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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**

LVI.

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cular cases what his wisdom, to whom nothing is future, once thought sufficient to be established for all cases. The effects, therefore, that are assumed of particular providences are either false, or they are undistinguishable from those of a general providence, and become particular by nothing more than the application which vain superstition or pious fraud makes of them. It is as easy to attack, and it is as easy to defend the justice of God on one hypothesis as on the other. But since one is supported by equivocal and doubtful, and the other by unquestionable facts, I shall borrow no help from the former, I shall suppose them not to have been, and shall rest the cause of God on the latter which are likewise the most proper to be urged against the atheists.

## LVI.

**L**ET us consider how it appears by the objections these difficult persons make that we, and the system we inhabit, should have been framed to satisfy them, and to anticipate their cavils; after which it will be proper to consider, further how it is framed, and to compare God's plan with theirs. Physical nature then should have been so constituted that the whole world might have been one paradise, neither scorched by the sun, nor pinched by the cold, nor ruffled by tempests. Men should have enjoyed in it every natural good, have been subject to no natural evil, no not to death which they deem to be the greatest of evils. Moral nature should have been so constituted that every man might be necessarily determined to all the obligations of morality, that he might be good as PATERCULUS says of CATO\*, because he could not

\* Quia aliter esse non potuit.

be otherwise. He should have been impeccable as well as invulnerable. No matter how all this would have unconnected the universe, and have broke the harmony, and the consent of it's parts, in which we see that the planets of our solar system act on one another, that the sun acts on all of them, and that for ought we can tell the several solar systems that compose the universe act on one another likewise. No matter how all this would have accorded with a gradation of sense and intellect; how senses less imperfect would have broke that proportion between them and their object which is necessary to make them useful in human life; how superior faculties of the mind would have broke that scale of intelligence which rises up to man in this animal system; which may rise up from him in other systems in an higher proportion, and which one of these allies, the divine, allows to do so in other created Beings. No matter for such considerations as these. Instead of concluding from the want of all these advantages, which they esteem to be due to them, that man is not so noble a creature as they have represented him to themselves, they conclude that because he wants them God is unjust. Just so they concluded from their indeterminable notions of divine goodness, and of divine love, that the world was made for man, and man not to be moderately but immoderately happy in it; instead of concluding the very contrary from their determinate idea of wisdom which has not proportioned any means to these ends, in making the world and man.

BUT the dogmatical persons who assume so much, and prove commonly so little, do not only proceed on groundless principles. They shift and vary their principles of reasoning as different occasions require, which is a practise much used, avowed, and approved by antient fathers, and which makes it rather tedious than hard very often to refute their

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successors. In the present argument for instance, many of their complaints and objections are levelled at the whole scheme and order of things both physical and moral. They mean nothing, or they mean that the whole should have been differently constituted, and in the manner I have hinted to have been reconcileable to the goodness and justice of God. But they grow less severe in their criticisms, and less exorbitant in their demands at other times, and seem to think that the divine attributes might have been saved even in the present constitution of physical and moral nature, if by continual interpositions of providence every good man had been protected from evils of both kinds, whilst every ill man was exposed to them all; if the office of the angels standing before the throne of God \* and ministering to the favorites of God, that is, to the elect, had been more extended and more regularly performed. This may be looked upon as a sort of composition into which they are driven by the extravagance of the other hypothesis, and by the absurd consequences that flow from it.

IF the divine attributes had required that there should have been no such thing as physical or moral evil, man would have been visibly the final cause of a world made solely for his use, and to be the scene of his happiness. This world would have been visibly the final cause of the universe. All the planets would have rolled in subserviency to ours, and the fixed stars themselves would have served to no other purpose than to twinkle by night, to adorn our canopy, and to please our eyes. But this hypothesis appearing too extravagant to be insisted upon in its whole extent, one part of it has been laid aside, and one retained. No one will affirm in terms,

\* Vid. Dan. C. 7.

I think, at this time, that our world is the final cause of the universe. But many will affirm that man is by the goodness of God the final cause of the world he inhabits; and, therefore, if physical evil is inseparable from physical nature, and moral evil from moral nature, by the necessary relations of things, or by the general scheme which infinite wisdom has established, the consistency of the divine attributes required that something more than we observe should have been done, to make the first design of God in the creation of this world and of man effectual. His goodness required at least, that the general state of mankind should not be as miserable as it is in a world made for the sake of mankind. His justice required most certainly, that they who seek the perfection of their nature, and the happiness of their kind in virtue, should be distinguished from those who deprave their own nature, pervert the order of things, and hinder virtue from having it's due effect. What could not be effected by a general providence, acting by general laws, might have been effected by particular providences acting on every occasion, according to the merit or demerit of every rational creature. But this has not been done, and such providences are so rare, that there is far less virtue than vice to be found, and that the former is, for the most part, unhappy, and the latter prosperous in this world. The justice of God is, therefore, justly condemned, unless there is another. Let us make a few reflections, that will shew how ill this charge is laid, and how ill, if it was better laid, the expedient of another life would serve to set right the pretended irregularities of this world, and to justify the providence of God.