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**The Works Of the late Right Honorable Henry St. John,  
Lord Viscount Bolingbroke**

In Five Volumes, complete.

**Bolingbroke, Henry St. John**

**London, 1754**

XLVIII.

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vastly altered from that infinite distance in nature and state between God and us, and from the immense differences which his relations towards us have from our relations to one another. These two great divines are, you see, on my side. They are both of the same opinion that CLARKE censures: and if his censures were as just as they are dogmatical, St. PAUL himself would be one of those men who take in reality the moral attributes of God entirely away, and who may on the same grounds deny his natural attributes\*.

## XLVIII.

**I**T is time to have done with CLARKE, especially since I leave this part of the argument in much better hands than my own, in those of Dr. BARROW and St. PAUL, who deny to him the very principle from which, as from a common source, all the accusations of providence are deduced by him, by many other divines, and by the whole tribe of atheists. I proceed to take notice of another writer, and to examine another of those assumptions which are employed by these men, whether divines or atheists, to maintain their charge. That we are very incompetent judges of the moral attributes of God and of the eternal reason of things; that it is unpardonable presumption in us to pronounce what both or either of them required that God should do in the original constitution of our system, or requires that he should do in the government of it; these truths, I say, are so evident, that he who denies them, does not deserve to be argued against any longer. "Quae  
"perspicua sunt longa esse non debent." The determination of them should in reason determine the whole dispute. Infi-

\* Evid. p. 26.

nite wisdom and infinite power have made things as they are: how goodness and justice required that they should be made, is neither *coram iudice*, nor to any rational purpose to enquire. For greater satisfaction, however, it may not be amiss to shew that neither the state of mankind in this life, in general, nor the lot of good and bad men, in particular, are such as they have been represented to serve the purposes of some persons; and that if they were such, the hypothesis of a life to come would not restore by reason the goodness and justice, which these men endeavor to destroy by appeals to reason and to passion.

THE solemn author of the religion of nature delineated, whom CLARKE had in his eye perhaps, when he described his fourth sort of theists, whether this treatise had been then published or not, places himself on the same bench with MINOS. MINOS was the son of JUPITER, and the disciple of his father. So PLATO calls him, in order to insinuate, as I believe, that nothing less than the wisdom of the Supreme Being was sufficient for the task assigned to this infernal judge. But I think on recollection, that I must recall my words, and say that WOLLASTON places himself far above MINOS. He judges God as well as man. Departed souls appear at the tribunal of the other, where they are punished for the evil they have done, or recompenced for the evil they have suffered, in this world. But he erects this court of judicature, establishes the general laws of it, as he judges the perfections of the divine nature required that they should be established, and distinguishes, and weighs the kinds of happiness, or misery, that fall to the share of different men. Clear, and mixed happiness, avoidable, and unavoidable misery in the whole, or avoidable so far that the creature would chuse rather to bear the remainder than miss the proportion of happiness: all which must

come into consideration with the good and the evil men have done, at that judgment seat, where they are to be tryed after death for what they have done in life.

IN his attempt to prove, from the nature of an all-perfect Being, that God created the human soul immortal, because the mortality of it does not consist with reason, this author has the temerity to assert that he who says the contrary, must say in consequence either that God is unreasonable, unjust\*, and cruel, or that no man has a greater share of misery unavoidable than of happiness. Nay further, the existence of an all-perfect Being depends so much, according to this theist, on the hypothesis of a future state†, that one single instance of unfortunate virtue and of prosperous wickedness in this world would be to him a sufficient argument for such a state. His reason is, that God cannot be unjust nor unreasonable in any one instance, which is undoubtedly true. But on this supposition he would be so in one instance, if there was no future state. One instance of these kinds, therefore, would have been to WOLLASTON a demonstration against the existence of an all-perfect Being, without the hypothesis of such a state. This is strange theism. Artificial theology is neither more dogmatical, nor more absurd: and the belief of God's existence hangs by a twine in both.

To support this hypothesis, he gives a most exaggerated description of the misfortunes to which particular men are liable in this world, and a very ridiculous as well as exaggerated description of the general, and usual state of mankind; both which are assumed to be inconsistent with the idea of a reasonable cause. Let us consider the last first, as the natural order

\* p. 200.

† p. 205.

seems to require. Whilst the CLARKES and WOLLASTONS of the age accuse the providence of God by arguments drawn from his nature, and from the eternal reason of things, both as imperfectly known to them as to you and me; let us defend this providence by arguments, drawn from the nature of man, and the actual constitutions of the world, both equally well known to them and to us. Instead of hearkening to them, let us hearken to God who speaks to us in his works; and instead of pronouncing what it was right for him to do, believe all he has done, for that very reason, right. Let us be prepared to meet with several appearances, which we cannot explain, nor therefore reconcile to the ideas we endeavor to form of the divine perfections. But let us remember too that as the pretended science of the men, against whom we dispute, exposes them to error, and as they render the great truths of theism doubtful, or at least perplexed by blending them up in an imaginary scheme of divine oeconomy; so we may be secure from error by a modest avowal of ignorance, where human knowledge ceases: and as the imperfections of created Beings prove them to be created, not self-existent, so the very deficiencies of the knowledge we have will be so many proofs of its truth. They must be necessarily such; for if it be true that infinite wisdom and infinite power created, and govern the universe, it cannot but follow that some of the phaenomena may be proportionable, and that others must be disproportionable to our, and to every other finite understanding.

## XLIX.

**H**AVING premised what I thought proper in this place, I observe that the representation, made of the general state of mankind, proves nothing, or proves too much.