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The Works Of Alexander Pope Esq.

In Nine Volumes Complete. With His Last Corrections, Additions, And Improvements; As they were delivered to the Editor a little before his Death

Containing His Moral Essays

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

Epistle I. Of the nature and state of man with the respect to the universe

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A N
E S S A Y on M A N,
I N
F O U R E P I S T L E S,
T O
H. St. John, Lord Bolingbroke.

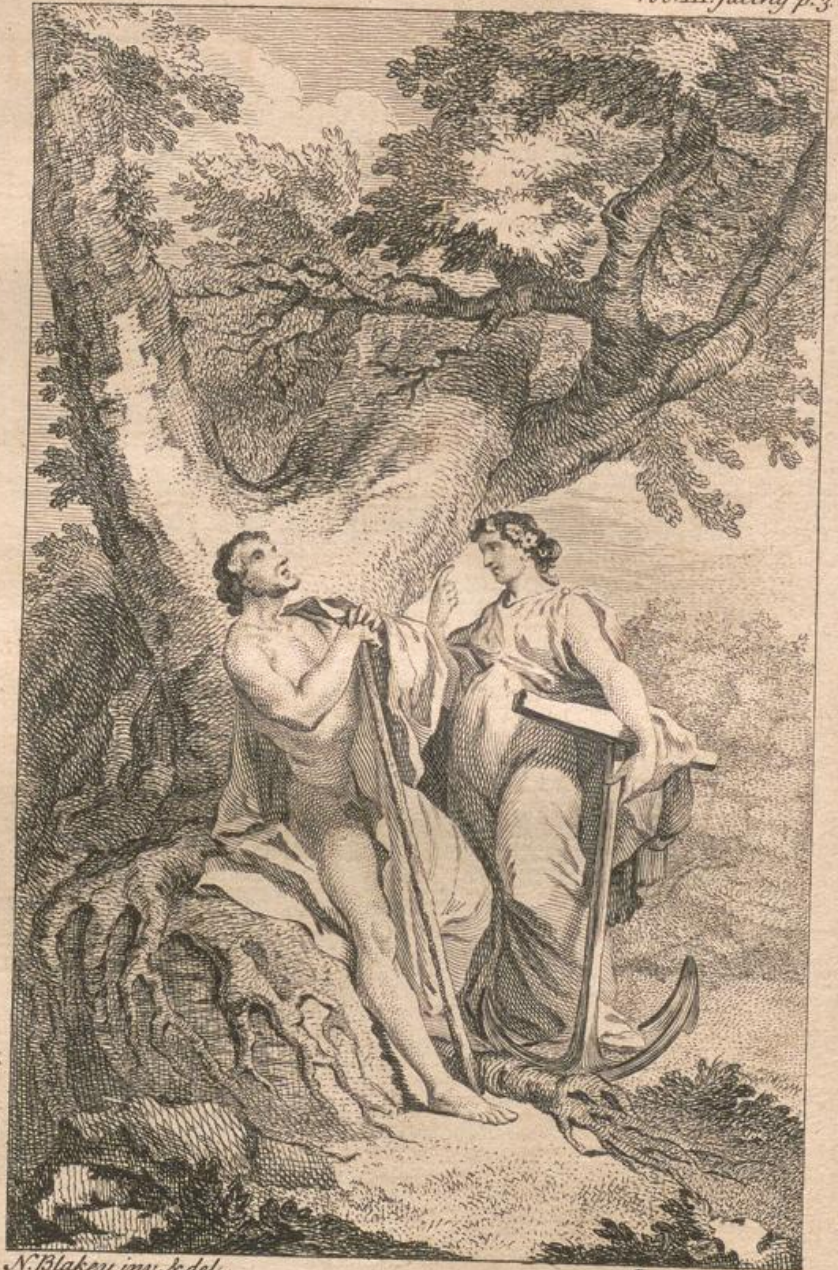
A R G U M E N T O F
E P I S T L E I.

*Of the Nature and State of Man with respect
to the U N I V E R S E.*

OF Man in the abstract.—I. That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things, § 17, &c. II. That Man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a Being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general Order of things, and conformable to Ends and Relations to him unknown, § 35, &c. III. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the

A

present depends, § 77, &c. IV. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more Perfection, the cause of Man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice of his dispensations, § 109, &c. V. The absurdity of conceiving himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world, which is not in the natural, § 131, &c. VI. The unreasonableness of his complaints against Providence, while on the one hand he demands the Perfections of the Angels, and on the other the bodily qualifications of the Brutes; though, to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree, would render him miserable, § 173, &c. VII. That throughout the whole visible world, an universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to Man. The gradations of sense, instinct, thought, reflection, reason; that Reason alone countervails all the other faculties, § 207. VIII. How much farther this order and subordination of living creatures may extend, above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation must be destroyed, § 233. IX. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire, § 250. X. The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state, § 281, &c. to the end.



N. Blakey inv. & del.

Ravenet sculp.

HOPE humbly then; with trembling Pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher Death; and God adore!

Essay on Man, Ep. I.

E P I S T L E I.

AWAKE, my ST. JOHN! leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of Kings.
Let us (since Life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die)
Expatiate free o'er all this scene of Man ;
A mighty maze ! but not without a plan ;
A Wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot ;
Or Garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.

COMMENTARY.

THE Opening of this poem, in fifteen lines, is taken up in giving an account of the Subject; which, agreeably to the title, is an ESSAY ON MAN, or a Philosophical Enquiry into his *Nature and End*, his *Passions* and *Pursuits*.

The Exordium relates to the whole work, of which the *Essay on Man* was only the first book. The 6th, 7th, and 8th lines allude to the subjects of this *Essay*, viz. the general Order and Design of Providence; the Constitution of the human Mind; the origin, use, and end of the Passions and Affections, both self-
ish and social; and the wrong pursuits of Power, Pleasure, and Happiness. The 10th, 11th, 12th, &c. have relation to the subjects of the books intended to follow, viz. the Characters and Capacities of Men, and the Limits of Learning and Ignorance. The 13th and 14th, to the Knowledge of Mankind, and the various Manners of the age.

NOTES.

VER. 7, 8. *A Wild, — Or Garden,*] The *Wild* relates to the human *passions*; productive (as he explains in the second epistle) both of good and evil. The *Garden*, to human *reason*, so often *tempting* us to transgress the bounds God has set to it, and wander in fruitless enquiries.

What vary'd Being peoples ev'ry star,
 May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.
 But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,
 The strong connections, nice dependencies, 30
 Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
 Look'd thro' ? or can a part contain the whole ?

COMMENTARY.

why ? because we can *reason only from what we know*, and as we know no more of *Man* than what we see of his station here ; so we know no more of *God* than what we see of his dispensations in this station ; being able to trace him no further than to the limits of our own system. This naturally leads the poet to exprobrate the miserable Folly and Impiety of pretending to pry into, and call in question the profound dispensations of Providence : Which reproof contains (from \S 22 to 43) a sublime description of the Omniscience of God, and the miserable Blindness and Presumption of Man.

NOTES.

VER. 30. *The strong connections, nice dependencies,*] The thought is very noble, and expressed with great philosophic beauty and exactness. The system of the Universe is a combination of *natural* and *moral* Fitnesses, as the human system is, of *body* and *spirit*. By the *strong connections*, therefore, the Poet alluded to the *natural* part ; and by the *nice dependen-*

cies to the *moral*. For the *Essay on Man* is not a system of *Naturalism* but of *natural Religion*. Hence it is, that, where he supposes disorders may tend to some greater good in the *natural* world, he supposes they may tend likewise to some greater good in the *moral*, as appears from these sublime images in the following lines,

*If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,
 Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline ?
 Who knows, but he, whose hand the light'ning forms,
 Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms ;
 Pours fierce Ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
 Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind ?*

Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?

II. Presumptuous Man! the reason wouldst
thou find, 35

Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?

First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,

Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less?

Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made

Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade? 40

Or ask of yonder argent fields above,

Why Jove's Satellites are less than Jove?

Of Systems possible, if 'tis confess'd

That Wisdom infinite must form the best,

COMMENTARY.

VER. 43. *Of systems possible, &c.*] So far his modest and sober Introduction; in which he truly observes, that no wisdom less than omniscient

Can tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.

Yet, though we cannot discover the *particular* reasons for this mode of our existence, we may be assured in *general* that it is *right*. For now, entering upon his argument, he lays down this self-evident proposition as the foundation of his Thesis,

NOTES.

VER. 35 to 42.] In these lines the poet has joined the beauty of argumentation to the sublimity of thought; where the similar instances, proposed for his adversaries examination, shew as well the *absurdity* of their complaints against Order, as the *fruitlessness* of their enquiries into the arcana of the Godhead.

Where all must full or not coherent be, 45
 And all that rises, rise in due degree;
 Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 'tis plain,
 There must be, somewhere, such a rank as Man:
 And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
 Is only this, if God has plac'd him wrong? 50
 Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
 May, must be right, as relative to all.

COMMENTARY.

which he reasonably supposes will be allowed him, *That, of all possible systems, infinite wisdom hath formed the best* (¶ 43, 44)
 From whence he draws two consequences:

1. The *first* (from ¶ 44 to 51) is, that as the best system cannot but be such a one as hath no inconnected Void; such a one in which there is a perfect coherence and gradual subordination in all its parts; there must needs be, in some part or other of the scale of reasoning life, such a creature as MAN: Which reduces the dispute to this absurd question, *Whether God has placed him wrong?*

VER. 51. *Respecting Man, &c.*] It being shewn that MAN, the Subject of his enquiry, has a necessary place in such a system as this is confessed to be; and it being evident, that the abuse of Free-will, from whence proceeds all moral evil, is the certain effect of such a creature's existence; the next question will be, How these evils can be accounted for, consistently with the idea we have of God's attributes? Therefore,

2. The *second* consequence he draws from his principle, *That of all possible systems, infinite wisdom has formed the best*, is, that whatever is wrong in our private system, is right as relative to the whole:

*Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
 May, must be right, as relative to ALL.*

That it *may*, he proves (from ¶ 52 to 61) by shewing in what consists the difference between the *systematic* works of God,

In human works, tho' labour'd on with pain,
 A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;
 In God's, one single can its end produce; 55
 Yet serves to second too some other use.
 So Man, who here seems principal alone,
 Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
 Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;
 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

When the proud steed shall know why Man
 restrains
 His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;

C O M M E N T A R Y.

and those of Man; viz. that, in the latter, a thousand movements scarce gain one purpose; in the former, one movement gains many purposes. So that

—*Man, who here seems principal alone,
 Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown.*

And acting thus, the appearances of *wrong* in the *partial* system, may be *right* in the *universal*: For

'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.

That it *must*, the whole body of this epistle is employed to illustrate and inforce. Thus *partial Evil is universal Good*; and thus Providence is fairly acquitted.

VER. 61. *When the proud steed &c.*] From all this he draws a general conclusion (from v 60 to 91) that, as what has been said is sufficient to vindicate the ways of Providence, Man should rest submissive and content, and confess every thing to be disposed for the best; that to pretend to enquire into the manner how God conducts this wonderful scheme to its completion, is as absurd as to imagine that the horse and ox shall

When the dull Ox, why now he breaks the clod,
 Is now a victim, and now Ægypt's God :
 Then shall Man's pride and dulness comprehend
 His actions', passions', being's, use and end ; 66
 Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd ; and why
 This hour a slave, the next a deity.

Then say not Man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault ;
 Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought : 70
 His knowledge measur'd to his state and place ;
 His time a moment, and a point his space.
 If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
 What matter, soon or late, or here or there ?

VARIATIONS.

In the former Editions y 64.

Now wears a garland an Ægyptian God.

altered as above for the reason given in the note.

After y 68. the following lines in first Ed.

If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
 What matters soon or late, or here or there ?
 The blest to-day is as completely so
 As who began ten thousand years ago.

COMMENTARY.

ever come to comprehend why they undergo such different *manage* and *fortunes* in the hand of Man ; nay, that such knowledge, if communicated, would be even *pernicious* to Man, and

NOTES.

VER. 64 — *Ægypt's God :*] worshipped universally over the
 called so because the *Apis* was | whole land.

The blest to day is as completely so, 75
As who began a thousand years ago.

III. Heav'n from all creatures hides the book
of Fate,

All but the page prescrib'd, their present state:
From brutes what men, from men what spirits
know:

Or who could suffer Being here below? 80

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy Reason, would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.

Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n, 85

That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n:

Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,

VARIATIONS.

After v 88. in the MS.

No great, no little; 'tis as much decreed
That Virgil's Gnat should die as Cæsar bleed.

COMMENTARY.

make him *neglect* or *desert* his Duty here. This he illustrates
by an instance in the lamb, which is happy in not knowing the
fate that attends it from the butcher; and from thence takes

NOTES.

VER. 87. *Who sees with equal eye, &c.*] Mat. x. 29.

Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world. 90

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher Death; and God adore.

COMMENTARY.

occasion to observe, that God is the equal master of all his creatures, and provides for the proper happiness of *each* being.

VER. 91. *Hope humbly then; &c.*] But now the objector is supposed to put in, and say, You tell us indeed, that all things will terminate in good; but we see ourselves surrounded with present Evil; and yet you forbid us all inquiry into the manner how we are to be extricated; and, in a word, leave us in a very disconsolate condition. Not so, replies the poet, you may reasonably, if you so please, receive much comfort from the HOPE of a happy futurity; a *Hope* implanted in the human breast for this very purpose by God himself, as an earnest of that Bliss, which here perpetually flying us, is reserved for the good Man hereafter. The reason why the poet chuses to insist on this proof of a future state, in preference to others, is in order to give his system (which is founded in a sublime and improved *Platonism*) the higher grace of uniformity. For HOPE was *Plato's* peculiar argument for a future state; and the words here employed — *the soul uneasy* &c. his particular expression. The poet in this place, therefore, says in express terms, that *God gave us Hope to supply that future bliss, which he at present keeps hid from us*. In his second epistle, § 274, he goes still farther, and says, this HOPE quits us not even at Death, when every thing mortal drops from us:

Hope travels thro', nor quits us when we die.

And, in the fourth epistle, he shews how the same HOPE is a *proof* of a future state, from the consideration of God's giving man no appetite in vain, or what he did not intend should be satisfied;

*He sees, why Nature plants in Man alone
Hope of known bliss, and Faith in bliss unknown:*

What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
 But gives that Hope to be thy blessing now.
 Hope springs eternal in the human breast: 95
 Man never Is, but always To be blest:

VARIATIONS.

In the first Fol. and Quarto,

What bliss *above* he gives not thee to know,
 But gives that Hope to be thy bliss *below*.

COMMENTARY.

(*Nature, whose dictates to no other kind
 Are giv'n in vain, but what they seek they find*)

It is only for the *good man*, he tells us, that *Hope* leads from goal to goal &c. It would be strange indeed then if it should prove a delusion.

NOTES.

VER. 93. *What future bliss, &c.*] It hath been objected, that the *System of the best* weakens the other natural arguments for a future state; because, if the evils which good Men suffer promote the benefit of the whole, then every thing is here in order; and nothing amiss that wants to be set right: Nor has the good man any reason to expect amends, when the evils he suffered had such a tendency. To this it may be replied, 1. That the poet tells us (Ep. iv. v. 361) that *God loves from whole to parts*. 2. That the *system of the best* is so far from weakening those natural

arguments, that it strengthens and supports them. For if those evils, to which good men are subject, be mere Disorders, without any tendency to the greater good of the whole; then, though we must indeed conclude that they will hereafter be set right, yet this view of things, representing God as suffering disorders for no other end than to set them right, gives us a very low idea of the divine wisdom. But if those evils (according to the *system of the best*) contribute to the greater perfection of the whole; such a reason may be then given for their permission, as supports

The soul, uneasy and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind; 100

COMMENTARY.

VER 99. *Lo, the poor Indian! &c.*] The poet, as we said, having bid Man comfort himself with expectation of future happiness, shewn him that this HOPE is an earnest of it, and put in one very necessary caution,

Hope humbly then, with trembling pinions soar;
provoked at those miscreants whom he afterwards (Ep. iii. v 263) describes as building *Hell on Spite, and Heaven on Pride,*

NOTES.

our idea of divine wisdom to the highest religious purposes. Then, as to the good man's hopes of a retribution, those still remain in their original force: For our idea of God's justice, and how far that justice is engaged to a retribution, is exactly and invariably the same on either hypothesis. For though the *system of the best* supposes that the evils themselves will be

fully compensated by the good they produce to the *whole*, yet this is so far from supposing that *particulars* shall suffer for a *general good*, that it is essential to *this system* to conclude, that, at the completion of things when the whole is arrived to the state of utmost perfection, *particular* and *universal* good shall coincide.

*Such is the World's great harmony, that springs
From Order, Union, full Consent of things.*

*Where small and great, where weak and mighty, made
To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade, &c.* Ep. iii. v 295.

Which coincidence can never be, without a retribution to good men for the evils suffered here below.

VER. 97.—*from home,*] By these words, it was the poet's

purpose to teach, that the present life is only a state of probation for another, more suitable to the essence of the soul, and to the free exercise of its qualities.

His soul, proud Science never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
 Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n,
 Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
 Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd, 105
 Some happier island in the watry waste,
 Where slaves once more their native land behold,
 No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
 To Be, contents his natural desire,
 He asks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's fire; 110
 But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
 His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV. Go, wiser thou! and, in thy scale of sense,
 Weigh thy Opinion against Providence;

VARIATIONS.

After v 108. in the first Ed.

But does he say the maker is not good,
 Till he's exalted to what state he wou'd:
 Himself alone high Heav'n's peculiar care,
 Alone made happy when he will, and where?

COMMENTARY.

he upbraids them (from v 99 to 112) with the example of the poor Indian, to whom also Nature hath given this *common* HOPE of *Mankind*: But, tho' his untutored mind had betrayed him into many childish fancies concerning the nature of that future state, yet he is so far from excluding any part of his own species (a vice which could proceed only from vain science, which *puffeth up*) that he humanely admits even his *faithful dog to bear him company*.

VER. 113 *Go, wiser thou! &c.*] He goes on with these ac-

Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such, 115
 Say, here he gives too little, there too much :
 Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
 Yet cry, If Man's unhappy, God's unjust ;
 If Man alone ingross not Heav'n's high care,
 Alone made perfect here, immortal there : 120
 Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
 Re-judge his justice, be the God of God.
 In Pride, in reas'ning Pride, our error lies ;
 All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.

COMMENTARY.

cusers of providence (from v 112 to 122) and shews them, that complaints against the *established order of things* begin in the *highest absurdity*, from misapplied *reason and power*, and end in the *highest impiety*, in an attempt to degrade the God of heaven, and assume his place :

Alone made perfect here, immortal there :

That is, be made God, *who only is perfect and hath immortality* :
 To which sense the lines immediately following confine us ;

*Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
 Re-judge his justice, be the God of God.*

VER. 123. *In Pride, in reas'ning Pride, our error lies ; &c.]*

NOTES.

VER. 123. *In Pride, &c.]* Ar-
 nobius has passed the same cen-
 sure on these very follies, which
 he supposes to arise from the
 cause here assigned.—*Nihil est*
quod nos fallat, nihil quod nobis
polliceatur spes cassas (id quod
nobis a quibusdam dicitur viris

immoderata sui opinione sublati)
animas immortales esse, Deo,
rerum ac principi, gradu proxi-
mas dignitatis, genitore illo ac
patre prolatas, divinas, sapientes,
doctas, neque ulla corporis at-
trectatione contiguas. Adversus
gentes.

Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes, 125

Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods.

Aspiring to be Gods, if Angels fell,

Aspiring to be Angels, Men rebel:

And who but wishes to invert the laws

Of ORDER, sins against th'Eternal Cause. 130

V. Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "'Tis for mine:

COMMENTARY.

From these men the poet now turns to his friend, and (from v 123 to 130) remarks, that the ground of all this extravagance is *Pride*; which, more or less, infects the whole Species; shews the ill effects of it, in the case of the fallen Angels; and observes, that even *wishing* to invert the laws of Order, is a lower species of their crime: Then brings an instance of one of the effects of Pride, which is the folly of thinking every thing made *solely* for the use of Man; without the least regard to any other of God's creatures:

Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine, &c.

The ridicule of imagining the *greater portions* of the material system to be solely for the use of Man, Philosophy has sufficiently exposed: And Common sense, as the poet shews, instructs us to know that our fellow-creatures, placed by Providence the joint-inhabitants of this globe, are designed by Providence to be joint-sharers with us of its blessings:

*Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for thy good,
Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?*

NOTES.

VER. 131. *Ask for what end, &c.*] If there be any fault in these lines, it is not in the general sentiment, but a want of exactness in expressing it.—It is the highest absurdity to think that *Earth* is man's *foot-stool*, his *canopy* the *Skies*, and the *heavenly bodies* lighted up principally for his use; yet not so, to suppose fruits and minerals given for this end.

B

" For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,
 " Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
 " Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew 135
 " The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
 " For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
 " For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
 " Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
 " My foot-stool earth, my canopy the skies." 140

But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
 From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
 When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
 Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?

COMMENTARY.

*Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
 For him as kindly spreads the flow'ry lawn.* Ep. iii. § 27.

VER. 141. *But errs not Nature from this gracious end,*] The author comes next to the confirmation of his Thesis, That *partial moral Evil is universal Good*; but introduceth it with a proper argument to abate our wonder at the phænomenon of moral Evil, which argument he builds on a concession of his adversaries: If we ask you, says he (from § 140 to 150) whether Nature doth not err from the gracious purpose of its creator, when plagues, earthquakes, and tempests unpeople whole regions at a time; you readily answer No. For that God acts by general, and not by particular laws; and that the course of matter and motion must be necessarily subject to some irregularities, because nothing is created perfect. I then ask why you should expect this perfection in Man? If you own that the *great end of God* (notwithstanding all this deviation) be *general happiness*, then 'tis *Nature*, and not God, that deviates; and do you expect greater constancy in Man?

Then Nature deviates; and can Man do less?

“ No (’tis reply’d) the first Almighty Cause 145
 “ Acts not by partial, but by gen’ral laws;
 “ Th’exceptions few; some change since all began:
 “ And what created perfect?”—Why then Man?
 If the great end be human Happiness,
 Then Nature deviates; and can Man do less? 150
 As much that end a constant course requires
 Of show’rs and sun-shine, as of Man’s desires;

COMMENTARY.

That is, if Nature, or the inanimate system (on which God hath imposed his laws, which it obeys as a machine obeys the hand of the workman) may in course of time deviate from its first direction, as the best philosophy shews it may; where is the wonder that Man, who was created a free Agent, and hath it in his power every moment to transgress the eternal rule of Right, should sometimes go out of Order?

VER. 151. *As much that end &c.*] Having thus shown how moral evil came into the world, namely, by *Man’s abuse of his own free-will*; he comes to the point, the *confirmation* of his thesis, by shewing how *moral* evil promotes good; and employs the *same* concessions of his adversaries, concerning *natural* evil, to illustrate it.

1. He shews it tends to the *good* of the *whole*, or *Universe* (from v 151 to 164) and this by analogy. You own, says he, that storms and tempests, clouds, rain, heat, and variety of sea-

NOTES.

VER. 150. *Then Nature deviates; &c.*] “ While comets
 “ move in very eccentric orbs,
 “ in all manner of positions,
 “ blind Fate could never make
 “ all the planets move one and
 “ the same way in orbs con-
 “ centric; some inconfidera-
 “ ble irregularities excepted,

“ which may have risen from
 “ the mutual actions of comets
 “ and planets upon one ano-
 “ ther, and which will be apt
 “ to increase, ’till this system
 “ wants a reformation.” *Sir*
Isaac Newton’s Optics, Quest.
ult.

As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
 As Men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise.
 If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,
 Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?

156

COMMENTARY.

sons are necessary (notwithstanding the accidental evil they bring with them) to the health and plenty of this Globe; why then should you suppose there is not the same use, with regard to the Universe, in a Borgia and a Catiline? But you say you can see the one and not the other. You say right: one terminates in this system, the other refers to the whole: of which none are capable of judging but the great Author of it himself: For, says the poet, in another place,

— of this Frame the bearings, and the ties,
 The strong connections, nice dependencies,
 Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
 Look'd thro' ? or can a part contain the whole? § 29, & seq.

Own therefore, says he, here, that

From Pride, from Pride, our very Reas'ning springs;
 Account for moral, as for nat'ral things:
 Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit?
 In both, to reason right is to submit.

NOTES.

VER. 155. *If plagues, &c.*] in its being between the effects of a thing in the universe at large, and the familiar and known effects of one in this sublunary world. For the position inforced in these lines is this, that partial evil tends to the good of the whole:

*Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
 May, must be right, as relative to all.*

§ 51.

How does the poet inforce it? of partial moral evil in a particular system, by that of partial natural evil in the same

Who knows but he, whose hand the light'ning
forms,

Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms;

Pours fierce Ambition in a Cæsar's mind, 159

Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?

From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs;

Account for moral, as for nat'ral things:

Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit?

In both, to reason right is to submit.

Better for Us, perhaps, it might appear, 165

Were there all harmony, all virtue here;

COMMENTARY.

VER. 165. *Better for us, &c.*] But, secondly, to strengthen the foregoing *analogical* argument, and to make the wisdom and goodness of God still more apparent, he observes (from *ψ* 165

NOTES.

system, while he leaves his *position* in the lurch. But the poet reasons at another rate: The way to prove his point, he knew, was to illustrate the effect of partial moral evil in the *universe*, by partial natural evil in a *particular system*. Whether partial moral evil tend to the good of the universe, being a question which, by reason of our ignorance of many parts of that universe, we cannot decide, but from known effects; the rules of argument require that it be

proved by *analogy*, i. e. setting it by, and comparing it with, a thing *certain*; and it is a thing *certain*, that partial natural evil tends to the good of our *particular system*.

VER. 157. *Who knows but he, &c.*] The sublimity with which the great Author of Nature is here characterised, is but the second beauty of this fine passage. The greatest is the making the very dispensation objected to, the paraphrasis of his Title.

That never air or ocean felt the wind;
That never passion discompos'd the mind.

COMMENTARY.

to 172) that *moral evil* is not only productive of *good* to the *whole*, but is even productive of *good* in *our own system*. It might, says he, perhaps, appear better to us, that there were nothing in this world but *peace* and *virtue* :

*That never air or ocean felt the wind;
That never passion discompos'd the mind.*

But then consider, that as our *material system* is supported by the strife of its elementary particles; so is our *intellectual system* by the conflict of our Passions, which are the elements of human action.

In a word, as without the benefit of tempestuous winds, both air and ocean would stagnate, corrupt, and spread universal contagion throughout all the ranks of animals that inhabit, or are supported by, them; so, without the benefit of the Passions, such virtue as was merely the effect of the absence of those Passions, would be a lifeless calm, a stoical Apathy :

Contracted all, retiring to the breast :
But health of Mind is Exercise, not Rest. Ep. ii. v 103.

Therefore, instead of regarding the Conflict of the elements, and the Passions of the mind as disorders, you ought to consider them as part of the *general order* of Providence: And that they are so, appears from their always preserving the same unvaried course, throughout all ages, from the creation to the present time :

*The gen'ral order, since the Whole began,
Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.*

We see, therefore, it would be doing great injustice to our author to suspect that he intended, by this, to give any encouragement to Vice. His system, as all his Ethic Epistles shew, is this: That the *Passions*, for the reasons given above, are necessary to the support of Virtue; That, indeed, the Passions in excess produce Vice, which is, in its own Nature, the greatest of all Evils, and comes into the world from the abuse of Man's free-will; but that God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, devi-

But ALL subsists by elemental strife;
And Passions are the elements of Life. 170
The gen'ral ORDER, since the whole began,
Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

VI. What would this Man? Now upward will
he soar,
And little less than Angel, would be more; 174

COMMENTARY.

ously turns the natural bias of its malignity to the advancement
of human happiness, and makes it productive of general Good:

TH'ETERNAL ART EDUCES GOOD FROM ILL.

Ep. ii. y 175.

This set against what we have observed of the Poet's doctrine
of a *future State*, will furnish us with an instance of his *steering*
(as he well expresses it in his preface) *between Doctrines seem-*
ingly opposite: If his Essay has any merit, he thinks it is in this.
And doubtless it is uncommon merit to reject the extravagances
of every System, and take in only what is rational and real.

The *Characteristics* and the *Fable of the Bees* are two seem-
ingly inconsistent systems; the extravagancy of the first is in
giving a scheme of *Virtue without Religion*; and of the latter,
in giving a scheme of *Religion without Virtue*. These our Poet
leaves to Any that will take them up; but agrees however so
far with the first, that "Virtue would be worth having, though
"itself was its only reward;" and so far with the latter, that
"God makes Evil, against its nature, productive of Good."

VER. 173. *What would this Man? &c.*] Having thus justified
Providence in its *permission* of partial MORAL EVIL, he employs
the remaining part of his Epistle in vindicating it from the im-

NOTES.

VER. 169. *But all subsists* | *than Angel, &c.*] *Thou hast*
| *made him a little lower than*
| *the Angels, and hast crowned*
| *him with glory and honour.*
155, &c.

VER. 174. *And little less* | Psalm viii. 9.

Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears
 To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
 Made for his use all creatures if he call,
 Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all?
 Nature to these, without profusion, kind,
 The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd; 180
 Each seeming want compensated of course,
 Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;

COMMENTARY.

putation of certain supposed NATURAL EVILS. For now he shews (from v 172 to 207) that though the complaint of his adversaries against Providence be on pretence of *real moral evils*; yet, at bottom, it all proceeds from their impatience under *imaginary natural ones*, the issue of a depraved appetite for visionary advantages, which if Man had, they would be either *useless* or *pernicious* to him, as unsuitable to his state, or repugnant to his condition. Though God (says he) hath so bountifully bestowed, on Man, Faculties little less than *angelic*, yet he ungratefully grasps at higher; and then, extravagant in another extreme, with a passion as ridiculous as that is impious, envies even the peculiar accommodations of *brutes*. But here his own principles shew his folly. He supposes them all made for his use: Now what use could he have of them, when he had robbed them of all their qualities? Qualities, distributed with the highest wisdom, as they are divided at present; but which, if bestowed according to the froward humour of these childish complainers, would be found to be, every where, either *wanting* or *superfluous*. But even with these brutal qualities, Man would not only be no gainer, but a considerable loser; as is shewn, in

NOTES.

VER. 182. *Here with degrees of swiftness, &c.*] It is a certain axiom in the anatomy of creatures, that in proportion as they are formed for

strength, their swiftness is lessened; or as they are formed for swiftness, their strength is abated. P.

All in exact proportion to the state;
 Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
 Each beast, each insect, happy in its own: 185
 Is Heav'n unkind to Man, and Man alone?
 Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
 Be pleas'd with nothing, if not bless'd with all?

The blifs of Man (could Pride that blessing find)
 Is not to act or think beyond mankind; 190
 No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,
 But what his nature and his state can bear.
 Why has not Man a microscopic eye?
 For this plain reason, Man is not a Fly.
 Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n, 195
 T'inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?
 Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
 To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore?
 Or quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,
 Die of a rose in aromatic pain? 200
 If nature thunder'd in his op'ning ears,
 And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,

COMMENTARY.

explaining the consequences that would follow from his having his sensations in that exquisite degree, in which this or that animal is observed to possess them.

NOTES.

VER. 202. *Stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,* This instance is poetical and even sublime, but misplaced. He

How would he wish that Heav'n had left him still
 The whisp'ring Zephyr, and the purling rill?
 Who finds not Providence all good and wise, 205
 Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

VII. Far as Creation's ample range extends,
 The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends:
 Mark how it mounts, to Man's imperial race,
 From the green myriads in the peopled grass: 210
 What modes of fight betwixt each wide extreme,
 The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:
 Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
 And hound sagacious on the tainted green:

COMMENTARY.

VER. 207. *Far as Creation's ample range extends,*] He tells us next (from v 206 to 233) that the complying with such extravagant desires would not only be useless and pernicious to Man, but would be breaking into the Order, and deforming the Beauty of God's Creation, in which *this* animal is subject to *that*, and every one to Man; who by his Reason enjoys the sum of all their powers.

NOTES.

is arguing philosophically in a case that required him to employ the *real* objects of sense only: And, what is worse, he speaks of this as a *real* object.—*If NATURE thunder'd, &c.* The case is different where (in v 253) he speaks of the motion of the heavenly bodies under the sublime Im-

gery of *ruling Angels*: For whether there be *ruling Angels* or no, there is *real motion*, which was all his argument wanted; but if there be no *music of the spheres*, there was no real sound, which his argument could not do without.

VER. 213. *The headlong lioness*] The manner of the

Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood, 215
 To that which warbles thro' the vernal wood:
 The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
 Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
 In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
 From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew? 220
 How Instinct varies in the grov'ling swine,
 Compar'd, half-reas'ning elephant, with thine!
 'Twixt that, and Reason, what a nice barrier;
 For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near!
 Remembrance and Reflection how ally'd; 225
 What thin partitions Sense from Thought divide:

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Lions hunting their prey in the deserts of Africa is this: At their first going out in the night-time they set up a loud roar, and then listen to the noise made by the beasts in their flight, pursuing them by the ear, and not by the nostril. It is probable the story of the jackal's hunting for the lion, was occasioned by observation of this defect of scent in that terrible animal. P.

VER. 224. *For ever sep'rate, &c.*] *Near*, by the similitude of the operations; *separate*, by the immense difference in the nature of the powers.

VER. 226. *What thin partitions &c.*] So *thin*, that the

Atheistic philosophers, as Protagoras, held that *thought was only sense*; and from thence concluded, that *every imagination or opinion of every man was true*: Πᾶσα φαντασία ἐστὶ ἀληθής. But the poet determines more philosophically; that they are really and essentially different, how *thin* soever the partition is by which they are *divided*. Thus (to illustrate the truth of this observation) when a geometer considers a triangle, in order to demonstrate the equality of its three angles to two right ones, he has the picture or image of some sensible triangle in his mind, which is *sense*;

And Middle natures, how they long to join,
 Yet never pass th'insuperable line!
 Without this just gradation, could they be
 Subjected, these to those, or all to thee? 230
 The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,
 Is not thy Reason all these pow'rs in one?

VIII. See, thro' this air, this ocean, and this earth,
 All matter quick, and bursting into birth.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 233. *See, thro' this air, &c.*] And farther (from v 232 to 267) that this breaking the order of things, which, as a link or chain, connects all beings from the highest to the lowest, would unavoidably be attended with the destruction of the Universe: For that the several parts of it must at least compose as entire and harmonious a whole, as the parts of a human body, can hardly be doubted: Yet we see what confusion it would make in our frame, if the members were set upon invading each other's office:

What if the foot, &c.

v 259, &c.

Who will not acknowledge, therefore, that so harmonious a

NOTES.

yet notwithstanding, he must needs have the notion or idea of an intellectual triangle likewise, which is *thought*; for this plain reason, because every image or picture of a triangle must needs be obtusangular, or rectangular, or acutangular; but that which, in his mind, is the subject of his proposition is the *ratio* of a triangle, undetermined to any of

these species. On this account it was that Aristotle said, Νοήματα τινὶ διοίσει, τὲ μὴ φαντάσματα εἶναι, ἢ εἰδὲ ταῦτα φαντάσματα, ἀλλ' ἐκ ἀνευ φαντασμάτων. *The conceptions of the mind differ somewhat from sensible images; they are not sensible images, and yet not quite free or disengaged from sensible images.*

Above, how high, progressive life may go! 235
 Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
 Vast chain of Being! which from God began,
 Natures æthereal, human, angel, man,
 Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
 No glass can reach; from Infinite to thee, 240
 From thee to Nothing.—On superior pow'rs
 Were we to press, inferior might on ours:
 Or in the full creation leave a void,
 Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd:
 From Nature's chain whatever link you strike, 245
 Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

And, if each system in gradation roll
 Alike essential to th' amazing Whole,

VARIATIONS.

VER. 238. Ed. 1st.

Ethereal essence, spirit, substance, man.

COMMENTARY.

connection in the disposition of things, as is here described, is transcendently beautiful? But the *Fatalists* suppose such an one.—What then? Is the First Free Agent, the great Cause of all things, debarred from a contrivance so exquisite, because some Men, to set up their idol, Fate, absurdly represent it as presiding over such a system?

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VER. 243. *Or in the full creation leave a void, &c.*

This is only an illustration, alluding to the Peripatetic *plenam* and *vacuum*; the full

and *void* here meant, relating not to Matter, but to Life.

VER. 247. *And, if each system in gradation roll*] The verb alludes to the *motion* of

The least confusion but in one, not all
 That system only, but the Whole must fall. 250
 Let Earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
 Planets and Suns run lawless thro' the sky;
 Let ruling Angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
 Being on Being wreck'd, and world on world;
 Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod, 255
 And Nature trembles to the throne of God.
 All this dread ORDER break—for whom? for thee?
 Vile worm!—oh Madness! Pride! Impiety!

IX. What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
 Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head? 260
 What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd
 To serve mere engines to the ruling Mind?

NOTES.

the planetary bodies of each system; and to the *figures* described by that motion.

VER. 251. *Let Earth unbalanc'd*] *i. e.* Being no longer kept within its orbit by the different directions of its progressive and attractive motions; which, like equal weights in a balance, keep it in an equilibrium.

VER. 253. *Let ruling Angels &c.*] The poet, throughout this poem, with great art uses an advantage, which his employing a *Platonic* principle

for the foundation of his Essay had afforded him; and that is the expressing himself (as here) in Platonic notions; which, luckily for his purpose, are highly poetical, at the same time that they add a grace to the uniformity of his reasoning.

VER. 259. *What if the foot, &c.*] This fine illustration in defence of the *System of Nature*, is taken from St. Paul, who employed it to defend the *System of Grace*.

Just as absurd for any part to claim
 To be another, in this gen'ral frame:
 Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains, 265
 The great directing MIND of ALL ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
 Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;

COMMENTARY.

VER. 267. *All are but parts of one stupendous whole,*] Having thus given a representation of God's creation, as *one entire whole*, where all the parts have a necessary dependence on, and relation to each other, and where every Particular works and concurs to the perfection of the whole; as such a system would be thought above the reach of vulgar ideas; to reconcile it to common conceptions, he shews (from v 266 to 281) that God is equally and intimately present to every sort of *substance*, to every particle of *matter*, and in every instant of *being*; which eases the labouring imagination, and makes it expect no less, from such a *Presence*, than such a *Dispensation*.

NOTES.

VER. 265. *Just as absurd,* &c.] See the Prosecution and application of this in Ep. iv. P.

VER. 266. *The great directing Mind* &c.] *Veneramur autem & colimus ob dominium. Deus enim sine dominio, providentia, & causis finalibus, nihil aliud est quam FATUM & NATURA.* Newtoni Princip. Schol. gener. sub finem.

VER. 268. *Whose body Nature is,* &c.] A certain examiner remarks, on this line, that "A Spinozist would express himself in this Manner." I believe he would,

and so, we know, would St. Paul too, when writing on the same subject, namely the omnipresence of God in his Providence, and in his Substance. *In him we live and move and have our being; i. e.* we are parts of him, *his offspring*, as the Greek poet, a pantheist quoted by the Apostle, observes: And the reason is, because a religious theist and an impious pantheist both profess to believe the omnipresence of God. But would Spinoza, as Mr. Pope does, call God *the great directing Mind of all*,

That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in th'æthereal frame; 270

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who hath intentionally created a perfect Universe? Or would | a Spinozist have told us,

The workman from the work distinct was known,

a line that overturns all Spinozism from its very foundations.

But this sublime description of the Godhead contains not only the divinity of St. Paul;

but, if that will not satisfy the men he writes against, the philosophy likewise of Sir Isaac Newton.

The poet says,

*All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul,
That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in th'æthereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow's in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.*

The Philosopher:—*In ipso continentur & moventur universa, sed absque mutua passione. Deus nihil patitur ex corporum motibus; illa nullam sentiunt resistantiam ex omnipræsentia Dei.—Corpore omni & figura corporea destituitur.—Omnia*

regit & omnia cognoscit.—Cum unaquæque Spatii particula sit semper, & unumquodque Durationis indivisibile momentum, ubique, certe rerum omnium Fabricator ac Dominus non erit nunquam, nusquam.

Mr. Pope:

*Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair, as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns:
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.*

Sir Isaac Newton:—*Annon ex phænomenis constat esse entem in-*

corporeum, viventem, intelligentem, omnipræsentem, qui in spa-

Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
 Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
 Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
 Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part, 275
 As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;

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tio infinito, tanquam sensorio suo, res ipsas intime cernat, penitusque perspiciat, totasque intra se præsens præsentes complectatur.

But now admitting, for argument's sake, there was an ambiguity in these expressions, so great, as that a Spinozist might employ them to express his own particular principles; and such a thing might well be, because the Spinozists, in order to hide the impiety of their principle, are used to express the Omnipresence of God in terms that any religious Theist might employ. In this case, I say, how are we to judge of the poet's meaning? Surely by the whole tenor of his argument. Now take the words in the sense of the Spinozists, and he is made, in the conclusion of his epistle, to overthrow all he has been advancing throughout the body of it: For Spinozism is the destruction of an Universe, where every thing tends, by a foreseen contrivance in all its parts,

to the perfection of the whole. But allow him to employ the passage in the sense of St. Paul, *That we and all creatures live and move and have our being in God*; and then it will be seen to be the most logical support of all that had preceded. For the poet having, as we say, laboured through his epistle to prove, that every thing in the Universe tends, by a foreseen contrivance, and a present direction of all its parts, to the perfection of the whole; it might be objected, that such a disposition of things implying in God a painful, operose, and inconceivable extent of Providence, it could not be supposed that such care extended to *all*, but was confined to the more noble parts of the creation. This gross conception of the First Cause the poet exposes, by shewing that God is equally and intimately present to every particle of Matter, to every sort of Substance, and in every instant of Being.

As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
 As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns :
 To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all. 280

X. Cease then, nor ORDER Imperfection name :
 Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.

VARIATIONS.

After γ 282. in the MS.

Reason, to think of God when she pretends,
 Begins a Cenfor, an Adorer ends.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 281. *Cease then, nor Order Imperfection name :*] And now the poet, as he had promised, having *vindicated the ways of God to Man*, concludes (from γ 280 to the end) that, from what had been said, it appears, that the very things we blame, contribute to our Happiness, either as Particulars, or as Parts of the Universal system; that our State of Ignorance was allotted to us out of compassion; that yet we have as much Knowledge as is sufficient to shew us that we are, and always shall be, as blest as we can bear; for that NATURE is neither a *Stratonic* chain of blind Causes and Effects,

(All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee)

nor yet the fortuitous result of *Epicurean* Atoms,

(All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see)

as those two species of atheism supposed it; but the wonderful Art and Direction, unknown indeed to Man, of an all-powerful, all-wise, all-good, and free Being. And therefore, we may be assured, that the arguments, brought above, to prove partial moral Evil productive of universal Good, are conclusive; from

NOTES.

VER. 278. *As the rapt* | name *Seraphim*, signifying
Seraph &c.] Alluding to the | *burners*.

Know thy own point: This kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.

Submit.—In this, or any other sphere, 285

Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:

Safe in the hand of one disposing Pow'r,

Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.

COMMENTARY.

whence one certain truth results, in spite of all the pride and cavils of vain Reason, That WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.

That the reader may see in one view the Exactness of the Method, as well as Force of the Argument, I shall here draw up a short synopsis of this Epistle. The poet begins by telling us his subject is an Essay on Man: That his end of writing is to *vindicate Providence*: That he intends to derive his arguments, *from the visible things of God seen in this system*: Lays down this Proposition, *That of all possible systems infinite Wisdom has form'd the best*: draws from thence two Consequences,
1. *That there must needs be somewhere such a creature as Man*;
2. *That the moral Evil which he is author of, is productive of the Good of the Whole.* This is his general Thesis; from whence he forms this Conclusion, *That Man should rest submissive and content, and make the hopes of Futurity his comfort; but not suffer this to be the occasion of PRIDE*, which is the cause of all his impious complaints.

He proceeds to confirm his Thesis.—Previously endeavours to abate our wonder at the phenomenon of *moral Evil*; shews, first, *its use to the Perfection of the Universe*, by Analogy, from the use of *physical Evil* in this particular system.—Secondly, *its use in this system*, where it is turned, providentially, from its natural bias, to promote Virtue. Then goes on to vindicate Providence from the imputation of certain *supposed natural Evils*; as he had before justified it for the Permission of *real moral Evil*, in shewing that, though the atheist's complaint against Providence be on pretence of *real moral Evil*, yet the true cause is his impatience under *imaginary natural Evil*; the issue of a *depraved appetite for fantastical advantages*, which, if obtained, would be *useless or hurtful* to Man, and deforming

All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
 All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see;
 All Discord, Harmony not understood; 291
 All partial Evil, universal Good:
 And, spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
 One truth is clear, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.

COMMENTARY.

and destructive to the Universe, as breaking into that Order by which it is supported.—He describes that *Order, Harmony, and close Connection of the Parts*; and, by shewing the intimate presence of God to his whole creation, gives a reason for an Universe so amazingly beautiful and perfect. From all this he deduces his general Conclusion, *That Nature being neither a blind chain of Causes and Effects, nor yet the fortuitous result of wandering atoms, but the wonderful Art and Direction of an all-wise, all-good, and free Being; WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT, with regard to the Disposition of God, and its Ultimate Tendency*; which once granted, all complaints against Providence are at an end.

NOTES.

VER. 294. *One truth is clear, &c.*] It will be hard to think any caviller should have objected to this conclusion, especially when the author, in this very epistle, has himself thus explained it;

*Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
 May, must be right, as relative to ALL—
 So Man, who here seems principal alone,
 Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown;
 Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal:
 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.*

But without any regard to the evidence of this illustration, there is one who exclaims:
 “ See the general conclusion,
 “ *All that is, is right.* So that
 “ at the sight of Charles the
 “ first losing his head on the
 “ scaffold, we must have said
 “ *this is right*; at the sight
 “ too of his judges condemn-
 “ ing him, we must have said
 “ *this is right*; at the sight of

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“some of these judges, taken
 “and condemned for the
 “action which he had own-
 “ed to be right, he must have
 “cried out *this is doubly right.*”
 Never was any thing more a-
 mazing than that the absurdi-
 ties arising from the sense in
 which this critic takes the
 grand principle, of *whatever*
is, is right, did not shew him
 his mistake: For could any
 one in his senses employ a
 proposition in a meaning from
 whence such evident absur-
 dities *immediately* arise? I have
 observed, that this conclusion,
whatever is, is right, is a con-
 sequence of these premises,
 that *partial Evil tends to uni-*
versal Good; which the au-
 thor employs as a principle to
 humble the pride of Man, who
 would impiously make God
 accountable for his creation.
 What then does common sense
 teach us to understand by *what-*
ever is, is right? Did the poet
 mean right with regard to
 Man, or right with regard to
 God; right with regard to it-
 self, or right with regard to

its ultimate tendency? Surely
 WITH REGARD TO GOD;
 for he tells us his design is to
vindicate the ways of God to
Man. Surely, with regard to
 its ULTIMATE TENDENCY;
 for he tells us again, *all par-*
tial ill is universal good, & 291.
 Now is this any encouragement
 to Vice? Or does it take off
 from the crime of him who
 commits it, that God provi-
 dentially produces Good out
 of Evil? Had Mr. Pope ab-
 ruptly said in his conclusion,
the result of all is, that what-
ever is, is right, the objector
 had even then been inexcusa-
 ble for putting so absurd a
 sense upon the words, when he
 might have seen that it was a
 conclusion from the general
 principle abovementioned; and
 therefore must necessarily have
 another meaning. But what
 must we think of him, when
 the poet, to prevent mistakes,
 had delivered, in this very
 place, the principle itself, to-
 gether with this conclusion as
 the consequence of it?

*All Discord, Harmony not understood;
 All partial Evil, universal Good:
 And, spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
 One truth is clear, "Whatever Is, is Right."*

He could not have told his
 reader plainer that this conclu-
 sion was the consequence of that principle, unless he had
 written THEREFORE in great
 Church letters.

A R G U M E N T O F
E P I S T L E II.

*Of the Nature and State of Man with respect to
Himself, as an Individual.*

- I. *THE business of Man not to pry into God, but to study himself. His Middle Nature; his Powers and Frailties, § 1 to 19. The Limits of his Capacity, § 19, &c. II. The two Principles of Man, Self-love and Reason, both necessary, § 53, &c. Self-love the stronger, and why, § 67, &c. Their end the same, § 81, &c. III. The PASSIONS, and their use, § 93 to 130. The predominant Passion, and its force, § 132 to 160. Its Necessity, in directing Men to different purposes, § 165, &c. Its providential Use, in fixing our Principle, and ascertaining our Virtue, § 177. IV. Virtue and Vice joined in our mixed Nature; the limits near, yet the things separate and evident: What is the Office of Reason, § 202 to 216. V. How odious Vice in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it, § 217. VI. That, however, the Ends of Providence and general Good are answered in our Passions and Imperfections, § 238, &c. How usefully these are distributed to all Orders of Men, § 241. How useful they are to Society, § 251. And to the Individuals, § 263. In every state, and every age of life, § 273, &c.*



N. Blakey inv. & delin. 1748.

Ravenot Sculp.

Self-Love still stronger, as its Objects nigh,
Reason's at distance, and in Prospect lies;
That sees immediate Good, by present Sense,
Reason the future, and the Consequence.

Essay on Man, Ep. II.