any satisfaction to you, you may freely command,

Dear Niece,

Your affectionate Aunt,

Ca. Cockburn.

I have not heard from *London* since *October* last. My love to all your family. Your uncle and cousins send the same. We hear nothing of any change in *Dr. Garden's* congregation. I have no time for news, but *Lady Catherine Frazer* is thought to be dying.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

June 8, 1733.

DEAR NIECE,

Lord Chancellor^s declined presenting the poem^b, though with assurances of a readiness to serve me. After this, the *Duchess of Hamilton* undertook it; but has been prevented from waiting on the *Queen* by illness first, and then by the death of *Lady Orkney*, her sister in-law. And after giving me frequent hopes of getting the bookⁱ printed, I am told, that the booksellers refused to undertake it, without paying down the whole charge, because all subjects of divinity are disregarded now, but what concern the very foundations of *Christia-*

^s King.
Hermitage.

^b Occasioned by the bust set up in the *Queen's*
ⁱ *Defence of Mr. Locke's Christian Principles.*
nity;

nity; infidelity having of late appeared in so many shapes; so that you see I have lost a great deal of time and labour, since all is like to end in disappointment.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

Aberdeen, Feb. 8, 1733-4.

DEAR NIECE,

I Had a letter from my daughter by the last ship: she has been detained by a new prospect of succeeding in my affairs; at least in the matter of the poem; and of being presented to some great ladies, to whom I was formerly known, and must wait the event, before she determines on her coming hither.

I sent you both the volumes of Dr. Clarke's discourses at Boyle's lectures, because the last part will best shew, how different he was in his *Christian* principles from those two hot brained men. *Woolston* was no better than a prophane infidel, under a thin, ridiculous disguise.*** I have too much regard for the character of so great and good a man, not to be willing to communicate any books, that may contribute to do him justice; and wish I had his posthumous sermons, some of which would satisfy any judicious persons, capable of conviction. But I cannot answer for *Jacobite* prejudices. He was indeed an enemy to their principles, and consequently must be a heretic, and every thing that is evil.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

Aug. 16, 1734

DEAR NIECE,

IT is some years since I read Dr. Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine*, &c. and I have too bad a me-

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mory to keep particulars in my head. I only remember in general, that I thought he had given no reason for the alarm, that was taken, though there were some things that needed explication, which it seems he gave to the satisfaction of the Convocation. And his sermons, since on the *Trinity* sufficiently clear him from *Arianism*.

I have been much out of books for some time, but have got a recruit of late; yet fear I cannot accommodate you. The first I shall read is, *The Method of studying and teaching the Belles Letters*, &c. which you may have seen often advertised. I was very well entertained last summer in reading *Madam Dacier's Homer*.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

January 20, 1734-5.

DEAR NIECE.

I Was in hopes you would have had more indulgence to the many infirmities, that hinder me from being punctual in my correspondence with you, than to impute it to forgetfulness, or a wilful neglect of what might any way contribute to your satisfaction. But you will not wrong me, if you think it proceeds from a consciousness, that my little abilities, of being useful or entertaining to my friends, sensibly abate, as yours encrease; which (with the little time my frequent disorders, and necessary obligations to my absent children allow me) makes me really very backward to any epistolary commerce. Besides, I have been taken up with more than ordinary company, for five or six weeks, that Mr. Perkins was in the house with us, whose conversation we found very agreeable; though he and I had many skirmishes upon Dr. Clarke's principles, for he has a high esteem of him, and consults

sults him in all the texts of scripture he has expounded on most points of divinity; a province, in which the Doctor is allowed by all to excel. Yet Mr. Perkins sides with his opposers, on the subjects controverted, as the manner of explaining the *Trinity*, and the foundation of our obligation to moral and positive duties, &c. But I must own his arguments have only served to confirm my opinion of the solidity of the Doctor's notions, and to shew me more clearly the difficulties and objections, to which the other side of the questions are liable.

I hope you have received the second volume of *Madam Dacier*. When you have done with the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* is at your service. Let me know, if you have read both by *Pope*. It is no wonder you should be most charmed with him, for the advantages of a fine turn of verse are certainly very great. But even *Madam Dacier's* prose makes me equally admire *Homer*; and her notes give me a high idea of her genius and learning. Nor is it a little to her honour, that *Pope* all along makes use of them, and but rarely differs from her, at least, in the *Odyssey*, which I have lately read, but not her *Iliad*.

It is long since I should have said something to you of *Jael* and *Sisera*. I find commentators excuse her by a particular direction of God, under whose immediate government the *Israelites* were; and observe, that *Deborah* foretells the action, as well as extolls it afterwards. If this be the solution, I hope she had a better assurance of the divine will, than the pretended inspiration of modern fanatical enthusiasts.

Mrs.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

May 30, 1735.

DEAR NIECE,

I Have seized the first moment my health and leisure would allow me, to answer your's of the 3^d instant, and hope it is not so late, but that you may remember what you desired my thoughts about.

As to the *Turkish Spy*, I read it with great pleasure soon after it came out; but it is so long ago, that I can say little particular of it, only in general, that it was much esteemed at that time, and done in so natural a manner, that it is scarce possible to believe the *Spy* to be a personated character, though it was said to be composed by the gentleman, who published it, a Doctor of physic^k.

As to the tragedy, I am intirely of opinion, that *George Barnewell's* case is most to be pitied. Such a load of guilt, with a consciousness of so many worthy persons suffering on his account, to a mind, that has a tender sense of virtue, gratitude, and friendship, is surely a distress, almost beyond human hearing; and if *Maria's* part add any thing to the distress, it chiefly adds to his sense of his faults and misfortunes. She has all her virtue to support her, with the consciousness of having done all in her power to prevent his ruin. We may hope time may cure a love, which had never been re-

^k The real author of the first volumes of the *Turkish Spy* was John Paul Marana, of Milan, as we are assured by Monsieur Charpentier, of the French Academy, who was employed by the Chancellor of France, to examine the manuscript of the third volume, and has given the world a copy of the certificate of Marana, dated at Paris, September 28, 1686, in which he engages to retrench four passages, which had been objected to by Monsieur Charpentier. *Carpenteriana*, p. 29, 30, 31. Edit. Paris, 1724.

turned, and had little prospect of being successful, if that sad catastrophe had not happened. To say the truth, if I might be allowed to criticise the play, I should think her appearance at last rather a fault than a beauty in it. The business of it was over; she had nothing to do in the prison, but to disturb the dying man: And I question, whether it would not be more natural in such a case, as well as a higher degree of virtue, for all men to conceal her concern in his fate, as she had hitherto done her love. And now I have been so free in my judgment, pray let me know in whose favour I have decided.

It must be a great satisfaction to you, to hear so often from Mr. *Arbutnot* at this distance; and though we cannot be free from all anxiety for our sea-fairing friends, I think one of the remedies you propose, a much less desirable state. An extreme stupidity would equally make us insensible of all the comforts of life, and deprive us of the pleasures of a happy meeting; which makes ample amends for all past apprehensions. The other remedy may do a great deal; and indeed, if we rightly considered the providence of God, the many wonderful escapes at sea, and the surprising accidents at land, we should find little more reason to be in pain for those, who are on the former, than for those, who are even at home with us. How many sudden deaths, murders, &c! A story I met with lately in one of the weekly papers, gave occasion to deep reflections of this kind; it was of a sea captain, who was found murdered a little out of *London*, where, it seems, he resided; and whose wife was said to be in danger of losing her senses, by the surprize. I could not help reflecting how many anxious thoughts and vain terrors this poor woman had probably indulged, whilst her husband was safe at sea; and how easy and secure she was, thinking him out of danger at home, when so unexpected a blow

blow deprived her of him. Such things should teach us not to disturb our minds for uncertain events. If we are to meet with any unhappy ones, it is time enough to feel them when they come: If they are not to come, why should we give ourselves so much unnecessary misery? To hope the best, to submit, and to believe, that God will bring nothing upon us, but what he will enable us to bear, is the truest philosophy I know; which I wish I may be as well able to practise, as to preach.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

Aberdeen, Aug. 28, 1735.

DEAR NIECE,

I hope by this time you have had the comfort of good news from a far country, which *Solomon* had so deep a sense of, and which no doubt is more effectual to compose a mind disturbed with apprehensions for an absent friend, than the best instructions in the world. However, I cannot allow you to talk of *despair* possessing itself of the mind in the greatest dangers; for that can only be excusable, where ills are certain and remedies. Wherever there is cause of fear, there must always be ground for trust and hope.

I have too good an opinion of your judgment to believe you would submit it to any authority, but that of reason, though it may sometimes be swayed by a tenderness of affection; which perhaps was the case in your judgment on the tragedy. A kind of sympathising with *Maria* might bias your compassion to her side, though you are in no danger of one part of her distress, love without return: and I must own, I have no notion of carrying love to a great height, or long continuance, when it is not mutual.

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Madam

Madam *Dacier*, has indeed, as you observe, done a great piece of service to those of her own country, by her translation of so valuable a book; and I think the unlearned of ours no less obliged to Mr. *Pope*; for though *Homer* had been turned into *English* by several hands before, it was so ill done, that few had patience to read them. I am much pleased with *Pope's* notes, especially on the *Iliad*; which I read after his *Odyssey*. He is not so partial as *Dacier*, who will scarce allow it possible for *Homer* to err. But I am charmed with the humanity of his remarks on some passages, which, though suitable to the manners of those times, are very shocking to us; and he is always very gallant to the ladies. To say the truth, I am grown of late very fond of the man, since I have read some originals of his, particularly his *Essay on Man*, and an *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, which is chiefly a vindication of himself and writings from the calumnies of his enemies; for such great merit will always raise.

Have you heard of Mr. *Blackwell's Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer*? It has had a great vogue at *London*. It is said, the Queen was pleased with it; but it has been criticised in the *Republic of Letters*, and by other hands, in some things, I think unjustly, though owned an ingenious book.

I suppose you have seen your uncle's answer to the remarks on his sermon. What opinion have your people of it? It is said there is a reply to it.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

Aberdeen, Nov. 8, 1735.

DEAR NIECE,

IT cannot but be agreeable to you housewives to find the great ladies, even queens, in *Homer*, and

and other ancient books, at the same employment [of spinsters.] How would it please the young women of *Aberdeen*, to see the princess *Nausicaa* going with her cloaths to wash, as it were to the *Dan-Burn*! I confess, there is nothing pleases me more in reading those books, than to observe the simplicity of the ancient manners; though they did not want politeness, as appears by their extraordinary hospitality, and sacred regard to strangers. Sure there must not have been so much villainy in those days, as there is now, when such a conduct would be impracticable, or attended with a thousand dangers. However, we may justly admire in them what we cannot imitate.

Your judgment in favour of *Prideaux's Connection* is sufficiently justified before-hand by the universal esteem it is in. *Shuckford's* is likewise very well approved of; which I read last winter. He takes things higher, and ends where *Prideaux* begins; but opposes Sir *Isaac Newton's Chronology*. I do not know, whether I can procure you *Blackwell's* book; but I am promised *Pope's Essay on Man* to send out to you. I have seen no criticism on him or *Swift*, except something of *Dennis*, which has more of ill nature than weight; and a very satirical poem on *Pope* by a lady. But you would find by the epistle I sent you, that many malicious things had been published against him and his friends; which provoked the *Dunciad*, and that complaint; though all the malice and envy of little critics can do no hurt to men of such superior worth, and are indeed but the natural attendants of shining characters, according to a verse of his own;

“ Envy does merit as its shade pursue,

“ And like a shadow proves the substance true.

The judgment of your people about your uncle's book is certainly a great instance of prejudice and partiality. Persons not bigotted can see good reason-

soning, even when they are not convinced by it; and some there are, who think the arguments in it unanswerable. To say the truth, I am persuaded, that no principles can hinder people of good sense from perceiving when a book is well writ, though they may not always think fit to own it. It keeps them the better in countenance, when they are resolved not to desert their beloved notions.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

February. 20, 1734.

IT is with great pleasure, dear niece, I am at last enabled to perform my promise of sending you this valuable *Essay*¹, which, I dare say, will answer your expectation. What must the original deserve, if a translation into *French* met with so great applause? In which (as far as I can judge of the genius of that language) much of the strength and beauty must be lost. *Voltaire*, who is one of their great poets, has in some *Letters* he published of *the English nation*, given a specimen of some celebrated verses from the most famous of ours, with which I was perfectly well acquainted, but should not have known them in his version. To avoid being literal, and, as he pretends, to preserve the spirit, the turn of thought, as well as manner of expression, is intirely altered: and I fear *Pope's Essay* would not fare better. You will find in it the foundation of all ethics, with a beautiful viadication of the order of nature and providence against all sorts of cavillers; the design of each book summed up in the last line of it, and of the

¹ On Man,

whole

whole at the end of the fourth. The fine turn of thoughts and delicacy of expression have peculiar graces in all he writes, and will distinguish what is his from those bound up with him. When you have done with it, I will endeavour to get *Blackwell's* books for you, and I believe I shall be tempted to read it over again myself, to try, if with *Mr. Ogilby's* help (one of our Ministers here, who has been preaching against it) I can spy out deism and irreligion in it, which I confess myself so dull-sighted, as not to have perceived in my way of reading, which is never with design to discover faults, that are not too obvious to be overlooked. Whether will this opposition to the book make you more or less curious to see it?

There is a pamphlet published some time ago, which I have lately read, said to be written by *Duncan Forbes*, lord advocate, intitled, *Thoughts concerning Religion, &c.* tending to shew, that *Christianity is indeed very near as old as the creation*. It is a very curious piece, well worth your reading; and if it is not come into your parts, I may perhaps procure it for you. The design of it is to overthrow the most material of *Tindall's* objections against revelation, by shewing, that it was much older than he supposes. That the great purpose of a Saviour's coming into the world was made known from the first, and typified by the earliest worship; for which opinion there is certainly a good foundation in the universal practise of sacrificing, which could scarce have been thought on, as a proper means to appease the deity, without institution; or have been instituted, without a view to the great sacrifice of a redeemer. There are many other curious observations, some relating to the Trinity; but they do not all seem to me to have so clear a foundation as the former: but the whole is in great esteem, and has had four editions.

Mrs.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

May 7, 1736.

DEAR NIECE,

I Find so little appearance of being rid of the cold in my head, which has for some time hindered my writing to you, that I must even make shift to do the best I can with it, the violence of it being somewhat abated; and having two letters to answer at once, I have, as you see, enlarged my paper accordingly.

To begin in the same order with yours, *Pope's* admirable *Essay* comes first upon the carpet. I was very well pleased with your keeping it to oblige the Bishop's people, in return of their many favours; and indeed I am always fond of communicating, as far as I can, what I much value myself, where I think it will be acceptable. I am glad to find all your family (of which I hope *Kitty* is on this occasion reckoned one) have so good a taste of so fine a performance. I don't know who his *Laelius* is, but imagine Dr. *Arbuthnot* would have been named, had it been he, and rather incline to think it may be the Earl of *Bolingbroke*, with whose character, if I mistake not, the *Roman Laelius* better suits. I referred you to the reasoning in page 66, &c. as what we must be satisfied with, when great calamities happen in the ordinary course of nature, where God has not thought fit to interpose, to prevent such a particular effect of his general laws; and may conclude, he has good and wise ends to serve by every event, though we cannot perceive them. Nor is the doctrine of God's governing by general laws, (which is evidently a true one) at all the same with chance, or inconsistent with his particular providence over the lives and fortunes of men; for among a great variety of possible events, all alike proceeding from what we call natural causes,

causes, he can certainly order which of them shall take place, without reverting any of his laws. And though he does not, as *Pope* has it,

"When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
"Make gravitation cease if you go by;
"Or some old temple nodding to its fall,
"For *Chartres* head reserve the hanging wall:

yet he can so order it, that *Chartres* shall be passing under the wall when it tumbles; or in the former case, that you shall not be going by when the mountain falls. And such escapes, when persons are in imminent danger, as in the late instance at *Murray*, may very well be ascribed to a particular providence, though all might be conducted without breaking in upon the regular order of nature, or appearing otherwise than accidental. And it is remarkable to this purpose, that in scripture, God is said to deliver a man into the hand of him, who happens to kill him, without intending it, by what we call mere accident; (for there is in reality no such thing as chance) though I do not think this is to be so strictly taken, as if God did positively direct every such event, but only, that when the unsearchable views of his providence are best served, by his not interposing to avert any particular disaster, he is then said to do what he permits to fall out by general laws; and indeed it amounts to much the same thing, for no doubt he can determine those laws to any particular event, when he sees fit, as I said at first. So that I think, that passage of the *Essay* contains nothing contrary to your beloved opinion, or in favour of chance.

The next in order is *Madam Dacier*, whose prefaces are indeed very judicious, and the disparity she shews to be between an epic poem, and modern romances, very just. The high vogue they were once in among the polite world, is really amazing, but much more, that persons of so great genius

as the authors of them must have been, could employ so much time, and such vast pains for a mere unprofitable amusement.

I am of your opinion as to her notes; but why do you call her partiality womanish? There is nothing more common among the men translators and commentators, than to be so *entesté* with the authors they have bestowed their labours upon, as to allow no faults in them: And it is rather owing to a singular justness of thought and moderation of temper in *Pope*, that makes him impartial to all parties, all religions, all authors, that he is capable of seeing even the errors of *Homer*. Indeed, his private letters shew him to be, in all respects, the most amiable character I ever met with in so great a genius, and makes me much regret my not being acquainted with him; but he had but just begun to dawn upon the world, when I retired from it. If you have seen his *Odyssey*, you will find, that Madam *Dacier* had, upon a new edition of hers, expressed herself much displeased with him for owning any faults in *Homer*, though she had otherwise a great esteem of his abilities. You must not ask me for his *Letters*, though I wish you could get them; but it is not in my power to procure them for you, there being none in this town that I know of, but the copy that belongs to the college.

"I never meet with those *Gentleman's Magazines*. There is nobody gets them here, that I converse with, else I should be willing to read some of the prize poems, if they are worth any thing, which is not to be doubted of that, that gains the fifty pounds, according to *Hudibras*,

"For what's the worth of any thing,
"But so much money as 'twill bring?"

Though I do not think it a crime to suppose there may be errors in *Homer*, yet sure an attempt

to ridicule him, who has been in possession of the admiration of all persons of taste, for 2000 years, can only render those, who endeavour it, ridiculous themselves; and I doubt not the passage you mention may very well be defended. It was certainly the custom in the simplicity of those ancient times for women to assist in the compliment, which was paid to their guests, of bathing and washing, though men, without being thought guilty of a breach of modesty; and that sufficiently solves the decency of *Nausicaä's* ordering her maids to wash *Ulysses*. His declining it seems partly from respect, on account of the mean condition he appeared in: besides that in my opinion, his expressions imply, that he had contracted too much filth by the sea, to give them the trouble of cleaning, which might require a more particular washing than was usual in ordinary bathings, and perhaps could not be done with so great decency; an easy conjecture, that takes off all the ridicule. Since I writ this, I am promised the *Magazines* by Dr. *Gordon*, who it seems takes them constantly: you may let me know in what month that paper about *Homer* was. I have had so many interruptions in my writing, that it is a question whether my letter will be done by *Monday's* post, for it is now *Saturday* night, and I have not quite gone through your first, but must dispatch to your second.

I believe I told you, that your uncle and *Griffy* had visited at Mr. *Petry's*, but without return. I am no judge of the grounds of the treatment he has met with from our town; but they lay the blame heavily on him, and have printed a large account of the case, which I intend to read, if I can find leisure.

I am extremely pleased, that your absent friend is so fortunate in his first expedition, and hope the delay will double the satisfaction in meeting.

" 'Tis

" 'Tis expectation makes the blessing dear.

You see, talking of *Pope* and *Homer* brings poetry much into my thoughts: but the advocate will return us to humble prose, with whom it is time to begin.

May 10.

I designed to have given you some of my thoughts upon the particulars you mention in his book, but having necessary works to dispatch this morning, I thought it better to send this as it is, than to defer it to another post, being enough to trouble you with at once.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

May 14, 1736.

DEAR NIECE,

I Believe you told my thoughts of the general design of the advocate's book, when I first mentioned it to you. That the *Jewish* institutions were typical of the *Christian*, is no new assertion, being the doctrine of most divines: but that they were only a republication of the revelation made to *Adam*, is perhaps a pretty singular notion, though very well supported by observations from history. As to the cherubim at the east end of the garden of *Eden*, I confess I see little ground for his explanation of it, or how it is consistent with the preceding words, *and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever: Therefore, &c.* It is strange he takes no notice of these words, which certainly require another sense than they seem to bear, to make them agree with his notion; and he should have given us some direction, if he could, how to understand them suitably. Besides, of what use could it be, to set up an emblem of the way to happiness, in a place from which

which *Adam* and all his posterity were banished for ever? Nor does the account of the Cherubim, as it is commonly understood, seem to me so monstrous a story as he calls it; or at all unintelligible, if the history of the fall is, upon the whole, to be taken in a literal sense. For where is the difficulty to suppose, that God might have prepared a tree, whose fruit should have a natural efficacy to keep the body of man from decaying, of which he should have been allowed to eat, had he continued innocent, in order to preserve him immortal; and that upon his incurring the penalty of death, some guard should be set to prevent his endeavouring to eat of a tree, the virtue of which he had forfeited his right to. There is nothing in this, that seems absurd to me; and I should be glad to know what notion you had of it, that appeared so unintelligible.

I am no better satisfied with his supposing, that the general belief of a plurality of deities must be owing to an original revelation of the *Trinity*; and think the reason he gives for it not true, *viz.* that the essential unity of the Deity is clear by the light of nature; that a plurality of deities is so contrary to that light, that nothing less than an authority believed to be divine could draw mankind to a belief of this monstrous proposition, and induce reasonable creatures to speak of, and make their addresses to Gods in the plural number. But how agreeable soever to reason the unity of the Deity may appear to free-thinkers now, after it has been plainly revealed, and all the proofs of it from reason studied for by philosophical believers, it does not seem to be the most obvious and natural notion to common apprehensions. Mankind are indeed generally disposed to think, that there must be some invisible superior powers, who inspect their actions, and take care of this visible world. But that one simple being should be able to order the whole, is very difficult for our narrow minds to conceive,

conceive, till enlarged and refined by philosophy. It seems more natural to imagine, that the several parts of it are under the care of different Deities; for the harmony, uniformity, beauty, and order of the system, which prove the maker and governor of it to be one, are considerations, that do not fall under common observation; and arguments of another kind, which the learned call *a priori*, are much more remote from vulgar conceptions. Nay, some of our eminent divines have lately, in their opposition to Dr. Clarke's doctrine of the *Trinity*, denied his proofs of that sort to be valid, or that there can be any demonstration of the unity of God from reason: so that I think, we may fairly conclude, that the polytheism of the nations is no proof of an original revelation of the *Trinity*, since it may be very probably deduced from the weakness and ignorance of man; and we must be content with the presumptions of such an early revelation, which the scriptures afford us.

I am afraid you will think me possessed with a spirit of contradiction, when, after I have found fault with a notion you liked, I am now going to tell you, I am not displeased with what the bishop objected to; nor is it peculiar to the advocate or his author, to ascribe to the divine mind something similar to human passions: several great divines have ventured to do the same. The only reason, I suppose, why others are alarmed at the notion, is, that they think the affections of love, hatred, &c. must disorder the mind; and that any addition, or diminution, is inconsistent with the essential happiness of God. In the mean time, if they are consistent with themselves, I fear they can give no meaning at all to those expressions of scripture, where God is said to have loved the world, to be delighted with the good, to abhor the evil, &c. At least I know not what to make of them, if we are to suppose all affections unworthy of

of the Deity. For my part, such an apprehension would be very mortifying to me, it gives so cold and comfortless an idea; and I believe there is no danger in mistaking, if we do not mingle the weaknesses, the ruffles, and perturbations, which we experience in ourselves, with the affections in the divine mind; and content ourselves with being ignorant *how* they are in him. It seems to me more presumptuous to determine, that he can have no affections at all, contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, being a very different case from its ascribing bodily parts to him, which we can easily apply to a figurative sense, and are sufficiently warned in other places, from entertaining any such notion: But God is spoke of throughout the Scriptures, as the most affectionate being, and we are led to no other sense of those expressions, than the literal. Who can imagine, that when he formed the universe, to communicate of his happiness and goodness to his creatures, he was no more delighted, than if he had not done it; and that he is perfectly indifferent, and unaffected with all the good or evil they do?

I saw that *Letter to a Bishop* a good while ago, but was not so well pleased with it, as with the latter book; it seemed to me full of fancy and uncertain conjectures, which, with the obscurity of the style of *Moses's Principia*, from whence both are taken, makes that book not so much minded, as the advocate thinks it deserves. But it is too well known for him to pretend to be the original of those discoveries, if his modesty would have allowed it. But it is time to release you and myself; so I shall only add, that I am

Yours affectionately,

C. COCKBURN.

*Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.**Aberdeen, Sept. 8, 1737.*

DEAR NIECE,

I Hope you do not impute my long silence to any change in my regard for you. I assure you I have still the same affection and desire of corresponding with you as ever, and did most sincerely and heartily interest myself in your happiness on the late important change of your condition^m, though I did not make the usual compliments upon it. If you knew the infirmities, that make writing a burthen to me, you would pity, rather than complain of me: My eyes and head suffer much by it, especially in bad weather; and I was in hopes summer would have restored me to myself and friends, but we have had so much wet and cold this season, that it could scarce be distinguished from winter, which has such an effect on me, that an illness I had then had left a great weakness upon me still, and I was long unable to guide a pen: yet I have been obliged to use it since, much more than I could have wished, on occasion of my poem, which I suppose you may have heard was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May lastⁿ. There were several alterations in it, that I thought for the worse, which cost me some writing, both to my son and the publisher about it; besides another little thing I sent them with it. And Lady *Betty Gordon* having taken a copy from the print, hearing there were faults in it, was very pressing to have a correct one from me. This obliged me to write a fair copy (for I have none by me) and I have since received a very ingenious letter from her ladyship, that I must answer. I have before heard she was a great reader, and now find she has read Mr. *Locke's*

^m By marriage with Capt. *Arbutnot*.ⁿ p. 308.*Essay,**and several of her friends.*

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Essay, and the controversies he was engaged in, upon which she speaks very judiciously. She tells me, she has seen some of my former performances (but does not say of what kind) which made her desirous to see my late poem, and wishes for an opportunity of subscribing to my *Vindication* of Mr. *Locke*, if it were to be published in that way. All this I have told you, to make a merit to you (that may in some measure atone for past omissions) of deferring to answer the obliging expressions of so great a lady, that I might first acquit myself of my debt to you.

*Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.**February 8, 1737-8.*

DEAR NIECE,

I Sent *Alzira* ° and the *Toy-shop* to divert you and your grave companion a little. The humour of the last pleased me extremely.

I know not whether the Queen ever saw my poem; but I believe I might have had it presented to her, if a certain diffidence of every thing I do, till I know the judgment of others, had not made me over-backward to attempt it, not imagining her death would so soon have put it out of my power. Her loss is certainly much to be lamented, on account of the extraordinary qualifications of her mind, which disposed her to be a great encourager of learning and virtue, and a support to the unhappy. But perhaps it may make no great change in affairs at court, since, if we may believe the parliament, she was intirely submissive to the King's will. However, the breach there will, in all probability, no more affect the public, than the same thing did in the last reign.

° Tragedy of *Monf. de Voltaire*.

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Mrs.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

June 22, 1738.

DEAR NIECE,

I Should have writ to you sooner, but deferred it till I had read out the book, on which you desire my thoughts, and which I now return you.

It is very hard to form any judgment of a subject quite out of one's knowledge or understanding, as I confess most of that book is to mine. Yet I shall give you some superficial remarks I have made on it. In the first place, I do not see, that in all that long animadversion upon the second *Theſis*, and indeed in the whole book, is any confutation of the author he pretends to oppose, for this plain reason, that he uses his terms in a quite different sense, and consequently writes upon a quite different subject. For instance, the author of the *Theſes* means by divine faith, what it is commonly understood to mean, viz. an *Act* of the *Human Mind*; against which his adversary's objection, that a single act cannot constitute the essence of faith, is a mere cavil, as is likewise his objection against the definition of reason, *Theſis* I. for reason, as opposed to faith, cannot be understood of the faculty, but the act. On the contrary, the animadverter, by divine faith, means an *Act* of *God* illuminating the mind, which, in my opinion, is more properly called *Divine Light*. Otherwise it confounds the revelations of God, with our assent to them. And if these were rightly considered, perhaps it might appear, that whatever truth there may be in what your author says of divine light, it does not hinder, but that all the propositions in the *Theſis* about divine faith may be true too, since they relate to quite another thing.

My next remark is, that there seems no sufficient foundation for supposing a supreme spirit really distinct

distinct from the rational soul. The author of the preface says it is that, which in common speech is called conscience. And why that power of judging, approving, or condemning our inclinations, or actions, may not be a faculty of the same soul, that desires, or acts, I do not see. Your author says, indeed, that there are too contrary *wills* in man, which cannot belong to one soul. But I take this to be a misapplying of the word *WILL*; or rather confounding it with the affections and the judging faculty; for it is plain, he speaks of them under the name of the will. It is certain, the will sometimes determines contrary to the inclinations, and sometimes contrary to the judgment of conscience, which yet may all three belong to the same soul. But I find nothing like two contrary wills; for I think we can no more determine or will, than we can do, and not do, the same action at the same time.

My third remark is, that he speaks of such a sublime union with God, and clear vision of him, as we are promised, in Scripture, shall be the happiness of another life, but no where, that I know of, encouraged to expect it in this. *We now see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* And to aim at so high a privilege in this imperfect state may, I fear, be a dangerous presumption. For, in the last place, I remark, that the whole doctrine of the book opens a way to the wildest enthusiasm, and leaves no defence against the illusions of seducing spirits, or a warm imagination, reason being utterly exploded, and declared incapable to judge of divine things. For, though I make no doubt, that when God is pleased to reveal himself internally to the mind of man (as he has done on extraordinary occasions) he can do it in such a manner, as to give a clear certainty, that he is the author of the revelation; yet this is no security against the delusions

of other spirits, or of our own imaginations, if we unwarrantably give up our minds to expect divine illuminations, and are persuaded, that reason must not presume to examine, whether they are divine or not. One would think these mystic writers scarce look upon reason as a gift of the all-wise God, but rather of some evil principle, so much they fear to be guided by it. Let Dr. Clarke admonish them better than I can do, in these words, vol. III. sermon v. "Whoever at any time speaks against reason in matters of religion, *knows not*, or considers not, *whereof he affirms*. All reason and truth is from God; and God does as truly reveal himself by the nature and reason of things, as by inspiration of words. Reason is the light of God's creation." May he grant us to make a right use of that light, with the assistance of his externally-revealed word; and then we need not envy those, who pretend to such sublime attainments here, as we humbly wait for, being the utmost of our hopes in life to come, or who imagine they understand what seems to us poor rationalists unintelligible jargon.

You will excuse my being so tedious on a subject, which, I confess, instead of light, throws nothing but confusion and darkness about me. I pray God those, who have so high a conceit of it, may take sufficient care, that the light, that is in them, be not darkness.

This letter was begun last week, but I have been obliged to lay it aside till now; and the carrier being come in, I shall not have time to say all I intended on other parts of your's. Lord Shaftesbury is esteemed by the deists, as one of their chief oracles; and in several of his writings, has many artful insinuations against some doctrines of revelation. His notions of virtue are indeed very sublime; but he seems to be defective in his foundation. I cannot enter into particulars now, but have

have sent Dr. Butler^p to my assistance, whose three first Sermons, with the preface, will help you to form a judgment on some of Lord Shaftesbury's notions. I believe the Doctor will please you. He is a most judicious writer, has searched deeply into human nature, and is by some thought obscure; but he thinks with great clearness, and there needs only a deep attention to understand him perfectly.

I am surprised to hear *the Essay on Man* is accused of deistical principles; which I think there is no other ground for, than in all books, that treat of natural morality only, independent of revelation. If you can procure the answer you mention, I shall be glad to see it, and am not afraid of being put out of conceit with the *Essay*.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

Sept. 8, 1738.

DEAR NIECE,

I Should sooner have answered yours of August the 8th, but that I have been much out of order the greatest part of the time since, by a cold in my head, and a return of my cough, which coming so early, I hope, will make me only a transient visit, for it seems going off.

I did not doubt, that Dr. Butler would give you great satisfaction. He seems to have studied human nature very deeply, its passions and affections; and has justly cleared it of that over-balance of self-love, which some would make the motive of all our actions, setting that matter in a clearer light, than it is usually treated with. He likewise, as you observe, very rightly establishes the authority of the principle of reflection, which

^p Now Lord Bishop of Durham.

strongly obliges us to act according to its dictates, when considered as the guide assigned us by the author of our nature.

The power we have to act or not act, as conscience directs, is, I think, what constitutes us free agents. And since you allow me to be your assistant in the study of morality, (to which I have little pretence, but by my helping you to books) I will take the liberty to give you this hint, that, whilst our modern moralists have contended to establish moral virtue, some on the moral sense alone, some on the essential difference and relations of things, and some on the sole will of God, they have all been deficient; for neither of those principles are sufficient exclusive of the others, but all three together make an immovable foundation for, and obligation to moral practice; the moral sense or conscience, and the essential difference of things discovering to us what the will of our maker is.

I have so great an opinion of the author of the *Analogy*⁹, that I no sooner saw it advertised, than I made it my business to inquire after it, and procured the reading it twice. I think the design finely executed, especially in the first part, and all the objections of the deists very well obviated. But alas! they are a sort of people not to be convinced. They have such partial notions of the goodness of God, that they scarce allow him any other attributes; from whence they conclude, that nothing can be wanting to restore sinful man to his favour, but their own repentance, which gives them invincible prejudices against a mediator, a sacrifice, and especially an innocent person's suffering for the guilty. I have seen a late book of theirs, that mentions the *Analogy*, but still goes on with the old objections. However, that valu-

able performance, and several others, that have come out within these few years, are of great use to satisfy and confirm the humble believer in his pious and just opinion, that God best knows by what means it is fit for him, in the wisdom of his government, to be reconciled to mankind.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

Long Horsely, June 30, 1739.

DEAR NIECE,

THE hurry and disorders, that must unavoidably attend one under my infirmities upon this grand revolution in our situation, have so whirled about my thoughts, that this is the first moment I could compose them enough to set pen to paper. But amidst all the confusion of them, I preserved a sensible concern for you and your affairs, an earnest desire to hear of Capt. *Arbutnot's* return, and what voyage he next intends; which I fear will be a perplexing matter under so great an appearance of war. To say the truth, there is scarce any thing I find more regret for in this change, than the distance and difficulty of hearing frequently from you, or of having any account of what relates to you, and the rest of our friends at *Peterhead*.

It is but very lately, that I have got rid of my cough, and have since been troubled with some pains. But fine weather, which we have at present, recovers me, and I always loved the country in summer. This is agreeable enough now, nor are we without company, and of such as can help us to books. But we had need to lay in a store of them against the winter; for I fear all the rest of the pleasing scene will disappear at that time. My head has not been disposed for deep reading, since

since I came here, but I have been very well entertained with a book, which, I believe, you might find no unuseful amusement, if you can meet with it there. It is in two parts, and consists in some account of the life of Mrs. Thomas, (who is mentioned at the beginning of *Pope's* letters) and letters, which pass betwixt her and Mr. Gwinnett, under the names of *Pylades* and *Corinna*, during an honourable love for sixteen years. There appears a great deal of good sense, solid virtue, and sincere piety in all his writings; and as she was a lady of fine talents and true worth, it cannot but grieve one to find such persons so unfortunate. Her case is indeed extremely pitiable, and may afford matter of submission, and even gratitude to providence, under many uneasy dispensations, when we reflect how unhappy some have been, who seem to have deserved much better than ourselves.

I have not given you the particulars of our passage hither, because I believe you will have it from other hands. The greatest inconvenience I find in this place is the distance from church. By good providence I had a lift thither and home again on *Whitsunday* in a chaise with four horses. But the lady, to whom the vehicle belonged (and who sometimes comes in a coach and six) has been ever since in another part of the country; so that I have staid at home all the other Sundays, and am like to do so, till I get myself equipped for riding, which I intend as soon as possible, that I may not lose the only season, when the weather and my health will allow me to go in the public worship. It is misfortune enough to be deprived of it in the winter.

Mrs.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

Sept. 11, 1739.

DEAR NIECE,

THE difficulties, that attend our correspondence at this distance, give a double relish to the pleasure of hearing from you; and we shall perhaps write more frequently, when we are afraid of losing any opportunity for it, than if we had it every week in our power. So much the uneasinesses of this life are blended with the satisfactions of it, that we scarce have a share of any one of them, without a mixture of the other.

If I had had time to finish my last, I designed to have chid you for conceiving an ill opinion of one you knew nothing of, upon very insufficient grounds. *Pope* says nothing to her disadvantage in his letters. *Cromwell* indeed speaks slightly of her, and calls a letter, which he publishes of hers, a *romantic* one: but as the letter was there for every body to judge of, I could not but acquit it of that character; and though I had never heard of Mrs. Thomas before (which, by the way, I wonder at) was much displeased to find a man speak so unhand somely of a lady, whom it appeared he had once had some regard for, with a kind of insult on her unhappiness: and since I have read her life, and seen the cause of her distresses, it gave me the more indignation against him, who had known her in better days, and was then a great admirer of her. *Pope*, in a pique for her having published his Letters, put the name of *Corinna*, which Mr. Dryden had given to that lady, into his *Dunciad*; but in his notes afterwards made an apology for it. I think it is a piece of justice, due even to strangers, not to conclude against them from any reproaches thrown at them, without examining upon what grounds.

Mrs.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

Sept. 19, 1740.

DEAR NIECE,

BETWIXT your backwardness to writing and mine, our correspondence is likely to go on very much at leisure; which, considering the dulness, that increases with old age, I dare answer for it, will be no great loss on your side, but what your goodness makes so by your desire to hear from a friend, who has a sincere value for you. Our communicating books with our thoughts upon them, whilst we were near one another, afforded matter for our Letters, which must fail at this distance. The news papers indeed we still read in common; but I am too little a politician to converse with you on those subjects. My little understanding in such affairs makes me willing to believe, that those, who are at the helm, may have views, in what appears to others to be wrong; and reasons against what they think should be done, that are above my reach; so that I humbly content myself with reading the public papers, to know what is done, whilst others are sagely commenting on what should, or should not be done. However, thus far I think I can apprehend, that no fleet, how great soever, nor the best management possible, can prevent many of our ships being taken, or vast losses in trade; both which must be unavoidable in a war with Spain; and there end my politics.

I could with much more pleasure impart to you my sentiments upon subjects of another nature, which have raised a controversy, that has employed many able pens for some years, and should be glad to have your thoughts of what I have scribbled about them. But there is no trusting such papers so far off, when there is but one copy of them; and I am too lazy to take another. They
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are chiefly upon the dispute, whether moral virtue, and moral obligation, are founded solely on the will of God, and rewards and punishments; or on the immutable nature of things; a contest set on foot by Dr. *Waterland*, upon comparing positive with moral duties, in opposition to Dr. *Clarke's Exposition of the Church Catechism*, published soon after his death. These points, with a little touch of some others, more curious and metaphysical, were my study last winter. And I design, if it please God I am able, to resume them, when the evenings grow long, for I cannot work by candle-light: but in the summer I am so much employed at my needle, that I read little, and write less.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

April 18, 1741.

DEAR NIECE,

I Hope you are too well assured of my sincere concern for you, and the reality of my friendship, to impute my silence, upon the great loss you have sustained, either to indifference or neglect. I had indeed too deep a sense of it to express, or to be able to offer any thing for your immediate comfort. Nature must yield a while to such a shock; but it is not for dependent creatures, in such a precarious state as this is, to give themselves over to an inconsolable grief for any changes, that can happen here. It is the condition of our being to expect them; and there is nothing we possess with greater uncertainty, than the life of ourselves, or our friends. Here then it is, that *that* resignation, which Dr. *Butler* observes our nature is formed to, ought as reasonably to be exercised occasionally, as it is habitually by every one towards objects out of our sphere, or out of our reach.

reach. Nature inclines us to be contented with our lot: we find the principles of this submission within us; and this, says the Doctor, is an excellent foundation of a reasonable and religious resignation, which he justly calls the whole of piety, and a source of the most settled quiet, and composure of mind. Nothing would perhaps more effectually contribute to bring us to this, than frequently to consider, that happiness is really inconsistent with a probation state, and sufferings of one kind or other essential to it. We may sometimes be apt to reflect, that others are allowed to enjoy the blessings we are deprived of, when those very persons may have some cross, which we would find harder to bear. To have a good husband early snatched from us, is indeed a grievous affliction; but to live long with a very bad one, might be much worse; which is the lot of many, and numberless other more grievous evils this life is subject to. The consideration therefore, that all must undergo some sufferings, and that what our particular trial shall be, is in the direction of infinite goodness and wisdom, ought to dispose our minds to a perfect submission, and cheerful hope, that all will tend to our good in the final issue of things, if we behave, as is our duty to the governor of the universe. Religion is certainly the only stay of an afflicted soul; and as I know you have a real and serious sense of it, I hope it will have its proper effect upon you, and shall be glad to know the state of your mind from yourself.

You are now called to the exercise of a new duty, which may be at once your employment and delight. But do not let the cares and tenderness of a mother, excite an anxious solicitude about future contingencies. In doing your part leave the event to him, who has the sole disposal of life and death, and has wise reasons, though unknown to us, for dispensing either. May that good providence

dence give a blessing on your tender cares, that your little son may prove a comfort and support to you, and restore you to your peace of mind. There is some kind of relief in imparting our sorrows to a friend. If you will give yourself leisure to try that remedy, you can find none, that more truly sympathises with you, or would more willingly contribute to lighten your affliction, than,

dear Niece,

your sincerely affectionate aunt,
and humble servant,

C. COCKBURN.

Mrs. Arbuthnot to Mrs. Cockburn.

Peterhead, Aug. 6, 1741.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR last delicate kind letter on such a melancholy subject gave me all the comfort and satisfaction, that my mind was capable of receiving, in the disconsolate state it was then in. It deserved an answer much sooner, but I assure you I was never able to give one; nor is it any great abatement I find in my grief, that makes me write now, but a strong desire to hear from you again. I agree with Dr. Butler, that compassion is a remedy provided for misery, and have found nothing more comforting to myself in my distress, than the real sympathy I have met with from some of my friends. And as there are none, of whose sincerity I am more certain than yours; so I assure you I set as great a value on your sympathy, as any I have met with on this sad occasion. I could impart my sorrow to you with all my heart; but am too big with it, and ten thousand different reflections on it, to be able to give you in writing almost any notion of the true state of my mind. I have

have lost a most dear pleasant companion; and one of the fondest husbands, that ever stood in that relation, to whom I bore a most violent affection in return: and shall leave you from thence to conclude, what sad sorrow I must feel on the reflection of such a change. It has many aggravations, particularly that of being left in a dependent state. But I assure you, they are all so much swallowed up in the loss of himself, that I am much less sensible of the consequences than can be imagined. I wish I could say to myself, that I deserve the opinion you seem kindly to have entertained of me, in regard to my sense of religion; wherein I have been formerly too deficient in cultivating that principle, I have need to make up for the future; since I find, that nothing less than resignation to the will of Almighty God can reconcile my mind to my present lot. He has brought it upon me in his wife and just providence; but, heavy as it is, I must own, I can discover some rays of mercy in the conducting of it; particularly, when I consider the frame of mind I was wrought up to, when I received the sad and melancholy news. I used at other times, when I was in any extraordinary fears for him, to find my mind so weakened by them, that I always thought, if they proved true, I should run great hazard of losing my senses. But all this voyage I found them take a very different turn. I had many apprehensions, but no extraordinary cause for fear; and when *Sandy* turned bad, which happened to fall in the very middle of winter, I was so divided between fear of him, and his father, whom, I believed then to be on his passage home, and was expecting him every day, that I cannot say I ever felt myself in a more serious frame of temper. But, in spite of these advantages, I spent many a night in sad uneasiness, and shed abundance of tears, before I got the finishing stroke. The distraction and agony of mind I was in, on hearing

hearing of the ship being come, and seeing no sign of himself, for about a quarter of an hour, and the stupid resignation, with which I received the news from his two brothers, is a subject, which you will excuse me from saying any more on, since I am quite spiritless already.

Poor *Sandy* has been very bad of the measles, but has now, thank God, got quite over them. I am hopeful they may prove a means of health to him, for the future, if the small-pox keep away; but they are in the country just now. I shall endeavour to follow your advice in moderating my anxiety about him, which I assure you is no easy task. I was but too fond of him from the time of his birth; but God knows, I am much more so, since his father's death. If I would not trust him to providence, I should be very ungrateful for the past mercy of his recovery from a very dangerous illness, far beyond the expectation of all that saw him at that time.

***I assure you, I found it [the absence of her husband] much harder than the danger, to which he was exposed. I must own, that so long as it pleased God to preserve my dear, I always thought the danger carried its reward along with it. Every new deliverance proved a new ground for trust in providence, and raised such pleasant emotions in the mind, as made me think my past fears abundantly recompensed. And though it has pleased God, to make my lot very melancholy; yet I assure you, my case is singular here; for since the memory of man, there has no such misfortune, as the death of a husband abroad, with the loss that ensued afterwards, befallen any belonging to that employment in this place. But I have kept you too long on this melancholy subject, and am rendered quite faint with it myself. This is the second time I have entered on it in writing, but have been sadly defeated both times. I shall conclude it with telling you, that I believe

I should be the most unhappy person in the earth, was it not for a very strong relish I have for the subject of morality, which has a strong tendency to draw off the mind from vanity. I know to whom I think myself obliged, for the first turn I took that way, and for the many helps I got afterwards. I look upon you as no small instrument in making me bear up in my trouble, and reckon myself at a great loss for the distance between us. I remember you once mentioned in a letter to me, that you was writing something on that subject, but could not conveniently send me a copy of it. If you can abridge it, so as to send me any thing of the substance of it, in a letter, it will be most acceptable. If you have not wrote to my cousin before this comes to hand, I shall be glad to hear from you (though never so short) under cover to her. All here send their kind service to all your family; and I am, dear madam, though in great affliction,

*Your most affectionate niece,
and bumble servant,*

ANNE ARBUTHNOT.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

Feb. 17, 1745.

DEAR NIECE,

IT was a great concern to me when I received your last sorrowful letter, that I was not in a condition to answer it; and I am still in pain to think, that my long silence must look like an unkind neglect of you in your afflictions: but as my heart is conscious of a sincere sympathy with you, it persuades me you will be inclined to have juster thoughts of me. It was long before I recovered from

from the disorders, that attended my cough, under which my head was utterly incapable to dictate, and my hand to guide a pen; and the moment I was able, I was obliged to go on with a work I had before begun, which required all my time and my thoughts; but they were often interrupted with anxious desires of writing to you, from a deep concern for you.

Your letters speak a mind given up to all the aggravating reflections, that can produce a disconsolate dejection, beyond what would be the natural consequence even of the great losses you have sustained; and so far must be called voluntary unhappiness. But as you seemed sensible, that you had run into some extravagance, I am in hopes your own reason has long before now, composed that tumult, which the return of a sad anniversary had raised. For a little observation of the common dispensations of God's providence, and of his declarations in scripture, might satisfy you, that you had no grounds to think the case of your family singular; that God had set you up for a mark of his displeasure, as you express it; or that he has been very angry with you. I do not know how exempt that little corner of the island, where you are, may have been from great calamities: but I dare say, you must frequently have heard, and read of such. And I can assure you, that since we have been here, several instances have happened near us, of tender, fond, industrious husbands, whose employments were the only support of their families, snatched away by a fever, and one drowned, leaving their wives with five or six young children to bring up, and little visible means for it, without parents or any near relations about them; which I take to be more deplorable cases than yours, though you seem to think your misfortunes somewhat singular. As to their being a sign, that God has been very angry with you, it is a thought scarce

excusable in one, that is at all acquainted with the sacred scriptures, which abound in expressions of the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous; assuring us, that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of heaven, and that whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, &c. Passages of this nature made a lady, I have heard of, apprehend herself entirely out of the favour of God, and tempted to despair of her salvation, because she had never met with any misfortunes in her life. And if you would attentively consider them, you must find, that she had better grounds, than you have, for such melancholly apprehensions. Both shew indeed how apt some tempers are to give every thing the worst turn it will bear. Whereas, it is our business, whatever situation we are placed in, to regard chiefly what duties it requires from us, and how we may make it an instrument of obtaining God's favour. And surely it is our wisdom to turn our thoughts to such reflections, as may serve to alleviate rather than aggravate our sorrows; and this I hope you will think your duty as well as your interest.

I can give you no other account, in a letter, of the papers I once mentioned, than that they are remarks on some writers in the controversy concerning the foundation of moral virtue and moral obligation, and in opposition to those, who found them solely on the will of God, or the sanctions of rewards and punishments. One of them, I am so hardy as to oppose, is the translator of Archbishop King's *Origin of Evil*. Another a person of great name, and author of the *Divine Legation of Moses*; a work I have a great value for, and, I assure you, a high esteem of both those authors, though I differ from them in that point. My design at first was only to strike light into my own thoughts, by remarks on the subject; but your uncle proposed to print them, and my son has sent for them to put
into

into a friend's hands at London; so that if they should come to be published, you shall have one of the books: but I am in some fear of trusting the manuscript by sea, having no copy.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

L. Horsely, Sept. 3, 1743.

DEAR NIECE,

THOUGH I am always desirous to hear news of you and your family, I begin to be well enough content, to leave the writing part between your cousin and you, as I grow too infirm and dull for a constant correspondent; and she, I hope, may keep us from wearing quite out of acquaintance. But since you are so good as to write to me in particular, and to communicate your thoughts of some books, I would not omit the opportunity of her frank, to shew you my sense of your kindness.

The unexpected loss of my poor child, who was so useful to me, and had been almost all her life with me, was indeed a severe affliction. She was a long time every moment in my thoughts. Whatever I turned my mind to, she mingled with it: all that I found in books, was some way or other applied to her; and still there is not a day but she is frequently the subject of my reflections; nor do I endeavour to divert them from her, but make the best use I can of them: I sometimes imagine, that I have now a nearer interest in another state than I had; and please myself with the hopes of joining her spirit there, and finding her rejoicing in her early escape from the evils of this world. Sometimes I consider, how graciously providence often makes our disappointments, and crosses in one kind, turn to our advantage in another. My dear Kitty's return to me is an instance of this: had she
been

been settled, as we proposed, or continued with her brother, how desolate should I have been, when deprived of the only child, that was left me ! It is true, her coming from one sorrow to another made some part of my grief ; but her being with me, and sharing each other's griefs, was a mighty relief and comfort ; besides that she is of the greatest use to me. So that I have reason to be thankful both for her, and the blessing I have in the goodness of my son, though at this distance from me ; and I hope God will please to preserve them. It is some trouble to us, that we hear seldom from him since he went to *Germany*, though his business obliges him to write every week to his uncle, which, I suppose, you thought was to his father. We have heard but once from him since the battle, at which he happened to be present, though his office does not require it. But how that was, and what hardships he went through, I leave to his sister to give you an account of.

Since you enquire, if my papers are come abroad, you shall have a history of their fate after I mentioned them to you. My son having no leisure, upon his leaving *England*, to manage such an affair, designed to write to a friend of his, to whom he had before shewn my papers, to take the care of them, and in the mean time left them with his aunt *Cull* till she should hear farther about them. They were sealed up in a cover directed to me ; and she having soon after occasion to send some writings hither to her brother, thought it a good opportunity of conveying my packet, not doubting but it was designed to come to me ; so it was put up with a large parcel, and arrived here safe by sea many months ago. I looked upon this accident as a sort of providential check to my design of printing ; so gave over all thoughts of it, which I informed my son of : but he had writ before to his friend (though not till he came to *Maastricht*) from whom I had a letter

last

last *April*, desiring me to send my manuscript to him, in order to get it printed, and assuring me, on my son's account, of all the assistance in his power. I answered, that since the papers were returned to me, I was unwilling to part with them, as I had once done, without having another copy, and transcribing was grown a very troublesome work to me ; besides that I should take it kindly, as he had read them, if he would let me know, whether he thought there was any thing in them worth publishing. To this he replied, that since I desired it, he would give his sentiments freely, " That he thinks the whole to be wrote with solid judgment, and well weighed arguments, and that it is worthy the perusal of the learned." He added, that it was absolutely necessary to transcribe it ; that the delay would be no detriment at that time of the year ; and whenever I pleased to send it to him, he would do his utmost to get it printed. Thus encouraged, I resolved to write the whole over again, and having met with some things in *Dr. Watts's Philosophical Essays* upon part of the subjects I had treated of, I made several additions relating to them, all which employed the few leisure hours I have, for about two months. When it was finished, just the day before it was to have been dispatched for *London*, *Dr. Sharp*, our Archdeacon, happening to make us a visit, your uncle mentioned the manuscript to him, who was willing to peruse it. I confess I dreaded his judgment more than that of the public, to whom I suppose I shall not be known ; yet I was desirous to have his opinion. It was sent him on the *Friday*, when *Kitty* and her papa made a visit there ; and he returned it the *Monday* following, with a long letter to your uncle relating to it. He begins with telling him, that " he had read the discourses with all the attention they require and deserve ; that he believed they would be well received in print ; and that he was so desirous of having

them

them published; that he returned them the sooner, that there might be no delay; and the rather, because he saw no room to advise any alteration either in matter or expression." So full an approbation from a person of his judgment and integrity, you may be sure, gave me great satisfaction, and confirmed my design of sending them once more to London, whither they are now on their way, if not arrived. The rest of the Doctor's letter contained some particulars, in which he perfectly agreed with the author, and some difficulties he found in Dr. Clarke's scheme, which she perhaps could clear up; and on these I have since given my thoughts, but with what effect, I cannot yet tell. I did not imagine this detail would have taken up half so much room in my paper, or I should have scarce entered into it: but as it may yet be uncertain, whether the papers will be printed or not, I was willing to impart to you what steps I have taken, and on what grounds; which if you are tempted to think an effect of vanity, it will perhaps be more just to impute to the freedom of friendship.

We used to take the *Gentleman's Magazine* ever since we came here, but none has been sent us this year since *January*. If you will let me know in what *Magazine* the poem you mention is, and in what month (except it be in the *Scots Magazine*, which does not come here) I will endeavour to procure it, and give you what account I can of it. Dr. *Whicote* is well known, but we never heard of any sermons of his published by Lord *Shaftesbury*. I had like to have told you too, that I never read any of Mr. *Murault's* writings; but your uncle says, that is the name of the author of the *World unmasked*, and another little book we had at *Aberdeen*, the title of which we have forgot. However the author's name was to neither of them, and I am quite unacquainted with it; but if you had, in condescension to a bad memory, given the title of your books,

books, and a little hint of their subjects, it might have revived my remembrance of them. I can only now recollect, that the first seemed so mysterious to me, (though very amusing) that when I had gone through it, I knew not what it aimed at; what was meant by the True, where it was to be found, and how we are to know it. The other, I thought, had many good things in it, though of what nature I have forgot, and some just reflections of false notions of religion; yet, if I mistake not, it was not free from several such itself. But perhaps these are not the books you mean: your favourite author may have writ others, that I have never seen. However, I would caution you not to be too fond of such moralists, as would draw us from all societies of *Christians*, to *Christianity* in the abstract, or at large, which is truly an impracticable scheme; and much less of those, who discover a prejudice against the doctrines of the Gospel, where undoubtedly the purest morality is to be found, and upon the surest grounds. I am sorry to say the noble earl you so much admire (the great oracle of the deists) is one of these; whose fine genius, and personal virtue, might otherwise have been of great service to the religion of his country; which so zealous a patriot, one would think, should have countenanced for the public good (as the best philosophers of old did theirs) though his own refined taste needed no external incitements to the practice of virtue. But it is time to conclude reflections, which perhaps will be little agreeable to you; and I have scarce left myself room to offer my love and service to your mother and sisters, and to assure you, that I am very much,

Dear niece,

Your affectionate aunt,
and humble servant,

C. COCKBURN.

Mrs.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

June 12, 1744.

DEAR NIECE,

I Have at last got the papers in print, of which I promised you a copy. They were published in the middle of *March*, but the copies sent me did not arrive till the last *Saturday* in *May*, about which time I was a little recovered from an illness, that had confined me near four months to my chamber and my bed-gown; and I was pleased, that my ability to write to you, and to keep my promise with you, were come to me together. But the very next day, though a warm one, upon going down stairs a little less wrapped up, I got a new cold, accompanied with a low fever, which again reduced me to my former weakness, and I have not yet recovered my strength or spirits. However, as no opportunity has yet offered of sending you my remarks, I shall endeavour to get a letter ready to go with them by the first safe hand. When you have read them, I shall expect to know your sentiments, especially on the principal subject.

My son's friend, who managed the affair of getting them printed, writes me word, that they have been well received by many learned and judicious men, particularly Mr. *Warburton*, who, though I have opposed him in some things, has a great value for me, and desired to have a direction how he might write to the author; which the gentleman would not give without my consent, but I could not well refuse it to so great a man, whose desire of it does me such an honour. I flattered myself, that Mr. *Pope* might have the same desire upon my inscribing them to him: but the newspapers have been of late so full of his dangerous illness, and even his death, though that has been

con-

contradicted, that I fear I shall be deprived of the satisfaction I proposed, in having him know the great value I have for him, though I have no pretensions to any share in a friendship I should most highly prize.

I have at last met with the fifth edition of the poem you mentioned, but did not so much as tell me the title of it, *The Complaint or Night Thoughts*. There are many curious and just reflections, which are extremely affecting, as they seem to come from the very heart of the writer. I believe it is Dr. *Young's*, but I know nothing of his case, farther than I can gather from the poem and the preface, in both which he seems to avoid being particular, and leaves a great deal to guesses. He mentions three deaths of persons very dear to him, that happened in less than three months, which disappointed all his hopes, and reduced him to the utmost affliction: but who they were, he does not tell us, yet I think it pretty plain, that *Narcissa* was his daughter. *Philander* he speaks of only as a friend, but by some lines that relate to the effect his death had upon *Narcissa*, hastening her's by a break of bliss, I should imagine him to have been her brother; but that is not so clear. He says, in his preface, the reader may observe, there was a third death yet unsung; and he does not know, whether he shall have occasion, or rather excuse, for continuing the amusements of his grief, when his mind was now become composed for more important studies. Yet I find there is a fifth, and a sixth *Night* come out, which if I meet with, you shall hear of them, and if they come into your *Magazines*, you may send me some account of them. Those we have seen have a fine strain of poetry, and tend much to wean us from depending on the uncertain comforts of this life, and to raise the mind to that future state, where alone complete and lasting happiness is to be expected.

I read

I read the *World unmasked* twice as you did, and found a good deal of agreeable amusement in it, but not a whit the more instruction, or solid satisfaction upon a second reading. If his aim was to shew, that every man's conscience sincerely attended to would prove an unerring guide, why so much mysteriousness? why such dark and round-about ways, to inculcate so plain a proposition? (though by the way I think it a very false one.) How are we to know, when we have found his true? Which is I know not what, distinct from all particular truths. I like an author, who shews, that he has a clear idea of his subject, and that he honestly intends to convey his thoughts to his readers, by expressing himself intelligibly, without endeavouring to puzzle or amaze. Otherwise, I am apt to suspect, either that he does not know himself what he aims at, or does not design his readers should. If I have any guess at your favourite's aim, it is to draw people from adhering to any particular church, and to be *Christians* at large, which was not to be plainly spoke out. This is indeed running from bigotry to another extreme. Those, who embrace this scheme, must lay aside all positive ordinances, though sure they are too expressly commanded for any sincere *Christian* to think they may be safely neglected: and what need is there of it? Cannot we join in communion with a church, that holds all the essentials of *Christianity*, and which we think has the fewest corruptions of it; and comply with its customs in indifferent matters, without adopting any bigotry for trifles on the one hand, or aversion to them on the other? We may silently judge for ourselves, and live free from party heats, and bigotry, in communion with bigots. As to the doctrine of redemption by *Jesus Christ*, rejecting that may well give offence to judicious *Christians*, since it is plainly and frequently delivered in Scripture: but I confess the
general

general way of explaining it is so little agreeable to reason, that it may as justly give offence to considering men. For my part, I could never assent to the common notions about it; yet for all that I never doubted, but that a doctrine, which is the very foundation of *Christianity*, must be consistent with reason, and the divine rectitude, if rightly understood; and though I rejected some explanations of it, I saw both the obligation and the comfort of believing the truth of the thing. Dr. Clarke went as far as most in removing the difficulties; but I have lately met with *An Essay on Redemption*, that has given me great satisfaction, and, I think, obviates all the objections of unbelievers. I wish you could get the reading of it: it is the second part of *Divine Rectitude*, by the author of the first, Mr. Balguy. I read the fourteen letters with pleasure, and remember they gave me a pleasing idea of the whole creation being happy at last: but alas! when I came to consider the grounds of his proofs from reason and Scripture, I found them very defective. His arguments from Scripture have been extremely well answered some time ago, in the *History of the Works of the Learned*; and there are several considerations in Archbishop King's *Origin of Evil*, which shew, how reasonably it may be concluded, that free creatures, designed for immortality, will be continued the whole extent of their duration, in that state, which is the natural consequence of their own choice. Indeed this seems more agreeable to rectitude, and the nature of things, than that the good and the wicked should be at last equally happy, and equally in favour with God. But this is a subject too copious for a letter. I shall only add with respect to Scripture, that though it is very true, that *everlasting*, &c. is sometimes to be understood in a limited sense; yet reason, and all the rules of interpretation must assure us, that such terms are to be taken in the
same

same sense, when spoken of the *miseries* of a future state, as when applied to the *happiness* of it; so that, if one is temporary, the other must be so likewise.

I come now to Lord *Shaftesbury*, who perhaps was a good *Christian*, when he published the sermons you speak of, and writ so like a divine; for no doubt his education led him that way. He was *Mr. Locke's* pupil, and seems to have taken a prejudice against him at the same time, that he fell out with revelation. I do not know from whence his prejudices arose; but if it was from the violence, divisions, or degeneracy of *Christians*, surely a man of his penetration might have known mankind well enough to conclude, that the best religion in such hands must be mingled with the passions, frailties, and mistakes of men; and should not have thought it reasonable to condemn the purest principles, for the sake of practices entirely opposite to them. Could he know the world, and think, that morality, and by consequence the good of his country, would be less advanced by the belief of *Christianity*, (even with his hard thoughts of its teachers) than by no religion at all? Without which it has never been thought practicable in any age, or country, to keep up any tolerable order in society. If, instead of that, he proposed to bring the bulk of mankind to a love of virtue for its beauty, and excellencies, and to give them all his own refined taste; he might as well (as a great author says) have proposed to make them all lords. But supposing he was not so firm a believer, as one could wish, you tell me, *that* will admit of a great deal of excuse in *Dr. Butler's* opinion; for he says some people's trial in this probation state may spring chiefly from difficulties in speculation. I do not remember that passage in the *Analogy*, but I dare almost venture to answer for the doctor, that he no more meant it for an ex-

cuse of infidelity, than he would have meant it an excuse for vice, if he had said, that most people's trial in this state came from the difficulties of practice; and I doubt not you will find he had some other aim in view, if you read him again, and consider the occasion, or the use he makes of that observation. Perhaps it was to warn those, whose trials lie that way, to arm against them; as those, whose trials are in points of practice, ought to arm on that side: or he might design to shew, as *Dr. Clarke* somewhere does, how faith comes to be accounted a virtue, and unbelief a vice, which some pretend are not in our own power. *Dr. Clarke* asserts, that the right or wrong disposition of mind, which leads to the one or the other, is in our own power: It is the business of reason and virtue to cultivate or correct them: we ought to bring our minds to a sincere desire of knowing the truth, and a readiness to receive it upon such evidence, as the nature of the thing will admit. That sceptical turn of mind, which you speak of as an apology for infidelity, is that very wrong turn, which it is the province of reason to correct; for it can never lead to truth, and nothing can be more unworthy a rational creature, than to be always wavering and doubting about every thing. I should be loth to suspect you of being a sceptic, for it is a very unhappy, as well as faulty turn of mind; but I do not know what to think of your saying, that *most things are involved in a vast uncertainty*. What things do you mean? The truth of the *Christian* revelation is, in my opinion, established upon as strong and convincing proofs, as the nature of such a dispensation can admit. The essentials of it are plain enough to a sincere enquirer, and we are not obliged to concern ourselves about disputable matters. But I will say no more on a subject, which perhaps you have only engaged in to vindicate your admired writers; and I do not know, whether

ther you can forgive my taking so much freedom with them, though you may be assured I mean well. If any thing I have said, can help you to judge more impartially of them, I shall not think my pains ill bestowed; and if your inquisitive mind would turn from authors, that strike the imagination, and puzzle the understanding, to such, as establish solid truths, in a clear and rational manner, you would find your account in it. And contributing to it in any measure would yield a great satisfaction to me, who love you sincerely, and am

Your faithful friend and servant, &c.

C. COCKBURN.

Mr. Pope's death proves but too certain, as you will find by the verses it occasioned; but no doubt you will have heard of it long before they can reach you. I wait impatiently now for an opportunity to send this packet. *June 20.*

Your letter to your cousin, of *Aug. 13.* came to hand the 25th, I am sorry to find by it, that your mother's last illness has left some of the same ill effects behind it, that mine has done, since she has not yet recovered her strength. For my own part, I do not ever expect it. I have not been able to ride this summer, so have been only twice at church, when I could get Mr. Ogle's coach, where I have likewise made one visit.

It is scarce to be hoped indeed, that this age should produce another genius equal to Mr. Pope, especially one of his excellent moral character. The aspersions of him are by no means to be credited: the best rule to judge of him is by his own, and his friends letters, which gained him my heart entirely. It is the fate of all men of great merit to have many enemies: it was *that*, and not his satires, that raised his, meer envy; for they had all vented their spleen against him, long before he had

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writ

writ any satires; as you may find in his epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, if you can recollect it. I do not remember any bitter things he has said against our sex, (perhaps some things of that kind, that were Dean Swift's, may be taken for his) but if he had, his extraordinary regard for his mother, and friendship for Mrs. M. Blount, would cancel them all. The two volumes you speak of are not new, but a collection of all his works in folio, which I would fain see, for I have never read them all; but we are very ill situated here for getting any thing of the *Belles Lettres*. We have not yet seen *The pleasures of the imagination*, but are promised it. I do not know how far Mr. Pope approved of it, but it seems his friend and commentator Mr. Warburton has in some late work censured the author, for adopting that odd notion of Lord Shaftesbury's, that ridicule was the best test of truth; which Mr. Warburton, in his preface to the *Divine Legation*, &c. had demonstrated to be false, by two well-known facts. This is the same person, whose name you will find in my papers, from whom I have had a letter, with an encomium of that small performance, far beyond my expectation; as he says, it was beyond his, to hear it was wrote by a lady. He expresses his obligation for the candour, and politeness of that part, in which he is concerned, and styles it *the strongest and clearest piece of metaphysics, that ever was written*. Your uncle goes this week to Newcastle, and will try some way to get this parcel sent. If it comes with your ship, you will have another with it, which you will take the trouble of sending by your carrier to Mr. Farg.

Sept. the 3d.

VOL. II.

Y

Mrs.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

Nov. 20, 1744.

DEAR NIECE,

YOUR letters came to us by post from *New-castle* on the 17th instant, and I write immediately, in hopes your ship may not be gone, though I shall not have time for a letter of our usual size; but I would not defer what I have to say in defence of Mr. *Pope*. As to the omission in his will, which you say has given much offence, I believe it is not so singular in *England*, as to deserve such notice. The practice of expressing a dependance on the merits of our Saviour is not, I think, general with us, especially in the polite world; but had it been ever so customary, as he was a *Roman Catholic*, if he had done it without joining the virgin, and the saints, it would have given great scandal to those of that church, and he might have good reasons not to think that proper, besides that he seemed no bigot to any of their peculiarities. But his greatest admirers own, you say, that nothing is to be found in his works, that favours *Christianity*. It seems his poem on the *Messiah* escaped their diligent search, though it was published with his first *Miscellanies*. However, supposing there was nothing of that nature in his works, his subjects not requiring it, how does that oblige us to give him up to the *Deists*? Indeed, dear niece, this will never set him upon the same foot with your favourite lord, there is a wide difference betwixt saying nothing for, and saying a great deal against *Christianity*. But sure the dislike Mr. *Pope* has shewn to the enemies of it, by bringing the most noted of them into his *Dunciad*, and other satires, as *Blount*, *Toland*, &c. might pass, with candid judges, for something in favour of *Christianity*. And since he professed himself a Catholic, which he frequently

does

does in his Letters, and never dropped one word in jest or earnest, in his public or private writings, to the disadvantage of *Christianity*; no silence, or omission, can be a sufficient ground to conclude he was not a believer. I was surprized at the turn you give to my styling myself *an admirer of his moral character*, which I did not think capable of being misapprehended; nor can I imagine what defect of principles can be in an admirable moral character, for that, in my judgment, includes every virtue. There was no opposition intended, only a distinction from his poetical character, which all the world admired. You will find the same sense expressed in the verses:

“The heart beyond the genius I admir’d.

When you read my *Remarks* again, you will observe, that I place morality solely and entirely on the nature, relations, and fitness of things; for I cannot conceive how any other principle can have the least share in the foundation of virtue. But perhaps you meant our obligation to the practice of moral virtue, which is a distinct consideration; and that I do indeed place upon a threefold bottom, the fitnesses of things, the moral sense, (not a blind instinct) and the will of God: but interest is no part of the ground of moral obligation in my judgment; for what has that to do with conscience? And yet I think my scheme is in no danger of running into wildness or absurdities; for what is there of either, in practising what our nature directs us to approve as fit and right? Or in obeying God, on account of the relation we stand in to him, and a desire of being acceptable to him? The sanctions of his laws are, no doubt, of great importance, and in many cases necessary incitements to a steady performance of our duty; but they are not the ground of our duty, which must be prior to all consideration of them; and a man, who should conform to the laws of virtue, merely

with a view to rewards and punishments, would not, according to my notions, be either a virtuous or a religious man. In this I am nearer to an agreement with Lord *Shaftesbury*, than you seem to be; though, in other respects, I think his scheme very defective.

There is an *Essay on Virtue* lately published, which places all obligation to it solely on self-interest. I should be much disposed to make some animadversions upon it, if I could hope for time and ability: but it is a large book, and I have very little prospect of tolerable health for any continuance. My cough returned the beginning of *September*, and held me about two months; but is now succeeded by such a difficulty of breathing, that I do not know, which is most grievous, but between them I am reduced to great weakness.

I am loth to refuse any request of yours, but neither your uncle, nor I, think it proper to send a copy of Mr. *Warburton's* letter. If by any chance it should get air, it might not be well taken, and at best, would be looked on as a piece of womanish vanity; nor is it worth while, being only a matter of compliment. If he gives any answer to my arguments, it will be tacked to some of his printed works, and then you may probably see it.

I was very well pleased with the *History of the Works of the Learned*, as it gives us some knowledge of every thing of note, that is published, and I thought the extracts were very judiciously made. Some small pieces are given us entire, as you see by mine; but that is rare. We had them for some years from a clergyman, who binds the months together at the half year's end, which makes a pretty thick octavo; but we have not seen them of late, nor do I remember in what year or month the answer to Mr. *Murault* was placed. You will find upon the title page of that I sent you, where the last five years are to be had. I do not know the

the poem you mention of Mr. *Pope's*. No doubt ridicule may be of use in exposing follies or vices. All that Mr. *Warburton* blames is applying it to serious and valuable things, especially to religion; and he talks of calling Lord *Shaftesbury* to a farther account for his frequent railleries against it. I never heard of any quarrel betwixt him and Mr. *Locke*; but it was thought unhandsome in him to ridicule the subject of the *Essay on Human Understanding*.

I read Mr. *Baxter's* book at *Aberdeen*, and could not but be exceedingly pleased with great part of it, though I did not agree with him in all, particularly in what he much labours to prove, that every being capable of perception must always actually perceive. I do not remember his being hard upon Mr. *Locke*; but that is so common with authors, who differ, that I might not much reflect on it; nor am I apt to expect quotations from Scripture in philosophical works, since Scripture is not designed to teach us philosophy. I have neither time nor room to add; but here is enough to shew you, how much I desire to correspond with you, and that I am sincerely

Your affectionate aunt,

C. COCKBURN.

Mrs. Arbuthnot to Mrs. Cockburn

Peterhead, June 9, 1747.

DEAR MADAM,

I Think it my duty to return you my most hearty thanks for your kindness in sending me a copy of your book. I am sorry, that I am a judge so unequal to the subject; for I am quite rusted, and have not one single acquaintance just now, who can give me the least assistance, or who has the least notion of these subjects. I should be glad to know

how Mr. *Rutherford's* book is relished, for I think the most of your quotations from him are so very absurd, that they could have little weight. The ground of moral obligation is, it seems, a very perplexed subject; but I should think, that the essential difference of things, the moral sense, and the will of God, did all perfectly coincide. The first I think the foundation of the other two; the second results from the first; and what can be more fit, than that a creature should obey the will of his creator, whom he knows to be perfect in goodness and wisdom? Neither am I sensible of any inconsistency between Lord *Shaftesbury's* scheme and yours, for I take his moral sense to be a sense of the fitness of actions. I read lately some letters of his to a student of divinity, and to *Robert Moleworth, Esq.*; I should be glad to know, if ever they have fallen into your hands. I think them exceeding good. he is very angry with Mr. *Locke* in some of them for his notions of innate ideas. As to human nature's being capable of disinterestedness, I make no doubt, but it may be so with long cultivation and care; but I really believe there is very little of it practised in the world; and I look upon a great many things that are brought to prove it, to be only deceitful appearances, as particularly, that of people's concern for their children, which I have frequently observed to be very great in the most selfish tempers. But I agree with Dr. *Butler*, that self-love, when in its due degree, does not derogate from the morality of an action; and he seems to think, that man cannot divest himself of self-love, and that, as he expresses it, "our ideas of happiness and misery are, of all our ideas, the nearest, and most important to us; that they will, nay, if you please, that they ought, to prevail over those of order, and beauty, and harmony, and proportion, if there should ever be, as it is impossible there ever should be, any inconsistency between them:

them: and that when we sit down in a cool hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this, or any other pursuit, till we are convinced, that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it." Thus far the Doctor, and I must own I perfectly agree with him, and should be glad to know, if you do so too. In his sermons on the love of our neighbour, he seems to think, that all virtues can be traced up to benevolence. Among other instances to contradict that opinion, I find you * bring one from *Silverton's Case*: but I cannot but differ from you, as to his design of hoarding up his money; for I am persuaded, that it proceeded from a vile selfish temper, that would not suffer him to part with it while alive; and that all these kind of bequeathments are owing, either to vanity, thinking to immortalize their name; or to remorse, and with a design to atone for former errors. Thus, Madam, though you will easily see, that I am but lame on these subjects, yet I have ventured to give you my opinion, even where it seems to differ from yours; and shall think myself very lucky if it procures me a letter from you: for I reckon myself much at a loss, that our correspondence has dropped so long, and I can assure you I endeavour, as much as possible, to keep a mind open to conviction on all subjects; and wish I could keep as clear of scepticism, as I can do of dogmatism. I never saw any of Mr. *Warburton's* writings but this small preface, which I think extraordinarily well writ. I am glad you are so well appointed of an agreeable correspondent: for my part I am turned a great stranger to what passes in the literate world, and shall be in hazard of entirely forgetting it, unless you lend me your assistance.

I shall not touch upon the public calamities, to you, having done it to my cousin, perhaps more

* Remarks on Dr. *Rutherford's* Essay, Vol. II. p. 15.

fully, than prudently. If I have erred in that point, I should be most afraid of it, in what is said on some of our clergy's compliance: but if you knew in how ridiculous a manner they did it, you would excuse me. They had not three days advertisement, but were obliged to hurry into *Aberdeen* in all haste, or they had lost the opportunity. It was thought, that the government, by allowing them so short a time, had no mind, that any of them should reap the benefit of the act; and it looks very like it, for Mr. Mann, member of parliament for the borough, wrote from *London* to the magistrates of *Aberdeen*, not to allow them to register their orders, which is expressly required by the act: and I assure you, they are thought by many to be but in a tottering state. To make the thing still the worse, one of them took it in his head, just after he had taken the oaths, to write a burlesque poem, wherein he ridicules in a most barefaced manner all those, who will suffer themselves to be brought to streights for conscience sake. In short, he says every thing in it, which an enemy could have said, by which means he stops all their mouths: for it is impossible to make him more ridiculous, than he makes himself in it. Let this suffice for an apology, if I have given any offence upon the subject in my cousin's letter. I was sorry to hear, that you was under the uneasiness of your cough, when my cousin wrote; but hope you have now got rid of it, and are at freedom to exercise your mind and pen in those subjects, that you most delight in. It must be a great pleasure to you, to get the approbation of the best judges, and a great condescension in you, and at the same time a compliment, that I am very sensible of, to vouchsafe to communicate your writings to me.

My mother desires her brother to excuse her at this time from writing, and says, she will take the next

next opportunity. We all join in our humble duty to him and you, and I am,

Dear madam,

your most affectionate niece,
and humble servant,

ANNE ARBUTHNOT.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

Long-Horsely, October 2, 1747.

DEAR NIECE,

WE were all uneasy at your long silence, till we received your letters dated in *May* and *June*, which did not come to our hands till the beginning of *September*, when your uncle got them at *Newcastle*. I know I am much in arrear to you; but my health is so precarious, that no account can be laid on my part of the correspondence. What with the cough, and whilst I was free from that, a violent disorder on one side of my head, with an extravagant tooth-ach, I have had no respite all this fine summer, and have not been able to write once to my son, since he went last abroad, till the middle of last month. This by way of excuse for my not being punctual in my answers to you. I shall now begin with your last letter, and then, if I have time and paper to spare, may look back on some things in your former.

You say, "the ground of moral obligation seems a very perplexed subject. But you should think the essential difference, the moral sense, and the will of God, do all perfectly coincide." I make no doubt they do; but how will this disentangle the perplexity? Since most of Dr. *Clarke's* opposers allow none of these to be grounds of obligation at all, founding it solely on a prospect of future rewards;

wards; which (as I have observed) discharges all men from being obliged to the practice of virtue, who either do not know, or do not believe, the sanctions of God's laws. How contrary is this to Dr. Butler's doctrine, as well as mine! "Neither, you say, are you sensible of any inconsistency between Lord Shaftesbury's scheme and mine." How this comes in, I do not know, for I never opposed that Lord's scheme, nor do I precisely remember what it is; for when I read him, I had no view to the controversy: I have been of late engaged in: but if he founds *virtue* on the *moral sense*, as I think he does, his scheme and mine can by no means agree; for I found virtue solely on the essential difference, nature, and relations of things, not on any instincts; though I allow the moral sense its due weight in point of obligation. It is so long since I read any thing of Lord Shaftesbury's, that I have forgot, whether I saw the letters you mention; but I remember something of his speaking slightly of Mr. Locke's *Essay*, as if there was little use in knowing from whence we have our ideas, in which he is surely much mistaken; but he is thought to be prejudiced against that great philosopher, for his strong attachment to *Christianity*. Perhaps you may think I am agreed with him, in his dislike of having any regard to future retributions, in the practice of virtue: but I assure you, I am very far from it, though I contend against those, who have run into the other extreme, and would have us regard nothing else.

"As to human nature's being *capable* of disinterestedness, you make no doubt but it *may* be so with care and cultivation, &c." Strange! that your two favourite authors should have so little influence on your opinions. Both Lord Shaftesbury, and Dr. Butler, strongly assert a *natural* disposition in mankind to benevolence; an instance of which, brought from the first, I have supported in my

Remarks;

Remarks; and the Doctor has a whole sermon tending to shew, that benevolence is as much a part of our nature as self-love, and no more inconsistent with it than any other affection is. And he more than *seems* to think, that man cannot divest himself of self-love; for he all along supposes *that* to be a fixed principle, given him to direct him to private good, as the other is to direct him to public good; and he says, that mens acting often contrary to the last is no *proof*, that there is no such thing; for they as often *act* contrary to true self-love. But you entirely mistake the question, which is not, how much or how little disinterested benevolence is practised in the world; but whether that, which there is of it, proceeds from an artificial *association* of ideas, or from a disposition to delight in the good of others, *implanted in the nature of man*? And that, which you bring as an objection against this disinterested benevolence, is the strongest proof of it; for that affection for their off-spring must be *natural*, which the most *selfish tempers* cannot divest themselves of. Indeed I wonder how you come to imagine, that there is little real benevolence in the world; for I think you may have observed a good deal of it, even in the small place where you are. Pray what is all that concern among you for the sufferings of your country, when you do not share in it yourselves, but disinterested benevolence? What *deceitful appearance* was there in Major Petrie's kind intentions for your son? Or in the brotherly affection of the *Barclays*? And what deceit in the friendship between you and your cousin *Kitty*? I could give many more particular instances, but let us return to your letter.

You next bring some passages from Dr. Butler, as if you thought them something different from my sentiments; I do not know why, for I have said nothing inconsistent with any of them. That I am no enemy to *self-love*, appears sufficiently from

page

page 21, * &c. of my *Remarks*, and I assure you, there is not a sentence of that author's, that I would not readily subscribe to, so perfectly I am satisfied with the whole tenor of his doctrine. And if in reading him and me, you would rather consider the drift and design of what we say, than particular expressions, I believe you would more clearly understand both our principles, than you seem to do. In that sermon you mention, in order to explain the text, and to justify the apostle's assertion, that all other commandments are comprehended in this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, the Doctor shews how the most common virtues of mankind may be traced up to benevolence: but then he talks of cautions, restrictions, and exceptions, which might require to be considered, on which he has a large note. In all this I perfectly agree with him. No doubt the social virtues are all included in the love of our neighbour, and the self-duties may in practice be reduced to it, though perhaps they rarely are. But how you come to think, that I brought *Silverton's* case to contradict that opinion, I cannot guess. Had I differed ever so much from it, I could have no occasion to oppose it, when I was remarking on an author, who asserts the very reverse, that all benevolence may be traced up to self-love. But I was then upon a quite different point, viz. to shew, that by Dr. *Rutherford's* definition of virtue, that quality in our actions, by which they are fitted to do good to others, and to prevent their harm, is not a just one; for there may be actions fitted to do good, &c. which yet are not virtues; and for this I instanced in *Silverton's* case. His was an action fitted to do good to a great many, and to prevent their harm; and yet upon the whole, would not be esteemed a virtuous action. Now, unless you think his was a virtuous action, you cannot differ from me, for

* P. 19. of the present edition.

this is all I have said about it. I have not pretended to guess at his motives, not knowing his heart; and if I had, it would have been nothing to my purpose, which was to shew, that practical virtue consists in acting agreeably to the nature, relations, and fitness of things. If you would read my *Remarks* with a proper attention, I doubt not you would be better acquainted with my opinions. You may observe, that when I speak of desiring the happiness of others, it is upon a supposition, that this does not interfere with our own. I always consider man as a sensible being; but I contend, that there are principles in his nature, that direct him to regard what is right and fit, and to desire the good of others; and that these are therefore proper grounds of obligation, as well as his natural desire of his own good. This is partly in answer to something in a former letter of yours, about allowing interest a share in the obligations of a sensible being, which I always do. But I have not done with your last letter yet, though my paper is at an end. What shall I say to the rest?

Mr. *Warburton's* preface is writ (as every thing he writes is) in a masterly style.

There remains nothing more to take notice of in your last, but what you say of your complying clergy. Their case, I suppose, will be considered by your cousin or uncle, so I shall only say, that they had time enough after the act of parliament past to form their resolution; and if they were determined to take the oaths, and had but short warning given them, I see nothing ridiculous in their hurrying into *Aberdeen*, that they might not lose the opportunity. Surely it would have been more ridiculous to have lingered by the way, till it was too late for the business they went about. As to the burlesquing gentleman, I am loth to think, that any one, who pretends to be a *Christian* clergyman, would ridicule suffering, for real conscience-sake: but

but I know the force of prejudice to make things misunderstood, and am willing to imagine he only meant to ridicule *such a pretended* point of conscience, or making it a point of conscience to suffer for what cannot really be any man's duty. This, I suppose, would be much the same thing in your people's way of thinking; but I believe all civilians, and all who have writ on the laws of nature and nations, are agreed, that protection and allegiance are reciprocal obligations, and that where either fails, the other cannot be due.

You see how much paper it has taken me to answer your crowded scrap. Pray when you write to me again, have more indulgence for my eyes, allow yourself room to enlarge your writing a little, and to set your lines at a proper distance, for I assure you it was with no small difficulty I could read your last at all.

I come now to one of yours, dated *March 30, 1745*, which I have not in all this time been able to answer, though it chiefly concerns Mr. *Pope*, to whose memory I would always pay a just regard. There is no reason to expect, that either he or his friends should be absolutely without faults; they were *men* indeed, but he was certainly one of the worthiest of men, and valued his friends most for their moral character, though he did not judge of that by *party* measures, as those who censure him for partiality, grossly do. As for Secretary *Craggs*, he is much wronged by those reports, I can assure you there was no such thing as his living with the Duch. of *M****. in open defiance of her husband; nor did I ever hear of any just ground of scandal given, though there was certainly a great friendship between them; but after his death, she put on mourning, and shewed such an excess of grief, that the world was surprized, and she was much censured for it, which would have been thought nothing of, if she had lived openly with him

him before. Perhaps they might lodge in the same house at the *Bath*, where he died, as is common in those places, where lodgings are scarce; and that may have been called living with him. But for any thing I ever heard of his conduct in that affair (and I was then in the way of knowing what passed in the *grande monde*) Mr. *Pope* needed not to have been ashamed of any character he had given of him. I never saw what he wrote of him, nor of *Poultney*; nor the epistle you mention to a lady, though I thought I had read all his epistles. Your *Magazines* never come into our hands, and I know nothing more than you tell me of that satyrical poem. But how foolish is it in the author to think, that if truth guided Mr. *Pope's* pen, in celebrating *Poultney* for his patriotism, he would have recanted it, when the patriot changed his conduct? No such matter, the truths he spoke in praise of the patriot, were, of themselves, a sufficient censure on his acting a contrary part. Mr. *Pope* had friends of all parties, and made it a law to himself to be of none; and carefully to avoid writing any thing, that might give offence to the family on the throne, or to the ministry; a very proper piece of prudence in his situation: and how inconsistent with this would it have been to fly in the face of both, by satyrizing a man for dropping his opposition to the court? This was all his crime; at least I never heard he did any other injury to his country. And to tell you the truth, I think there is a great deal more outcry upon such changes, than the matter really deserves. I look upon those oppositions, as mere exercises of that spirit of liberty we are so fond of, and meant chiefly to keep up the claim of a free people, to a right of enquiring into the conduct of their governors, and to be a check upon the ministry; and I have often observed, that the subjects, highly debated in parliament, were of so doubtful a nature, and the arguments so strong on both sides, that

that an honest man might have changed his opinion with every speech. Nay, I have heard much better politicians, than I am, say they were generally inclined to be on the side of the last speaker. So that when a patriot has been many years finding fault to no purpose, I see not the mighty baseness of accepting overtures for his own good, since, with all his bustling, he could do none to his country.

You will think me very loose in my political principles, especially when I tell you, I could not but smile at your reading Mr. Murray's speech for continuing the *Hanoverians* in pay, with abundance of indignation: but you may take your revenge by smiling at me in your turn, if you are not too angry to smile, when I tell you, that I read the speeches against them with no less indignation. Such insolence and ill manners, such a contempt of a brave people, for no other reason, but because they had the same sovereign with ourselves, which ought to be a cement of union between us, was unworthy of that august assembly. If the King shewed some partial favour for his native subjects, for which he was invidiously praised, this might have been decently represented; nor do I pretend, that there was no cause of complaint given. But how mean was it to express such unreasonable prejudices, spight, and jealousy upon it! How much nobler would it have been, to take a pride in seeing a small people encrease in welfare and grandeur, by their sovereign becoming ours, when we could lose nothing by their advancement! Indeed I could never think that love of our country a virtue, which makes us partial, and unjust to all the world besides.

It is time now to come to Lord Bolingbroke, though I fear I have by this time so prejudiced you against my vindications, that I shall be ill heard in favour of him: but I must speak my true sentiments, and you will judge as you are inclined.

All

All the invectives against that great man ought to be ascribed to *party rage*, for that is the real source of them. Queen Anne's last ministry, of which he was one, were accused of designing to bring in the Pretender: what their views were, and what the ground of their quarrel among themselves, is a mystery to this day, and I believe will be so, till his history of those times appears, which I fear will not be in my life time. Dr. Swift (who had laboured much, though in vain, to reconcile Lord Oxford and him, and therefore knew all their measures) earnestly presses him in some letters after his return from exile, to publish the history he was about, that the world might know and esteem him as much as he does. But no doubt he was quite another man, when he had laid aside his politics, and applied himself to the study of philosophy, in a retirement of several years from the busy world. It was after this period, that Mr. Pope's intimacy with him was chiefly contracted, and in the letters, which pass between them and Dr. Swift, he appears to be of a very worthy and amiable character. He first urged Mr. Pope to turn his thoughts to moral subjects, who looked on him as his guide in life, and a most useful friend, in various nature wise, as he justly says of him; and all the world had seen him fall with dignity, with temper rise. Now, I appeal to you, whether the judgment of two such men, as Dr. Swift and Mr. Pope, is not more to be credited in favour of Lord Bolingbroke, whom they intimately knew, than invectives upon uncertain appearances, and the distant guesses of a party satyrist.

We have seen no more of Dr. Young's *Night-Thoughts* than what I told you of: but I am sorry to hear, that he talks so extravagantly against the practice of virtue without a prospect of a future state; for I can no more excuse a poet for deviating from truth on moral subjects, than a philosopher.

Vol. II.

Z

But

but *the madness and folly of virtue*, supposing no existence but the present, is grown a fashionable topic with all the writers on the interested scheme. It seems our *moral sense* is much altered since the times of the philosophers, and vice is become *eligible in itself*, instead of virtue. You will know my sentiments on this, by several passages in my last *Remarks*, particularly p. 114, &c.*

You ask me, who it is, that calls the moral sense a *blind instinct*, for you are sure Mr. *Hutchinson* does not. But *that* is understood to be Mr. *Hutchinson's* meaning by all, who have wrote upon it, and I do not hear, that he contradicts it. Indeed an *instinctive approbation of virtue*, &c. can have no other meaning, for all instincts are figuratively said to be blind, that is, they act without judgment by a kind of *Taste*; and therefore you see I several times express a doubt, whether the *moral sense* and *conscience* are the same thing. If they are the same principle or faculty in us, I think, at least, they are different ideas of it, and I take care to shew, that by *conscience* I do not mean a *blind instinct*.

I have nothing more to take notice of, but what you say in a short letter of *Aug. 1746*, when you returned a copy of one of mine to Mr. *Warburton* (and by the way, I assure you I have taken no copy of any since.) You tell me his zeal in preaching against popery gives a prejudice to a certain set of people. It seems that set of people have much less zeal for the interest of their religion, than for that of a certain family: but it is a strange prejudice to blame a pastor of the church of *England*, for warning his flock of the errors of popery, at a time, when there was an attempt to set a popish King upon the throne. What could be more proper, what more seasonable? I believe there was scarce a worthy clergyman in the kingdom, that did not do the same; and it would have become

* P. 78, &c. of the present edition.

even

even your nonjurors to have done so too. But I fear they had rather have their King without their religion, than their religion without their King. You ask me, what Mr. *Warburton* has been doing this long time. I can only tell you, he is often at the *Bath* for his health, married Mr. *Allen's* niece near that place, was called to the *preachership of Lincoln's-Inn*, has published an edition of *Shakespeare* with critical notes, at Mr. *Pope's* request, for which he refers us in the margin to some letters from him, but I know not where they are to found, for I never heard of them before. Thus have I endeavoured to answer every thing in your former letters, and hope this long scrawl will cancel all accounts between you and

Your affectionate aunt,

Oct. 16, 1747.

C. COCKBURN.

I have had several intervals of ill health, since I began this to you, and am much out of order now; but was willing to have this ready against an opportunity offers of sending it. God knows if ever I shall be able to write to you again.

Mrs. Cockburn to her Niece.

DEAR NIECE,

ONCE more it has pleased God to enable me to begin a letter to you (as for finishing I will not yet answer.) A tedious winter had brought me deep in arrears with all my correspondents: it was *June* before I could write at all, but I have at last cleared off my debts, and now come to acknowledge yours of *Aug. 14*, since I find my last has not discouraged you from writing to me again, notwithstanding the perverseness of my politics, and the freedoms I took upon your inattentive reading.

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I am

I am glad you now apprehend my arguments better, and are come to some agreement with me on moral points. The objections you make against a *disinterested benevolence*, are, I believe, owing to your not being thoroughly acquainted with the scheme of those, whom the advocates for it oppose, which makes you not see the drift of our reasoning. You say, our concern for our offspring has much of an *instinctive* nature in it. Why, that is the very thing, which we contend for, and which they deny. They pretend, that all the appearance of benevolence, that is in the world, is owing to an early associating the *idea* of doing good to others, with that of our own interest. We on the contrary maintain, that God has planted in man a natural disposition to delight in the good of others, quite independent of any consideration of his own, and particularly a strong propensity to seek the good of his offspring. You say, we consider them much as part of ourselves; and what can be a greater proof of the strength of our affection? They are really no more a part of ourselves, than any other of our species are. What then makes us consider them as such? Why because we have so great a natural benevolence for them, that we cannot be happy, if they are not so; that is, we love them as well as we do ourselves; and what is this but a *disinterested benevolence*? Your objections prove what you argue against: but why have you a quarrel with the world? I dare say you have none with the thing. It is certain, self-love may be joined with benevolence; and I know no harm in it, nor any necessity of determining the goodness or badness of actions, by the epithets you dislike. I do not know whom you oppose here. All we contend for is, that God has given to man such a disposition to benevolence, as should lead him to virtue; should teach him, that he was designed to seek the good of others, as well as his own; and that self-love

love, or an artificial association of ideas, are not the sole ground of our benevolence, or the proper foundation of virtuous practice, as the gentlemen of the interested scheme maintain. And if you can read Dr. *Butler* with attention, and doubt of this, I shall much wonder: or, without any reading at all, if you but consult the movements of your own heart towards those you love, or pity, or for whom you have any good will.

Here I have had a long interruption for letters of importance, and will not now go on with the rest of your letter, for fear I should not have time or room to consider Lord *Shaftesbury's* *, which is indeed a curiosity. Nothing can more strongly shew the force of prejudice, even in thinking men, than his mistakes of what Mr. *Locke* has said, and the false consequences he draws from what he has denied. How ridiculously does he run on upon his denying innate ideas! about the time of their entering, the idea of woman, &c. and learning all from our catechism, as if Mr. *Locke* had denied, that any appetites, affections, or propensities were *natural* to man; or that being adult, he would naturally have the ideas of virtue, and of God, if he made use of his faculties; not necessarily indeed, if he neglected to use them; for to that neglect it is, that he imputes the ignorance of those barbarian nations, with whom Lord *Shaftesbury* rambles so wildly, though Mr. *Locke's* chief proofs, that the *Idea of God is not innate*, are taken from the different and contrary notions of those, who have an idea of God; he mentions indeed, some wild people, who are said to have none. But Lord *Shaftesbury* says, "he poorly plays upon the word *innate*: the word, though less used, is *connatural*." That is, he would suppose Mr. *Locke* to deny what he does not deny, for *connatural* is not the same sense with in-

* Letters written by a noble Lord to a young man at the university. Let. viii. p. 39—41, Edit. 1716.

nate, nor is the expression so clear and determinate. But enough of this, let us come to the terrible accusation, that "it was Mr. *Locke*, that struck at all fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of the world, made the very ideas of these *unnatural*; that, according to him, virtue has no other measure, law, or rule, than fashion and custom. God, indeed, is a perfect free agent in his sense; that is, free to any thing, that is however ill: for if he wills it, it will be made good; virtue may be vice, and vice virtue in its turn, if he pleases, and thus neither right nor wrong are any thing in themselves." &c. Now, dear niece, saving your noble Lord's honour, this is all utterly false: whether mistake or misrepresentation, I cannot say, but not one word of it is Mr. *Locke's* sense. They are Mr. *Hobbes's* principles indeed, and he has his followers in this age; but Mr. *Locke* was far from going in the same tract. I wish I had you here with his *Essay*, to convince you of it; for it will be difficult to quote enough from him to clear him, and to shew you on what slight grounds this slander has been raised; but I must do something towards it. First then, Mr. *Locke* asserts, that "morality might be ranked among the sciences capable of demonstration." Now this would be impossible, if it depended on *will*, if virtue may be vice, and vice virtue in its turn, if God pleases. Secondly, he grounds the demonstration on the nature (not the will) of God, and the nature of man; and, Thirdly, he frequently speaks of the eternal and unalterable nature of virtue and vice, as things in themselves right or wrong; which is directly contrary to what Lord *Shaftesbury* taxes him with. But what has he said to give any colour for this accusation? Why, he has observed, that the name of virtue and vice has been given, at different times and places, to different things, as the customs, fashions, or interest of men have prevailed. This is the

the whole of it. He is so far from making these the measure or rule of virtue, that he there says, "the name of virtue and vice are every where supposed to stand for things, in their own nature, right or wrong; and when they really do so, they so far coincide with the law of nature, the only true touch-stone of moral rectitude." And a great deal more of the eternal and unalterable nature of right and wrong, of virtue and vice, he says in that very place, enough to make his Lordship quite inexcusable. Yet I must own to you, I am not myself satisfied upon a review of what Mr. *Locke* has said on moral relations. His plan led him to consider them only with reference to the present constitution of things; and though he is very free from the charge of making the nature of morality uncertain, I fear he has given occasion to the interested scheme so much in fashion of late, but carried, I dare say, far beyond what he intended.

You see, I have left myself little room to answer the rest of your letter; but, what is worse, my disorders, which disable me from writing, begin to come upon me, so that if I can do no more before your uncle sends his letter away, this must suffice to shew you my willingness to continue our correspondence, and that I am,

Dear niece,

Your affectionate aunt,
And sincere friend,

Sept. 29, 1748.

C. COCKBURN.

I am making one effort more towards completing my answer to yours. I am sorry your difficulties in attending to controversy should throw you upon the mystics. Sure you may meet with better writers in another way: for my part I could never find any solidity in them; and however the heart may be affected, if the understanding does not go along with it, it is to be feared the impressions will

not be very lasting. *Madam Guion*, I believe, was a very pious lady, and her spiritual interpretations of Scripture might be suitable to her way of life; but I could see nothing solid in them; all seems merely fanciful. Your other mystic author I know nothing of, nor ever heard of him.

Your complying clergymen, are indeed, much to be pitied: their usage is as unaccountable, as it is unjustifiable. But I believe our Bishops intend this winter to bring the matter on again, and will endeavour to get something done in their favour.

When it is said, that protection and allegiance are reciprocal, it is not meant, as you understand it, actual protection, or a disputable exercise of power; but the power and possibility itself of protection, without which allegiance cannot be long due. How long you, who were born under a settled government, need not enquire.

You mistake too the nature of that liberty of conscience we boast of: it is a liberty purely religious. We may profess what religion we please, and enjoy the public exercise of it freely, if our ministers will give the government the security all governments require for the allegiance of their subjects, which can be nothing but an oath. But if their conscience obliges them to refuse their governors this security, and to pray for those, who would dispose of them, this is a matter of a civil nature, and in this we cannot expect to be indulged. It was indeed long connived at, and the nonjurors enjoyed full liberty many years under a very mild government, till the late attempt to overthrow it. To this alone must be imputed the disadvantages they now lie under; and I hope, upon second thoughts, you will see a wide difference between this and a popish persecution, for hereby, as they call it, when the subjects are willing to give all manner of security for their allegiance, if they might be allowed the exercise of their religion. There

was an edict of this kind published in *France* the very year of the late invasion, forbidding all assemblies of protestants on severe penalties, and on pain of death to their ministers.

Your sentiments on the Archbishop of *St. Andrew's* conduct are very just. Such prevarications with parties of religion are extremely blameable; but if you had the same notion of political parties, as you know I have, you would make no comparison between them. I cannot think, that either conscience or honour oblige a man to continue always an opposition to the ministry, because he was once engaged in, or headed a party, that did so. The interests of nations, and the management of public affairs, are things so intricate, and so variable, that honest men may differ about them, and change their minds or their measures, as a new situation of things may require, though a deserted party will always exclaim against them. The Earl of *Bath* may be as sincerely in the interests of his country now, as *Mr. Poultney* seemed to be.

As to *Hanover* being enriched at the expence of *England*, I doubt not this is much exaggerated; but, if it were so, why is this such a strong ground of prejudice, that, though we must hire foreign troops, we must not hire them? Why must none of our fellow subjects be rich but ourselves? But the same jealous spirit exerted itself upon a King of *Scotland's* accession to the crown of *England*: every thing was grumbled at, that seemed to favour his native dominions; and poor *Ireland* severely feels the effects of this selfish spirit. I fear this will be always so; but sure it is entirely wrong, quite contrary to that universal benevolence we owe to all mankind.

We have heard the same story about Lord *Bolingbroke's* papers left with *Mr. Pope*, and I have desired *Mr. Warburton* to let me know, what there

is in it, but have not heard of him since: If he gives me any account of it, you shall know.

And now, I think, I have answered all your articles, having been these two days a little better than some time before: but I have writ myself very weary, so, dear niece, adieu.

I am glad you have a promise of Bishop Butler's Sermons, for it does not lie in our way to get such things, or even hear of them. It is said he is to be Bishop of London.

October 1, 1748.

Mrs.

Mrs. COCKBURN to *****.

March, 1747.

REV. SIR,

MY disapprobation can be of little consequence to one, who sees much farther into Mr. Locke's designs, than I can pretend to. I confess I was never sagacious enough to discover notions and views of his, which he did not declare, nor can I find in all his works the least ground to conclude, that he had reserves on account of what he judged the world could then bear, so freely he attacked the most inveterate prejudices of the learned. As to an association of ideas, he seems wholly to have confined his thoughts to that wrong one of ideas, that have no connection in nature to which he gives the harsh term of madness, the source of the most obstinate prejudices in philosophy and religion, and of all the odd and fantastical likings and averfions, that may be observed among mankind. But I think he gives not the least hint of our owing to the same source our most reasonable, and such as we call natural affections, &c. though he speaks of ideas connected by nature, which it is the business of reason to keep so united. Innate practical principles surely, sir, are very different things from appetites, propensions, affections, &c. These, I presume, may be left in us, when the others are plucked up, and allowed to be natural, not wholly owing to the chance of our association of ideas.

I am glad, sir, you express a reverence for Dr. Clarke's memory. That great and good man is certainly worthy of respect, even from those, who do not agree with him: but when you talk of *his* argument a priori, both in morals and metaphysics, being of pernicious consequence, this is such strange language

language to me, that I am ready to apprehend indeed, that either you, Sir, or I, are under the influence of some strong association of ideas, which hinders one of us from seeing the force of the other's reasoning. You esteem Dr. *Clarke's* argument to be a fallacy, and I think I have shewn the pretences against it to be nothing else. And as to the use the Deist has made of it, which is only by drawing wrong consequences from it, I can never imagine, that rejecting or embracing a principle, on account of the good or bad use, that may be made of it, is the way to come at truth, or to convince others of it. It seems to me a much more likely way to bring over the Deist to us, by shewing him the false consequences he draws from a true principle, the perfect agreement of revelation with the dictates of reason, the uses and improvements of it, &c. which have been set in a fine light by several great hands, rather than to drive him from us, by throwing up at once the only foundation of all natural religion. As to the argument in metaphysics, I cannot have the least guess, how it can possibly be of any service to the Atheist, against whom Dr. *Clarke* professes particularly to have produced it; and shall be curious to know what can be suggested that way. Whenever your affairs will allow you to favour me with a personal conference, I shall esteem it a great obligation, as the advantage must be wholly on my side, for you will be much disappointed, Sir, if you expect to encounter an able disputant. My companionable capacity (if I may so speak) has entirely left me, readiness of thought and expression, so necessary in conversation, are no more; but I can still hear with attention, and consider with impartiality, nor am yet too old to learn. Your candour will give allowances for the decays of age, and the illnesses, that have for some years attended it. And in the mean time, let this assure you of my desire to continue

and several of her friends.

tinue a correspondence, to which you cannot find any inducement on your side, but it will always be agreeable to,

Rev. Sir,

Your obliged and

most humble servant,

C. COCKBURN.

Mrs. Cockburn to *****

Aug. 1748.

REV. SIR,

IT is so long since I received the favour of your last, that I am almost ashamed to put you in mind of my neglect. But you will excuse me, when you know, that there are about nine months in the year, in which I am unable to write to my nearest friends, or on the most important business: much less can I apply myself to abstruse speculations; nor dare I now enter on such subjects, if I should venture to barely touch at them.

I saw a book, last year, on the origin of the human appetites and affections, which derives them all from an *association of ideas*; and I concluded it was that, which you expected would soon appear from a gentleman at Bath, though I confess I thought it neither worthy of you, nor of the character of that gentleman; and I am since informed, that it was published by a clergyman of *Lincoln*, from some MSS. stolen from Dr. *Hartley*. He has attacked three passages of my *Remarks* on your notes, weakly enough, I think; and I had drawn up a defence of them; but hearing the author's character, I thought it not worth my while to engage

gage with him. He talks, in my opinion, very poorly about eternal relations, eternal truths, and abstract ideas, as if they had no reality in the nature of things, but were whimsies, which any man may form a thousand of a day in his own brain. Such reasoners must mistake the doctrine of eternal relations, truths, &c. which are whimsies indeed, if they are not conformable to the ideas of the eternal mind.

You speak, sir, of "a difficulty, which you apprehend remains, and will remain unanswered by the advocates for abstract fitnesses." Excuse me from entering into the particulars, and give me leave only to say, that I believe they think reason rightly exercised is a sufficient supply for all the wants of the human mind, without pre-supposing a *sense*; and that, as reason encreases, it is the proper director of all the passions, appetites, and affections, which are found there, before reason can act, or any association of ideas be made. And after all, sir, what is an association of ideas, but right or wrong reasoning? Or at least must not the understanding determine, whether such ideas be truly or falsely associated? And so we end where we might as well begin.

I suppose, sir, you have read Mr. Balguy's tracts, one of which is an answer to a gentleman, who had made some remarks on his *Foundation of moral goodness*, upon Mr. Hutcheson's plan, arguing for the necessity of pre-supposing a *moral sense*, for the support of virtue. But he there so strongly shews the sufficiency of reason or intelligence for that end, and its superior power, that I would rather suppose you had not read it, since you seem at a loss for an origin of our moral maxims, without recurring to a *sense* or a *habit*. Surely, sir, the reasonable faculties of a moral agent will account for them much better. And I was in hopes my *Remarks* on Dr. Rutherford would have given you

you some satisfaction on the point of the fitness of other views than private happiness in a moral agent, &c.

As to the notion of an internal necessity, considered as the ground of the divine existence, it is no doubt a point of great depth and difficulty; perhaps incomprehensible by any finite mind: but that it destroys the very notion of a first cause, or gives any advantage to the Atheist, I can by no means see, after all I have read about it, by the assistance, for which I am obliged to you. The necessity is not external to the divine nature, nor dependent on any thing distinct from it; but may rather be considered as a perfection of the Deity to exist by a necessity of his own nature; which implies existing from all eternity, and this can no way destroy the notion of a *first cause*; nor can it be of any service to the Atheist, but by consequences, which the maintainers of existing by necessity disown, and think too absurd even for an Atheist to urge. Necessity is one uniform thing: a series of necessities, carried on to infinity, will be but one and the same necessity still. But what will not the Atheist draw in to his service? Do not the *Spinozists* apply the notion of existing *absolutely without any cause*, to the whole universe of beings, which they affirm has existed *without any cause* from all eternity. The friends of religion need not invent objections for them against a principle, which Dr. Clarke advanced solely for such metaphysical Atheists, as would not be convinced by the present phenomena of nature, much less by revelation. If it should satisfy any one of them, there is a brother gained. If not, he is but where he was. And no Theist can be lost by this principle: if he thinks it an error, he will let it alone; if a truth, he will the more profoundly adore the eternally necessary being.

I beg

I beg pardon for entering so much into controversy, which I was far from intending, when I began, but writing to a person of Mr. **** character insensibly draws one into subjects, with which he is most conversant. I wish I could come nearer to an agreement, especially on moral points, with one, of whose judgment I have so high an esteem: but we cannot make things appear to us otherwise than they do, or see with the eyes of others; and though we differ, I am not the less,

Rev. Sir,

Your respectful and

most humble servant,

C. COCKBURN.

In the last letter I had from Mr. Warburton, which was towards the end of July, he desires his best respects to you, when I had an opportunity of conveying them. Mr. Cockburn sends you his.

L E T.

and several of her friends.

LETTERS between the Rev. Dr. THOMAS SHARP, Archdeacon of *Northumberland*, and Prebendary of *Durham*, and Mrs. COCKBURN.

Dr. Sharp to the Rev. Mr. Cockburn, when he returned Mrs. Cockburn's MSS papers.

Whitton Tower, Aug. 8, 1743.

REV. SIR,

THE discourses you was pleased to give me the perusal of, were so entertaining and instructive, that I could scarce stop till I got through them; though, I assure you, I have not read them negligently, but with the attention, which they require and deserve. I doubt not but they will be well received in print; and I am so desirous of their publication, that I think no time should be lost, and therefore I return them sooner, that I may not in the least deprive the public of them, especially as I do not see reason to advise the least alteration either in matter or expression.

I do not mean by this to say, that I am absolutely and wholly in the sentiments of the ingenious author. As for the subjects of her cursory thoughts, they are so abstruse and nice, that I can hardly say, what sentiment I am of: for I am apt to hearken and incline to every fine reasoner upon them; and it is perhaps for this reason, (perhaps for a better) that if I were at this very time to declare, which of the writers on these subjects I most approve of, I should answer, Mrs. Cockburn.

But as to the other and principal subject of these papers, (which I now thankfully return) concerning the foundation of moral virtue and moral obligation,

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ligation,

ligation, I am not yet so satisfied with any of the accounts I have met with, as I could wish to be; and am still apt to think, there are some distinctions yet wanting to be hit of, which would reconcile the advocates of Dr. *Clarke*, and Dr. *Waterland*, with each other.

I am, indeed, altogether with the learned lady in what she says, and opposes to those, who would lay this foundation in such low and ungenerous principles, as self-love, and self-interest. And I am also ready to admit, that the reason, nature, and fitness of things, as they now appear to a moral agent, would be a foundation of obligation. So would the moral sense likewise, if they were not both of them resolvable into a nobler principle still, which can be no other than the will of God. Perhaps in this I come the closest to Mr. *W*—, though I think, our present author has fairly caught him tripping in one position. Nor do I see how he can be able to answer her last query put to him.

The things wanting yet to be settled in this controversy are, I conceive,

1st, What is meant by the word foundation, as it is commonly used by the writers in it?

2dly, Whether moral virtue, and moral obligation, must needs have the same foundation, and in the same sense?

3dly, Whether the reason, nature, and fitness of things, considered as antecedent to the divine will, do appear under that consideration to be obligatory to morality? Or thus:

Whether rules of action, and obligation to action, be not quite distinct, and may not have distinct foundations, in like manner, as the reason and fitness of a law are distinct from the authority of a law.

I must confess, for my own part, I have such an undistinguishing head, that I could never tell how

how to separate the essential differences of things (as they now appear to moral agents) from the will of God. All created nature is an expression of his will, in these very essential differences, and relations, and fitnesses flowing from them. And therefore I like, and I adhere to that expression of Mrs. *Cockburn's*; *Thy perfect will in the essential differences of good and evil.*

Why may not morality, considered in the mind of God before creation, like metaphysical truths, be ultimately resolved (as your learned lady is pleased to word it) into the divine understanding? And morality, considered in its obligations on rational creatures, be ultimately resolved into the divine will? Is there any inconsistency in this distinction?

Though morality, as a rule, was eternally in the mind of God, like mathematical proportions; yet there could be no obligation to conform to this rule, till it became practicable by the actual subsistence of things, expressing those relations and fitnesses; that is, till God had expressed his own will, as well as his wisdom, in a system of works, exhibiting all those eternal ratios, &c. Therefore, I am inclined to conceive, that the foundation of obligation to conform to these fitnesses could not be antecedent to the divine will, whatever the ratios themselves were.

Mrs. Cockburn's Answer to Dr. Sharp.

I AM much encouraged in the design of printing my papers, by the favourable opinion of so good a judge as Dr. *Sharp*; who, no doubt, upon a thorough consideration, would be much better able than I am, to clear up the difficulties he finds in Dr. *Clarke's* scheme. But since he is so condescending

ing to my weak attempts, I shall freely give my thoughts upon them. It is, I think, a good step towards removing them, that he is intirely against those, who would lay the foundation of moral obligation on such low principles, as *self-love* and *self-interest*; for, I believe, upon a farther reflection it will appear, that we must either lay it there, or upon the nature, relations, and fitness of things.

As to the word *foundation*, though metaphorically applied to these subjects, I do not find, that there is any ambiguity in the use of it, or that any misunderstanding has happened for want of explaining it. When it is spoke of *moral virtue*, it is commonly, I suppose, understood (at least I have always taken it) to mean the ground, on which moral virtue *solely* arises, or that, without which there could be no such thing as virtue. And such a foundation, I think, can be no other than the necessary relations and essential differences of things; for upon these even the virtue of obeying the will of God must be founded; since, on a supposition that there were no essential differences, or fitnesses resulting from them, there could be no more *goodness* in obedience, than in the contrary.

As to the second question, whether moral virtue and moral obligation must have the same foundation, and in the same sense? it seems clear to me, that if the *nature* and *reason* of things is the foundation of *moral virtue*, it must be the foundation of *moral obligation* likewise to *reasonable* beings. Yet not in such a sense, as that there can be no other foundation of it. The *moral sense*, and the *will of God*, are both grounds of obligation to moral agents; though perhaps their being so may be ultimately resolvable into the eternal *reason* and *truth* of things, which I take to be the most noble of all principles, as that, to which the divine will itself is always conformed.

On the third question, whether the reason, nature, and fitness of things, when considered as *antecedent* to the divine will, do appear under *that* consideration to be obligatory to morality? I have largely expressed my sentiments in the papers, but not, it seems, to the judicious Doctor's satisfaction; who apprehends, that *rules* of action, and *obligation* to action, may be *quite distinct*, &c. For my part, I know not how to conceive *reasons* or *rules* of action, (I mean eternal and immutable reasons) distinct from *obligation* to action. The reasons of a law are indeed distinct from the *authority* of the law; and those laws, that are founded on *temporary* and *mutable* reasons, oblige solely by the authority of the legislator; but those, that are founded on the *necessary* relations and *essential differences* of things, have, from those eternal reasons, a *right* of obliging moral agents *prior* to the authority, that enforces them. The reasons and authority, though distinct, are, as I conceive, both proper foundations of obligation; for what are reasons and rules of action, if they do not oblige reasonable beings to act conformably to them?

I would ask, for what end was man endued with a faculty of perceiving the essential differences of things? It is said by Mr. Warburton and others, that they are the rule, which God has given his creatures to *bring them to a knowledge of his will*. Very good; it is certainly a rational deduction from those *perceptions*, that it must be the will of the author of our nature, that we should act suitably to them; and this discovery lays us under an *additional* obligation. But by what means do those perceptions bring us to this knowledge? Is it not by first shewing us our duty, shewing us what course of action our nature requires us to follow, and forcing us to stand self-condemned, if we counteract them? And must not then the essential differences be the *primary* foundation of moral obligation? What then

can hinder them from continuing to have a *right* of obliging reasonable beings, even though such beings should stop short of considering them as a *rule, by which to know the will of God*, either from having false notions, or no notions at all of a Deity? Since, notwithstanding this, they will unavoidably *approve or condemn* their own, and other men's actions, according to the *immutable nature* of things. And that this brings them under *obligation*, I the rather insist on, because I see not otherwise, how it is possible to solve the difficulty proposed to Mr. Warburton.

The Doctor enquires, if there is any inconsistency in resolving morality, as considered to be in the mind of God *before creation*, into the divine *understanding*; and morality, considered in its *obligations on rational creatures*, into the *divine will*? I should think this a very proper distinction, if applied to *positive precepts*: but if by morality is understood that law, which *necessarily* results from the nature of such a system as mankind; and which God eternally saw, would be fit and right for them to practice, whenever he pleased to determine their existence; I do not apprehend, how the *obligations* to morality thus understood can, any more than the eternal reasons of them, be *ultimately* resolved into the *divine will*. It is very true, as the Doctor finely reasons, that obligation to morality could not *take place*, till God had expressed his *will* as well as his wisdom in a system of works, exhibiting those relations and fitnesses that were eternally in the divine mind. But I see not how it follows from thence, that the *foundation* of obligation to conform to those fitnesses *could not be antecedent to the divine will*; since the ratios themselves are allowed to be so, according to which the divine will determined to create such a system; for it is those *eternal ratios*, that are maintained to be the ultimate *foundation* of moral obligation. The *obligation itself* indeed, being *subsequent* to the creation

ation, though founded on the eternal reason and nature of things, may perhaps be more properly said to be antecedent to all *consideration* of the divine will, and to any *prospect* of reward or punishment. Whether this *distinction* might, in any measure, contribute to reconcile the advocates of Dr. Clarke and Dr. Waterland, I much doubt, since the last seem resolute to admit of no obligation but what arises from a superior will.

But I would ask, if the will of God is supposed to be the *only* foundation of moral obligation, upon what grounds we are obliged to obey his will? I can conceive no other, but either his absolute power to *punish and reward*; or the *fitness* of obedience from a creature to his creator. The first of these would bring us down, I fear, to those low principles the Doctor disapproves; and if that is rejected, the other returns us to that reason, nature, and essential differences of things, into which, I apprehend, all obligation must at last be resolved.

The Doctor is pleased to impute to an *undistinguishing* head, that he could never tell how to separate the essential differences of things (as they now appear to moral agents) from the will of God. But though he cannot *separate*, no doubt he does *distinguish* them. "All created nature (as he justly says) is an expression of the will of God in these very essential differences and fitnesses flowing from them." They are indeed expressions of his will, that all his own works, and the free actions of moral agents, should be conformable to them: But he did not *create* those necessary and eternal truths, according to which the perfect rectitude of his will determined him to act. His will may therefore be *distinguished* from those essential truths, to which it conformed, though, as they intirely coincide, I think they ought not to be *separated*.

I do not know, whether there is any thing in these reflections, that may deserve the attention of Dr.

Sharp; but I hope he will receive them as instances of my respect, and a desire of approving my sentiments to his judgment, being, with the greatest esteem,

His most humble servant,

C. COCKBURN.

Dr. Sharp to the Rev. Mr. Cockburn.

Sept. 12, 1743.

REV. SIR,

THE paper you put into my hands, when you was last here, was too great a favour not to be acknowledged in a more particular manner than by a letter of thanks. I have spent some hours in comparing and adjusting, as far as I could, her sentiments with mine, and in giving her the reasons of my three questions, rather than defending them. Whether I am right or wrong in what I suggest, it matters not much. My aim is to get at the bottom, or near it, of such variety of conclusions made by very learned and ingenious persons. No one writer among them all treats more distinctly than Mrs. Cockburn. And I apprehend, what she has said in her papers designed for the press, will meet with very good acceptance from all, as it did from me; though I am not altogether with her in every part of Dr. Clarke's reasonings. Pray make my respects acceptable to her.

I am, Sir,

Your affectionate brother,

THO. SHARP.

Some

Some further thoughts offered to the ingenious and judicious Mrs. COCKBURN, after perusal of her solutions given to three questions proposed to her, upon the subject of moral virtue and moral obligation.

MADAM,

AFTER returning you many thanks for your kind assistance in clearing up my notions upon a subject, that you are better acquainted with than I am, and that you have studied more, and to more purpose, than I have; I shall presume to repeat a liberty I took once before, and acquaint you freely, how things appear to me upon perusing your very ingenious *Remarks*, which I have read with all the attention I was capable of.

By the word FOUNDATION, you apprehend the writers on this subject commonly understand the ground, on which moral virtue solely arises. But are they agreed, whether this ground be any one simple principle, or compounded of more principles than one? If ground in your definition may be explained by principle, then you are clear, that virtue arises upon one principle only. But a skilful writer among you, as I remember, makes the ground to consist of three principles, and is bold to say, that the making any one single principle the sole ground of virtue, is itself a fundamental error in this controversy, and has been the occasion of much perplexity in it. I do not undertake to say, whether he is right or wrong in this charge against the rest; but I bring it as one instance of a disagreement among the writers about the word foundation; which ought to be adjusted by an unanimous admission or exclusion of the term *solely* in the definition.

Again, among those, who admit of *one principle only* for the purpose, (as I think most of you do)

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may we not discover some different conceptions of the word *foundation*? One seems to consider it as the ground, from whence virtue is directly produced, or to which it owes its birth. Another considers it as a more remote cause, as the fountain head, from whence virtue derives its origin.

They may both perhaps abide by your definition; but then it is not precisely in the same sense of it. One will say it is *the ground, from which* (meaning without the intervention of other mediums) *it arises* (meaning from whence it immediately springs); another will say, it is *the ground, on which* (mediums supposed) *it arises*, (but meaning indeed, into which it must be ultimately and finally resolved.) Now he, who puts it upon any principle, that immediately operates, cannot have the very same idea of *foundation*, with him, who puts it upon a remote and distant bottom. I am not now determining to which of these the word *foundation* may be most properly applied, but only observing, that even those writers, who agree in placing virtue on some one foundation, do not yet agree exactly in their sense of *foundation*.

Once more; you explain your *ground* further in these words; or, *that, without which there could be no such thing as virtue*. But yet this seems not to enter into *their* notion of *foundation*, who place it in self-love and self-interest. For virtue, call it a conformity to the reasons of things, or to the will of God, in either sense, it will be the same thing it was, though this foundation of theirs should be destroyed, or out of sight. For virtue, even according to them, may be considered as disinterested, that is, independently on the sanctions of rewards and punishments. They will disown indeed any obligation, or any motive to practice it in this case; but virtue will still be what it was; whereas, without the foundation, which you give it, there can be no such thing. When you are pleased therefore to observe

observe, that the *foundation of moral virtue, upon further reflection, will be found to lie either in the essential differences, &c. or in self-love, and self-interest*; I would remark, *but not in the same sense of foundation*, which means, when understood of the one, *that, without which there could be no such thing as virtue*; but does not mean this, when understood of, or applied to the other.

It was upon these, and the like reflections, that I ventured to say, that settling the term *foundation* seemed to me previously necessary in this controversy about moral virtue. For so long as there is any ambiguity in terms, it is likely there will be misunderstanding of arguments. Your explanation of what you yourself mean, when you use the word, is ingenuous, and I thank you for it; and I shall understand all your reasonings and conclusions on this subject the better for this light. But still I have doubts, whether you can bring your foundation to answer your definition; especially in regard of that important word *SOLELY*; which excludes every thing else from being in any sense foundations. Yet you seem to apprehend this to be plain enough from this single consideration, that your *foundation is that, without which there could be no such thing as moral virtue*; and that on supposition there were no essential differences, there could be no more goodness in obeying God's will, than in the contrary.

But now, in my poor apprehension, this sort of reasoning amounts to no more in strictness, than this, that moral virtue stands so necessarily related to these essential differences, &c. that it cannot be considered, *even as subsisting independently*, or exclusive of them, by one, who considers virtue in all its relations. The same may be said of free will, or of reason in moral agents. Supposing them away, and out of the question, there is an end of moral agency, an end of all virtue and goodness.

And

And yet you would not call these *foundations*, at least not *the sole foundation*, purely because they are absolutely necessary to the very being of virtue.

Space is that, without which there could be no such thing as matter; and on supposition there were no space, there could be no more matter than there could be matter without extension. Yet if you should conclude, or infer from hence, that space was a foundation, and the sole foundation of matter, you would not discover so fine a genius, as you have already done, in what you said of space among your cursory thoughts.

Should a company of ingenious florists dispute with each other concerning the origin or foundation of a flower; and one should lay it in the plant producing the flower; another in the root feeding the plant; another in the earth nourishing the root; another in the specific plastic form of that plant; another in the general laws of vegetation, &c. each of them might justly and pertinently say for his respective principle, that it is *a ground, on which the flower arises; and without which there had been no such flower.* Yet it would be hard to prove of any of these principles singly, that it is *the ground, on which the flower solely arises, or without which there could be no flower at all.*

To give another instance more apposite to our subject. Let us take some art or science; music for instance; and let the query be, what is the true and proper foundation of it?

One man conceives it merely as sound, of which indeed it is a species, and so lays *the foundation* of it in the true and immediate cause of sound, or, from whence sound arises, viz. the external motions or vibrations of the medium, through which, or by which, the sense of sound is raised in the ear.

Another

Another conceives it as a sensation different from all other sensations of sound, and distinguishable from them by a certain sweetness and agreeableness, which strongly affects the mind, and sometimes enravishes the soul. Now as there seems no sort of relation or correspondence between the undulations of the air, made by strings or whistles, and this internal grateful sensation, he places the foundation of music in the proper internal structure of the organ, which receiving the external impulses, affects the mind with delight. Hence what we call *an Ear*, which is indeed properly a *musical sense*, or taste, in some measure, common to all, but far more exquisite in some than in others. And it is to this alone, be it more or less, that we must refer and ascribe all approbation of harmony, and dislike of discord. The music therefore is in the man, and not in the natural causes of sound, which are the very same way productive of all sounds, whether musical or no.

A third comes, considers the matter more deeply and philosophically; and after acknowledging all that is said of the origin of sound, and of the necessity and delicacy of this musical sense or taste, concludes notwithstanding, that music is of noble birth, and hath its foundation in the nature of things, in certain eternal and essential proportions and disproportions. He alledges, that from the monochord alone, harmonically divided, arise all the ratios of music; and, though the common practitioners, even the best of them, may be ignorant of this, or may not regard it; yet mathematicians demonstrate it, and build the whole theory of music upon it.

And lastly, another comes, and says, it is very wrong to lay the foundation of music, as a *liberal science*, or *practical art*, in any of the things above mentioned. For it is owing merely to the invention and WILL of man. *Jubal* was the father of it, and

and whatsoever improvements have been made in it from time to time, have been owing to human skill and industry, in contriving of instruments, and facilitating practice upon them. That whatever *Euclid*, and other mathematicians might talk in their books of harmonies, yet, both the greatest composers, and the best performers in this art, quite neglected the theory, and followed their own taste, and laid down arbitrary rules of composition, whereby some entire species of music, once in vogue, are now become obsolete and impracticable. And more to the same purpose, shewing music to depend upon the *will* of man.

Now, there is truth in all these allegations, and each of these disputants lays a foundation properly and agreeably to that light, in which he views and considers music. Neither will their doctrine be found to interfere in any thing, but in each man's making his most beloved principle the sole *foundation* of the whole science. And till they all shall agree in some one notion of music, and abide by some one definition of foundation, they may dispute to the world's end, and be never the nearer coming to an agreement.

Now, why may I not have leave to suspect, that something analogous to this has happened in the controversy about the foundation of moral virtue? That all the writers in it are not yet agreed upon a precise meaning of foundation, I have endeavoured to shew above. And I think they are as little agreed in the definition of virtue itself. One considers it as *a conformity of a reasonable creature to the will of its creator*. He prefers this view as the largest and most universal, and in which obligation seems the strongest, and is most apparent. This leads him to lay the foundation solely in God's will. And to secure it, he labours to appropriate all obligation to his way of considering virtue.

Another

Another considers it, and with equal truth and justice, as *the conformity of a reasonable creature to the nature and reasons of things*. He prefers this view as the noblest in his judgment, not only from its necessary connexion with eternal truths, but also from its including, as he apprehends, the foundation before-mentioned. This leads him to lay his foundation solely in the essential differences of things and fitnesses resulting from them. Another considers and defines virtue to be *acting agreeably to right reason*, viz, such as man is endowed with, or capable of using; which includes the boni-form faculty or instinct. This he prefers as the most easy and natural way of considering virtue, because these are man's proper and innate faculties; and, without doubt, given to him to be the immediate principles of virtue in him. He must therefore fix his foundation here, in man's moral sense.

A fourth comes, and contemplates moral virtue in all these different lights and views. And this leads him to found it in three principles, all coinciding and concurring to its subsistence.

Now there is truth, and there is propriety in all these different ways of considering virtue, and in ascribing to each way of viewing it a respective, proper foundation.

But yet, without first determining, in which of these views or lights moral virtue is most properly to be taken and defined, it is in vain to search for the only proper and sole foundation; for one common foundation will not support them all.

Surely there are words in language, that might express to the utmost, what every man means by virtue, and the foundation he ascribes to virtue, in whatever light he views it in. Would it not be better to use these, than hold up a dispute upon terms, that are so liable to be taken in different senses by those who use them?

As

As to the second question, *Whether moral virtue and moral obligation must have the same foundation, and in the same sense*; it appears from your answer, that I had reason to make a question of it. For though you are clear, that the nature and reason of things must be the foundation of both; yet you add, with respect to *obligation*, but not in such a sense, as that there can be no other foundation of it. So that whereas moral virtue arises solely upon the nature, reason, &c. yet moral obligation arises not solely, but primarily upon it: or, as I think you explain it afterwards, the obligation arising from hence is antecedent to all other obligations, that may arise from other subsequent foundations of obligation; and therefore you apprehend, that the essential differences, &c. are still the ultimate foundation, or that, into which all obligation must at last be resolved.

The truth is, the precise meaning of obligation is as little settled in this part of the enquiry; as that of the term *foundation* was in the last. And it is chiefly owing to the different notions of *obligation*, that we have different foundations assigned to it. Take it in a grammatical sense, and it implies something, that enforces upon *reluctancy*; and in this sense of it (when used in morality) it should seem most properly founded in the sanctions of rewards and punishments; or in the will of him, who has the power to reward or punish.

Take it in a legal sense, and it implies an obliger: and there must be two persons at least, that is, two intelligent agents, or two free wills to create obligation in either of them. And in this view obligation in morals will certainly be founded in the will of God.

Take it in a third sense, viz. as an unalienable right, that truth has to be preferred before falsehood, good before bad, by all rational creatures, that can distinguish them; and then its foundation will be

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in the essential differences of things, and their eternal ratios, fitnesses, &c.

Now, I say, if men do reason upon three sorts of *obligation*, why may they not be allowed to conclude upon three sorts of foundations for them?

You yourself acknowledge a secondary obligation, or an *additional* one. But to this you are willing to assign another Ground, distinct from, though coinciding with the Ground of your primary foundation. This is right and just. And I am apt to think, you will all agree in your grounds, so far as you can all agree what obligation is.

I fancy myself something better prepared, by these previous considerations, to judge of your solution of my third question, viz. *Whether the reason, nature, and fitness of things, considered as antecedent to the divine will, do appear under that consideration, to be obligatory to morality? Or thus: Whether rules of action, and obligations to action, be not quite distinct, and may not have distinct foundations?*

It should seem plain here, that by *rules of action*, I mean eternal truths and fitnesses, and as considered in the mind of God only, to be *future rules of actions*, when things should exist with essential differences, &c. And I ask, whether in this view they carry any thing of *obligation* in them? You reply, you cannot conceive *reasons* or *rules of action* (if they be eternal and immutable reasons) *distinct from obligation to action*. But here you speak of these reasons and rules, as exhibited in the creation of things, and implying obligation in themselves, and not as they were proposed to be considered, viz. antecedent to God's will; and patterns as it were in the divine mind of rules, that were to be hereafter, carrying obligation with them. You add, that laws founded on the *necessary relations and differences of things* have from those eternal reasons, a

right of obliging moral agents: but not before they are laws, or before they are promulgated, or before those necessary relations and essential differences do actually exist. Again, you say, *what are reasons and rules of action*, if they do not oblige reasonable beings to act conformably to them? But they cannot oblige thus, till there are reasonable beings to conform to them. Thus it appears, you do not in your answer consider them in that same view, in which I took them, when I asked the question. But indeed in another place afterwards, you answer to my question fully and directly, viz. *It is very true, that obligation could not take place, till God had expressed his will, &c.* And again you speak of *obligation being subsequent to the creation*. But you add to the first of these concessions, that nevertheless the *foundation of obligation* might be antecedent to the divine will, as the ratios themselves were allowed to be. And you add to the second, that *obligation* itself, as founded on these ratios, might perhaps be more properly said to be antecedent to all consideration of the divine will.

You seem well aware of the drift of my question, by throwing in these observations, by way of security to your foundation, and to fill up the breach made by the concessions. But I hope you will give me leave to make my inferences also from the point, that is yielded, viz. *that obligation itself could not take place, till God had expressed his will, &c. and was subsequent to the creation.*

And what I would infer from hence is this: That as the essential reasons of things may be considered to have been once a rule of action prior to any obligation to action; and as obligation itself did not arise or take place, till the discovery of God's will agreeable to that rule, in the creation; there is no impropriety in saying, that the rule of morality is most naturally resolvable into those eternal

eternal reasons of things, and the obligation to morality into the divine will.

But I must not pass over what you are pleased to observe, immediately after the concessions above-mentioned, viz. that the eternal ratios are, notwithstanding, the foundation of moral obligation, as being themselves antecedent to the divine will; and that the *obligation* to conform to them may perhaps be properly said to be antecedent to all consideration of the divine will, or to any prospect of reward or punishment.

When in this argument from the ratios being antecedent, you say, *they are allowed to be so*; I ought to explain how far allowed, viz. antecedent to the exercise or discovery of the divine will in the creation; but not antecedent to all consideration of the divine will, which was as eternal, and as immutable, as they. I was putting a query upon your own hypothesis, not intending to grant any real or proper antecedence in the ratios to God's will; but making a supposition of it, to see whether, upon your own principles, any obligation would follow from it.

The query was, whether the reason, nature, and fitness of things, when considered as antecedent to the divine will, do appear, under that consideration, to be obligatory to morality. Now it seems upon a discussion of this query, it appears, that they are not obligatory themselves under this consideration, but they are nevertheless a *foundation of obligation*. That obligation could not take place, till these ratios were exhibited in God's works, is what you allow. And that they are in some sense a foundation of obligation, I will not deny. But if you make, them as you do in one place, the *primary foundation*, and in another the *ultimate foundation of obligation*, I must beg leave to doubt of this.

For, as I observed upon the second question, they can only be considered as a foundation of obligation,

tion, in one particular sense of obligation among three senses, that it is taken in, *viz.* the unalienable right, that truth has to be preferred before falsehood, by reasonable creatures, that can distinguish one from the other. Many there are indeed, who will by no means allow this to be *obligation* at all. But if they will not allow the word, they will scarce deny the thing, *viz.* such a claim upon all beings, endowed with reason and free will, as is tantamount to what they call *obligation*. Therefore, I do with you give it the name of *obligation* also; and acknowledge a foundation of this species of obligation, in the eternal ratios. But then as this is neither the principal, nor the most common and proper sense of obligation; and as there are other foundations for it, (as I think you allow) in those other senses of it; you must not lay too great a stress on this foundation, which is only partial; nor extend it too far. Your argument for its being the *primary foundation of obligation* from our perceptions of duty in the essential differences, &c. previous to our discovery, that they are also the will of God, is not, I think, sufficient to entitle it to the *primacy*: which the moral sense in that view would claim before it, as being the first foundation of obligation, or the first principle, that lays men under moral obligations. And this would be resolved easier into will, than into the essential differences; though indeed they both have a necessary relation to it.

The sum of all, that I mean to advertise you of in these reflections, however coarsely and inaccurately thrown together, is this:

That the notions of *foundations* and *obligations* are not yet sufficiently settled. That from the best judgment I can make of the issue of this controversy, from the various and different acceptations those terms appear to be taken in, it will be this: That the *principal*, not the *sole* foundation of moral

ral virtue, are the essential differences of things, and fitnesses resulting necessarily from them; but not considered as separate, or possibly separable from the will of God.

And that the *principal*, not the *sole* foundation of moral obligation is the will of God; but not considered as separate, or possibly separable from the eternal and immutable ratios of things.

And that the only proper ultimate foundation of moral virtue, and moral obligation, is God himself; the only true fountain both of wisdom and goodness, and every thing, that is, either perfect, true, or right in physics, metaphysics, or morals. He is *all in all*, the first cause, and sole origin of all.

Accept these hints with candor from him, who is an admirer of your reasonings and writings,

Sept. 1743.

T. SHARP.

Mrs. Cockburn's second Letter to the Reverend Dr. Thomas Sharp.

October 14, 1743.

REV. SIR,

1. **T**HOUGH I fear I am but ill qualified to continue a debate with you, who appear to have been more conversant than I with the writers on the subjects we are enquiring about; and to have gone into nicer distinctions, and more remote views of them, than I have had occasion to consider; yet I beg leave once more to lay before you my plain apprehensions, upon those *farther thoughts* you have condescended to favour me with.

2. After setting down what I apprehend the writers on the subject of moral virtue understand by

the word *foundation*, viz. *The ground, on which virtue solely arises*; you are pleased to ask, *but are they agreed, whether this ground be any one simple principle, or compounded of more principles than one?* To which I answer, no certainly. They are far from agreeing, whether this *ground* is the reason and nature of things, the will of God, the moral sense, or all three united; for that is the very matter in dispute. But then, Sir, I do not take these to be *different senses* of the word *foundation*: all these writers seem to me to agree in their general idea of a foundation, and each of them to apply that word in the *very same sense* to his own principle, as the ground, upon which he thinks virtue *solely* arises. Even your skilful writer, I doubt not, would adhere to this definition, and apply it to his three principles, without excluding the term *solely*. So that I cannot yet see, that there is the least ambiguity in the word *foundation*, or that any explication of it could at all contribute to adjust the different opinions on this subject. But if you could persuade the maintainers of them to agree in applying the word *foundation* to some one or more of the principles contended for, that would indeed effectually end the dispute; for there the disagreement lies, which does not, as I conceive, at all affect the sense or meaning of the word *foundation*.

3. As to those, whom you suppose to have different conceptions of that word, because one considers it as the ground, from which virtue *immediately* arises, and another considers it as a more *remote* ground, on which it arises, by the *intervention of some mediums*: I confess I do not well apprehend the use of mediums for the production of virtue, if a sufficient ground of it is allowed, into which it must be ultimately resolved. But as I have had no occasion to consider these nice distinctions, which have not come in my way, I may be in danger of blundering about them, and there-
fore

fore shall only say, that I imagine these authors may agree in their idea of foundation, as a *real ground, on which virtue arises*, though one excludes, and another admits the intervention of mediums, which do not hinder the ground from remaining immovably the same.

4. You next object to the *explanation* of my ground, viz. *that, without which there could be no such thing as virtue*; that this seems not to enter into their notion of foundation, who place it in self-love, and self-interest; for virtue, you say, even according to them, may be considered as *disinterested*.

5. Now here again, Sir, you are got among authors, that I am a stranger to; for though I have met with several, who make *self-interest* the foundation of *moral obligation*, I know of none, who make it the foundation of *virtue*. This those writers commonly deduce from the will of God. But if those you speak of, *found virtue on self-interest*, and yet allow, that it may be considered as *disinterested*; there must be such inconsistencies in their schemes, and such confusion in their ideas, both of *virtue* and *foundation*, that I will not pretend to answer for what they may mean by either.

6. But on this occasion, Sir, I am obliged to take notice of a mistake you have made in setting down as my words, that the foundation of *moral virtue*, upon farther reflection, will be found to lie, either in the essential differences, &c. or in self-love and self-interest; upon which you remark, *but not in the same sense of foundation*. Now, sir, if you please to look once more into my last paper, you will find, that those words were spoke of *moral obligation*, not of *moral virtue*; for I had no notion of any one's founding *virtue* on self-love and self-interest. And as to your remark, there was no occasion to consider, in what sense foundation might be applied to those principles, since my only

intention was to engage you on the side of the essential differences, by observing, that *obligation* must either be founded on them, or on those *low principles*, which you had before agreed with me in rejecting.

7. Again, you object to my explaining the word foundation, by calling it *that, without which there could be no such thing as virtue*, that the same may be said of free will, or of reason in moral agents: supposing them away, there is an end of moral agency, an end of all virtue. And yet you conclude, I would not call these foundations, at least not the *sole* foundation, *purely because they are absolutely necessary to the very being of virtue*. Reason and free-will I acknowledge, sir, to be absolutely necessary to *moral agency*: they are qualifications, without which there could be no such thing as the *practice of virtue*, and may, if you please, be called *foundations of virtuous practice*. But that is quite another idea, than the *general abstract nature of virtue*, the foundation of which we are enquiring about; and to the constituting or production of virtue in this sense, I see not that any thing can be necessary, or at all contribute, but the immutable relations and essential differences of things, from which virtue, considered in its *abstract nature*, directly and solely arises. If this idea were strictly kept to, as it ought to be in the question concerning the origin of virtue, there would perhaps have been less disagreement about it; for I apprehend there has been much ambiguity in the use of the term *virtue*, though I cannot perceive any in that of the word *foundation*.

8. But to go on with your objections, *space*, you say, is *that, without which there could be no such thing as matter*: yet you suppose I would not infer from hence, that *space was a foundation, and the sole foundation of matter*. So far from it, sir, that I cannot consider space as having any thing at all

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to do with the *production* of matter; and therefore I should rather chuse to say with respect to them, that *the existence of matter supposed*, the existence of space must be likewise admitted. But the dependence of virtue on the essential differences, &c. is of quite another nature, since it entirely derives its being from them.

9. If your ingenious florists, who dispute about the origin of a flower, or the admirers of music, whose enquiry into the *true foundation* of it you so elegantly describe, are agreed, that the thing they seek for is, *the ground, on which the flower, or the music solely arises*, or, *that to which either owes its being*: then it should seem plain, that they are all agreed in the sense of the word *foundation*, and only differ about the thing, to which it may be most properly applied. And if their error lies in each man's making his beloved principle the *sole foundation* of the flower, or of the music; when various principles contribute to their respective beings; then this controversy is not to be decided by the definition of a foundation, the general idea of which will agree indifferently to one or more principles; but till they can convince each other, either that some one, or more, or all the principles together, go to the production of the flower, or the music; they may indeed dispute to the world's end, notwithstanding the exactest agreement in their idea of *foundation*. A company of architects might dispute for ever, whether stone, or brick, or wood, or all together, were the properest foundation for a house; and yet have all the very same idea of foundation, as *that on which a house is solely erected*. And this, sir, I apprehend to be pretty nearly a parallel case with that of the contenders about the *foundation of moral virtue*, who, I cannot but think, are generally agreed in the precise meaning of that word.

10. But

10. But now, Sir, it is not the same as to the term *virtue*, which you next consider; for I am apt to think there is a great deal of ambiguity in the use of *that*, as I hinted before. Not but I am persuaded, that most people are agreed in their general notion of the *nature* of virtue; but when writers come to contend about the foundation of it, they are apt to substitute in place of the *nature of virtue*, either our *idea* of it, or the *practice* of it by moral agents. And this perhaps may have been some occasion of their assigning different foundations to virtue; for our *idea* of virtue, or our *practice* of it, may arise from other grounds than that, on which the *abstract nature* of virtue is founded. And these different senses of the term *virtue* may occasion likewise various *definitions* of it, every one defining it according to the light he has viewed it in, and to the foundation he has given it in that view. For you may be pleased to observe, that the several definitions you have instanced in, are rather *determinations of the foundation* of virtue, than *applications of its nature*. For instance, to say, that virtue is *a conformity of a reasonable creature to the will of its creator*, is the same as to say, that the will of the creator is the foundation of virtue: but this gives us no manner of light into the *nature of virtue*, till we are informed by other means what the will of the creator is, and therefore is no proper definition of it. The same may be said of the rest, excepting only that, which considers virtue as *the conformity of a reasonable creature to the nature and reasons of things*; for that directly acquaints us with the nature of virtue. It is true, this definition determines likewise the foundation of virtue, which in this controversy is a kind of *begging the question*: but then it may be said in excuse of this, (what cannot be said for any of the others) that it is scarce possible to give a just and proper definition of virtue, without expressing its relation to the

nature and essential differences of things. And this too may serve as a proof, that virtue owes its origin solely to them, since the consideration of them enters necessarily into the just idea of its essence. And give me leave to say, that even in the different views, according to which the several writers have defined virtue, the reasons and immutable nature of things might be (what you think it is in vain to search for) *a common foundation to support them all*: all may easily be resolved into them, and securely rest upon them.

11. I agree with you, Sir, that the precise meaning of *obligation* is as little settled, as you suppose that of the term foundation to be: and yet I cannot think with you, that it is chiefly owing to the different notions of obligation, that we have different foundations assigned to it; for I have all along allowed, that there are several grounds of obligation, though I have constantly kept to one precise meaning of that term. And according to my apprehensions of this matter, there can be but *one sort of obligation*, if there were fifty different foundations of it. What you call three sorts of obligation seems to me three sorts of foundations, upon which obligation in *one and the same sense* may, and does arise. Obligation surely is, or ought to be the same idea, whatever is supposed to be the foundation of it. I acknowledge, that the precise meaning of it has not been scientifically settled, and that some have obscured, and others begged the question by defining it; but I do not find, that any misunderstandings have happened in the controversy from these defects. I believe, Sir, you will allow, that people in common discourse understand one another well enough, when they say they are *under an obligation* to do such or such a thing, though perhaps they could not define the word. And so writers on the subject may be sufficiently agreed in the general meaning of the word, to talk

to the purpose about it without explaining it; which some of the best of those on Dr. Clarke's side of the question seem to have thought unnecessary, by their neglecting to do it. And this has been complained of by one of their adversaries, who himself defines obligation to be *such a necessity of action, as is consistent with liberty*: which I think does not make the term more intelligible than it was. Others of them tell us, they mean by it *a necessity of action arising from a prospect of obtaining happiness, or avoiding misery*. And this I take to be begging the question in favour of their beloved principle. But the most accurate and judicious writer on Dr. Clarke's side, that I have met with, defines obligation to be *a state of the mind, into which it is brought by the perception of a plain reason for acting or forbearing to act, arising from the nature, circumstances, or relations of persons or things*. Yet I think this defective, as not explaining what that state of mind is, in which he places obligation; besides that it is a kind of determining the foundation he assigns to it, which is the subject of debate, and the fault I observed in their adversaries. After so many great names as have engaged in this controversy, I have not ventured upon any definition of obligation in my *Remarks*, nor did any occasion for it offer. But since we are now upon the unsettled meaning of that term, I take the liberty, Sir, to lay before you the explanation I would chuse to give it, and leave to your judgment, whether it is less exceptionable than those I have objected against. By obligation then I understand, *such a perception of an inducement to act, or to forbear acting, as forces an agent to stand self-condemned, if he does not conform to it*. This I think expresses that *state of mind*, which my admired author hints at; and it determines no particular foundation, though it may suit with them all; and therefore it might be equally received by the maintainers of each. But I much doubt whether

their agreement in this meaning of *obligation* would bring them all to agree in the grounds, from which it arises.

12. We are now come, Sir, to the last and most important question between us, whether the reason, nature, and fitness of things, considered as antecedent to the divine will, do appear under *that consideration*, to be obligatory to morality? or whether rules of action, &c. In my answer to this, it seems, I have not considered eternal rules in the same view, in which you took them, when you asked the question. I confess, Sir, I did not consider them in the view you have now explained them; for I did not apprehend, that you intended to enquire, whether the eternal reasons of things were *obligatory* before there were any creatures capable of obligation; or, that you meant by *antecedent to the will*, antecedent to his will as expressed in the creation. These are remote views, in which I had never before occasion to consider things, except with respect to the Deity himself, who is said to be eternally obliged by the eternal ratios: but in that I do not see, that the present controversy is directly concerned.

That, which Dr. Clarke and his followers maintain, is, that the immutable nature and truth of things have, in themselves, an obligatory power, to which all reasonable beings ought to conform; and that this right of theirs is antecedent to the divine will, that is, to any declaration of it, by an *explicite* command to practice moral duties; antecedent to all consideration of the will of God in them, or of reward and punishment annexed to the observance or neglect of them. This is plainly their meaning. But when their adversaries support the contrary doctrine, by arguing, that the relations and fitnesses of things, and the obligation to conform to them, are consequences of the determination of the will of God in the creation, and therefore cannot be antecedent to his will; they put a manifest fallacy upon their readers

readers (which perhaps they themselves are not aware of) by substituting a quite different consideration of things, in the room of that, which they pretend to oppose, *viz.* particular existences, for *general abstract ideas*; and the will of God, as expressed in the creation, for the will of God *explicitly discovered* by the command of moral duties. The question surely is not, whether the eternal reasons of things were obligatory to reasonable creatures, before the will of God had brought any such into existence; for who ever supposed this? But if God created a system of beings, conformably to certain relations and fitnesses eternally perceived by the divine understanding; and if he gave them no other law but what resulted from their nature, discoverable by their natural faculties: Then the query is, whether that law of nature does not in itself oblige them to conform to it, before any discovery either by reason or revelation of the will of God concerning it? To urge, in answer to this, that *the will of God is expressed in the creation, exhibiting those relations and fitnesses, &c.* is a plain fallacy (though it has passed unobserved) for the will of God, *as expressed in the creation*, is the very same with that reason and truth of things, which are said to be obligatory *as such*, without considering them as the will of God. They are indeed, perfectly conformable to the will of God, but not *explicitly discovered* to be so, or considered under that formality; yet have a right in themselves of obliging moral agents, whenever any such exist, independently of any consideration of the will of God in them: So, that, though obligation could not take place, as I observed, till God had exhibited those eternal ratios in a system of beings conformable to them; still the rule of their duty, and their obligation to conform to it, must, as I apprehend, be ultimately resolved into those eternal truths, according to which they were formed, and by which they were left to discover what course

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of action their nature required of them to follow. And all I think, that can be justly *inferred* from obligation's being *subsequent to the creation*, is, that the *existence* of creatures, *capable of obligation*, is solely resolvable into the divine will.

What I have said, Sir, will, I hope, set me right in your thoughts as to any mistake I may have been in of your meaning, or any misapprehension you may have had of mine; though I do not minutely go through every particular relating to them, for fear of being tedious, and giving you too much trouble. But I beg leave to take notice of a *distinction* you have supposed for me, where I intended none. You are pleased to say, that on the discussion of this last query, *it appears, that they, viz.* the reason, nature, and fitness of things, when considered as antecedent to the divine will, *are not obligatory themselves, but they are nevertheless a foundation of obligation.* Now, Sir, as I have all along maintained, that those eternal ratios are absolutely obligatory under every consideration; when I said they were *foundations of obligation*, I took that to be an equivalent expression with the other, and therefore used them indifferently, designing no distinction; and where ever I have affirmed, that any principle is a *foundation of moral obligation*, I beg to be understood, that it is *obligatory to morality.*

13. You tell me, Sir, that you will not deny, that the eternal ratios are, in *some sense*, a foundation of obligation; but if I make them the *primary* and the *ultimate* foundation, of this you must doubt. Now if they are neither the one nor the other of these, I cannot guess in *what sense* you allow them to be a foundation at all. You add, that, as you observed upon the second question, they can only be considered as a foundation of obligation in one particular sense of obligation, among three senses that it is taken in. But here the difference between us is, that what you call *three senses of obligation*, I look upon

upon as three *distinct* foundations of it, and allow them all to be properly such. *The right, that truth has to be preferred before falsehood*, is according to my apprehension, not obligation, but a *ground from whence obligation arises*; and this I must have leave to call the *ultimate foundation* of it, or that, into which all obligation must be resolved, since the moral sense, and even the will of God, can only oblige, in virtue of reason, and truth, and the fitness of things.

14. What you say of the claim the *moral sense* would have to the *primacy* by my argument, as the first principle, that lays men under moral obligation, I think, may admit of a doubt: It seems to depend so much on custom, education, &c. that I apprehend it rather to be a *consequence* of the perception, which every rational mind has, in some degree, of the essential difference of good and evil. However, I was only taking notice, that our knowledge of duty, by those essential differences, was previous to our discovery of *the will of God* in them, and that therefore they were a foundation of obligation prior to it.

15. And now, Sir, however we may differ about the use of terms in this controversy; and though I must still maintain, that the essential differences of things are the *sole* foundation of moral virtue (the nature of which I cannot apprehend to depend on *will*, being eternally what it is in the divine understanding) and that I must likewise consider them as the *ultimate*, though not the *sole* foundation of moral obligation: yet I entirely agree with you in your conclusion, *that the only proper ultimate foundation of moral virtue, and moral obligation, is God himself, the fountain of every thing, that is perfect, true, or right, &c.* All essential truths are but the necessary preceptions of the *eternal mind*; and acting agreeably to them is acting in conformity with the *most perfect will*. So that I hope, Sir, you will al-

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low, that virtue and obligation cannot have a more sacred or divine origin, than that, which the followers of Dr. Clarke assign them; and if you cannot altogether agree with them, you will at least excuse the short sighted views of one, who would gladly see things in the same light with you, of whose judgment and candor I have the highest esteem, and am,

S I R,

Your most humble Servant,

C. COCKBURN.

Reply to Mrs. Cockburn's second paper about the foundation of moral virtue and moral obligation.

MADAM,

I AM greatly indebted to you for explaining to me some points in your own Writings; which I had mistaken; and for defining some of your terms to prevent my further mistakes; and for the candid and ingenuous manner, in which you have replied to every thing, that I had put queries upon in my late letter to you.

The benefit arising from these effects of your communicative disposition is, that I understand your writings on this subject, and the drift of them, better than I did before.

You have given me no small satisfaction by explaining what you mean by moral fitnesses being antecedent to the divine will; for I conceived, that Dr. Clarke and his followers had spoke of *their antecedency to God's will*, in such a manner, as implied their being some way independent on God himself. But your agreeing with me intirely in this point,

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that the only proper ultimate foundation of moral virtue, and moral obligation, is God himself, &c. has eased me of the only painful thought I had in the controversy. For, so long as this divine origin is assigned to them, I am little solicitous about the events of any disputes concerning things, that men are pleased to call *foundations* in some more qualified, or limited sense.

In your appendix to your *Remarks in the Works of the Learned*, (which was added to them, after I had the favour of perusing them in MS. and which was occasioned, as I apprehend, at least that part, which explains *antecedency*, by what I had said in that letter to Mr. Cockburn, which accompanied your MS. when I returned it) you are pleased to say, that the *antecedency* Dr. Clarke and his followers speak of, respects only the explicite declarations of God's will by the command of moral virtues: And that the will of God, as exprest, or rather implied in the creation, is the very same with that reason and truth of things, which are said to be obligatory as such. p. 159. And to the same effect you speak in your letter to me. I gladly lay hold of your authority for Dr. Clarke's sense of *antecedency*, and I heartily approve your remark, that follows, that *God's will as expressed*, &c. Now as I had no apprehension till I read this appendix, and your late letter to me, that this was your sense of *antecedent*, &c. you will the more readily excuse, what I needlessly said upon another supposition.

Another thing you have informed me of, in which I was greatly mistaken, viz. that in this enquiry into the true ground of virtue, you do not consider it as in *practise*, but in its general abstract nature. This distinction very much alters the question from what I conceived it to be. And had I been aware of this before, it would have prevented much of what I said, on presumption, that *practical* virtue

virtue (by which I mean *virtue in practice*) was the thing, of which the proper foundation was sought.

All that I have further to wish, is, that every body, who engages in this dispute, would explain as freely and as fully as you have done, what they precisely mean by their terms, and in what particular light they consider the subject, viz. what they include in, or exclude from their consideration of it. By this means, we should not only come sooner to every writer's true meaning, but probably find a way opened to bring them to an agreement. For, as each person might perhaps be found to argue justly from his own principles, and upon his own conceptions; so each person's principles and reasonings upon them might perhaps stand allowed in that sense he maintains them, without overturning, or even clashing with the principles and conclusions of others, who consider the same subject in a different light, and use terms in a different sense.

It was upon this conjecture, that I suggested to you, in my first paper, the usefulness of setting out with an enquiry into the meaning of the first term in the question, *foundation*, as it is used by the several writers in this controversy; and when that was determined, I proposed to proceed to another question, the solution of which would become more easy after the sense of the first term was ascertained. And so on to a third point. This occasioned the agreeable correspondence I have had with you, wherein you have given me great light into your own refined and just sentiments upon the subject, in the particular view you hold it in. But I have not yet received all the satisfaction I wished for in my enquiry after the sense of *foundation* in this dispute. You are pleased indeed to give me your own sense of it, which I thank you for, nor have I any right to ask more of you: And you also apply it justly and properly to your own sense of the term virtue, viz. considered in its general abstract nature.

But when you suppose, that all other writers use *foundation* in the very same sense that you do, and would abide by your definition of it; when you say, that there is no ambiguity in it; that no misapprehension has arisen from it; that no explanation of it could at all contribute to adjust the different opinions on this subject; you do indeed almost silence me from the deference I pay to your opinion, as such; but as you have given it me hitherto only as your opinion, without any reason to support it, I am yet at liberty to elicit them, for my own further satisfaction, if I can.

If the words of writers on morality are not always to be taken in the common acceptation, (as Mr. E. L. and yourself agree, * p. 102, *Works of the Learned*, 1743) but in the sense most agreeable to the apparent scope of their writings; and if a word, metaphorically used, may be applied to different things, and yet not just in the same sense: Why may it not happen, that in the metaphorical use of the word *foundation*, different writers shall not have the same precise idea of the term? What any of them mean by it, may be best collected, if they do not otherwise explain themselves, from the things they apply it to. And it is my observation of their different applications of it, which creates my suspicion, that they do not agree, as they should, in the idea of it. And if I were penetrating enough to discern where this disagreement lay, I should hope to contribute not a little towards adjusting their different opinions about the main subject.

I had offered at a distinction of *foundations*, even upon your own definition of that term, into immediate or proximate, and remote or original. You seem to think this can do no service. My not explaining it by instances has left it under the appearance of a nice, perhaps an arbitrary and useless distinction.

Is not *foundation*, when applied to *faith*, altogether as intelligible and determinate, as when it is ap-

plied to *virtue*? Yet if I should say there is no ambiguity in it, or difference about it, Mr. Hooker would admonish me; who, in a dispute about the foundation of faith, has these words.

"Let us see (says he) what the *foundation* of *faith* is. If it does import the general ground, whereupon we rest, when we do believe; the writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles are the foundation of the *Christian* faith. But if the name of *foundation* do note the principle thing, which is believed, then is the foundation of our *faith* God manifest in the flesh." p. 499.

Here are two senses of *foundation* very judiciously distinguished; and the more so, because, as I imagine, he grounds this distinction upon the words of a much greater writer than himself, who, comparing the *Christian* church, or the congregation of believers to an edifice, uses the word *foundation*, in a sense as near the primary and literal, as it is capable of in a figure. "As a wise master-builder, I have laid the *foundation*: and other *foundation* can no man lay, but what is laid, which is *Jesus Christ*." And yet he speaks in another place of another *foundation* for this same edifice; which, he says, "is built on the *foundation* of the apostles and prophets, *Jesus Christ* himself being the chief corner stone," viz. which unites both the Old and New Testament into a strong foundation, and cements the whole building both of believing Jews and Gentiles. Here is *foundation* and *foundation*. Both real ones, though not the same; yet justly applied to the same subject; the one as *principal*, the other as *subordinate*: or, to use a distinction I made before, upon your definition of *foundation*; the one, "as a ground, from which the thing said to be founded immediately and directly arises; and the other, as a ground, on which it stands, by the intervention of mediums, as upon its original *foundation*."

Is there no room for any distinction of this kind in the dispute about the foundations of virtue?

Once more : I find your admired writer obliged to have recourse to another distinction of *foundation*, when his opponent had mistaken his use of that word, in an application of it to a *Thesis*. "*Foundation*", says he, when it is applied *figuratively* to "*a Thesis*", signifies either *the support* of it, or the "*orderly introduction* to it." It seems his antagonist not attending to this distinction, had imagined, that *foundation of the Thesis*, (as it stood undefined in the *Divine Legation*) meant *the support* of the *Thesis*. Whereas the author meant no more than the *orderly introduction* to it.

May we not from hence reasonably presume, that the writers in morality do not *all*, much less *always*, use the same term *foundation* in their *figurative applications* of it; in the very same signification; though they do not intimate any distinction or difference, than what may be collected from the application itself?

There is an admired writer of the last mentioned author, for whom I have also an equal esteem, that uses *foundation*, as I think, in two different senses: In one, when applied to the abstract nature of virtue, and means *the ground, on which virtue solely arises; or, that, without which there could be no such thing as virtue*. And in another, when applied to obligation, of which she supposes there may be many *foundations*; and consequently it cannot be said of any *one* of them, that it is *the ground, on which obligation solely arises, or that, without which there could be no such thing as obligation*. Therefore, till this other sense of foundation be also explained to us, we must gather it as well as we can from the application itself, in which view I conceive, she means no more by it than *sufficient motive, or reasonable inducement*, in which sense it is very often taken.

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It is not my intention to uphold any dispute with you, Madam, not even on the main subject, much less upon the signification of terms, which would not have been worth my mentioning to you at first, but for a conceit, that something more material depended thereon. And as my only aim in what I have submitted, and do now submit to your better judgment, is to discover, if I can, whether too careless and lax an use of terms has not been one occasion, perhaps a principal one, of disagreement among writers; and consequently, whether the fixing their import with greater exactness and precision, than the several writers have commonly done, may not help very much towards finding out where the truth lies among various sentiments, which yet perhaps are not so various, if each were rightly understood: as this I say, is my only scope, I persuade myself you will bear with my giving you my own sense of the matter more fully.

FOUNDATION, although, in its first proper and literal sense, *as a ground or bottom, whereon a building is erected, or any heavy body stands or rests, as upon its proper basis*, it conveys always the same idea; yet *the figurative* use of it will be found to be of two sorts; one more proper, the other less proper.

The more proper is, when it is figuratively applied to kingdom, empire, city, &c. and signifies the first establishment of such civil constitution: Or to hospital, college, school, or lecture, &c. and signifies the settlement of a revenue to support such particular community or institution; or to history, poem, drama, &c. and signifies the subject, matter, groundwork, or plot; or to reasoning and argument, and signifies postulatums, or first principles laid down to be argued from, &c. In all which instances, something is conceived to be raised as a superstructure, upon what is called the foundation. And thus authorities, and proofs, upon which any

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thing can be figuratively said to be built, become figuratively foundations.

The less proper is when, it is put for the root, or source, from which any thing has its rise and beginning, or springs, or is deduced, And in this sense it is applied to *first occasions* and *introductions*, &c. considered as the origins of some things, and to *motives, inducements*, &c. considered as the springs of action; and to *designs* and *ends*, considered either as the *occasions* of, or the *motives* to the doing of such things, as are ascribed to such views.

And we are so far reconciled by use to these applications of foundation, though they are the less proper, as to prefer them sometimes before the former, or more proper. When we speak of the ground or foundation of a quarrel or a dispute, we chuse to understand it rather of the first occasion, that brought it on, than of subject matter of it, or the difference of sentiments in the contending parties.

And here I cannot help remarking, that the words, which literally signify *rise*, or *beginning* in the *Latin* and *Greek* tongues; (viz. *principium* and *ἀρχή*) are figuratively used for *foundation*. So that to lay a *beginning* in *Greek*, is to lay a *foundation*. And both in *Latin* and in *English* we hear as much (at least among philosophers) of *building upon principles*, as *deducing* from them.

In a word, I take both *principle* and *foundation* in its metaphorical usage, to be terms of much the same latitude with *cause*, and to admit of as great a variety of distinctions; because there is scarce any thing that can be called a *cause*, which may not be called in some sense or other a *principle*, or a *foundation*; having as near a relation, and the same kind of relation, to that, which is built upon it, or is deducible from it, as *cause* hath to its *effect*.

It is true, the logicians have found it necessary, in order to determine certain precise meanings of
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the general term *cause*, and to prevent confusion in the various uses of it, to distinguish and sub-distinguish to a very great nicety: Which they have not done, that I know of, with respect to the term *foundation*. Yet I conceive the same distinctions may be made to serve both, and thereby to serve a better purpose, viz. to account in some measure for mens various opinions about the *foundation* of morality.

Give me leave on this occasion to talk a little in the language of the schools, for so much I remember of it, that if a man were to ask me, what was the *cause of virtue and moral obligation* (as I think some of the writers will use that expression, and chuse it rather than *foundation*) I should first demand what it was he meant by *cause*, whether the *material*, the *formal*, the *efficient*, or the *final*; for in every one of these senses (to omit the several subdivisions) *cause* is taken, and in every one of them it may be applied to virtue, as being a *cause* of it.

The nature, truth, and relations of things, with their consequent fitnesses of application, are the *material cause* of virtue. They are of the essence of moral rectitude, speculative, or practical. They are the *subject-matter*, in which we conceive moral virtue ought to be exercised, and in which, when it is practised, it really is exercised. If one shall chuse to call them the *rule*, another the *foundation* of morals, I think there is nothing amiss, provided that their proper place or share in morals be assigned them, and no more, and no less: So that he, who calls them the *rule* of practice, allows them also to be the subject of it; or he, who lays the *foundation* in them, means it in no other sense, than as a *material cause* may be considered as a *foundation* of its effect.

The formal cause of virtue is *right reason with liberty*. These constitute moral agency, and are likewise of the essence of virtue; which, as Mr. War-
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burton justly observes, consists in *acting agreeably to those relations*, in which we stand to all beings whatsoever. These give moral acts their *quiddity*, (if you will bear with that school term used in the definition of *forms*) that is, not only distinguishes them from the acts of brutes, but gives them their proper rank and dignity among human actions, or that peculiar character, from which they are denominated virtue. For the actions even of reasonable creatures, however consonant (of themselves) to the nature, truth, and relations of things, if done through necessity, through ignorance, or, in one word, *without moral intention*, cannot be accounted virtue. However they may be said to come within the matter of it, yet they have not the *form* of virtue. Reason and liberty alone can constitute *that*. Some indeed will chuse to call these the *necessary qualifications to the practice of virtue*; perhaps also, *foundations of virtuous practices*. Yet surely they are a constituent part of virtue in every idea of it, and are to it, in the division of causes, most properly what the *formal* cause is to the effect.

Nor am I making any new distinctions on virtue, when I thus consider it *materially* and *formally*: For moralists have so considered it long ago, making both this *matter* and this *form* requisite to its being. They may not use indeed the very terms *cause*, or *foundation*, but (which comes to the same thing) they speak of *internal principles* of virtue, which they divide into *material* and *formal*, as the essential constituent parts of it, by which it is conceived, and understood as it were, *a priori*.

Chauvin, who gives us the sentiments of the generality of the philosophers, says, that the *material principle of virtue is the nature of things so far as it is a rule of conformity, or a subject of moral practice*. And upon this all virtue stands, says he, *as it were upon its foundation* (this expression will not displease you.) *The formal principle is right*
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reason; for, adds he, *when every thing is considered and treated, as right reason teaches it should be considered and treated, then virtue comes forth in its perfection*. Then he proceeds to other principles of virtue, which he styles the complex necessary indeed to the practice of virtue, but not necessary to the knowledge of its nature.

Will you now bear with me, if I return for a little time to my school logic again?

The efficient cause of virtue in this division is the intelligent free agent himself, conforming his will and actions, by the dictates of his reason, to the nature and relations of things. Perhaps you may look upon him in no other light, than as a subject capable of virtue, or as an instrument in the production of it. But you will scarce find among all the instances of *efficient causes* given by the logicians any one more proper, or that comes more closely up to their definitions, than that of an *intelligent free agent*, considered as *efficient*, in regard to *virtue*, considered as *effect*.

And lastly the *reasonable motive*, or the *ultimate end* (whatever it be) by which his will is so determined, is the *final cause* in this question. And so properly the *final*, that it not only fully answers the usual definition, *viz. of an external cause, for the sake of which, or upon account of which the efficient acts*, but agrees perfectly with another observation of the logicians, *viz. that the causality of final causes is chiefly to be considered in created intelligent agents*. It also answers perfectly to their distinction of *finis cuius*, and *finis cui*; the *end of whom*, and the *end to whom*. For such motives and inducements to virtuous actions, as *respect one's self*, are as properly *final causes* of our acting, as *gain or wealth* is that of a merchant's in trade; which they give as a right instance of *finis cuius*. And such motives and inducements to good actions, as *respect other beings*, are as properly the *fi-*
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nal causes of our studying and doing good, as the health of others is the final cause of physicians in studying and practising physic, which they give us as a right instance of *finis cui*.

I have had indeed hitherto a particular eye to your own definition of virtue, if I mistake you not, as *the conformity of a reasonable creature to the nature and reasons of things*. But still the division of its foundation or cause into four causes will be equally clear and certain, though we should with others substitute *the will of God* in the definition in the place of the *nature and reasons of things*. For as in my way of considering your definition, the *nature and reason of things*, so far as they are a rule of conformity, or the subject of moral practice, may be considered as *the material principle, or subject-matter of virtue*; so the *will of God* in the definition of others, (if they mean by it *his will as expressed, or rather implied in the creation*) is the very same material principle, or subject-matter with your *reason and truth of things*. A difference indeed will be found in the *form*, but none in the *matter*. Or if they mean by *the will of God*, a positive appointment, or explicit command, then the thing so appointed or commanded will be also the subject-matter of virtue; as coming within their rule or law of virtue.

Thus again as to the *form*. In your own definition it must be *reason*, including *liberty*. For when you say, a *reasonable creature*, you must mean not only a creature, that can understand, and judge of the nature and reasons of things, but who has power likewise to conform to them. But according to those, who espouse the other definition, the *formal cause* will be the *knowledge and discernment* of God's will, however attained, whether by reason or otherwise; or the power and capacity of discerning it, by whatever means it be imparted.

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And this I take to be Mr. Warburton's peculiar notion of *moral*, as distinguished from *rational*. From whence he collects, that an Atheist, though a reasonable creature, with respect to the nature and reasons of things, cannot nevertheless be a *moral* creature, so long as he is absolutely a stranger to God's will.

The term *conformity* in either of the definitions implies not only a determination of the reasonable and moral creature's will, to conform to the nature and reason of things, or to the will of God, but also his *acting* agreeably thereto. And this makes him in either case the *efficient cause* properly so called.

And as some kind of motive, or other, must be supposed to determine his will to conform to the one or to the other, because in either definition, he is considered as a *reasonable creature*, (which he could not be, if he had not some reason to induce him to action) this motive or reason, whatever it be in either consideration of the question, will be the proper *final cause*, which, I must confess, is rather implied than expressed in either of the definitions.

I might proceed to consider and distinguish in the same manner the *foundations or causes of obligation*; either from your own definition of it, or from that of others. But before I trouble you with any more logic, I think it is fitting I should first explain to you what use I would make of these kind of dry distinctions, that I have borrowed from the schools; hoping you will not censure them, or me, if that shall appear to be to my purpose.

Suppose then any person, instead of asking me the *cause* of virtue, should ask me, what is the *foundation* of it; might I not justly demand of him, in the first place, what it was he meant by *foundation*? And if he should reply, that all do

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agree in that term, and that there is no sort of ambiguity in it, might I not very justly and pertinently answer, that I have good reason to put this query, because I observe, that some very worthy writers do call *that the foundation and the sole foundation* of virtue, which, when it comes to be logically considered, amounts to no more than some one of the four species, into which *cause* is distinguished? And if one of them manifestly lays his *foundation* in the *material cause*, another lays his as evidently in the *formal*, and another as plainly, though perhaps not so directly, in the *final*. Can I think otherwise, than that they have not the same meaning, when they use the term *foundation*? Or must not their meanings be at least as different, as *material*, *formal*, and *final causes* are different from each other?

To give examples. Most of the old philosophers reduced the whole of virtue to one source or head, when they defined it *by living according to the dictates of reason*, or *living agreeably to right reason*, or more fully expressed, *reason from the nature of things, which enjoineeth the things, which ought to be done, and forbiddeth the contrary*. This with some of them was the sole principle of moral virtue, or, in our modern language, the true and proper *foundation*: and yet is truly and properly no more than the *formal cause* of it, according to *Cbauvin's* account.

Again there are other very learned and judicious persons, who lay the foundation of virtue, wholly and solely, in the nature, truth, and eternal *reasons of things*; whereas, upon enquiry, this may perhaps be found only a partial *foundation*, and to be equivalent to nothing more than what the logicians term the *material cause*.

We have got then a twofold ground for virtue (in the abstract idea) to stand upon, *viz. the reasons of things*, or fitnesses arising from the mutual rela-

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tions of things to each other; and *reason of agents*, or the faculty of discerning those fitnesses and reasons of things. But virtue or practical morality cannot properly be said to be *founded* on either of these *solely and wholly*, but must arise from the voluntary and actual exercise of the reason of the agent in the great law of morals, which is of nature's institution. Which exercise of the faculty towards the producing virtue, being an act of the will of the agent, makes a third principle, or cause of the *practice of virtue*; (from whence the moral agent is denominated the *efficient cause*) and has as good a right to be called a *foundation*, at least of *virtuous practice*, as either of the other two.

And lastly, when we come to consider the *final causes*, or the various inducements, by which the will of the agent is moved, and determined to virtuous practice, a new scene of *foundations* is opened, under the article of *obligation*. For whatever doth oblige to virtue, is in some sense a foundation of it. And there are as many causes or foundations of obligation, as there are just motives or sufficient inducements to virtuous actions. And we find some writers, who do not affect the term *foundation*, talking of *cause of duty*, *cause of moral obligation*, *true cause* of our obligation to virtue, *proper and natural cause*, which obliges to the practice of it, &c. And as man is considered in his rational, social, or sensitive nature, so the *final causes* differ. To the rational nature it is said to be rectitude; in which sense I suppose it is said, that virtue itself is the ultimate end of a moral agent. To the social nature it is the good of others, but yet neither of these exclusive of the *final cause* to the sensitive nature, which is happiness present or future: pleasure in the act itself, or expectation of it in consequence.

Now as virtue is conceived to arise from so many *causes*, or to have so many *foundations* in the

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lax manner of using that term, who can wonder at the difficulties, that must attend every attempt to reduce it to *one foundation*, till we come at the supreme *cause* and *foundation* of all things, in whom a proper ultimate will be found?

And I humbly conceive, that this controversy would be better understood, and carried on to better effect, if the word *foundation* were either entirely dropped, or the precise meaning of it in the several applications of it to different parts of the subject, fully adjusted. That is, let every principle, that goes to the production of virtue in any sense, as a *cause logically defined*, be taken into the question, and allowed its due weight, viz. its proper effect. And for the better judging of this, let the virtue, of which the cause or causes are sought, be so explained, that the writer's idea of it may be fully understood, and also whether he considers it in its abstract nature, or in the practice of it by mankind; and whether it is spoke of exclusive of the consideration of God's will, as implied in the creation, or expressed in the moral sense; or in conjunction with the consideration of his will in both these respects, and only exclusive of positive appointments and commands; or whether God's will at large, however revealed to mankind be taken into the question. And lastly, when any cause of virtue, or of obligation, is affirmed or denied, whether it is so affirmed or denied, with regard to man's reasonable, or social, or sensitive nature, and withal his corrupt nature: in a word, let every part of this complicated and entangled subject be unravelled and sorted, so as that one part, which is, and may be considered as distinct, shall not mix with, and run into another, which is, and may be likewise considered as distinct, to the confusion of ideas in both; and then something, I apprehend may come out, in which all parties shall either agree, or be forced to maintain such incon-

inconsistencies, as will prove their confutation in the judgment of all discerning people.

And now, Madam, from what has been said, you will the better perceive my reasons for putting my first queries, and of the methods I took, and expressions I used, in my reply to your first paper. Give me leave now to take the several paragraphs of your last letter into consideration.

The following passages since collected. The first *root* and *foundation* of virtue is the sincere desire of knowing the *will* of God, and impartially searching after the truth. Dr. Clarke's *Sermons*, vol. I. fol. p. 464.

Freedom of will, which according as it is determined in different circumstances by the reasonableness of what is good, or incitements of what is evil, renders the agent morally good or evil. *Ibid.* and also p. 60.

Liberty or moral agency must ever be the *foundation* of morality in man, and is the *sole ground* of the accountableness of intelligent creatures for all their actions. Bishop Hoadley's *Life of Dr. Clarke*.

The existence of one only God he (Dr. Clarke) justly esteemed as the *foundation* of all, viz. all true religion. *Ibid.*

His (Dr. Clarke's) first principle was the unity of God, which he esteemed as the *basis* of all moral obedience. *Ibid.*

The state as well as glory of human nature is free-agency. And from the nature of free-agency man being capable of chusing good, he must be also capable of chusing evil. It is *this power*, and a *wise enjoyment* of it, that constitutes virtue. Kennicott's *1st Dissertat.* p. 33.

1. **T**HE compliment you are pleased to make me in the beginning of your condescending answer to my *Remarks*, viz. of my having been more conversant than yourself, with the writers on these subjects, and having gone into nicer distinctions, and more remote views of them, than you have had occasion to consider, I am bound to acknowledge as a mark of your respect and civility. But really, Madam, I am so little deserving of it, that nothing could have justified it but your great address, through which you have ascribed to me what was more peculiarly applicable to yourself, and taken to yourself what seemed most properly to belong to me. For had not the *nice distinctions* been yours, and the *plain apprehensions* mine, I should not so easily have fallen into the mistake of supposing, that you were establishing the foundation of *practical morality*, or *virtue* in moral agents, when (as I now find by your *Reply*) you meant only the *foundation of virtue in its general abstract nature*; which, as you tell me, is quite another idea than the *practice of virtue*. And you admit, that the *practice of it* (as likewise some writers ideas of it) may arise from other grounds than that, on which the *abstract nature of virtue* is founded. So little conversant was I with the writers on these subjects, and so little aware of this distinction, that I troubled you with several impertinent queries (as they must now appear) on a mistaken supposition, that you had given me a definition of foundation, that might be applied to *virtue in practice*, as well as to an abstracted notion of it. For this unnecessary trouble I must therefore ask your pardon; which I am the better intitled to, because, to the best of my remembrance, you had not explained yourself to this purpose before. You had mentioned indeed (*Works of the Learned*, 1743, p. 139.) an *ambiguity in applying*

plying the term fit in itself indifferently to the foundation of virtue in the abstract, and to the practice of it by moral agents. But that your sole foundation was to be understood of virtue in the abstract only, is what, I think, you never declared either in that printed tract, or in the letter you first obliged me with, on this subject.

Neither have you thought fit to make use of this distinction in replying to my queries, till you come to your 7th paragraph, where you answer to what I had objected to your definition from the reason and free-will of moral agents.

Therefore till I come to that paragraph, I am a little at a loss how to carry on my discourse. For what I had advanced on mistake, should seem best intirely dropped. Yet as you have been pleased to reply to my questions, such as they are, without admonishing me of their impropriety; and to defend your sense of foundation, as the sense of most or all other writers, you have obliged me in decency to return you some answer or other.

2. "After setting down, say you, what I apprehend the writers on the subject of moral virtue understand by the word foundation, viz. the ground, on which virtue solely arises, you are pleased to ask, but are they agreed, whether this ground be any one simple principle, or compounded of more principles than one?" This was my query, and I thought at that time pertinent to the enquiry after sole ground. But now I ought to ask another question previous to it, which I did not know before that there was occasion for, viz. is virtue, in these words ("the ground on which virtue solely arises") to be understood in its general abstract nature only, or in its practice also? If in its general abstract nature only, as you afterwards consider it; then I have no dispute at all with you, either about more principles

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than one concurring to a foundation, or about *sole foundation*. For you have so explained *the virtue*, of which you assign the foundation (in the 7th paragraph) that no other foundation, than what you assign, can be thought of for it. For you exclude all *other grounds*, either of obligation or of virtuous practice, which some people have called foundations of moral virtue. So that neither *benevolent affections*, *moral sense*, nor even the faculties of human reason and free will come within your idea of the general abstracted nature of virtue: (for these are no more than "*grounds of obligation to 'virtue, or foundations of virtuous practice'*"); nor is the will of God further included in it, than as it is expressed, or rather implied in the creation, and is the very same with that reason and truth of things, from which your abstract idea of virtue arises. It follows, that you have left no assignable foundation of virtue, but what you give it; and which consequently must be acknowledged the *sole foundation* of it; and that so certainly, that I suppose no body will controvert the point with you; unless it be in this captious way, that your abstract nature of virtue *arises solely* from an art in thinking, and is no more than a conception of virtue formed by abstraction in a studious and distinguishing mind. I say no body will seriously dispute this point with you; for the general abstract nature of virtue being the idea of it, which is taken from its *subject-matter* (the fineness of things in their several relations, &c. in which all that is, or can be called virtue, must be exercised) *exclusive of all other considerations*, must have the *nature of things*, from whence the idea directly arises, and *that only*, for its foundation; and this is the proper *material cause* (as I before explained it) of *virtue* in all the views of it. But do you suppose, that other writers, whose sense of the term *foundation* we are en-

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quiring into, consider *virtue only in this abstracted light as you do?*

If they do not, but include *virtuous practice* under the term moral virtue; then I may without impropriety repeat my query about *one or more principles* concurring to a foundation. For *the practice of virtue*, as you tell me yourself, may arise from *other grounds than that, on which the abstract nature of virtue is founded*. The drift of the query was to discover, whether they, who admitted more principles than one into their *foundation*, understood by foundation what you do, *the ground on which virtue solely arises*. To this, which is the very purpose of my query, you reply very honestly, that *you do not doubt but that same skilful writer, whom I had mentioned as remarkable for founding virtue on three principles, would adhere to this definition, and apply it to his three principles, without excluding the term solely*.

Now till his mind be known, I cannot say positively what he would do. But till he shall think fit to declare himself upon it, I may have leave to presume, that he would not adhere to your definition with *solely* in it; because he can neither say (consistently with what he has said) of any one of his principles, that it is *the ground, on which virtue solely arises*, nor of all three principles in conjunction, that *virtue solely arises from all three in conjunction*; or that there can be no such thing as virtue, where all the three principles do not unite to the production of it. All that I apprehend he would say, would be this, that "*on these three principles the whole edifice of practical morality is built*." D. L. p. 37. And that there is no virtue among mankind, but is to be accounted for from some one, or more of these three principles. He says, indeed, they are never to be *untwisted* or separated. No more they are, when we speak in general of the practice of virtue in the world. But

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I cannot conceive he should mean by this expression, that there could be *no virtue, no instance of it*, where they did not all concur and conspire to the immediate production of it. He speaks likewise of *the great purposes, to which they will serve while in conjunction*, p. 38. Yet in another place they are considered "*as different excitements to the practice of virtue, that men of all ranks, constitutions, or educations might find their account in one or other of them; something, that would hit their palate, satisfy their reason, or subdue their will.*" p. 37.

He says, that one of these three principles, *viz.* the moral sense, is the *most extensive*, whereas another of them, the *essential difference, &c.* is only for *reflecting men*, and *will have its weight with the speculative, the abstracted and profound reasoners, &c.* And after all, neither of these are the true principle of morality, for that must be compliance with the will of God.

Would it now be consonant to this account of the grounds of virtue for the same writer to say, that *this is the ground, on which virtue solely arises?* Or that whatever is virtue, must have these three principles for its foundation?

But supposing he should adhere to your definition, doth he use *foundation*, when he applies it to each of these principles, in the *very same sense*, that you use it, when you apply it to yours?

He accounts the moral sense (how *extensive* a principle soever it be) to be no more than the first inlet into the adequate idea of morality; (that is, an *orderly introduction*, which you know is a *foundation* in one of the senses, in which he metaphorically uses the word) p. 36. He accounts the essential differences to be no more than *a medium*, to bring us to the only found foundation, p. 53. And he accounts the will of God to be the only true or found foundation, p. 41. and 53.

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Yet if on these three principles the whole edifice of *practical morality* is built, p. 37, then each of them is in some sense a *foundation* of that edifice; but not in the *very same sense*, or in the same respects; for then they must all be *equally true*, and *equally sound foundations*. This distinction, that he makes between them, shews a difference in his application of the figure: so doth his whole discourse. Moral sense is a foundation in one respect, as an *inlet, &c.* Essential difference, *&c.* in another as a *medium*. The will of God in another, more remarkable and more eminent respect; and yet not in your sense of *foundation*, as the ground, on which virtue *solely arises*.

It must be owned indeed, that Mr. W. is considering *practical morality*, when he talks of these three principles, that it is built upon; and therefore you might have answered me very justly, that I had cited him improperly to the point you was considering, *viz. virtue in its abstract nature*. But as you were pleased to hold to your sentiment, that all the writers in this controversy would subscribe to your definition, I have taken the liberty to give my reasons, why I presume Mr. W. would not.

3. I had observed further, that writers seemed to have different conceptions of foundation; because one considers it as the ground, from which virtue immediately arises, and another considers it as a more remote ground, on which it arises by the intervention of mediums. To which you reply "*that you do not well apprehend the use of mediums for the production of virtue, if a sufficient ground of it is allowed, into which it must be ultimately resolved.*" But supposing that mediums have no use in this enquiry; and supposing them likewise improperly called *foundations*; yet if any writers will allow them to be so, and call them so, my remark is true, that those writers cannot be thought to have

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the same conceptions of the term *foundation* that you have. For if you both had the same conceptions of it, what should hinder your agreement in applying it to *mediums*? “But you imagine these authors may agree in their idea of foundation, as a real ground, on which virtue arises, though one excludes, and another admits the intervention of *mediums*.”

But still he, who admits the intervention of *mediums*, looks upon those *mediums* as *foundations* too, which is the case I put.

He may indeed agree in the sense of the term, as applied to the remote and ultimate ground, but will have a something different meaning in it, when applied to the more immediate or proximate ground; as different as the meaning of *second causes*, when distinguished from the *primary*. *Essential differences*, &c. pass under the common term *foundation*, both with Mr. Warburton, yourself, and another good author, cited by Mr. Balguy in his last tract (*Wisdom the first spring, &c.*) But then, whereas you understand by it the true and ultimate foundation, Mr. W. means it only as a *medium* to bring us to the true foundation; and the other author refers it to an *ulterior foundation*, viz. happiness, which he calls the *remote foundation* of all moral fitness. (Balguy's *Traits*, p. 420.) I hope you will excuse my having used such expressions as *medium*, and *remote bottoms* in this argument, since these eminent writers introduced them into this controversy before me. And especially, as I can find no apter words for expressing the difference, which I conceive there is between the sense, in which they sometimes occasionally use *foundation*, and the sense, which you are pleased to fix upon it as invariable, and the very same, in all the writers on this subject.

4. I must own myself careless and inaccurate in my expression, when I spoke of virtue being considered as *disinterested* by those, who found it in *self-love*

love or *self-interest*; though, if the whole passage be attended to, I fancy no real inconsistency will be found in it.

All that I meant was this, that as men do commonly agree in their notions of virtuous practice, viz. what is, or is not so, (for I then thought you had included practice in your idea of virtue) though many of them disagree in their notions of the legitimate rule or true cause of this practice, so I imagined any of them might be willing to own *virtuous practice* to be, what it is, *virtue*; although it were evidently practised upon other principles, than what he himself esteemed to be the legitimate rule of virtue. And consequently, though he might call his own legitimate principle the true foundation of virtue, yet he could not mean it in the sense you have defined *foundation*, viz. as that without which there could be no such thing as virtue.

5. But you except against the instance I gave to illustrate this, viz. those, who place the foundation of virtue in *self-love* and *self-interest*. I am got, here, you say, “amongst authors, that you are a stranger to. For though you have met with several, who make *self-interest* the foundation of moral obligation, you know of none, who make it the foundation of virtue: that those writers commonly deduce from the will of God.” I know all the late ones do; and I suppose that all Theists, who lay the foundation of obligation in interest, will deduce that of virtue from God's will. But you are not in Mr. W.—'s sentiment, that Atheists are incapable of morality. They may practice virtue, and some of them on no other principle, than that of present convenience, private happiness, or self-interest. The old Epicureans could see into no other cause of virtue in the world, than what I have mentioned.

Ease of body, and pleasure of mind, was all they aimed at in it, or thought it good for. *Felicity*, or private happiness, was, they said, (*initium et finis*) the

the beginning and the end of it, &c. And whereas the *Stoics* esteemed and practised it for *its own sake*, these men esteemed and practised it only for *their own sake*. Now, may not these men be properly said to have placed the foundation of virtue in self-love and self-interest?

And yet they did not deny the virtuous practice of the *Stoics* to be virtue, though attended with pain in the performance.

They only looked upon it as virtue, without reason, or any sufficient inducement; virtue without any *proper foundation*. Therefore, with an eye to these men (and all such as are of their principles) I might say consistently enough, that *virtue, even according to them, might be considered as disinterested*, especially as I added immediately, *they will disown indeed any obligation, or any motive to practice it in this case*, viz. where private interest does no way appear to be concerned in it.

But you observe, that “*if they, who found virtue on self-interest, can yet allow, that it may be considered as disinterested, there must be such inconsistency in their schemes,*” &c.

But where is the inconsistency of holding (with the *Epicurean*) that private happiness is the only true and proper foundation of virtue, and yet allowing (with Archdeacon *Law's Prelim. Dissert.*) “that it is a matter of fact, that there are a great variety of instances of men’s practising virtue, without knowing, that it tends to their own private happiness; nay, even when it appears destructive of it.” If foundation, indeed, were constantly taken in your sense of it, then it would be inconsistent in any one, who made private happiness *that foundation*, to allow any thing to be virtue, which was not directly built upon private happiness.

But if you will please to recollect, the business we were upon in this part of the enquiry, was to try your definition of foundation by the idea, that others

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seem to have of that term, and not to expound their notions of it by your definition. And this was all I intended in mentioning these self-interested moralists, or their principles.

6. I did you wrong in setting down as your words, that the *foundation of moral virtue, upon further reflection, will be found to lie either in self-love, &c.* For your words were not *moral virtue*, but *moral obligation*, as I observed upon looking again into your paper. It was plainly my mistake, as you apprehended: and *one*, no doubt, among many I may have been guilty of. But I shall acknowledge them all, as soon as I shall discover them.

7. Next comes that passage in your letter, that has so much altered the state of the question, that I apprehended we were upon. I, still presuming that the *practice of virtue* was not out of the question, and observing, that you had explained foundation by *that, without which there could be no such thing as virtue*, and that you had added further, *that such a foundation can be no other than the necessary relations, &c. of things*; took occasion from hence to mention *the reason and free-will of agents*, as being alike necessary to virtue with your essential differences, &c. And yet I supposed, you would scarce call them for this reason foundations, at least not the sole foundation; which remark has proved of much greater consequence than I expected, by being the occasion of your explaining yourself to me by this distinction, that in your definition of foundation, you do not consider *virtue in practice*, but *in its abstract nature*.

I should perhaps have been too positive, that the generality of writers in this subject did always in their enquiries after the foundation of virtue, mean the practice of virtue in the world, had not my oversight, with regard to yourself, taught me to be cautious how I venture to affirm this. I shall not therefore dispute with you, what other writers mean

mean in this article, because, as you expressly exclude practice from that idea of virtue, to which you have adapted your definition of foundation, I am bound to consider it as excluded *by you*; and have, and do allow, your sole foundation, and your definition of it upon that footing, as you would observe from what I said in the beginning of this letter, though I have endeavoured in following the course of your reply, where you made no use of this distinction, to vindicate what I had advanced upon a mistake, as right upon the supposition from whence I argued.

8. There was no great matter indeed in my next remark about space. I could not imagine any more than you do, that *space had any thing at all to do with the production of matter*: Yet it is nevertheless true, that as extension is of the essence of matter, *there could be no such thing as matter without space*; which was all I said; and I think you allow the same, when you say, that *the existence of matter supposed, the existence of space must be likewise admitted*. But, as neither you, nor any body else, would for this reason, call space a foundation of matter, I concluded (and it was all I concluded) that your explanation of a foundation, *by that without which there could be no such thing as virtue*, was not full enough and sufficient to give the proper idea of that term, because this amounts to no more than a *requisite*. You do indeed, in your answer now before me, fully supply this deficiency, by dropping the former expression, against which I had excepted, and substituting another more defensible in the room of it, *viz. that virtue intirely derives its being from the essential differences, &c.* Had you given this at first, as your second explanation of the term foundation, instead of what you offered as above, you had prevented many of my objections, which, you cannot but observe, were levelled purely at

at your words, *without which there can be no such thing*.

9. Again, when you come to the florists in the next paragraph, you say, if they are agreed, that the thing they seek for is *the ground*, on which the flower or the music *solely arises*; or that to which either owes its being, &c. here you change your terms again. You should have said, agreeably to your definition, (to which you may observe I strictly kept) or, *that without which, there could be no such flower or music*. Now these differ from each other, just as widely as a *cause* does from a condition or a *requisite*. I would only observe, that this change of your expressions gives you an advantage in your reply, which you was not strictly intitled to, considering, that our dispute here, was merely about the propriety of a definition, which you yourself had given; and which you think more proper to amend than to defend. All the use I would make of this observation is, that it is not quite so easy, as you seemed to imagine, to give the true idea of *foundation* in the metaphorical use of it in these subjects.

But, notwithstanding this amendment, I do not see, that you have set aside, or even impaired, the relation and similitude, that my illustrations, taken from supposed disputes about the foundation of a flower, or of music, bear to the disputes about the foundation of moral virtue. In the first place, you are pleased to say of my florists, *that if they are agreed, that the thing they seek for, is the ground, on which the flower or the music solely arises*; or (to take your definition, as it stands amended) *that to which either owes its being; then it should seem plain, that they are all agreed in the sense of the word foundation*. To be sure, if they are already agreed to understand the word as you do, they will have no disputes about the sense of it, but only differ, if they differ at all, about the application of it.

But is not this something like begging of the question, that is at present between us? I am endeavouring to shew you, from their way of applying the word foundation, that they are not agreed rightly in the sense of it; because the word in your sense is not applicable to the foundations they fix upon; though yet each of their foundations are properly such in another sense, though not in your sense. For each of my disputants finds *a ground, on which the flower or the music arises*; which, I think, is the most obvious and common notion of a foundation. But none of them finds a foundation, of which it may be said, that it is *the ground, on which the flower or music solely arises, or that to which either owes its being*; or, in your other phrase, from which it entirely derives its being.

Which now is most likely, that they should all agree in your sense of the word, and all agree to misapply the word; or, that they should all use the word in an obvious figurative sense, though in a sense something different from yours?

You proceed: *if their error lies in each man's making his beloved principle the sole foundation of the flower or music; when various principles contribute to their respective beings* (let us allow their error to lie here, viz. in applying *sole* to a foundation or principle, where it is not applicable) *then this controversy is not to be decided by the definition of a foundation*.

I cannot say the controversy *will be decided* by such definition; but I conceive, it will not be decided without it; because the error just now supposed will not be seen into without it. The most likely way to shew these disputants their mistake, is to enquire of them, what it is they mean by foundation, when they use it in this dispute about flowers and music, viz. whether they understand by it *a-ground on which the flower or music arises*; which is the more obvious and general explanation of it,

or

or *the ground on which they solely arise, and from which they entirely derive their being*. What each of them calls a *foundation*, will answer to one of these explanations, but not to the other. If, they say, they take foundation in the latter sense (which you suppose the sense of most writers) let but each disputant join the definition of foundation, instead of the term to his beloved principle, and he will soon discover his mistake, at least his error will be detected, whether he cares to own it or not. One florist affirms, that the stalk is the proper foundation of the flower (in a tulip suppose,) let him only give the sense instead of the word thus, the stalk of the tulip is *the ground on which the flower solely arises, and to which it entirely owes its being*; and then let him say whether he will abide by this assertion.

But on the other hand, if the said disputants do really mean no more by foundation (and by their application of it they seem to intend no more) than a *ground on which the flower or music arises*; then what each disputant says is true (as will be found by inserting the definition in like manner in the proposition) and the controversy among them will be so far cleared up, and understood by them all.

You observe justly, and I grant it, that *the general idea of foundation will agree indifferently to one or more principles*. And I beg your leave further to observe, that it will agree to any common ground of those principles themselves, as an ulterior principle still, till it be carried up to the first cause of all things, or ultimate foundation of all beings; of which observation I would make this use, that when we consider two or more principles, on which any thing arises, or stands, without taking in the common ground or support of those principles, we may more properly call them foundations in the plural, than foundation. But when we apply *sole* to a complex foundation of two or more principles,

then

then we ought to take in the common ground of those principles; and this makes it, in many cases, difficult to know where to stop, for the idea of foundation is ever enlarging itself to some ulterior principle still, till we come to a proper ultimate.

You conceive lastly of the aforesaid florists and musicians, that, *till they can convince each other, that some one, or more, or all the principles together, go to the production of the flower or the music, they may indeed dispute to the world's end, notwithstanding the exactest agreement in their idea of foundation.* But this is still pre-supposing their exact agreement in the term, without offering at a solution of their disagreement in the application of it to different things. Whereas, I would pre-suppose nothing either way; but I only collect, I think rationally, from the manifestly different applications they make of the term, that they do not rightly agree in the meaning of it. Because, if they all understood it (as you do for instance) it must end their controversy, since each man's error would then be discovered to be an undue application of *sole ground* to a principle, that apparently is not so. Let us suppose again, that they agree exactly in the other more general idea of *a ground on which any thing arises*: this should, in all reason, end their dispute too; for foundation in this sense being applicable to each of their beloved principles, they must all go to the production of the flower or music. And nothing would be left to them to dispute upon, unless it were, which of their principles had the greatest share in the production; which is another question from that we are now upon.

You conclude this paragraph with obliging me with an illustration on your part, from a company of architects, who might dispute for ever, *whether stone or brick, or wood, or altogether, were the properest foundation for an house, and yet have all the same idea of foundation.* This I must readily grant; and

and also, that the comparison is exceedingly well adapted to your sentiment, as expressed through-out this paragraph. But when you apprehend *this to be pretty nearly a parallel case with that of the contenders about the foundation of moral virtue*, it looks as if you thought it as well adapted to their case, as it is to your own sentiment. But as to the parallel, I have two exceptions. First, that you here pre-suppose these architects agreed in the precise meaning of foundation; which, you know, I apprehend the moralists are not. Secondly, you are here speaking of foundation in its primary and literal sense, which must be one and the same in all architects minds, and indeed in all people's minds whatsoever. Whereas, to make the case parallel, you should have instanced, (as I did in the case of florists and musicians) in some *figurative application* of the term, which is the way, in which the contenders about the foundation of moral virtue always use it. Ask your architects, for instance, after the foundation of their own art or science, and they probably may differ as much in their sentiments about it, as the moralists do, when it is applied to virtue: not for want of knowing of all, that is requisite to be known by masters of the science, all that ordinarily goes to the perfection of it as an *art*; but for want of agreeing in some certain sense of that general and vague term foundation, in the metaphorical use of it. If one of them should assign the *elements* of geometry, as the first principles of architecture; another invention, the common parent of arts and sciences; another utility or necessity, the mother of invention; another looking back for its original, should fix upon the tower of *Babel*, or *Noah's ark*, or *Setib's pillars*, as the first instances of building in the world, we could not wonder, because it was not previously agreed and settled among them, what it was, that foundation, when *figuratively* applied to architecture, meant. Whereas, if they can be supposed to

agree exactly in their idea of it, when it is thus metaphorically used, as they do in the idea of a foundation, on which an house is erected, there can be no reason to believe, but that they would all likewise agree in their answer to the question.

10. You are pleased to own with me *a great deal ambiguity in the use of the term virtue*. But how comes this ambiguity to be so readily acknowledged, while none is supposed in the other term foundation? I presume this is the reason, *viz.* because the several writers having commonly defined what they meant by virtue, it hath evidently appeared from thence, that they do not agree exactly in the same meaning of the word. Perhaps therefore, when they shall in like manner define each of them his meaning of the other word foundation, the like ambiguity may be found and acknowledged in that term too; though, for the present, as they have not defined, it you may presume (nor can I so easily obviate such presumption) on the exactest agreement of their ideas of it.

Admitting this presumption, you have given as rational and as probable an account (in this paragraph) of their different ways of defining virtue, as can possibly be thought of. Yet if this *postulatum*, that *they are all agreed in the same precise meaning of foundation*, be not allowed you, then this account of yours, ingenious as it is, will seem to stand upon a very precarious foundation itself.

You are persuaded, that most people are agreed in their general notion of the nature of virtue. I am persuaded so too, if you mean by this *no more, than* that most people seem to make the same distinction between actions, that are virtuous, and those that are otherwise. But if you mean by nature of virtue, that *abstract idea of its nature*, which is quite another idea than the practice of virtue, and excludes reason and free will from having any share in its production; then I imagine there are but few people,

viz. the refined reasoners only, that have the idea; and even *they* have it more or less perfect, according to their capacities of distinguishing, and of abstracting.

The writers however upon virtue, (for to those only your next observation relates) may be allowed to be all agreed in the abstract idea of its nature. But when they *come*, as you observe, to contend about the foundation of it, *they are apt to substitute in place of the nature of virtue, either our idea of it, or the practice of it by moral agents*. Such change of the idea will, I confess, occasion their contention about the *foundation*, be they never so well agreed in the meaning of that term. But still we want something to account for this change of ideas, especially in persons, whose success in their reasoning upon virtue depends so much on their retaining the same idea of it in their minds. Is there no room, to suspect, that the want of an exact agreement in the notion of a foundation (though, as they have not defined it, they are not aware of it) may be the true reason of their disagreeing about what virtue itself is? For, by your own account, till *these writers began to contend about the foundation, they were mostly agreed in their notion of the nature of virtue*. And had they been mostly agreed in their notion of *foundation* too, it is very unaccountable, how the consideration of it, or enquiry after it, should have administered such a variety of speculations about virtue itself.

And this (substitution of our idea or virtue, or the practice of it, in the place of the nature of it,) may perhaps, you say, have been some occasion (I make no doubt a great occasion) of their assigning different foundations to virtue. So that this attempt to discover, and fix the true foundation, has proved doubly unfortunate: First, in setting them at variance about virtue itself, in the nature of which they were mostly agreed before; and next, in setting

ing them at variance about the ground, on which it arises, or stands; though, according to you, *they are all agreed in what they mean by a foundation*. I dare not say you are mistaken in this: it becomes me not to say so. But you will give me leave in the first place to wish they had not meddled with this unlucky term foundation, which has been of bad consequence to them, by your own account; and secondly, to suggest to you, with all deference, my account of this consequence as the more probable, *viz.* that a real, though unperceived disagreement in their ideas of foundation, when figuratively applied to virtue, has had its full share in introducing the variety of sentiments among them, especially as to the assignment of proper grounds for *foundations*.

For, you say, in your very next words, *our idea of virtue, or our practice of it, may arise from other grounds, than that on which the abstract nature of virtue is founded*. Here you admit of several real and true foundations of *virtue*, as that term stands *undefined*. We are indeed both of us agreed, that these foundations are applied to virtue; only in some particular light or view, in which it is considered; and that they are real and true foundations of it in that particular light only, and in no other. But then here we differ: you apprehend the notion, as well as name of foundation is the same in all these several applications of it to virtue in different lights and views; whereas, I apprehend, that though the same term indeed is indifferently used, yet the notion of it varies in all or most of these several applications of it. And therefore, that it ought to be as carefully defined in each of these applications of it, that we may know in what sense it is taken, as the virtue, to which it is applied, ought to be defined, that we may know in what particular light it is viewed. For as the general term virtue, till it be made more

more particular or special, will stand for distinct and different ideas of virtue; so the general term foundation, till it be more particular and special, will stand for distinct and different ideas of foundation. Some of which shall be justly applicable to virtue in some lights and views of it, but not so in other lights or views of it. None of the writers, except yourself, have hitherto, so far as I know, offered their definitions of foundation; but so far as may be collected from some occasional explanations, that they have given of their meaning, as Mr. Warburton and Mr. Hutcheson have done, there are at least two or three different senses of foundation in this controversy. And I desire no better proof of writers not exactly agreeing with each other in the use of that term, than their disagreeing in their accounts of it, so far as they have thought fit to explain themselves. In some lights, in which virtue is considered, the moral sense is said to be the foundation. But how? As the discernment of good and evil with approbation and dislike seems *the first and most universal spring of virtuous action, or the earliest and most immediate motive to them, or as the first inlet into the adequate ideas of morality*. You cannot justly say these things of any other principle, that is called a foundation of virtue; neither can you deny this to be a foundation in the common general acceptance of the word, seeing that it is *a ground, on which virtue arises*. But this no way excludes a more remote ground, from which virtue arises also, but not in the same sense; for if you ask in what the moral sense is founded, whether the answer be from Mr. Warburton, *viz. the real essential differences of human actions established by nature*; or from others, *the will of God, who gave mankind this faculty or discernment, &c.* it is a foundation, as it is *a ground, from which virtue arises*, and yet it is neither a *spring*, nor a *motive*, nor an *inlet* into the moral

moral sense, but must be expounded by a *necessary antecedent* in the first answer, and by a *cause freely producing* in the other answer. Now if these explanations of the same term in different applications of it are not to the same sense, although the term undefined, or defined loosely and generally, will indifferently suit with them all; then we must not take for granted, that writers, when they do not define the term, have always the same invariable meaning in it.

You observe, that the *different senses of the term virtue may occasion likewise various definitions of it; every one defining it according to the light he has viewed it in.* Now thus far there is no harm. Definitions, that are far from being perfect, may yet be true, as far as they go; in which case they may all stand. And consequently, disputes arising from such definitions, or rather the partial and private explanations of the several writers, may be accommodated (if they will but retain their candors and attention) because truth is always consistent with itself. But you further observe, and I think justly too, that they are apt, every one, to define virtue, not only according to the light he has viewed it in, but also according to the *foundation he has given it in that view.* From whence it appears, that some of their definitions of virtue are *rather determinations of the foundation of it, than explications of its nature.* I do not say, but you may have reason enough for this remark: all I would infer from it is this; that if they make the idea of virtue itself to depend any way on the ground, which they assign for its foundation, (and in many cases the idea will unavoidably follow the ground) the greater reason have we still to complain of their not defining foundation, and precisely fixing their meaning in it. Because if they apply it improperly, (as by making that a *principle of virtue*, which is more properly a consequence

quence of it) the idea of virtue itself may be impaired or suffer thereby. Nor will it be easy, while all are supposed to have just and true notions of *foundation*, and to agree perfectly in them, to shew how, or wherein the term is unduly applied. But surely the true way to bring this controversy to some good issue, is to postpone the dispute about *foundation* of virtue, till it be first agreed, what that virtue is, the foundation of which is sought after. And then when foundations come to be enquired into, to admit of as many foundations, as can justly and properly be called so, though in different senses of the word, as being applied to virtue in all the different lights and views, in which it may justly and properly be considered, and to give each of them its due weight and no more. Virtue in every true light will be amiable, and will have a proper ground in that view, sufficient to support it under that particular consideration. But in some lights it may appear far more excellent than in others; and the grounds, on which it will be discovered to stand in those views, will be in proportion more noble, as well as more steadfast and unmoveable.

Here you take an opportunity of remarking the peculiar propriety of *that definition, which considers virtue as the conformity of a reasonable creature to the nature and reasons of things, because this directly acquaints us with the nature of virtue.* But here by the nature of virtue, you must be understood to mean no more, than *its nature according to their idea of it, who give this definition.* For certainly, that other definition, which you quote from me, and which considers virtue as a *conformity of a reasonable creature to the will of the creator*, doth as directly acquaint us with the nature of virtue, according to *their idea of its nature, who give this definition.* And the same may be said of the third definition I mentioned, which is the old one, most

common among the ancients, which considers virtue to be *acting agreeably to right reason*, viz. such as man is endowed with, and is capable of using. For this does also as directly acquaint us with the *nature of virtue, according to their idea of its nature, who gave this definition.*

Still please to remember, that I am not endeavouring here to establish one definition more than another, but only shewing, that I fear your remark will not answer the purpose you here intend to serve by it. The truth and propriety of either definition, which you have been pleased to compare with each other on this occasion, entirely depends upon what the *true nature of virtue* is. If it arises solely from the nature and reason of things, then the definition you espouse is the only true one, and the only one, that can with truth be said to acquaint us directly with the nature of virtue. *But if it arises solely from the will of the creator*, the very same thing may be said of that too, with respect to determining virtue's nature. For, according to this definition, the very *essence of virtue is the will of the creator*, and not the fitness of things considered in itself. For nothing, according to this, is good or evil in its own nature, till made so by his appointment.

When therefore you object against this last definition, *that it gives us no manner of light into the nature of virtue, till we are informed by other means what the will of the creator is*, and therefore is no proper definition of it, will not they, who adhere to this definition, reply, that till such information of the creator's will is obtained, by some means or other, virtue hath no nature, properly speaking; every thing is indifferent in itself? And will not Mr. W—— himself reply, that till the law of a superior appear, there is no obligation arising, nor any thing that can constitute morality in actions? The first of these may say of the definition you

you recommend, *that it gives no light into the nature of virtue, till we are informed*, that the will of the creator is consonant to the nature and reasons of things. And Mr. W—— himself may say, *that it gives no light into the morality properly* (so called) of actions, till *we are informed*, that virtue is the injunction of a superior will; which will could not be found, till the being and attributes of God were discovered.

I do not apprehend, that any excuse need be made for either definition, *because they both determine likewise the foundation of virtue, which in this controversy is a kind of begging the question.* For definitions of things ought to take in whatsoever necessarily enters into a just idea of their essence; and consequently must determine their foundation in many cases unavoidably. But when you plead further in excuse for the definition you approve, that *it is scarce possible to give a just and proper definition of virtue, without expressing its relation to the nature and essential differences of things*; the advocates for the propriety of the other definition will give *that*, as an instance of one, wherein the nature and essential differences of things are not expressed. And if you should reply, that although they are not expressed, they are nevertheless implied; they will answer, that the creator's will is just as much implied in that definition, which expresses only the nature and reasons of things; and further, that *it is scarce possible to give a just and proper definition of virtue, without expressing its relation to the creator's will.* And they will also think, that they have as good a right as you have to say further in your words, *that this may serve as a proof, that virtue owes its origin solely to the creator's will, since the consideration of that enters necessarily into the just idea of its essence*; and they will also beg leave to say further, *that even in the different views, according to which the several writers have*

have defined virtue, the will of God, might be a common foundation to support them all. All may easily be resolved into that, and securely rest upon it.

But though you greatly prefer one of these definitions before the other, yet I do not find, that you have given it, or allowed it as *your own*, as the definition, that *you* take to be the most just and proper. My only reason for making a doubt, whether you will warrant it or not, is, because it will not well suit with that *abstract idea of the nature of virtue*, which you speak of in your 7th paragraph as a quite different idea from that of *the practice of virtue*; and doth not include the reason and free-will of moral agents. But now this definition, *viz. a conformity of a reasonable creature to the nature and reason of things*, doth include the reason and free-will of moral agents. For *the reason of the creature* is as absolutely necessary to the idea as the *reason of things*; and *conformity* relates as closely and indispensably to that, which *conforms to*, as to that, which *is conformed to*. Perhaps this may be thought a proper definition of moral agency, or the practice of virtue; for you own, that *free-will and reason are absolutely necessary to moral agency*. And in another place you say, *where there is no choice or free-agency, no morality can arise. But where these are, morality doth arise from the effects of an action made the object of choice.* (*Works of the Learned*, 1743, p. 154.) From comparing all these passages together it seems to me, that you will readily admit the definition above mentioned, as a just and proper one of moral agency; but cannot admit it as a just definition of *virtue in its abstract nature*, stripped of every thing but its necessary relation to the nature of things, which how you will express in a definition I know not.

Conti-

Continuation of the answer to Mrs. Cockburn's Letter, viz. on obligation, &c.

11. **Y**OU will be pleased to remember what it was, that gave occasion to the favour you did me in communicating your thoughts on obligation: it was this query, which I had put, *viz. whether moral virtue and moral obligation must needs have the same foundation, and in the same sense?*

It appeared to me from your first reflection on this query in your former paper, to which I refer you, that you allowed to moral obligation (what you had denied to moral virtue) more foundations than one; and also that you spake of obligation as a term, that had no ambiguity in it.

Therefore in hopes I might tempt you to clear up the notion of obligation, and at the same time, that I might shew you I had some reason for my query, I proposed to you three notions of obligation, arising, as I conceived, from three different grounds, or built on three different foundations.

I had called these *three sorts of obligations*, as well as *three sorts of foundations*. To which your answer in the 11th paragraph of your last letter is, that you have constantly kept to one precise meaning of obligation, and you apprehend *there can be but one sort of it*, though *there were fifty different foundations of it*: and that what I call three sorts of obligation, seem to you *three sorts of foundations, upon which obligation, in one and the same sense, may, and does arise.*

And as you are so good as to define likewise this one sense of obligation, to which you constantly adhere, you have done all, that can be desired of you, and have enabled me to see more clearly, wherein the difference lies between your sentiments and mine on this branch of the subject.

You

You have considered obligation *only*, as it is in the mind of the moral agent, who is under it: as appears from your definition of it, *viz. such a perception of an inducement to act, or to forbear acting, as forces an agent to stand self-condemned, if he does not conform to it.* Whereas I considered it, as others have done before me, more at large, as being obligation in an external as well as internal sense. When I said, for instance, that it was (in one sense of it) *the unalienable right, that truth has to be preferred before falsehood, good before bad, by all reasonable creatures that can distinguish between them*, I meant by this, that every creature, who is capable of making these distinctions, is *under obligation*, to prefer the one before the other, whether he hath that *perception*, which you define obligation by, or not. For his neglecting to make use of his faculties, or his undue use of them, will not release him from the obligation he lies under from the nature and truth of things. No matter how they are forgotten, denied, mistaken by careless, sensual, positive persons: they nevertheless stand in their full force of *obligation*, as that signifies their universal and unalienable right to be a rule of action to moral agents.

Now your definition does not take in obligation in this light, at least only partially, and so far as it is actually perceived by particular agents; and it takes in another kind of obligation, (*viz. that of a mistaken judgment*) which shall bind a particular agent, to act even contrary to obligation in the sense just now mentioned. I am not objecting to your definition on this account. So far from it, that I think it the fullest, the clearest, the most unexceptionable definition of *a sense* of obligation, that I have ever met with. It best describes an agent's state of mind under this *sense*, determines no particular foundation, yet suits with all, even mistaken and fancied foundations, from which

which nevertheless real obligations do sometimes arise; and it has an immediate and close connexion with practice; for our judgment or persuasion of the goodness or evil of actions, however gained, must be our present guide in all our conduct.

Now let it be observed here, before we go any further, 1st, that in your enquiry after the foundation of virtue, you considered virtue, not as it was practised by particular agents, but in its general abstract nature; in which view you give it *one only foundation*. When you come now to enquire into the foundations of obligation, you do not consider it as a general abstracted notion (as others have done, whose definitions you give me) but as a practical principle in each particular moral agent, which makes him accountable for his conduct, and which forces him to condemn himself for his misconduct. And to obligation in this sense you allow several foundations. So far then granted to the purpose of my query, first proposed to you; that moral virtue and moral obligation *may not* have the *same foundation*, and in the *same sense*.

2dly, Your definition of obligation is different from all others, that I have heard of. It is not indeed the worse for that, nor do I esteem it the less. But however, it is a further proof to me, that *the precise meaning of it is as little settled in this part of the enquiry, as that of the term foundation and virtue were in the last*. This I had ventured to say in my *Reply* to you. And your *Answer* to it is, that "you acknowledge the precise meaning of it has not been scientifically settled, and that some have obscured, and others begged the question by defining it; but you do not find any misunderstandings have happened in the controversy from these defects," &c. It is a marvel to me, that misunderstandings should not have happened in the controversy, where the principal

cial term was differently understood by different controvertists, as appears by their different definitions of it, now that they have at length thought fit to explain themselves. You are pleased to mention three of these definitions besides your own. So that you produce two on Dr. Clarke's side of the question, and two on the side of his adversaries in the question. Those on the same side differ somewhat from each other, but more considerably from those of the opposite side. And what you observe of one of these definitions on one side of the question, *that it is begging the question in favour of the author's beloved principle*, which he makes the foundation of virtue and obligation, I observe also of another definition, *viz. Mr. Balguy's* on the other side of the question, who defines in favour of his beloved principle. Is not this a strong presumption of the truth of what I told you before, though you are not willing to allow it, *that it is chiefly owing to the different notions of obligation, that we have different foundations assigned to it?*

3dly, One thing more I would observe to you here, that your most accurate and judicious writer on Dr. Clarke's side agrees with me in distinguishing obligation into external and internal. By the *internal* he means, I think, much the same, that you do, *i. e.* the obligation of conscience. But the *external, which arises from just authority*, he says, *he has no occasion to speak of* on the subject of morality. But his discarding one sense of obligation in this manner is no answer to those, who plead *a just authority* to be at any time a sufficient obligation to action; especially those, who acknowledge no obligation without an obliger, *i. e.* a superior person having right of command. You observe, that "people in common discourse understand one another well enough, when they say they are under an obligation to do such or such a thing,"

"though

"though perhaps they could not define the word." Very true, they understand, that the persons, who say so, are thoroughly convinced by some strong and plain reason for acting, and purpose within themselves for such plain reason to do so and so. But this is all they understand, or perhaps enquire after; and is all that is necessary to know, in order to discover what such persons design to do. But how doth it follow, that because people commonly agree in the general meaning of this expression, *being under obligation*, which is of the greatest latitude, and made use of in all sorts of subjects, and on all occasions; therefore, writers on morality are agreed sufficiently in a meaning of the term, when used only in a moral sense? They may perhaps agree, that it is the moral reason of action. But when they come to distinguish *the moral reason* of action from all other reasons of it, then they are divided in their sentiments, or at least in their way of expressing themselves.

But you "have constantly kept to the same precise meaning of the term;" and so you may, as you consider it as in the mind of the agent only, *viz.* as a perception of an inducement, &c. which will always appear to be one and the same idea, though there be fifty different inducements, that may be thus perceived, and thereby become obligation in one and the same sense, all of them forcing the agent in the same manner, though not perhaps in the same degree, to stand self-condemned, if he do not comply with them. But though all of them have the nature of obligation thus considered, as perceptions of the agent, yet all of them have not an obligatory power inherent in them, or inseparable from them. For several things may be perceived to be inducements, that *shall force the agent*, &c. and be consequently obligations to the person so perceiving them, which, in reality, are things not obligatory, but are only, through error in judgment, thought

to

to be so: while other things, that really have an obligatory power inseparable from them, through inattentiveness, or other criminal defect, may not come under his perception. Here then is room for a distinction of obligations under your own definition of the term: One sort is real, the other is only imaginary. One is so in its own nature; the other is so only in *perception*, or in the *sense* of the agent.

You will say, that in treating on the subject of obligation, you have no concern with distempered minds or erroneous consciences, but with persons capable of just and sound reasoning; that you are speaking of such obligations, as are *real*, and not such as are *only apparent*. Be it so: yet even among these, I apprehend, there are such evident distinctions, as denote a difference in kind. *ex. gr.* Is it not one thing to be obliged by the natural equity of things, without looking for any further authority; and another thing to be obliged by the will of a superior, having right to command obedience, without looking for any further reason; and another still to be obliged by a prospect of the consequences, that will follow, upon acting or not acting, in such or such a manner?

I know you look upon the two last of these, only as *additional obligations*, or re-enforcements of the first original obligation: And that nothing in strictness can oblige, but the internal reasons of things duly perceived by the moral agent. And what I have "called three sorts of obligation, seem "to you three sorts of foundations, upon which, "obligation in one, and the same sense, may, and "does arise: for there can be but one sort of obligation you say, though there were fifty different "foundations of it."

Madam, if I understand you right, you have but one invariable idea of *foundation*; and that so certain and adequate, so little liable to be misconceived, that you apprehend all writers agree in that

one

one sense of the term. For the same reasons therefore, that you can allow, and speak of three sorts of *foundations*, you may admit of three sorts of obligations, without hurting your definition, which answers equally to them all, and indeed brings them all into the agent's mind, under one denomination. Your way of considering obligation to arise, in one and the same sense, from different and distinct grounds, doth not destroy my distinction of three sorts of obligation, any more than your using the term foundation in one and the same sense, when applied to these different grounds, hinders you from saying, as you do very properly, that they are three sorts of foundations. Whereby you cannot mean consistently with yourself, that these three several grounds are to be taken in three different senses of foundation (for you allow of no such different senses) but only, that these three several grounds, though diverse things in themselves, and of different signification, are nevertheless foundations of obligation, in one and the same sense and signification of the term foundation.

Give me leave likewise, to support my *expression* as well as *distinction*, by the authority of others. In *Chambers's Dictionary* you will meet with this *expression*: "There are three kinds of obligation, natural, civil, and mixed."

"Natural obligations are founded on the mere "bonds of natural equity, without any civil necessity, and without producing any action of constraint."

It was this kind of obligation in our subject, that I intended to express by the unalienable rights, that truth has to be preferred before falsehood, good before bad, by all rational creatures, that can distinguish them; and its foundation, as I said, will be in the essential differences of things, and fitnesses of action flowing from them.

VOL. II.

F f

"Civil

“Civil obligation is that, which is supported by civil authority alone; which induces a constraint, without any principle or foundation in natural equity.”

It was this kind of obligation, so far as it could be considered in morals, that I intended, when I spoke of obligation, as being taken by some in a *legal sense*, as implying an obligor or superior having authority to command obedience. And in this view I said, that obligation in morals must certainly be founded in the will of God.

Not that I understand, as perhaps some do, that his will obliges, without any principle or foundation in natural equity; but that the will of such a being as God is, must, whenever it is made known to his creatures, oblige, without their having any other perception of the equity of it, than what they infer from his nature.

But indeed, the obligation, that is founded in God's will, doth answer better to *Chambers's* third division, *viz.* “mixed obligation is both natural and civil, being founded on natural equity, and further confirmed and enforced by civil authority.” For the obligation arising from God's will is ever presumed to be founded equally in natural equity or the reason of things.

And lastly, by obligation in the grammatical sense, as implying constraint upon reluctance, I intended to express that kind of obligation in morals, which is enforced by sanctions of rewards and punishments. Which kind is proper for those, who neither will be restrained by reason, nor by the will of God, on the legitimate motives of compliance with it, and who therefore must be *constrained* (as far as free will is capable of *constraint*) by some powerful inticements of reward, or dread of threatened punishments.

Upon this view of the matter, I shall leave you to judge and determine, whether these be properly

three sorts (as I had called them) of obligation, or whether they be only one sort; or, obligation in one and the same sense of the word. But at the same time, I must approve your definition of obligation as the best (I repeat it) that I have met with for expressing the state of mind, that a moral agent is under from obligation of any sort, or in any sense.”

Before we leave this point of obligation, I should take notice of what you say towards the end of your letter upon it, *viz.* “the right, say you, that truth has to be preferred before falsehood, is, according to your apprehensions, not obligation, but a ground, from whence obligation arises.”

Now I own *this right*, &c. is not obligation in your only way of considering that term, because you mean no more by it, than the sense, that an agent has of obligation. You speak of it as a *personal* quality, or perception; and not as it is in things themselves, the object of such perception.

And here again, our difference is only in *words* or *expressions*, which, when explained, shew we are both in a sentiment as to the *thing*. When people speak of the obligation of the law of nature, or of civil laws, they do not speak improperly, though they intend no more by this obligation, than the authority and influence of those laws, which ought to bind moral agents and subjects universally, whether they do acknowledge them or not; because men, by the constitution of their nature, and subjects by their condition and situation in society, are capable of acknowledging them, and obeying them. But if you chuse, instead of ascribing obligation to these laws, or to the will of God itself, to say, that they only have an obligatory power, and are foundations of obligation in moral agents; I shall not oppose you in such way of speaking: only I think, the other is as justifiable, and more, according to common usage; and stands equally well with your

own definition. For, according to that, the obligation lies in the *inducement to act, or to forbear acting*; the perception of which *inducement* is the agent's *sense* of the obligation. Before perception, it was obligation in general to all creatures capable of it. But the perception makes it special. It is then obligation to the particular agent, that perceives it. The standing self-condemned is only a consequence upon the sense of obligation. But yet it is a consequence, that distinguishes it from all other perceptions of inducements, that do not infer obligation, and therefore was very properly put in to make out your definition, and render it complete.

12. To your next paragraph, in which you enter upon the last question, *viz.* "whether the reason, "nature, and fitness of things, considered as antecedent to the divine will, do appear under that consideration to be obligatory to morality, &c. I need make no other answer than this, that it plainly appears, and is confessed by us both, that we mistook each other's meaning on that article. I had mistaken your meaning of antecedency to the divine will, when I put the query. And consequently, it was easy for you to mistake my intent in putting it. However, I am not sorry for the mistake I made, because it hath put you, in explaining yourself, to set me right, upon obliging me with a clear account of what Dr. Clarke and his followers maintain, concerning the said antecedency, and the fallacy, whereby their adversaries maintain a contrary doctrine. I have already made my acknowledgments to you for this favour, in the beginning of this letter. I am likewise to thank you for shewing me, before you finish this article, that I have also wrongfully supposed you had made a distinction where you had made none. For as much as you use *obligatory*, and *foundation of obligation*, as equivalent expressions, and that wherever you affirm any principle to be a *foundation of obligation*, you beg to be understood, that

that it is *obligatory to morality*, I shall take care to remember this for the future.

13. I had allowed *the eternal ratios in some sense a foundation*; and, in what sense I meant it, I afterwards explained: But I said, if you either made them the *primary* or the *ultimate* foundation of it (for both those words you had used) I must beg leave to doubt of it.

Upon this you tell me, that *if they are neither the one nor the other, you cannot guess in what sense I allow them to be a foundation at all*. I wonder a little at your being at a difficulty here, because you own there may be several foundations of obligation, of which one can only be the *primary*, and one the *ultimate*. So that you must acknowledge the rest to be foundations in *some other sense*, than as *primary* or *ultimate*.

But if you will please to look into that part of my letter, where this doubt occurs, you will see, that I objected against your making these ratios the *primary* foundation of obligation, only because they did not appear to me to be the foundation of the first motives or inducements to virtuous actions in mankind; in which light you had represented them to prove their obligation antecedent to that founded on God's will. To which I replied, "your argument for their being the primary foundation of "of obligation from our perceptions of duty in "in the essential differences, &c. previous to our "discovery, that they are also the will of God, is "not, I think, sufficient to intitle them to the *primacy*, which the moral sense, in that view, would "claim before them, as being the *first* foundation of "obligation, or the *first* principle, that lays men under moral obligations."

14. This indeed, you think, may admit of a doubt, but nevertheless you are willing to exchange *primary* for *prior* to the discovery of the will of God,

in which sense, I readily come into your sentiment.

15. Then as for *ultimate*, you know I acknowledge no ultimate in this subject, but God himself. In which, I think, you at length agree with me, viz. *that the only proper ultimate foundation of moral virtue, and moral obligation, is God himself.* In which conclusion whosoever concurs, may inoffensively retain any particular notions of his own, concerning foundations of them in a subordinate or secondary sense.

And now, Madam, I have gone through every part of your last obliging letter, not out of any humour of raising objections against what you have wrote, but with a desire to see, how far the three queries, which I first of all put to you, deserve to be attended to on this subject. But as I have hitherto given no particular account of my own sentiments, further than they may be guessed at, or gathered from the queries themselves; and what I have since said, to justify my putting them to you, and more particularly in the conclusion of my last letter, where I hinted three points, which I apprehended might prove the issue of the controversy; you may possibly think, I am not so fair and ingenuous with you, as you have been with me; and expect, that I should give you, with the same unreservedness and freedom that you have used with me, my whole sense of the matter in dispute. Now I acknowledge, it is but reasonable and just, that I should do so. The extraordinary length of this letter will be my sufficient excuse for not offering to do it at present; but if I get leisure for it hereafter, and have your permission to trouble you again with another letter on this subject, I will lay before you my whole sense of the controversy, as far as it hath come to my knowledge from the writers in it, which

it

it hath been my hap to look into. In the mean time I remain, with the greatest esteem,

Your most obliged,

bumble servant,

THO. SHARP.

Mrs. Cockburn's last letter to Dr. Sharp on the subject of moral virtue, with my answer.

October, 2, 1747.

REV. SIR,

I Hope you will excuse my keeping the MS. so long, which you favoured me with. I was desirous to accompany it with some thoughts of mine upon it, which I have not been able to do sooner.

I make no doubt, Sir, that the term *foundation*, as it is figuratively used, may have different significations, when applied to different things; but you will think me very tenacious of my opinion, when I say, that I still think most writers mean by it the ground, on which that, which they apply it to, stands, or from which it arises; nor do I think, that their different applications of it is any just ground of suspicion, that they do not agree in their idea of it. For my own case in particular, I am pretty sure I have the same idea of it, and use it in the same sense, when I apply it to *virtue* and *obligation*; and though I say of one, that it arises *solely* from the nature of things, and of the other, that it may arise from *several grounds*, this I apprehend to make no difference in the sense of the term *foundation*, when applied to both; but only to express a difference in the nature of the things, to which I apply it, to express my opinion, that it is of the nature of virtue in the abstract, to arise from no other foundation than that which I have assigned it; but

that

That obligation, though arising from the same foundation, may, by the nature of it, arise likewise from several other grounds, all equally foundations in the very same sense, as *grounds on which it arises*; for I cannot see, that assigning one or more foundations to a thing makes any difference in the sense of the term. And indeed, Sir, it seems to me, that those other instances you have given for different senses of foundation, are not really such, except that from Mr. Warburton. *The orderly introduction to a Thesis* is, I believe, a very different sense from what is commonly understood by the term *foundation*, and I think, I should not have chose it on that occasion; but no doubt, he is a much better judge of the propriety of it than I can be. Mr. Hooker's manner of expression looks, I own, like two senses of foundation; but, perhaps, if his sense is attended to, distinct from his expression, he will appear to be enquiring after two senses of *faith*, rather than of foundation. This is, I think, his sense. If by *faith* is meant our *belief in general of the Christian religion*, then the writings of the *Evangelists*, &c. are the foundation of it: but, if by *faith* is meant *the principal thing which is believed*, then God, manifest in the flesh, is that principal point, the foundation of all the rest. Here are plainly two different senses of *faith*; but the term *foundation* seems to me to be applied to both, in the sense of *a ground on which something is built*, the idea I have always affixed to it. And surely the apostle gives us the same idea, when he says, *no other foundation of the Christian church can be laid, but Jesus Christ*; and yet afterwards says, *it is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets*. They are both foundations in the sense I understand that term, the one *principal* indeed, and the other *subordinate*; and if you please to call these *different senses*, I shall not dispute it, but I think such a difference can cause no confusion or mistakes. The passages collected at the end of your

papers all relate to the *practice of virtue*, which may, as well as obligation, have several foundations; and, I think, that term, does in all of them signify *a ground*, from which the thing they apply it to arises.

However, supposing all the foregoing to be different senses, you are pleased to ask me, "if there is no room for any distinctions of this kind in the dispute about the foundations of virtue." I cannot say, Sir, what room there may be for it, but have expressed my opinion, (perhaps a little too positively) that no misapprehension *has* arisen on this subject, on account of such distinctions, or could be removed by any explanation of that term. And I now beg leave to give you my reason for this opinion. I have endeavoured to find out some different sense of foundation, which might alter the state of the question between the writers on that subject, or set it in a different light, but have not been able, to discover any; and, what is much more considerable, Dr. Sharp himself (as much as he is inclined to suspect, that those writers do not agree in their idea of the term *foundation*) has not discovered where their disagreement lies; who, I make no doubt, is penetrating enough to discern it, if there was really any such thing. And therefore, when he can point out such a disagreement, as, when explained, would help to adjust the matters in debate, I shall readily give up my opinion. Till then, he will excuse me for thinking, that the term *foundation* is not capable of the same distinctions and divisions, as the term *cause*, and therefore fitter to be retained in this controversy.

Will you forgive me, Sir, if I tell you, that I have always thought those logical distinctions fit only for the schools; and that they rather puzzle and perplex, than clear up an argument to readers, who are not used to their language? Nay, that the intention of their divisions may be rather more intelligibly

ligibly expressed, without taking notice of them, Dr. *Rutherford* having used the term *cause*, gave me the fittest occasion to put him in mind, that in the logical division of causes, he had considered only the *final cause*. But what would my argument have gained by this? He asserts, that no *essential differences*, no *perception of the relations of things*, no *moral sense*, &c. can be a cause of obligation to practice virtue; nothing, in short, but a view to a man's own happiness; and this as effectually excludes a *material and formal cause*, as if he had expressed them. On the other side, when I affirm, that those principles direct us to virtue, make us stand self-condemned, if we counteract them, &c. and that therefore they are true and proper causes or grounds of obligations; I believe the reasoning is as good, and at least as intelligible, as if I had called them *material and formal causes*.

Then, Sir, as to the difference between Mr. *Warburton* and me, you know he allows, that virtue is founded on the essential difference, nature, &c. of things; and yet he maintains, that nothing but *will*, or the law of a superior, can constitute the morality of actions. I on the other hand assert, that acting agreeably to the essential difference, nature, and fitness of things, is *moral virtue*; and that the free choice of an agent, judging his action to be right or wrong, though without reference to any will, *properly constitutes the morality of it*. Here are, I think, included three of the logical divisions of causes, *viz. the material, the formal, and the efficient*: But how the use of those terms, or any explanation of foundation can help to adjust this difference of sentiments, I confess I do not see.

Or, in the case of those, who differ from us both, by maintaining, that the will of God is the sole foundation or cause of virtue; that nothing is good or evil in its own nature, till made so by his appointment

pointment: What distinctions, or explanations can possibly be found out to reconcile this difference?

You say, Sir, that the nature and eternal reasons of things may perhaps be found only a *partial* foundation, equivalent to nothing more, than what the logicians term a *material cause*. But what shall we gain by this discovery, if the truth is, as I think it is, that the *abstract nature* of virtue cannot possibly arise from any other cause or foundation? The reason, and the free will of agents, may indeed, be considered as the formal and efficient causes of *the practice* of virtue, and these I have not neglected to take notice of, though I have not made use of those terms.

However, Sir, I perfectly agree with you, that it would be much to the advantage of this controversy, if all the writers in it would explain their terms, particularly in what sense they speak of virtue, and in what they place the nature of it; and if they would declare themselves on all those distinctions you have pointed at towards the end of your papers. It were to be wished too, that they would affirm or deny no point in debate with regard to man, considered *solely* as a rational, a social, or a sensible nature, but, as he truly is, a compound of all together. The error of such a partial consideration of man I took notice of in my former remarks; and I had thoughts, on occasion of Mr. *Seed's* Sermons, to say something of the *indeterminate use of terms*; for he has given us two or three different definitions of virtue in the same discourse: But my ill health did not allow me to do this time enough for an appendix to the *Remarks on Dr. Rutherford*, so it was dropped. There seems likewise some explanation wanted of the terms used by Dr. *Clarke's* followers, *eternal truths, immutable nature, and relations of things*, &c. These have been much mistaken, or misrepresented by their opposers. But I think I have done my part on these subjects, and need not trouble

trouble the world or you any more with the reflections of,

S I R,

Your obliged humble servant,

C. COCKBURN.

Oct. 2, 1747.

I am much disappointed, Sir, in not having the satisfaction of seeing you on your return, as we expected. I designed then to have enquired after a second part of your MS, which it seems to promise; and to have expressed my sincere thanks for your condescension, in bestowing so much pains on mine. When I am able to revise it, I shall make the best use I can of your judicious observations.

If you have done with *Wisdom the first spring of action in the Deity*, be pleased to send it when you have an opportunity, and I should be glad to know whether it answered your expectation. My respects to your Lady.

Dr. Sharp's Answer to Mrs. Cockburn's Letter
of October 2, 1747.

MADAM,

I Thank you for the favour of your late letter; and assure you, that I have perused it attentively; and that every thing, that you write, makes an impression upon me, and puts me upon review of my own sentiments. I am quite ashamed to harp so long upon the first string in the dispute *foundation*. I shall now make my dying speech upon it, resolving never to trouble you with it more.

No

No doubt, madam, "*most writers mean by foundation the ground on which that, which they apply it to, stands, or from which it arises.*" Because what will not answer to one or other of these explanations can be in no sense *any foundation* at all. For the idea taken from the first and literal meaning must in course be carried through all the metaphorical uses of it, more or less distinctly. But then *most writers* do likewise leave it ambiguous, in which of these two senses it must be taken: for though you seem indeed to represent it as *one sense*, or *one idea*, of which you give two explanations, yet in truth each of your explanations conveys a distinct idea, *viz.* the one not precisely the same with the other, but varying from the other sufficiently to make a perceptible difference, and to cause confusion in a dispute depending upon clearness of ideas.

You may remember I had observed to you in my enquiry after the various usages of the term, that the figurative uses of it, established by custom, were of two sorts, or might be thrown into two classes; one *more proper*, being the first remove from the primary or literal sense, *viz. a ground on which any thing stands*, rests, is supported or established; and the other *less proper*, being a further translation of the term to stand for the idea of *a source*, or *beginning* from whence any thing takes its rise, or *springs*, or is *deduced*. This is the metaphor in a further remove; and comes to the same sense with those other metaphors, *root* and *fountain*, which give not the same idea, that is carried through the former class.

Now then I grant there is no one of the writers, but assigns a foundation for virtue, and for obligation in one or other of these general metaphorical senses: nor can the term in this large and extensive acceptance of it, be said to be misused by any of them in their applications of it. Yet how

how can they be said to be *agreed in the idea of it*, when they apply it, in this question about virtue, sometimes in one of these senses, and sometimes in the other? Making it stand indiscriminately (for so it must stand, till it is explained and defined) not only for essential, necessary, and immutable principles, but for motives, inducements, ends, &c. and when they apply it to the subject, of which the foundation is sought in one of these senses, by inquiring upon *what bottom virtue stands*, or is established, and then proceed to assign that foundation in the other sense; by resolving that enquiry into something, from whence virtue confessedly *arises* or *springs*, but doth not stand, or is not established upon it.

The controversy is, as I take it, what is *the foundation* of moral virtue? Now there are many assignments made of grounds, which are all of them foundations of it, in the general idea of *grounds on which it stands*, or *from which it ariseth*. Either therefore, *they are all foundations* of virtue, (and if this idea *be one and the same*, as you say, *in all writers minds*, they *are all equally foundations*;) or if they be not, we must have a more determinate idea of what ought to be reputed, and called *the foundation*, in the application of that term to this subject, before the question can be resolved. For since *the term hath different significations, when applied to different things*, (which you also acknowledge) and is of more than ordinary importance, to be rightly understood, when it is applied to virtue and obligation, especially when so great a stress seems to be laid upon it in this debate; I should apprehend the true meaning of the enquiry to be, which among all the different significations of foundation, in the figurative use of the word, is *that*, which suits best with so complex an idea, as that of moral virtue is: and consequently, whether this, or that, assignment of a foundation be the most proper in this case.

case. Perhaps it were better to let so uncertain and vague a word be wholly drop'd in these disputes: but if the controversy must be carried on upon the shoulders of this term, I know of no method so effectual in prosecuting it, as examining carefully the whole metaphorical usage of the word, and judging from thence, of the propriety or impropriety, of the several applications of it, to this subject, without resting on that general meaning, which it necessarily carries thro' all the figurative uses of it. For tho' that meaning be all that necessarily goes to the idea of *a foundation in general*; yet it is not all, that goes to the notion of *the foundation*, in this special application of the term. Which had it been better attended to, we should scarce have seen principal motives, or the first apparent springs of actions, represented as the grounds, on which virtue stands established; nor subordinate foundations substituted in the room of the principal, nor adventitious taken in the place of original.

Tho' therefore, I would not be thought tenacious, any more than yourself, (having less reason, I am sure, to be so than you have) yet I cannot give up my suspicions, that most of the writers in this controversy, tho' they have agreed to use the term indefinitely, are not agreed in any one precise meaning of it, but use it in senses *not the same*. And that it is too delusory a word, while it stands unexplained by them, to bear the stress and weight of so delicate a dispute, as hath arisen from it.

When I something more than hinted, at your taking foundation in two different senses yourself, in one, when applied to the abstract idea of virtue, and in the other, when applied to obligation; (which I perceive you have taken notice of, and are applied to) I gave you the reason of my apprehension, which was this. You had given me your sense of foundation, in the beginning of your correspondence; viz. *the ground on which moral virtue*, (viz. virtue

virtue in it's abstract nature, as you afterwards explained it) solely arises, on that, without which, there could be no such thing as virtue. Now it appear'd to me, that you could not intend *foundation* in this sense, when you applied it to the many grounds, from which you said obligation might arise. Because it could not be said of any one of them, that it is the ground, on which obligation solely arises, or that without which there could be no such thing as obligation. Therefore I inferred from the manner of your applying the term to obligation, that you meant no more by it, when so applied, than a sufficient motive or a reasonable inducement. A sense, which the word carries, tho' it be different from the sense of it, when applied by you, to the abstract idea of virtue.

Now you have neither shewed me, that I judged wrong in thinking these were two different senses of foundation; nor that the word in either of these senses may be indifferently applied, either to the idea of virtue in the abstract, or to obligation; but you have only apprised me, that you have the same idea of it, and use it in the same sense, when you apply it to virtue and to obligation. This same idea, and same sense, I may presume, is that same, which most other writers have and mean, viz. the ground on which that which they apply it to, stands, or from which it arises; which you look upon as one idea, or one sense only. Be it so; you are allowed to have this sense and idea of foundations in both applications; because, if this had been wanting in either of them, they could not have been called foundations at all.

But then, although this is the most you may mean by the term, and though you mean always to use it in the same sense; doth it follow, that there is no ambiguity in the term itself, which, in one of these applications, might have signified (and so you once did expound it yourself) the ground, on which any thing

thing so wholly arises, as that, without it, there could be no such thing; and in the other, may only signify simply, a ground on which any thing arises, but yet not essential to its production, or necessary to its being.

Surely here is a distinction between foundations (and a remarkable one too) which in your one idea, and one sense of the term (as you now explain them) you do not reach. And, if most writers mean no more by it than you do (which yet will be a question, till they tell us so) I cannot possibly discover, what you are contending about, under this term *foundation*, rather than any other term; since none of you (according to your present account) mean any thing more by it, than what is equally true in every application, that every one of you makes of it.

I shall not allow this distinction between foundations, in this subject, to be called either unnecessary or nice, till they are given up for such, in the following instance. A certain author had laid the foundation of obligation in rewards and punishments; conceiving, that obligation arose solely from a prospect of them. He went too far indeed in saying *solely*, since there are other grounds of obligation: But, however, he uses *foundation* rightly, since that means only a ground on which any thing ariseth; in which sense, or according to which idea, foundation is justly applied to the prospect of rewards and punishments. Hereupon, he is advertised, by a very judicious adversary, that these cannot be the foundation of obligation, though he supposes all obligation to arise solely from a prospect of them. They are only a new motive to the performance of duty, but no new foundation of it. [*Works of the Learned, Aug. 1743. p. 120.*] Now would it be sufficient for the author abovementioned, to reply to these just and necessary distinctions, that they are all equally foundations in the very same sense, as

grounds on which obligation arises; and that assigning one or more foundations to a thing makes no difference in the sense of the term? and that rewards and punishments, whether the sole foundation or not, would at least be a new foundation of obligation? and as properly so, as any other thing, since there is but one idea, one sense of the word in this dispute? I do not see how you could obviate such a reply, upon the footing on which, you have now put the whole meaning of foundation in this controversy. You would find it necessary, to have recourse to your former distinctions, between *that*, from which any thing derives, or to which it owes its being, or without which there could be no such thing; and *that*, which is no more than a superinduced motive, or ground of an additional obligation, or a further enforcement of the true and genuine principle. But these are distinctions, which the term foundation in the one idea and one sense, that you are pleased to confine it to at present; can never reach; and therefore till it be more particularly and specifically defined, it cannot but have, and retain a perplexing ambiguity in these subjects.

You may indeed intend no more, by your applying foundation, as *one* to virtue in the abstract, and as *many* to obligation, than to express a difference in the nature of the things, to which you apply it. But you do really, at the same time, express a difference in the senses of foundation. Nay, you will find in due attention to your other writings, that you really make a difference in the senses of foundation, when applied to obligation only; though you may not always express this difference in direct words. When you say here, that obligation, though arising from the same foundation, with virtue in the abstract, may by the nature of it arise likewise from several other grounds all equally foundations, in the very same sense, as grounds on which it arises; you must mean a sameness of sense in this respect only,

only, that it may be equally said of them all, that they are grounds on which it arises; which is true indeed, but not to the purpose of my enquiry, nor sufficiently expressive of your own whole sense of the matter. For when you speak your opinion fully, these other grounds, from which likewise obligation, by the nature of it, arises, are only new motives; they are not new foundations. They all refer to that true original ground of moral obligation, about which (you say in another place, *Works of the Learned* p. 125) *this controversy is*; that being the only legitimate one in nature. They introduce no new moral obligation, in the usual sense of the word, and cannot therefore be the foundation of obligation, viz. in that sense of the word, about which the controversy is; and consequently, if I infer rightly, not in the very same sense; neither are they all equally foundations.

You are pleased to conjecture, that Mr. Hooker, in the passage I cited from him, is enquiring after two senses of *faith*, rather than of *foundation*. Give me leave to repeat and review the passage. His subject is not the nature of faith, but the foundation of it.

"Let us see, says he, what the foundation of faith is. If it does import the general ground, whereupon we rest, when we do believe, the writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles are the foundation of the Christian faith. But if the name of foundation do note the principal thing, which is believed, then is the foundation of our faith God manifest in the flesh."

You are pleased to say, "that if his sense be attended to, distinct from his expression," you apprehend it may be taken thus:

"If by *faith* is meant our belief in general of the Christian religion, then the writings of the Evangelists, &c. are the foundation of it. But if by *faith* is meant the principal thing which is believed,

"then God manifest in the flesh is that principal point, the foundation of all the rest."

Now, Madam, whether you and Mr. Hooker say, or mean the same thing, I shall leave to your own review of both passages; and shall only observe to you, that notwithstanding your substitution of *faith*, in the room of *foundation* of faith, you have not avoided the necessity of admitting his distinction between *foundations*. For when you say, "if by faith" is meant our belief in general of the *Christian* religion, then the writings of the Evangelists, &c. are "the foundation of it;" can you mean any thing else by *foundation* here, than what Mr. Hooker does, *viz. the general ground, whereon we rest, when we believe?* And when you proceed, "but if by faith is meant the principal thing, which is believed, then God manifest in the flesh is that principal point, the foundation of all the rest;" do you mean any thing else by *foundation* here, than what Mr. Hooker does, *viz. the principal thing which is believed?* Now Mr. Hooker plainly thought, that *foundation* was taken in different senses, when it imported, in one case, *the ground whereon we rest when we believe*, and when it denoted in the other case *the principal thing believed*. For surely, the capital article of belief is a *foundation* of faith in another sense than that, in which the authority, truth, and certainty of scripture records are a *foundation* of it. We rest upon the one as the proof and evidence, upon which our belief is built and established; and we refer to the other as to a first principle or fountain-head, from whence all other articles of belief are deduced; or, a root, which nourishes all the branches, that grow from it. He, that denies this proposition, *God manifest in the flesh, or Christ the son of the living God, or Christ the Saviour of the world, doth utterly erase* (says Mr. Hooker) *the foundation of our faith*: Not as it is built upon testimony, but as it necessarily hangs on this capital or primary article of belief.

You

You observe, that in Mr. Hooker's account, as you have given it, "there are plainly two different senses of faith." Allowed: But, "the term foundation, you say, seems to you applied to both in the sense of a ground, on which something is built." This I little doubt of, for the reason just now given. However, supposing that sense must necessarily accompany the term, yet it will not destroy Mr. Hooker's real distinction. For in both the branches of your distinction, faith means *something that is believed*. And if faith, as you say, has, in that distinction, plainly two different senses, and yet in both these senses, may retain and convey the idea of *something that is believed*; why should you make a difficulty of admitting, that *foundation* hath two senses also, though it may in both those senses retain and convey the idea of a *ground on which something is built*?

I observe you are willing to allow St. Paul's two foundations of the *Christian* church, capable of being considered under the distinction of *principal* and *subordinate*; which is an ingenuous concession in one, who can apprehend no difference in the use of the term:

But add, such distinction or "difference can cause no confusion or mistakes, among the writers in this controversy; neither have I yet discovered where their disagreement lies, or shewn how such disagreement, when explained, would help to adjust the matters in debate."

It would be a good thing, if any person more able than myself would try his hand in this business. I have done my part in endeavouring to shew, and I hope, to some degree of satisfaction, that the debate cannot be ended, till the sense of the several terms be better adjusted than they are. Three of the four, *viz. moral, and virtue, and obligation*, have proved of so ambiguous meaning, that contests have been actually raised about them. That the like have

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not

not been raised about the fourth term in the question, *viz.* *foundation*, I have ventured to suspect, and to propose as my conjecture, might be owing, not to any peculiar perspicuity in the term itself, or the idea it conveyed, but to its peculiar luck in having never been defined; which I apprehended would shew, whenever it was done, that this term was as susceptible of various interpretations, and as capable of bearing a contest, as any of the other three terms in the question.

And for the truth of this I appeal to all, that you yourself have been pleased to say by way of definition, explanation, illustration, &c. of this same term.

But I have "*not yet discovered, where the disagreement of the several writers about the sense and meaning of term lies.*" But this is impossible for any person to do, till they shall all define it in their own sense, as you have done; and then I presume the disagreement will appear of itself. However, as far as a discovery can be made by probable circumstances and reasonable inferences, I am apt to persuade myself, that I have, by comparing the views, in which different authors seem to have used this term, discovered their disagreement in it. In proof of which I must appeal to all that I myself have said upon this subject; withal freely confessing, that if I have not been successful in this attempt, nor made good my undertaking, as far as is above-mentioned, I cannot do it better; having said all that is of any consequence in the matter.

As to "*pointing out such a disagreement, as when explained will help to adjust the matters in debate,*" I have not been wanting in my endeavours to do this also, as often as it hath fallen in my way. I have shewn *foundation* to have been used in this dispute in all the usual senses, in which *cause* is taken in other subjects; and the inconveniencies of not defining and distinguishing it, as the word

cause

cause is commonly distinguished, to have appeared as plainly in this dispute, as they must have appeared in any other dispute about the *cause* of a thing, while *cause* was indiscriminately used, (and consequently in all appearance in the very same sense too) in every application of it to various things. From whence I have inferred, that if foundations were distinguished in some such manner as *causes* are, it would help to *adjust the matters in debate*; as the distinction of *causes* is found greatly subvenient to the clearing up all questions, wherein that term is made use of.

But you think the term *foundation* is not capable of the same distinctions and divisions as the term *cause*. If this be really so, then for the same reason, that you think it *fit to be retained in this controversy*, I cannot but judge it not fit to be used at all in this controversy, and much less fit to have the stress of the controversy laid upon it. It would, I own, be talking too much in a new language, to speak of material, formal, efficient, and final *foundations*. But if, instead of this, we substitute the word *principle*, we may talk of *material and formal, &c. principles*, and do no more than what others have done before us, and I think with great propriety as well as with good effect; as I shewed you from the use of those words by *Chauvin*. "*But these logical distinctions are only fit for the schools, and rather puzzle and perplex, than clear up to readers, who are not used to their language.*"

I believe you might perceive, by what I said about them, when I propos'd them as useful in this subject; that I am not fond of using them where they can be as well avoided; and am absolutely against the use of them to readers, who are not used to them. Yet I apprehend, that such readers, as either are not used to them, or that despise them, are not fit to read and judge in this controversy, which depends so much upon distinctions, and nice

ones too ; and all of them logical, whether people are willing to receive them under that character, or not.

But the *intention* of these (logical) "*divisions may be rather more intelligibly expressed, without taking notice of them.*" Whenever this can be done, I prefer it to logical terms. Nay, if the intention of them be but *as* intelligibly expressed in other words, I approve its being so. Nor has any body been more happy than yourself in doing this ; for your distinctions are clear and satisfactory, without any parade of learning. But then, what I complain of, is, that other writers in this controversy about moral virtue, have not done so too. As to the term *foundation* in particular, I desire no logical terms to be used, in explaining what it means ; in all the several applications of it in this dispute, provided you can find a way to explain it, without recourse to logical forms. Which hitherto, in my opinion, you have not done (forgive my saying so) after having tried two or three different ways, to express the precise meaning of it.

When Dr. *Clarke*, in arguing against the principles of *Hobbes*, asserted and proved the truth of the old doctrine, that the ratios of good and evil were eternal and immutable, and that virtue or the goodness of actions was, by necessary consequence, immutable in its nature, and independent on will and appointment ; he called this principle, which was *the foundation* of his argument for the immutable nature of virtue, *the foundation* of moral virtue, the *true foundation*, and *the only foundation*. In all which he was well enough understood, especially as he argued in the synthetic way, by deducing virtue as a necessary consequence from the ratios of things themselves. But when others afterwards, attending more to the sense of *foundation*, when applied to virtue, than to the necessary relation virtue bore to the essential differences of things, began to consider, whether

whether this was the *only and true foundation*, or whether there were not some other things, which might be properly styled *foundations* too ; and thereupon, finding a suitable application of this term, or a proper foundation of virtue, in as many different respects, as virtue could be considered in different true lights ; each of them was tempted to throw in his sentiments of foundation in that light, in which he chose to consider virtue, and so begat the late controversy about *foundations*. Whereas, had the first question been kept to, which was the eternal and immutable nature of morality (into which foundation seem'd to have slip'd without any design of making it a part of the controversy, or laying any stress upon it) ; all the contest about foundations in moral sense, public affections, universal benevolence, private happiness, and whatever else induces moral obligation, had been superseded. And the question about *foundation*, if a question must be made about it, would have been only this, viz. whether the essential differences of things, and fitnesses arising thereupon, be that foundation, or rather the will of the creator implied in those fitnesses ? Between which, I think, Dr. *Clarke* made no distinction, and which you say are one and the same thing.

And thus it is I account for the misapprehensions, that have arisen in this subject, in the use of the term *foundation* ; the original question having been overlooked, and a transition made into another question, which is more about the proper use of this unnecessary term, than about the true principles of morality. And as for that further question, that arose upon Dr. *Clarke's*, upon which Mr. *Balguy* takes so much ingenious pains, concerning an antecedency of the reason and truth of things to the will of God, and their absolute independency upon it ; or, *vice versâ*, whether it hath arisen from a conception, that the one must necessarily have a foundation in the other, or only from the difficulties, that attend

attend giving the priority to either, I cannot tell; but I take it to be a question having so many intricacies in it, that I am apt to think it will never be clear'd up, on either side, to satisfaction, or any otherwise determined, than by resolving it into the incomprehensible nature of God himself.

"But if any misapprehension," you say, "hath arisen on account of the different applications of foundation, you do not see how they could be removed by any explanation of that term." No; but by an explanation of what they mean by that term, in each particular application of it. You have so discountenanced the logical distinctions, which might serve this purpose, that I must endeavour to express them intelligibly, if I can, without taking notice of them. Dr. Clarke's foundation, as he uses it, may be explained by the reason, or proofs, or evidence of the natural immutability of moral virtue, and moral obligation. This reason, proof, &c. lies in the eternal and essential differences of things, &c. And in this way of considering virtue, this is the true and proper foundation: For it excludes all others from the pretence of being so; unless we except the will of God; which yet, if understood of the will implied in the creation, coincides with it, or rather is the same; and, if taken absolutely, is another question from that, which he considers.

When another person says, that the fitnesses and relations arising from the essential differences, &c. are the foundation, and *sole foundation of virtue in the abstract*; the meaning seems to be, and so I must judge, till it be better explain'd, that the idea of virtue's nature is taken immediately and solely from thence, *i. e.* they are the objects of intellect, upon which the mind inwardly reflecting gains the idea.

When Dr. Clarke says, liberty must be the *foundation* of morality in man, and *the sole ground* of his

his accountableness, &c. he is viewing the question purely as it regards the agent. Then the capacity of chusing, or the power of making elections, is the proper foundation of moral agency: Or, as he explains it himself in another place, "freedom of will, which, according as it is determined in different circumstances by the reasonableness of what is good, or incitements of what is evil, renders the agent morally good or evil." Now when liberty is made a *foundation*, I conceive nothing more is meant, than that it is a necessary antecedent, a requisite to morality, that is indispensable.

Here then we are come to the idea of *practical virtue*, as distinguished from the abstracted, *viz.* the conformity of a moral agent to the reasons of things. And what is the foundation of this conformity? Why here comes in that great principle, and spring of moral actions, which we agree to call obligation, and which extends to every thing, that moves the will to moral and right action. And here foundations are multiplied, one thing being the foundation of this conformity in one instance, another in another, a third in a third, &c. according to the capacities, improvements, and infinitely various circumstances and situations of moral agents. And the question about the preference of one above another, or of the propriety of one being called a foundation rather than another, can only, in my apprehension, lie in this, *viz.* which of them is most universal or most prevalent; or to which we may most justly ascribe the virtue, that is practised in the world. And when this is the question, I further humbly apprehend, that they, who make the prospect of rewards or private happiness the *foundation*, will have the advantage, though they seem to be in the wrong, if they suppose obligation to *arise solely* from thence. And that they, who ground obligation on the mere essential

sential differences and fitnesses, &c. will have less proof from *fact* to support their foundation, although it really be the nobler principle, and also the first and original principle of obligation.

And now, Madam, I take my leave of you, but with very great concern, I must assure you, because I find I am not to hear from you any more, at least not on this subject. Those words in the conclusion of your letter, that *you have done your part, and need not trouble the world or me with any more of your reflexions*; what shall I say to them? However sensibly I am touched with the loss of so agreeable a correspondent, I must not forget to thank you heartily for the instructive part *you have performed* in these subjects; and for your condescensions and favours to me in particular, under a just sense of which I subscribe myself,

Your faithful, and

obedient servant,

T. SHARP.

Fatal

Fatal Friendship:

A

TRAGEDY.

As it was Acted at the

NEW-THEATRE

IN

LITTLE-LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS,

In the Year MDCXCVIII.