

The Principles of Action

No. 3 of *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reported between brackets in normal-sized type.—Other philosophers are referred to by surname only; Reid also gives their titles.—The frequency of extremely short paragraphs is Reid’s work.

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Glossary

amiable: This meant 'likable', 'lovable', 'very attractive'. A good deal stronger than the word's normal meaning today.

art: In Reid's time an 'art' was any human activity that involves techniques or rules of procedure. 'Arts' in this sense include medicine, farming, and painting.

bad: This very often replaces Reid's adjective 'ill', e.g. in the phrase 'good and ill'. See also **evil**.

basic: Most occurrences of this replace Reid's 'original', which can't now carry the meaning it had at his time. In calling a human power 'original' he means that it is basic, fundamental, not derived from (or explainable in terms of) something lying deeper in the human constitution.

belief: Many occurrences of this, including the title of Part II chapter 8, replace Reid's 'opinion'. For him the two are equivalent, whereas for us their flavours are slightly different. The phrase 'belief and opinions' on page 47 seems to presuppose a difference, but Reid nowhere explains what it is.

contemn: This is not obsolete; it means 'have contempt for'.

culture: As used repeatedly in the final chapter of this work, 'culture' is to be thought of in connection with 'horticulture', 'agriculture' etc. It has nothing to do with being artistically or intellectually or socially cultured; it is all about cultivation, taking care of plants, making a good job of feeding and watering and pruning.

dignity: Excellence.

disinterested: What this meant in early modern times is what it still means when used by literate people, namely 'not *self*-interested'.

epitome: A reduced-scale model. (It nearly rhymes with 'litany'.)

evil: This replaces Reid's 'ill' when that is used as a noun. It has become fairly standard in English-language philosophy to use 'evil' to mean merely 'something bad', e.g. 'pain is an evil', and 'the problem of evil' meaning 'the problem posed by the existence of bad states of affairs'. It's just an oddity of English that 'good' works well as adjective or noun while 'bad' works only as an adjective. Don't load 'evil' in this text with all the force it has in English when used as an adjective. See also **bad**.

faculty: Your faculty of seeing (for example) is either **(i)** your ability to see or **(ii)** whatever it is about you that *gives* you the ability to see. Reid's stress on our need to trust the 'testimony' of our faculties, he seems to adopt **(ii)**, a choice that is underlined when on page 63 he speaks of faculties as 'engines'.

injury: In Reid's usage here, to do someone an injury is to hurt him *wrongly, unjustly*. That is why you can't believe that someone has done you an injury unless you are equipped with moral concepts—see page 34, the paragraph starting 'The very notion. . . '.

intercourse: This is used on page 20 in a context where sex is under discussion, but its meaning is not sexual. It has a very general meaning that covers conversation, business dealings, any kind of social inter-relations; 'sexual intercourse' named one species, but you couldn't drop the adjective and still refer to it.

lot: 'What is given to a person by fate or divine providence; *esp.* a person's destiny, fortune, or condition in life.' (OED)

mean: Low-down, poor, skimpy etc., in literal and metaphorical uses. Reid uses it here as a kind of intensifier—‘mean or bad motives’ [page 31], ‘base or mean’ [page 42], ‘mean and despicable’ [page 54].

object: In early modern usage, anything that is aimed at, wanted, loved, hated, thought about, feared, etc. is an *object* of that aim, desire, love, etc. *Anything:* it could be a physical object, but is more likely to be a state of affairs, a state of mind, an experience, etc.

principle: Of this work’s 305 occurrences of ‘principle’, a few concern basic propositions—principles ‘of false religion’, ‘of solid geometry’, ‘of the Epicurean sect’, and so on. But the vast majority use ‘principle’ in a sense that was common then but is now obsolete, in which it means ‘source’, ‘cause’, ‘driver’, ‘energizer’, or the like. Reid sometimes speaks of a principle’s ‘impulse’ and sometimes of its ‘drawing’ the person in a certain direction. He seems not to have given any thought to this choice between push and pull.

reflection: Reid sometimes uses this in a sense popularised by Locke, meaning ‘looking in at the events in one’s own mind’. But quite often he uses it in a sense that comes more naturally to us, in which reflection is just calmly thinking things over.

sagacity: Lively intelligence.

sated: utterly satisfied, glutted, full.

science: In early modern times this word applied to any body of knowledge or theory that is (perhaps) axiomatised and (certainly) conceptually highly organised. That is why on page 61 Reid implies that there is a ‘science’ of morals.

second cause: For those with certain theological views, God is the first cause of everything that happens in the world; a ‘second cause’ is an ordinary down-to-earth cause such as

heat causing butter to melt. It is a ‘second’ cause because God causes the butter to melt *through* bringing heat to bear on it. In Reid’s single use of this phrase in the present work [page 67] he seems—a bit surprisingly—to be saying that the most fundamental aspects of the human constitution are produced by God *directly* and not through any manipulation of created mental or physical realities.

self-control: This replaces Reid’s ‘self-government’ throughout.

social: In contrast to ‘selfish’, meaning ‘motivated by a concern for the welfare of other people’.

speculative: This means ‘having to do with non-moral propositions’. Ethics is a ‘practical’ discipline, chemistry is a ‘speculative’ one. When Reid speaks of ‘speculation’ he means ‘disciplined study of some factual material that isn’t immediately concerned with how anyone should behave’.

sympathy: Literally ‘feeling with’, as applied to any feeling. Sympathy is at work not only when your sadness saddens me but also when your happiness makes me happy. When on page 65 Reid says that if your friend acts badly that will give you ‘a very painful sympathy indeed’ in the form of a feeling like that of guilt, he is evidently assuming that your friend knows he has acted badly and is ashamed, and it’s his shame that your sympathy locks onto.

uneasy: Locke turned this into a kind of technical term for some later writers, through his theory that every intentional human act is the agent’s attempt to relieve his state of ‘uneasiness’. It covers pain but also many much milder states—any unpleasant sense of something’s being wrong.

vice, vicious: Morally wrong conduct, not necessarily of the special kind that we reserve ‘vice’ for these days, or the different special kind that we label as ‘vicious’.

Part II: Animal Principles of Action

Chapter 1: Appetites

Having discussed the mechanical principles of action, I now turn to the ones I am calling ‘animal’ principles..

They’re ones that operate on the will and intention, but don’t require any exercise of judgment or reason; and are most of them to be found in some brute animals as well as in man.

In this class, the first kind I’ll *appetites*, giving that word a stricter sense than it is sometimes given, even by good writers.

The word ‘appetite’ is sometimes limited so that it signifies only the desire for food when we are hungry; sometimes it is extended so as to signify any strong desire, whatever it is a desire *for*. Without wanting to criticise any use of the word that custom has authorised, I hope you’ll allow me to limit it to a particular class of desires that are distinguished from all other desires by the following two features.

(1) Every appetite is accompanied by an uneasy sensation proper to it [= ‘which is characteristic of that specific appetite’]. The sensation is strong or weak in proportion to the strength of our desire for the object. **(2)** Appetites are not constant, but periodic, being sated [see Glossary] by their objects for a while and then returning after certain periods. Such is the nature of the principles of action that I ask to be allowed in this Essay to give the name ‘appetites’. The appetites that are chiefly observable in man, as well as in most other animals, are hunger, thirst, and lust.

In the appetite of hunger we find two ingredients, an uneasy sensation and a desire to eat. The desire keeps pace with the sensation, and ceases when it ceases. When a man

has eaten as much as he wants, both the uneasy sensation and the desire to eat cease for a time, and return after a certain interval. So it is with other appetites.

In *very* young infants the uneasy sensation of hunger is probably all there is to the appetite. We can’t suppose that before experience they have any conception of eating or, therefore, any desire to eat. They are led by mere instinct to suck when they feel the sensation of hunger. But when experience has connected, in their imagination, the uneasy sensation with the means for removing it, •the desire to remove it comes to be so associated with •the means that they are inseparable from then on; and we give the name ‘hunger’ to the principle that is made up of both.

The statement that the appetite of hunger includes the two ingredients I have mentioned won’t surprise anyone. My reason for emphasising it is •not that I think it is novel, but •rather because I think we can find a similar composition in other principles of action. They have different ingredients, and can be analysed into the parts that make them up.

If one philosopher holds that hunger is an uneasy sensation, and another that it is a desire to eat, they seem to differ widely; for a desire and a sensation are very different things, nothing like one another. But they are both in the right; for hunger includes *both* an uneasy sensation *and* a desire to eat. There hasn’t actually been any such disagreement as that about hunger; but there have been similar disputes concerning other principles of action, and we should see whether they might be terminated in a similar manner.

The purposes for which our natural appetites are given to us are too obvious to be overlooked by anyone who reflects at all. Of the three I listed, •hunger and •thirst are intended

for the preservation of the individual, and •lust for the continuance of the species.

Human reason would be utterly insufficient for those ends if it didn't have the direction and call of appetite.

Though a man knows that his life must be supported by eating, reason can't tell him when to eat, or what, or how much, or how often. In all these things, appetite is a much better guide than our reason. If we had only reason to direct us in this matter, its calm voice would often be drowned in the hurry of our daily activities or the charms of amusement. But the voice of appetite rises gradually until eventually it becomes loud enough to call our attention away from anything else we might be doing.

Everyone must be convinced of this:

Even if mankind were inspired with all the knowledge needed for achieving their ends, if they didn't have appetites the human race would have perished long ago; whereas when armed with appetites the race continues from one generation to the next, whether men are savage or civilised, knowing or ignorant, virtuous or vicious.

And it is also with the help of appetites that every tribe of brute animals, from the whale that ranges the ocean to the tiniest microscopic insect, has been continued from the beginning of the world to this day; and no good evidence has been found that any one species that God made has perished.

Nature has given to every animal not only an appetite for its food but also taste and smell by which to pick out the food that is proper for it.

It's enjoyable to see a caterpillar, which nature intended to live on the leaf of one species of plant, crawl across a hundred leaves of other kinds without tasting one, until it reaches the one that is its natural food, which it immediately

starts in on and devours greedily.

Most caterpillars feed only on the leaf of one species of plant, and nature suits the season of their production to the food that is intended to nourish them. Many insects and animals have a greater variety of food; but, of all animals, man has the greatest variety, being able to subsist on almost every kind of vegetable or animal food, from the bark of trees to the oil of whales. . . . A man may eat from appetite only. So the brutes commonly do. He may eat to please his taste when he has no call of appetite. I believe that a brute can do this also. A man may eat for the sake of health, when neither appetite nor taste invites him to. As far as I can tell, brutes never do this.

That shows how a single action can come from any one of several principles—hunger, desire for a taste experience, concern for health—and there are many more that could come into play. And this holds not just for eating but for most human actions. So we see that very different and contrary theories can serve to explain the actions of men. A cause that is assigned may be sufficient to produce the effect and yet not be the true cause.

To act merely from appetite is neither good nor bad, morally speaking. . . . No man expects to be praised for eating when he is hungry or resting when he is tired. But he won't be blamed, either, if he obeys the call of appetite when there is no reason why he shouldn't. In this he is acting in conformity with his nature. . . .

Appetites, considered in themselves, are neither social [see Glossary] nor selfish. They can't be called 'social' because they don't involve any concern for the good of others. But it's not right to call them 'selfish' either, though they are commonly seen in that way. An appetite draws us to a certain object without regard to its being good or bad for us. There's no •self-love implied in it any more than •benevolence. We

know that appetite will often lead a man to something that he knows will be damaging to him. To call this 'acting from self-love' is to pervert the meanings of words. It's obvious that in every case of this kind self-love is sacrificed to appetite.

Some principles of the human constitution are very like our appetites, but aren't usually given that name.

Men are made for labour either of body or mind, yet excessive labour hurts the powers of both. To prevent this hurt, nature has given to men and other animals an uneasy sensation that always accompanies excessive labour; we call it 'fatigue', 'weariness', 'lassitude'. This uneasy sensation is combined with a desire for rest, i.e. a break in our labour. Thus, nature calls us to rest when we are weary, in the same way as to eat when we are hungry.

In both cases there's a desire for a certain object [see Glossary], and an uneasy sensation accompanying that desire. In both cases the desire is satisfied by its object, and returns after certain intervals. The only difference between them is this: in hunger and its like, the uneasy sensation arises at intervals without action, and leads to a certain action; in weariness, the uneasy sensation arises from action too long continued, and leads to rest.

But nature intended that we should be active, and we need some principle to incite us to action, when we happen not to be invited by any appetite or passion. For this end, when strength and spirits are recruited by rest, nature has made total inaction as uneasy as excessive labour.

We could call this the principle of activity. It is most conspicuous in children, who can't be expected to know how necessary it is for their improvement to be constantly employed. Their constant activity seems to come not from their having some end constantly in view, but rather from their desire always to be doing something because they feel uneasiness in total inaction.

This principle isn't confined to childhood; it has great effects in adult life.

When a man has no hope, no fear, no desire, no project, no employment of body or mind, one might think him the happiest mortal on earth, having nothing to do but to enjoy himself; but we find him in fact to be the most unhappy. He is more weary of inaction than ever he was of excessive labour. He is weary of the world, and of his own existence; and is more miserable than the sailor struggling with a storm, or the soldier attacking a city wall.

This dismal state is commonly the lot [see Glossary] of the man who has neither exercise of body nor employment of mind. The mind is really like water: it corrupts and putrefies by stagnation, but by running it purifies and refines.

Besides the appetites that nature has given us for useful and necessary purposes, we can create appetites that nature never gave.

The frequent use of things that stimulate the nervous system produces a distressed condition when their effect has worn off, and a desire to repeat them. By this means a desire for a certain object is created, accompanied by an uneasy sensation. Both are removed by the object desired, but they return after a certain interval. This differs from natural appetite only in being acquired by custom. Examples are the appetites that some men acquire for the use of tobacco, opiates, and intoxicating liquors.

These are commonly called 'habits', which is what they are. But there are different kinds of habits, even of the active sort, which ought to be distinguished. Some habits only make it easier to do a thing, without any inclination to do it. All arts are habits of this kind, but they can't be called principles of action because they don't cause the action, but only make it easier to perform. Other habits produce a proneness to perform an action, without

thought or intention; I have discussed these under the label 'mechanical principles of action'. Yet other habits produce a desire for a certain object, and an uneasy [see Glossary] sensation until it is obtained. It's only this last kind that I call 'acquired appetites'.

Just as it's best to preserve our natural appetites in the tone and degree of strength that nature gives them, so we ought to beware of acquiring appetites that nature never gave. They are always useless, and very often damaging.

Although there's neither virtue nor vice in acting from appetite, there may be much virtue or vice in the management of our appetites. When an appetite is opposed by some principle drawing the person in a different direction, he must decide which of the two principles is to prevail, and this decision may be morally right or wrong.

Even in a brute animal an appetite can be restrained by a stronger principle opposed to it. A hungry dog with meat set before him can be kept from touching it by the fear of immediate punishment. In this case his fear operates more strongly than his desire. Do we attribute any virtue to the dog because of this? I think not.

Nor would we ascribe any virtue to a man in a similar case. The animal is carried by the strongest moving force. This requires no exertion, no self-control [see Glossary], but merely a passive giving in to the strongest impulse. I think that's what brutes always do, which is why we don't attribute to them either virtue or vice—don't consider them as being objects of moral approval or disapproval.

But it can happen that an appetite is opposed not by any appetite or passion but by some cool principle of action, one that has •authority but no •impulsive force. For example, the appetite is opposed by •some interest that is too distant to raise any passion or emotion, or by •some consideration of decency or of duty.

In cases of this kind, the man is convinced that he ought not to yield to appetite, but there's no equal or greater impulse to oppose it. There are indeed facts that convince the •person's• judgment, but it's only if self-control comes into play that these facts are enough to determine the will against a strong appetite.

Brute animals have no power of self-control. Their constitution ensures that they are led by the appetite or passion that is strongest at the time. That is why they have always and everywhere been thought incapable of being •governed by laws, though some of them can be •subjected to discipline.

That would be man's situation if he had no power to restrain any appetite except through a stronger contrary appetite or passion. It would be useless to prescribe laws to him for the control of his actions . You might as well forbid the wind to blow as forbid him to follow whatever happens to give the strongest present impulse.

Everyone knows that when an appetite draws one way, duty or decency or even •self•-interest may draw the person a contrary way; and that an appetite can give a stronger impulse than any one of these or even all three of them conjoined. Yet in every case of this kind •the appetite certainly *ought to* yield to any of these principles when they stand opposed to •it. It's in cases like this that self-control is necessary.

A man who allows himself to be led by an appetite to do something that he knows he ought not to do has an immediate and natural conviction that he did wrong and could have done otherwise; and therefore he condemns himself and admits that he gave way to an appetite that ought to have been under his control.

So although our natural appetites have in themselves neither virtue nor vice. . . ., it turns out that •there may be a great deal of virtue or of vice in the management of our

appetites, and that •the power of self-control is necessary for their regulation.

Chapter 2: Desires

For lack of a better name, I shall label as ‘desires’ the next class of animal principles of action in man that I want to discuss.

They are distinguished from appetites by two things. **(1)** It is not the case that each desire is always accompanied by its own characteristic uneasy sensation. **(2)** Desires are not periodical but constant because they aren’t sated with their objects for a time as appetites are.

I want to focus mainly on three desires: for power, for esteem, and for knowledge.

I think we can see some degree of these principles in brute animals of the more intelligent kind; but in man they are much more conspicuous and have a wider range.

In a herd of black cattle there is rank and subordination. When an animal is newly introduced into the herd, he must fight everyone till his rank is settled. After that happens, he gives way to the stronger and assumes authority over the weaker. It’s much like that with the crew of a ship of war.

As soon as men associate together, the desire for superiority comes into play. In barbarous tribes, as well as among the gregarious kinds of animals, rank is determined by strength, courage, speed, or such other qualities. Among civilised nations, many things of a different kind give power and rank—places in government, titles of honour, riches, wisdom, eloquence, virtue, and even the reputation for having any of these. These are either different kinds of power or different ways of getting power; and when they are sought for that purpose they must be regarded as cases of the desire for power.

The desire for esteem is not special to man. A dog rejoices in the approval and applause of his master, and is humbled by his displeasure. But in man this desire is much more conspicuous, and operates in a thousand different ways.

It is the reason why so very few people are proof against flattery, when it isn’t laid on too thickly. We want to stand well in the opinion of others, so we are apt to interpret the signs of their good opinion in our own favour, even when the signs are ambiguous.

Showing contempt for someone is inflicting an injury [here = ‘insult’] that is one of the hardest to bear. We can’t always avoid seeing in the conduct of other people things that move our contempt; but in all civilised circles the signs of contempt must be suppressed, because otherwise social life would be impossible.

Of the qualities that can be possessed by good men and bad men, none is more esteemed than courage, and none is more contemned [see Glossary] than cowardice; so every man desires to be thought a man of courage, and a reputation for cowardice is worse than death. How many have died to avoid being thought cowards? How many have for the same reason done things that made them unhappy to the end of their lives?

I believe that many a disastrous event, if tracked back to its source in human nature, would turn out to be traceable to the desire for esteem or the fear of contempt.

Brute animals have so little that can be called ‘knowledge’ that the desire for it can’t play a large role in their lives. Yet I have seen a cat, when brought to a new home, examine carefully every corner of it, anxious to know every hiding-place and all the ways in and out. And I believe the same thing can be observed in many other species, especially ones that are liable to be hunted by man or by other animals.

But the desire for knowledge in the human species is a principle that can't be ignored.

Children's curiosity is the principle that occupies most of their waking hours. Anything they can handle they examine on all sides, and they often break it into pieces so as to discover what is inside it.

When men grow up their curiosity continues, but is employed on other objects. Novelty is considered as one great source of the pleasures of taste, and indeed some degree of novelty is needed for such pleasures to be really enjoyable.

When we speak of the desire for knowledge as a principle of action in man, we mustn't restrict it to the pursuits of the philosopher or of the literary man. The desire for knowledge can show up in different people by an eagerness to know •the village scandal (e.g. who is making love and to whom), •the finances of the family next door, •what the post brings, or •what the path is of a new comet.

When men work hard to learn things that have no significance and can't be useful to themselves or to anyone else, this is curiosity that is trivial and pointless. It is a blameworthy weakness and folly; but still it's the wrong direction for a natural principle, and it shows the force of that principle more than when it is directed to things worth knowing.

I don't think I need to *argue* that the desires for power, esteem, and knowledge are natural principles in the human constitution. Those who aren't convinced of this by reflecting on their own feelings and sentiments won't easily be convinced by arguments!

Power, esteem and knowledge are so useful for many purposes that it's easy to see the desire for them as a special case of other principles. Those who take this view must maintain that we never desire these objects for their own sakes but only as means of procuring pleasure or some other

natural object of desire. . . . But this can't be right, because it has been observed that men desire posthumous fame, which can't give them any pleasure. . . .

We have in fact seen innumerable cases of men sacrificing ease, pleasure, and everything else to their lust for power, for fame, even for knowledge. It's absurd to suggest that men sacrifice an end to something they desire only as a means to that end.

The natural desires I have mentioned are not in themselves either virtuous or vicious. They're part of our constitution, and ought to be regulated and restrained when they come into competition with more important principles. But to eradicate them (if that were possible, which I believe it isn't) would be like cutting off a leg or an arm, i.e. making ourselves other creatures than God has made us.

They have commonly been said to be selfish principles, but that is wrong.

When power is desired for its own sake and not as a means to something else, this desire is neither selfish nor social. When a man desires power as a means of doing good for others, this is benevolence. When he desires it only as a means of promoting his own good, this is self-love. But if he desires it only for its own sake, then—and only then—is it properly described as a desire for power, and it implies neither self-love nor benevolence. The same thing holds for the desires for esteem and for knowledge.

Nature's wisdom shows as clearly in its giving us these •desires as in its giving us our natural •appetites. I have already remarked that without the natural appetites reason would be inadequate to preserve the individual or continue of the species; and without the natural desires that I have mentioned human virtue wouldn't be adequate to influence mankind to behave at least moderately well towards one another in society.

It is because of these morally neutral desires that a man who has little or no respect for virtue can nevertheless be a good member of society. The fact is that *perfect* virtue joined with *perfect* knowledge would make both our appetites and desires unnecessary clutter in our nature; but as human knowledge and human virtue are both very imperfect, these appetites and desires are needed to make up for our imperfections.

Human society couldn't survive without a certain degree of the regularity of conduct that virtue prescribes. Men who have no virtue are led to regularity of conduct by a concern for character, and sometimes by a concern for their own interests. [This unexplained concern (or 'regard') for character is a concern for reputation; we shall soon see Reid implicitly equating them.]

Even in those who are not entirely without virtue a •concern for character is often a useful aid to •virtue when the two principles point in the same direction.

The pursuits of power, of fame, and of knowledge require self-control just as much as virtue does. In our behaviour towards our fellow-creatures, those pursuits generally lead to the very same conduct that virtue requires. I say 'generally' because no doubt there are exceptions, especially in the case of ambition, i.e. the desire for power.

The evils that ambition has produced in the world are a common topic of denunciation. But it should be pointed out that for every **one** socially harmful act that ambition has led to there have been **ten thousand** beneficial ones. And we rightly regard a lack of ambition as one of the most unfavourable symptoms in a man's temperament.

The desires for esteem and for knowledge are highly useful to society, as well as the desire for power; and they are less dangerous than it is in their excesses.

Although •actions driven merely by the love of power, of reputation, or of knowledge can't be accounted virtuous,

or be entitled to moral approval, we still accept them as manly, straightforward, and suited to the dignity [see Glossary] of human nature; which entitles them to a higher degree of respect than •actions that come from mere appetite.

[Reid illustrates this with the cases of Alexander the Great who was 'great' in his early years when dominated by the love of glory and power, but not later on when he was conquered by his 'passions and appetites'; and of the luxury-loving Persian king Sardanapalus whom no-one ever called 'great'.]

Appetite is the principle of most of the actions of brute animals, and when a man employs himself chiefly in gratifying his appetites we think he has sunk to the level of such animals. The desires for power, for esteem, and for knowledge are important working parts of the human constitution; and the actions they lead to, though not strictly virtuous, are human and manly; and they are entitled to rank higher than actions that come from appetites. I think this is the universal and unbiased judgment of mankind. . . .

The desires I have mentioned are not only highly useful in society, and in their nature nobler than our appetites; they are also the best engines that can be used in the education and discipline of men.

In training brute animals to such habits as they are capable of, the chief instrument is the fear of punishment. But in the training of decent men, •ambition to excel and •love of esteem are much nobler and more powerful engines by which to lead them to worthy conduct and train them in good habits.

And there's another point: the desires I have mentioned are very friendly to real virtue, and make it easier to acquire. A man who is not quite abandoned [= 'not completely morally bankrupt'] must behave in society in a way that lets him keep some degree of reputation. Every man desires to do this, and the majority succeed. For this he must acquire the

habit of keeping his appetites and passions within the limits that common decency requires, and so as to make himself a •tolerable member of society if not a •useful and •agreeable one.

It can't be doubted that many people who are very little influenced by a sense of duty nevertheless make themselves useful and agreeable members of society, being led to this by a concern for character and for the opinion of others.

Thus men who live in society, especially in polished society, are tamed and civilised by the principles that are common to good and bad men. They're taught to restrain their appetites and passions in the eyes of men, which makes it easier to bring them under the rein of virtue.

Just as a horse that has been broken in is more easily managed than an unbroken colt, so also a man who has undergone the discipline of society is more manageable, and is in an excellent state of preparation for the discipline of virtue; and the self-control that is necessary in the •race of ambition and honour is an important thing to have in the •course of virtue.

So I think that those who regard the life of a hermit as favourable to a course of virtue are very grossly wrong! The hermit is indeed free from some temptations to vice, but he is deprived of •many strong inducements to self-control and •of every opportunity to exercise the social virtues.

A very able author has explained our moral sentiments regarding the virtues of self-control purely in terms of a concern for the opinion of men. [He is thought to mean Adam Smith.] I think this is giving a great deal too much to the love of esteem, and putting the •shadow of virtue in place of the •substance; but there's no doubt that a concern for the opinion of others is. . . .a great inducement to good conduct. That is because however men may •behave, they will always •approve in others the conduct that they think is right.

I remarked earlier that in addition to the appetites that nature has given us we can *acquire* appetites which, if we aren't careful, become as urgently demanding as the natural ones. The same thing holds for desires.

One of the most remarkable acquired desires is the desire for money. In countries that *have* money, some degree of this desire will be found in most men, and in some men it swallows up every other desire, appetite and passion.

The desire for money only counts as a principle of action when the money is desired for its own sake, and not merely as a means to something else.

It seems obvious that misers have that kind of desire for money; and I don't think anyone will say that it is natural, or a part of our basic constitution. It seems to be an effect of habit.

In money-using nations money is an instrument by which almost anything that is desired can be obtained. Because money is useful as a means to many different ends, some men lose sight of the end and desire only the means. Money is also a species of power, equipping a man to do many things that he couldn't do without it; and power is a natural object of desire even when it isn't exercised.

In a similar way a man may acquire a desire for a title of honour, for good furniture, for an estate.

Although our natural desires are highly beneficial to society, and are even an aid to virtue, acquired desires are worse than useless—they are harmful and even disgraceful.

No man is ashamed to admit that he loves power, loves esteem, loves knowledge, for their own sake. He may love these things excessively, and that is a blemish; but there's a degree of such love that is natural and not a blemish. To love money, titles or furniture for any reason except that they are useful or ornamental is agreed by everyone to be weakness and folly.

The natural desires I have been considering can't be called *social* principles of action in the common sense of that word, because they don't aim to procure any good or benefit to others; but they relate to society in a way that shows most evidently that nature intended man to live in society.

The desire for **knowledge** is not more natural than the desire to communicate our knowledge. Even **power** would be less valued if there were no chance to show it to others; it derives half its value from that. As for the desire for **esteem**, it can't possibly be gratified except in society.

So these parts of our constitution are evidently intended for social life. It's not more obvious that birds were made for flying and fishes for swimming than that man, endowed with a natural desire for power, for esteem, and for knowledge, is made not for the savage and solitary state but for living in society.

Chapter 3: Benevolent affection in general

We have seen how, by the 'mechanical principles' of instinct and habit, man—without any expense of thought and without deliberation or will—is led to many actions that are needed for his preservation and well-being, actions that all his skill and wisdom couldn't have accomplished in the absence of those principles.

Perhaps you are thinking that man's deliberate and voluntary actions are to be guided by his reason.

But I should point out that he is a voluntary agent long before he has the use of reason. Reason and virtue, the prerogatives of man, are of the latest growth. They come to maturity slowly and gradually, and in the greater part of our species they are too weak to secure the preservation of individuals and of communities, and to produce that varied scene of human life in which they are to be exercised and

improved.

So the wise Author of our being has implanted in human nature many lower principles of action which, with little or no help from reason or virtue, preserve our species and produce the various actions and changes and movements that we observe on life's stage.

In this busy scene [= 'theatrical production'] reason and virtue can come on-stage to act their parts, and they do often produce great and good effects; but whether or not they show up, there are actors of an inferior kind that will carry on the play and produce a variety of events, good or bad.

Perfect reason would lead men to use the right means for preserving their own lives and continuing their species; but the Author of our being hasn't thought fit to leave this task to reason alone, and if he had, the species would long ago have been extinct. He has given us, in common with other animals, *appetites* by which those important purposes are secured, whether men are wise or foolish, virtuous or vicious.

Perfect reason would lead men not to lose the benefit of their active powers by inactivity, and not to overstrain them by excessive labour. But nature has given a powerful assistant to reason by making inactivity a grievous punishment to itself, and by linking the pain of weariness to excessive labour.

Perfect reason would lead us to desire power, knowledge, and the esteem and affection of our fellow-men as means of •promoting our own happiness and of •being useful to others. Here again nature makes up for defects in our reason by giving us a strong natural desire for those objects, which leads us to pursue them without regard to their utility.

I have already discussed those principles; and I add here another point, namely that they all have things, not persons, for their object [see Glossary]. They don't imply any good or

bad affection towards any other person, or even towards ourselves; so they can't properly be called 'selfish' or 'social'. But various principles of action in man do have persons for their immediate object, and imply in their very nature our being well or badly affected towards some person or at least towards some animated being.

I shall call such principles by the general name 'affections', whether they dispose us to do good or harm to others.

[Reid compares this with the use of 'affection' in ordinary speech, and sticks to his guns, saying that the verb 'affect' is good/bad neutral in its meaning, and that we therefore oughtn't to restrict 'affection' to items that are positive or friendly. He then goes on to say: **(a1)** Intense disturbing love is commonly called 'passion'; **(a2)** calm composed love is called 'affection'. **(b1)** 'Malevolent principles such as anger, resentment and envy' are commonly called 'passions' because of their violence. By parity with **(a2)**, therefore, **(b2)** calmly undisturbed anger, resentment etc. should be called 'affections'. Summing up:]

The principles that lead us immediately to desire the good of others, and those that lead us to desire their hurt, have in common that persons and not things are their immediate objects. Both imply our being in some way affected towards the person; so they ought to have some common name to express what is common in their natures, and I know no better name for this than 'affection'.

Taking 'affection' therefore in this extended sense, our affections are very naturally divided into benevolent and malevolent, according as they imply our being well or badly affected towards their object.

There are some things common to all benevolent affections, others in which they differ.

They differ •in the feeling or sensation contained in each of them and •in the objects to which they are directed.

They all agree in two things: •the feeling that accompanies them is agreeable, and •they imply a desire for the good and happiness of their object.

The affections we have towards a parent, a child, a benefactor, a person in distress, a mistress, differ in •the feelings they produce in the mind as much as they differ in •their objects. We don't have names to express the differences amongst these feelings, but everyone is conscious of the differences. And along with all this difference, they are alike in being agreeable feelings.

I know of no exception to this rule, if we distinguish the feeling that naturally and necessarily accompanies the kind affection from feelings that it may happen to produce in certain circumstances. Parental affection is an agreeable feeling; but it makes the misfortune or misbehaviour of a child give a deeper wound to the mind. Pity is an agreeable feeling, but distress that we can't relieve may give a painful sympathy. Love for one of the other sex is an agreeable feeling, but when it doesn't meet with a proper return it can give the most piercing distress.

The joy and comfort of human life consists in the reciprocal exercise of kind affections, and without them life would be undesirable.

Shaftesbury and many other judicious moralists have observed that even the epicure and the debauchee, who are thought to place all their happiness in sensual gratifications and to pursue these as their only object, can get no pleasure from solitary indulgences of this kind but only from ones that are mixed with social intercourse [see Glossary] and a two-way exchange of kind affections. . . .

Mutual kind affections are undoubtedly the balm of life, and of all the enjoyments common to good and bad men they are the chief. If a man had no-one to love or esteem, and no-one who loved or esteemed him, how wretched his

condition would be! Surely any man capable of reflection would rather die than live in such a state.

Poets have represented it as being the state of some bloody and barbarous tyrants, but Poets are allowed to paint a little beyond the life. Atreus is represented by a poet as saying 'Let them hate, as long as they fear'. I don't think there was ever a man with that attitude to all mankind. The most odious tyrant that ever was will have his favourites, whose affection he tries to deserve or to bribe and to whom he has some good will.

So we can lay it down as a principle that all benevolent affections are intrinsically agreeable; and that along with a good conscience (to which they are always friendly, and can't ever be adverse), they are the chief part of human happiness.

Another ingredient essential to every benevolent affection, expressed by the label 'benevolent', is a desire for the good and happiness of the object.

The object of a benevolent affection therefore, must be some being capable of happiness. When we speak of 'affection' for a house or for any inanimate thing, the word has a different meaning. Something that has no capacity for enjoyment or suffering can be an object of liking or disgust, but it can't possibly be an object either of benevolent or malevolent affection.

A thing can be desired either for itself or as a means to something else. Something can properly be called an object of desire only if it is desired for itself; and those are the only desires that I call 'principles of action'. When something is desired only as a •means, there must be an •end for which it is desired; and in that case it's the desire for the end that is the principle of action. . . .

For this reason the only affections that count as benevolent are ones where the object's good is desired ultimately, and not merely as a means to something else. To say that

we desire the good of others only in order to procure some pleasure or good for ourselves

is to say that

there is no benevolent affection in human nature.

This has indeed been the position of some philosophers, in ancient times and more recently. I shan't examine this view here, because I judge it to be better to present what I think is the correct view of the principles of action in man before examining theories that have mistaken or misrepresented them.

At present I'll just say this: to treat all our benevolent affections as versions of self-love appears as unreasonable as it would be to say that hunger and thirst are versions of self-love! These appetites are necessary for the survival of the individual. Benevolent affections are no less necessary for the survival of society among men, and without *that* man would become an easy prey to the beasts of the field.

We are placed in this world by the Author of our being, surrounded by many objects that are necessary or useful to us and by many that can hurt us. We are led not only by reason and self-love but also by many instincts, appetites, and natural desires to seek the helpful things and avoid the harmful ones.

Of all the things in this world, what is the most useful to man? And what is the most hurtful? It may be that the two questions have the same answer—*man*! Every man is in the power of every man with whom he lives. Every man has power to do much good to his fellow-men and to do more harm.

We can't live without the society of men; and it would be impossible to live *in* society if men were not disposed to do to other men much of the good and little of the harm that it is in their power to do.

But how is this end, so necessary for the existence of human society and thus for the existence of the human species, to be accomplished?

If we judge by analogy, we'll conclude that in this as in other parts of our conduct •our rational principles are aided by principles of a lower kind, like ones that enable many brute animals to live in society with their species; and •by means of such principles we achieve the degree of regularity that we find in all societies of men, whether wise or foolish, virtuous or vicious.

So the benevolent affections planted in human nature seem to be just as necessary for the survival of the human species as are the appetites of hunger and thirst.

Chapter 4: Some particular benevolent affections

Having made these points about benevolent affections •generally, I shall now discuss seven of them •individually.

1. The affection between parents and children, and other near relations.

We commonly call this 'natural affection'. Every language has a name for it. We have it in common with most of the brute animals, with different versions of it in different animals, depending on whether it is more or less necessary for the preservation of the species. Many of the insect tribe need no other care from their parents than that the eggs be laid in a proper place where they'll have neither too little nor too much heat, and where the newly hatched animal will find its natural food. The parent takes this care of its young, and no more.

In other tribes the young must be lodged in some secret place where they can't be easily discovered by their enemies. They must be comforted and made to feel safe by the warmth of the parent's body. They must be suckled [= 'breast-fed']

and fed at first with tender food; accompanied in their excursions and guarded from danger, until they have learned by experience and by the example of their parents to provide for their own subsistence and safety. We all know with what care and tender affection this is done by the parents in every species that requires it.

The eggs of the feathered tribe are commonly hatched by incubation by the mother, who immediately stops her lively activities and confines herself to her solitary and painful task, cheered by the song of her mate on a nearby branch. He sometimes feeds her, and sometimes takes over the incubation while she gathers a scanty meal and quickly returns to her post.

The young birds of many species are so very tender and delicate that we with all our wisdom and experience wouldn't be able to rear one to maturity. But the parents, without any experience, know perfectly how to rear their young—sometimes a dozen or more in one brood—and to give to each its due portion. They know the food best suited to their delicate constitution, which in some species must first be cooked and half digested in the stomach of the parent.

In some animals, nature has furnished the female with a kind of second womb into which the young retire occasionally for food, warmth, and the convenience of being carried about with the mother.

One could go on for ever about all the various ways in which parental affection is expressed by brute animals!

It seems to me that a person would have to have a *very strange* sort of mind if he could survey the various ways in which the young of the various species are reared and not be filled with wonder, with pious admiration for the manifold wisdom that has so skillfully fitted means to ends in such an infinite variety of ways!

In all the brute animals we know about, the purpose of the parental affection is completely met in a short time; and then the affection ceases, as if it had never been.

The infancy of man is longer and more helpless than that of any other animal. Parental affection is necessary for many years; it is highly useful throughout life; so it ends only when life does. And it extends to children's children without any lessening of its force.

Here is a *common* kind of event:

A young woman in the gayest period of life spends her days in having fun and her nights in profound sleep with no worries or cares; then she is suddenly transformed into the careful, solicitous, watchful nurse of her dear infant. During the day she does nothing but gaze on it and serving it in the meanest offices [meaning: through the lowest tasks—burping and bottom-wiping and diaper-changing etc.]; and by night she deprives herself of sound sleep for months, so that it can lie safe in her arms. Forgetful of herself, her whole care is centred in this little object.

Such a sudden and total transformation of her habits, occupations, and cast of mind, if we didn't see it every day, would strike us as a more wonderful metamorphosis than any that Ovid has described. [The Latin poet Ovid wrote *Metamorphoses*, a book of long poems recounting Greek myths, especially ones in which *someone* is metamorphosed—transformed—into *something*: Jupiter into a shower of gold coins, Actaeon into a stag, and so on.]

But this is the work of nature, and not the effect of reason and reflection. For we see it in good women and in bad ones, in the most thoughtless as well as in the thoughtful.

Nature has assigned different roles to the father and mother in rearing their offspring. This can be seen in many brute animals; and its being so in the human species was long ago observed by Socrates and most beautifully illus-

trated by him, as we learn from Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*. The parental affection of the two sexes is exactly adapted to the work assigned to each: the father would make an awkward nurse to a new-born child, and the mother would be too indulgent as a guardian, but both act with propriety and grace in their proper sphere. [Reid had nine children, eight of whom died before he did.]

It is very remarkable that when the job of rearing a child is transferred from the parent to another person, nature seems to transfer the affection along with the work. A nurse who is breast-feeding the baby, or even one that isn't, usually has the same affection for her nursling as if she had born it. This well known fact seems to be the work of nature.

•Our affections are not immediately in our power in the way our physical actions are. Nature has directed •them to certain objects. We can give kind help without affection, but we can't create an affection that nature hasn't given.

Reason might teach a man that his children are especially committed to his care by the providence of God, and that therefore he ought to attend to them as his special responsibility; but reason couldn't teach him to love them more than other children of equal merit, or to be more saddened by their misfortunes or misbehaviour. . . . He gets that love and that sadness from the constitution that nature has given him.

There are some affections that we could call 'rational' because they are based on a belief about the merit of the object. Parental affection is not like that. For though a man's affection for his child may be •increased by merit and •lessened by demerit, I don't think anyone will say that it •arose in the first place from a belief about merit. It's not the belief that creates the affection, though often affection creates the belief. It is apt to pervert the judgment and create a belief in one's merit on the part of someone who has none.

The absolute necessity of this parental affection for the continuance of the human species is so obvious that I needn't provide arguments to prove it. The rearing of a child from its birth to maturity requires so much time and care, and such infinite attentions, that if it were to be done merely from considerations of reason and duty, and were not sweetened by affection in parents, nurses and guardians, there's reason to doubt whether one child in ten thousand would ever be reared!

This part of the human constitution is not only absolutely **necessary** for the survival of the species; it is also very **useful**

- for toning down the wildness and impetuosity of youth, and improving its knowledge by the prudence and experience of age,
- for encouraging industry and frugality in the parents, in order to provide for their children, and
- for the solace and support of parents as they go through the infirmities of old age.

Not to mention the fact that that it probably gave rise to the first civil governments. [That seems to be a casual wave in the direction of certain theories about the origin of government; see for example chapters 6 and 7 of Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*.]

Parental and other family affections seem in general not to be too strong or too weak for achieving their purpose. If they were too weak, parents would be tend to err on the side of undue severity; if too strong, the error would consist in undue indulgence. As things stand, I don't think anyone can say that the errors are more general on one side than on the other. When these affections are exercised according to their intended purpose, directed by wisdom and prudence, the workings of such a family are a most delightful spectacle which provide the most agreeable and affecting subject for the painter's brush and for the pen of the orator and poet.

2. Gratitude towards benefactors.

No-one who knows anything about human nature will deny that kindly help is, by the very constitution of our nature, apt to produce good will towards the benefactor—in good and bad men, in the savage and in the civilised.

The danger of perverting a man's judgment by good deeds in a situation where he ought to have no bias is so well known that it is dishonourable in judges, in witnesses, in electors to positions of trust, to accept such favours; and in all civilised nations gifts in such situations are prohibited as a means of corruption.

Those who would corrupt the sentence of a judge, the testimony of a witness, or the vote of an elector, know well that they mustn't make a bargain, i.e. stipulate what is to be done for them in return. To do so would shock every man who has the faintest claim to moral seriousness. If the judge or etc. can only be persuaded to accept the favour as an expression of pure and disinterested friendship, it is left to work on his gratitude. He finds himself under a kind of moral obligation to consider the cause of his benefactor and friend in the most favourable light. He finds it easier to justify his conduct to himself if he sides with his benefactor than if he sides against him.

Thus the principle of gratitude is taken for granted, even in the nature of a bribe. [His point is that making a gift to the judge, and wanting nothing back except gratitude, is in effect giving a bribe.] Bad men know how to make this natural principle the most effective means of corruption. The very best things can be turned to a bad use. But the natural effect of this principle, and the intention of nature in planting it in the human breast, are obviously to promote goodwill among men, and to give to kindly favours the power of multiplying their kind, like seed sown in the earth which brings a return with increase.

I shan't discuss the question of whether the more intelligent brutes have something that might be called 'gratitude'. We must allow this important difference between their 'gratitude' and ours, that in ours it's the mind of the benefactor that mainly counts, whereas with the brutes all that matters is the physical action. A brute animal will be as kindly affected to someone who feeds it •in order to kill and eat it as to someone who does this •from affection. . . .

3. Pity and compassion towards the distressed.

Of all persons, those in distress stand most in need of our kindly help. And for that reason the Author of nature has planted in the breast of every human creature a powerful advocate to plead their cause.

In man and in some other animals there are signs of distress that nature has taught them to •use and to •understand without any interpreter. These natural signs are more eloquent than language: they move our hearts, and produce sympathy and a desire to give relief.

There are few hearts so hard that great distress won't conquer their anger, indignation, any malevolent affection.

We sympathise even with the traitor or the assassin when we see him led to execution. It is only self-preservation and the public good that makes us reluctantly agree to his being cut off from among men.

The practice of the ·native· Canadian nations toward their prisoners would tempt one to think that they have rooted out the principle of compassion from their nature. But I think this would be a rash conclusion. They assign only some of their prisoners to a cruel death. This satisfies the desire for revenge of the women and children who have lost their husbands and fathers in the war. The other prisoners are treated kindly and adopted as brethren.

Compassion with bodily pain is no doubt weakened among these savages, because they are trained from their

infancy to be superior to death and to every degree of pain; and one of them who can't defy his tormentors and sing his death-song in the midst of the most cruel tortures is thought to be unworthy to be called a man. One who *can* do this is honoured as a brave man, although an enemy. . . .

A Canadian has the most perfect contempt for every man who thinks pain an intolerable evil. And nothing is so apt to stifle compassion as contempt and the belief that the evil suffered is only what ought to be manfully borne.

It must also be observed that savages set no limits to their revenge.

Those who find no protection in laws and government never think they are safe until they have destroyed their enemy. One of the main advantages of civil government is that it damps down the cruel passion of revenge and opens the heart to compassion with every human woe.

Any religion that is able to check the tear of compassion must, it seems, be a false one. ·I mention this because· we are told that in Portugal and Spain a man condemned to be burned as an obstinate heretic meets with no compassion, even from the crowd. It's true that they are taught to see him as an enemy to God and doomed to hell-fire. But shouldn't precisely *that* produce compassion? Surely it would if they weren't taught that in this case it is a crime to show or even to feel compassion.

4. Esteem for the wise and the good.

The worst men can't avoid feeling this in some degree. Esteem, veneration, devotion are different degrees of the same affection. The perfection of wisdom, power and goodness, which belongs only to the Almighty, is the object [see Glossary] of devotion.

Is it right to classify this principle of esteem and that of gratitude as •animal principles rather than •rational ones? They are certainly more allied to the rational nature than the

others I have named, and it's not obvious that brute animals have anything that deserves the same name.

There is indeed a subordination in a herd of cattle and in a flock of sheep, and I believe this is determined by strength and courage, as it is among savage tribes of men. I have been told that in a pack of hounds a staunch hound [i.e. one that is especially good at following scents] acquires a degree of esteem in the pack; so that when the dogs are wandering in search of the scent, if he starts baying after the scent the pack immediately follows him, when they wouldn't pay any attention to the baying of a dog of no reputation. This is something like a respect for wisdom.

But I have classified esteem for the wise and good as an 'animal' principle not because I think •it is to be found in brute animals but because I think •it appears in the most undeveloped and in the most degenerate part of our species, even in those in whom it's hard to see any activity of reason or of virtue.

But I shan't argue with anyone who thinks it deserves a more honourable name than of 'animal principle'. It is of small importance what name we give it, if we are satisfied that there is such a principle in the human constitution.

5. Friendship.

We have some famous instances of friendship in history. Not many, but enough to show that human nature is susceptible of the extraordinary attachment, sympathy [see Glossary] and affection to one or a few persons that the ancients thought was the only attachment worthy of the name 'friendship'.

The Epicureans found it difficult to reconcile the existence of friendship with the principles of their sect. They weren't so bold as to deny its existence. They even boasted that there had been more attachments of that kind between Epicureans than in any other sect! But it wasn't easy to account for real

friendship on Epicurean principles. They went into different hypotheses on this point, three of which are explained by Torquatus the Epicurean, in Cicero's book *De Finibus* [= 'Concerning ends or goals']. Cicero in his reply to Torquatus examines all three, and shows each to be inconsistent either with •the nature of true friendship or with •the fundamental principles of the Epicurean sect.

Regarding the friendship that the Epicureans boasted of among those of their sect, Cicero doesn't question the fact, but remarks that just as there are many whose practice is worse than their principles, so there are some whose principles are worse than their practice, and that the bad principles of these Epicureans were overcome by the goodness of their nature.

6. The passion of love between the sexes.

Although it is commonly the theme of poets, this is not unworthy of the pen of the philosopher, as it is a most important part of the human constitution.

No doubt it's made up of various ingredients, as are many other principles of action, but it certainly can't exist without a very strong benevolent affection toward its object—in whom it finds or imagines everything that is amiable [see Glossary] and excellent and even something more than human. I am considering it here only as a benevolent affection that is natural to man; and its being so can't be doubted by any man who ever felt its force.

It is evidently intended by nature to direct a man in the choice of a mate with whom he desires to live and to rear an offspring.

It has effectively achieved this goal in all ages and in every state of society.

The passion of love and parental affection are counterparts to each other; and when they are conducted with prudence and meet with a proper return they are the source

of all domestic happiness, which is the second-greatest happiness that this world has to offer, after a good conscience.

In the world as it now is, pain often dwells near to pleasure, and sorrow near to joy, so it shouldn't seem strange that a passion fitted and intended by nature to yield the greatest worldly happiness should, when badly regulated or wrongly directed, lead to the most piercing distress.

But love's joys and griefs, its different versions in the two sexes, and its influence on the character of each, though very important subjects are fitter to be sung than said, and I leave them to the poets.

7. What we commonly call public spirit, i.e. an affection towards any community to which we belong.

If there's any man who has *nothing* of this affection, he must be as great a freak as a man born with two heads. Its effects are manifest in the whole of human life, and in the history of all nations.

The situation of a great part of mankind is such that their thoughts and views must be restricted to a very narrow sphere, and be very much occupied by their private concerns. With regard to an extensive public such as a •state or •nation they are like a drop in the ocean, so that they seldom have any opportunity to act with •its welfare in view.

In people whose actions can affect the public and whose rank and position lead them to think of it, private passions often outweigh public spirit. This shows only that their public spirit is weak, not that it doesn't exist.

If a man wishes the public well, and is ready to help rather than harm it when this costs him nothing, he has *some* affection towards the public though it may be scandalously weak in degree.

I believe that every man has it in some degree. What man is there who does not resent satirical reflections on his country or on any community to which he belongs?

Whether the affection is towards a college, a monastery, a clan, a profession, a party or a nation, it is public spirit. These affections differ not in kind but *only* in the size of their object.

The object grows as our connections extend, and our sense of the connection carries the affection along with it to every community that we can call 'ours'.

Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,
His country next, and then all human race. (Pope)

Even in the misanthrope [= 'hater of mankind'] this affection isn't extinguished but merely overpowered by his sense of the worthlessness, the baseness, and the ingratitude of mankind. Convince him that our species has some amiable qualities and immediately his philanthropy [= 'love of mankind'] revives and rejoices to find something on which to exercise it.

Like every subordinate principle of action, public spirit when it is not under the control of reason and virtue can produce much evil as well as good. But if there is *any* reason and virtue to regulate it, its good far outweighs its evil. [Reid hasn't introduced and doesn't explain the phrase 'subordinate principle', and his use of it in the last paragraph of this chapter (page 29 doesn't fit the present context. The paragraph beginning 'I shall try to show. . .' on page 48 gives the answer: all the 'animal principles' are and should be subordinate to 'rational principles'.]

It sometimes fires up animosities between communities or contending parties, and makes them treat each other with little concern for justice. It starts wars between nations, and makes them destroy one another for trivial causes. But without it society couldn't survive; every community would be a rope of sand.

When public spirit is under the direction of reason and virtue, it is the very *image of God* in the soul. It spreads its benign influence as far as its power reaches, and has a share in the happiness of God and of the whole creation.

* * * * *

Those ·seven· are the benevolent affections that appear to me to be built into the human constitution. If anyone thinks the list is not complete. . . ., I shall very readily listen to him, because I'm aware such enumerations are very often incomplete.

Perhaps some will think that some or all of the affections I have named are acquired by education, or by habits and associations based on self-love, and are not basic parts of our constitution. Well, there has been much subtle debate about this in ancient and in modern times; and I think it has to be settled •by what a man feels in himself when he reflects carefully, rather than •by what he observes in others. But I'm not willing to enter into this dispute until I have explained the principle of action that we commonly call self-love . [See Part III, chapters 2-4, starting on page 48.]

I shall conclude this subject with four reflections on the benevolent affections.

(1) All of them—insofar as they are benevolent (and I am looking at them only in that light)—agree very much in how they dispose us to behave with regard to their objects. They dispose us to

- do them good as far as we have power and opportunity;
- wish them well when we can't do them any good;
- judge them favourably and often with bias in their favour;
- sympathise with them in their afflictions; and
- rejoice with them in their happiness and good fortune.

It's impossible for there to be a benevolent affection without sympathy both with the good and the bad fortune of the object; and it appears to be impossible for there to be sympathy without benevolent affection. Men don't sympathise with anyone they hate, or even with anyone to

whose welfare they are perfectly indifferent.

We may sympathise with a perfect stranger or even an enemy whom we see in distress; but this is an effect of pity—if we didn't pity him we wouldn't sympathise with him.

I'm making this point here because a very able author [Adam Smith] in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* gives a very different account of the origin of sympathy. It appears to me to be •an effect of benevolent affection, and to be inseparable from it. [Smith held that sympathy •causes benevolent affections.]

(2) The constitution of our nature very powerfully invites us to value the benevolent affections and cultivate them in our minds.

The agreeable feeling that always accompanies them as a present reward seems to be intended by nature for this purpose.

Benevolence naturally calms the mind, warms the heart, enlivens the whole body, and brightens every feature of the face. It can fairly be called 'medicinal' both to soul and body. We are bound to it by •duty, and invited to it by •self-interest; and because both of •these are often feeble, we have natural kind affections to aid them in their work and make up for their defects, and the exercise of these affections brings manly pleasure.

(3) The natural benevolent affections provide the most irresistible proof that the Author of our nature intended us to live in society and do good to our fellow-men when we have the opportunity. ·How do they prove this? Through the fact that· this great and important part of the human constitution has an obvious relation to society and can't have any use in a solitary state.

(4) The different principles of action differ in how much dignity [see Glossary] they have, and when we think carefully about them we find that some rise higher in our esteem than others.

We don't ascribe any dignity to instincts or to habits; we only admire the Creator's wisdom in adapting them so perfectly to the ways of life of the animals that have them. Much the same holds for appetites: they are for use rather than for ornament.

The desires for knowledge, power, and esteem stand higher in our estimation, and we see them as giving dignity and ornament to man. Although the actions that comes from them are not strictly speaking *virtuous*, they are manly and worthy of respect, and can fairly be counted as superior to actions that come from mere appetite. I think that's what everyone thinks.

If we apply the same kind of judgment to our benevolent affections, they appear not only manly and respect-worthy but highly amiable [see Glossary].

They are amiable even in brute animals. We love the meekness of the lamb, the gentleness of the dove, the affection of a dog to his master. [Reid gives examples: a ewe defending its lamb from predators, small birds decoying hawks away from the nest, and so on. Then:] If kind affection is amiable in brutes, it is not less so in our own species. Even the external signs of it have a powerful charm.

Everyone knows that a person of accomplished good breeding charms everyone he converses with. And what is this good breeding? If we analyse it we'll find it to be made up of looks, gestures and speeches, which are the natural signs of benevolence and good affection. Someone who has the habit of using these signs in the proper way and without meanness [see Glossary] is a well-bred and polite man.

What is the beauty of facial features, particularly in the fair sex, that all men love and admire? I believe it consists chiefly in the features that indicate good affections. Every indication of meekness, gentleness, and benignity is a beauty. On the contrary, every feature that indicates pride, passion,

envy, and malignity is an ugliness.

... Even the signs and shadows of kind affections are highly attractive in our species. Indeed they're the joy and the comfort of human life, to good men and even to vicious and dissolute ones.

Without society and the intercourse [see Glossary] of kind affection, man is a gloomy, melancholy and joyless being. His mind oppressed with cares and fears, he can't enjoy the consolations of sound sleep; in constant dread of impending danger, he jumps when a leaf rustles. His ears are continually on the stretch, and every little breeze brings a sound that alarms him.

When he enters into society and feels security in the good affection of friends and neighbours, then—but only then—his fear vanishes and his mind is at ease. His courage is raised, his understanding enlightened, his heart warmed with joy.

Human society is like a heap of embers: when they are scattered they lose their light and heat. . . ., but when brought together they give heat and light to each other, and the flame breaks out and not only defends itself but subdues everything around it.

The security, happiness and strength of human society spring solely from the benevolent affections of its members.

Though the benevolent affections are all honourable and lovely, they aren't all equally so. There's a subordination among them, and the honour we pay to them generally corresponds to how large their object is. The good husband, the good father, the good friend, the good neighbour, we honour as a good man who is worthy of our love and affection. But the man in whom these more private affections are swallowed up in zeal for the good of his country, and of mankind, who goes about doing good and looks for opportunities to be useful to his species, we revere as more than a good man—as a hero, as a good angel.

Chapter 5: Malevolent affections

Are there in the human constitution any affections that can be called ‘malevolent’? What are they? And what are they *for*?

To me there seem to be two that we could call ‘malevolent’. They are •emulation and •resentment. I take these to be parts of the human constitution that •were given to us by our Maker for good ends, and •are—when properly directed and regulated—of excellent use. But I call them ‘malevolent’ because human nature is very prone to use them wrongly or excessively, and that is what drives all the malevolence that is to be found among men.

If you think they deserve a softer name, because they can be exercised without malevolence, as nature intended, I have no objection.

Emulation

By ‘emulation’ I mean a desire for superiority to one’s rivals in any pursuit, accompanied by an uneasiness [see Glossary] at being surpassed.

Human life has justly been compared to a race. The prize is superiority of some kind; but the kinds. . . .of superiority among men are infinitely diversified.

No man is so contemptible in his own eyes that he won’t enter into some kind of contest; and he will always find competitors to rival him. . . .

We see emulation among brute animals. . . . Many animals of the gregarious kind contend for superiority in their flock or herd, and show obvious signs of jealousy when others offer to rival them.

The emulation of brute animals is mostly confined to •swiftness, •strength, and •favour with their females. But emulation of the human kind has a much wider field.

In every profession, and in every accomplishment—real or imaginary!—of body or mind, there are rivalries. Literary men rival one another in literary abilities. Artists in their various arts. The fair sex in their beauty and attractions, and in the respect paid them by the other sex.

In every political society, from a minor corporation up to the government of the country, there is rivalry for power and influence.

Men have a natural desire for power, apart from any thought about the power of others. We call that *ambition*. But the desire for superiority, in power or in anything else we think worthy of esteem, concerns a relation to rivals and is what we properly call ‘emulation’.

The stronger the desire is, the more piercing will be the uneasiness of falling behind, and the more the mind will be hurt by this humiliation.

Emulation plainly makes things better. Without it, life would stagnate and the discoveries of art and genius would be at a stand. This principle produces a constant fermentation in society, by which—though dregs may be produced—the better part is purified and raised to a perfection that it couldn’t otherwise reach.

We don’t have enough data to weigh against one another the good and the bad effects that this principle produces in society; but there’s reason to think that with emulation as with other natural principles the good outweighs the bad. As long as it’s under the control of reason and virtue its effects are always good; when left to be guided by passion and folly they are often very bad.

Reason directs us to work for superiority only in things that have real excellence, otherwise we are wasting our labour. To value ourselves for superiority in things that have no real worth or none compared with what they cost is to be proud of our own folly! And it’s equally ridiculous to

be uneasy [see Glossary] at not being the best at something of that kind.

Reason directs us to work for superiority only in things that we *can* achieve; otherwise we'll be like the frog in [Aesop's] fable, who tried to match the size of the ox, and swelled herself till she burst.

To suppress •all desire for things that aren't achievable, and •every uneasy thought about the lack of them, is an obvious dictate of prudence as well as of virtue and religion.

If •emulation is controlled by such maxims of reason, and if all bias in our own favour is laid aside, •it will be a powerful principle of our improvement without harming anyone else. It will give strength to the nerves and vigour to the mind in every noble and manly pursuit.

But when it isn't being directed by reason and virtue its effects are dismal. It often has the most malignant influence on men's beliefs, their affections, and their actions.

It's an old saying that *affection follows opinion*, and in many cases it does. A man can't be grateful unless he thinks that someone has done him a favour; can't have deliberate resentment unless he thinks he has been injured; can't have esteem for someone whom he doesn't think to have some estimable quality. . . .

But it's equally true that sometimes *opinion follows affection*—not that it •should but that it actually •does so, by giving a false bias to our judgment. We are apt to be biased in favour of our friends and even more of ourselves.

So the desire for superiority leads men to assign an unduly high value to things in which they excel, or think they excel. In this way, pride can feed itself on the very dregs of human nature.

That same desire for superiority may lead men to under-value things that they think they can't excel in or don't want to put in the effort needed for excellence. 'The grapes are

sour', said the fox [in another of Aesop's fables], when he saw them beyond his reach. The same principle leads men to under-rate the merit of others, and to impute their brightest actions to mean or bad motives.

He who runs a race feels uneasiness at seeing another outstrip him. This is uncorrupted nature, and the work of God within him. But this uneasiness can have either one of two very different effects. •It may incite him to try harder, straining every nerve to get ahead of his rival. This is fair and honest emulation; it's effect it is intended to produce. But if he doesn't have fairness and honesty of heart, •he will look with an evil eye on his competitor, and will try to trip him or throw a stumbling-block in his way. This is pure envy, the most malignant passion that can lodge in the human breast. It devours as its natural food the fame and the happiness of those who are most deserving of esteem.

Some men are prone to detract from the character of other people, even ones they don't know or don't care about; and others are eager to hear scandal and to pass it on. To what principle in human nature must we ascribe these qualities? The failings of others surely add nothing to our worth, and they aren't in themselves a pleasant topic of thought or of discourse. But they flatter pride by making us believe we are superior to those we are running down.

Mightn't that the same desire for superiority have some secret influence on those who declaim eloquently on •the corruption of human nature and •the wickedness, fraud and insincerity of mankind in general? It should always be taken for granted that the declaimer is—i.e. sees himself as—an exception to the general rule. . . . Hoping that his audience will be so civil as not to include him in the black description, he *rises* by *lowering* the species; so he stands alone, like Noah in the world before the flood. This looks like envy against the human race.

It would be an endless and disagreeable task to enumerate all the evils and vices that passion and folly beget on emulation. Here as in most cases the corruption of the best things is the worst. In brute animals, emulation doesn't have much material to work on, and its effects—good or bad—are few. . . . But in mankind it has an infinity of material, and its good or bad effects. . . . multiply correspondingly. . . .

Resentment

Nature disposes us, when we are hurt, to resist and retaliate. Beside the bodily pain caused by the hurt, the mind is ruffled, and a desire is raised to retaliate against the author of the hurt or injury [see Glossary]. This in general is what we call 'anger' or 'resentment'.

·In the eighth of his *Fifteen Sermons*· Butler makes a very important distinction between •sudden resentment, which is a blind impulse arising from our constitution and •deliberate resentment. The first can be created by hurt of any kind, but the second can only be created by injury, real or conceived. The same distinction is made by Henry Home in his *Elements of Criticism*. What Butler calls 'sudden' he calls 'instinctive'.

We don't in ordinary language have different names for these different kinds of resentment, but we must distinguish them if we are to have sound notions of this part of the human constitution. The distinction corresponds perfectly with the distinction I have made between the •animal and •rational principles of action. For sudden or instinctive resentment is an animal principle that we share with brute animals, whereas the resentment that those two authors call 'deliberate' has to be classified as a rational principle.

By putting it in that class, I don't mean that it is always kept within the limits that reason prescribes, but only that it is exclusive to man as a reasonable being whose rational faculties enable him to distinguish hurt from injury—a distinction that no brute animal can make.

Each of these kinds of resentment can be produced by hurt or injury done •to ourselves or •to others whose interests we care about.

When we have a benevolent affection towards others we resent wrongs done to them, our resentment being proportion to the strength of our affection. Pity and sympathy with the sufferer produce resentment against the author of the suffering as naturally as concern for ourselves produces resentment of our own wrongs.

I shall first consider the resentment that I classify as 'animal', which Butler calls 'sudden' and Home calls 'instinctive'.

In every animal that has the power to hurt its enemy we see an attempt to retaliate for the evil that is done to it. Even a mouse will bite when it can't run away.

There are some animals to whom nature hasn't given any offensive weapon. Anger and resentment wouldn't be useful to them, and I think we'll find that they never show any sign of it. But there are few of this kind.

Some of the more intelligent animals can be provoked to fierce anger, and can stay angry for a long time. Many of them show great animosity in defending their young, yet hardly show any in defending themselves. Others resist every assault made on the flock or herd to which they belong. Bees defend their hive, wild beasts their den, and birds their nest.

This sudden resentment works in the same way in men as in brutes, and seems to be given by nature to both as a means of defence in cases where there is no time for deliberation. It is comparable with the natural instinct by which a man who has lost his balance and starts to fall makes a sudden and violent effort to recover himself, without any intention or deliberation.

In such efforts men often exert a degree of muscular strength beyond what they can exert by a calm determination of the will. . . .

By a similar violent and sudden impulse nature prompts us to lash out at the cause of any hurt to us, whether it be man or beast. The 'balance' instinct is solely defensive and is prompted by fear. This sudden resentment is offensive and is prompted by anger, but with a view to defence.

Man in his present state is surrounded by so many dangers from his own species, from brute animals, from everything around him, that he needs some defensive armour that will always be ready in a moment of danger. His reason is of great use for this purpose, when there's time to apply it. But in many cases the harm would be done before reason could work out how to prevent it.

The wisdom of nature has provided two ways of making up for this defect in our reason. One is the instinct before mentioned. . . . [Reid sketchily repeats his account of blinking to protect one's eyes, recovering from a stumble, etc.]

But •offensive arms are often the surest means of •defence—by deterrence. Accordingly, nature has provided man and other animals with this kind of defence, through the sudden resentment that outruns the quickest decisions of reason and takes fire in an instant, threatening the enemy with retaliation.

. . . .This principle has a two-fold effect: it •inspires the defender with courage and animosity, and •strikes terror into the assailant. It proclaims to all assailants what our ancient Scottish kings did on their coins, *Nemo me impune lacesset* [Latin, meaning 'No-one hurts me and gets away with it']. In countless cases this •implied threat of retaliation• deters men and beasts from doing harm, thereby saving others from being harmed.

[Reid now raises the question of why brutes and even men show anger and resentment against inanimate things, which can't be affected by this. His answer:] It seems to me impossible that there should be resentment against a

thing which at that very moment is regarded as inanimate and consequently incapable either of •intending hurt or of •being punished. What can be more absurd than to be angry with a knife for cutting me, or with a weight for falling on my toes? I think there must be some momentary notion or conception that the object of our resentment *is* capable of being punished; and if it is natural, before reflection, to be angry with inanimate things, it seems to follow that it is natural to think that they have life and feeling.

Several phenomena in human nature lead us to conjecture that in the earliest period of life we are apt to think that everything around us is animated. Judging them by ourselves, we ascribe to them the feelings we are conscious of in ourselves. So we see what a little girl thinks about her doll and her playthings, and what primitive nations think about the heavenly bodies, the elements, and the sea, rivers, and fountains.

. . . .By reason and experience we learn that certain things to which at first we ascribed life and intelligence are really inanimate. If this is right, it's not very surprising that when we are adults we should sometimes—before reflection—relapse for a moment into this prejudice of our early years, treating as alive things that we once believed to be so.

[Reid says that his present line of thought doesn't require him to have this or any other explanation of why, for instance, a man who loses at cards may 'punish' the cards. And he adds that this kind of emotional conduct doesn't matter much, because 'the least ray of reflection corrects it'.]

It's clear enough that this sudden or animal resentment is intended by nature for our defence. It prevents harmful behaviour by the fear of punishment. It's a kind of penal statute promulgated by nature and left to the sufferer to enforce.

It is to be expected that anyone who judges in his own cause will be inclined to seek more than a fair compensation. But this disposition is checked by the resentment of the other party.

But once injuries are begun in the state of nature, it often happens that the pay-back is found excessive and produces resentment and return pay-back, which. . . etc. until mortal enmity is produced, and each party thinks himself safe only in the destruction of his enemy.

This right of redressing and punishing our own wrongs, so apt to be abused, is one of the natural rights which in political society is given up to the laws and the civil magistrate; and it's one of the chief benefits of political union that it largely prevents the evils arising from ungoverned resentment.

Although deliberate resentment doesn't really belong to the class of animal principles, but I'll make some remarks about it here. It does share the name 'resentment' with the sudden resentment that certainly is an animal principle; the two are distinguished only by philosophers; and in real life they are commonly intermixed.

A very little reason and reflection is enough to teach a man that only •injury, and not mere •hurt, is a proper object of resentment for a rational creature. A man may suffer at the hands of someone else not only •without injury but •with the most friendly intention—for example, in a painful surgical operation. Every man of common sense sees that an animal may resent such suffering but a man shouldn't.

Locke reports a gentleman who •was cured of madness by a very harsh and unpleasant operation, •gratefully acknowledged the cure as the greatest obligation he could have received, but •could never bear the sight of the operator because it brought back the idea of the agony he had endured from his hands.

In this case we can see clearly that the animal and rational principles are both at work. Animal resentment produced an aversion to the operator, and reason couldn't overcome it; and in a weak mind it might well have produced lasting resentment and hatred. But in this gentleman reason prevailed enough to make him aware that gratitude and not resentment was appropriate.

Suffering may give a bias to the judgment and make us think there was injury where really there wasn't. But without a belief that there has been injury, there can't be any deliberate resentment.

Hence, among enlightened nations, hostile armies fight without anger or resentment. The vanquished are not treated as offenders but as brave men who have fought for their country unsuccessfully and are entitled to every humane help that is consistent with the safety of the conquerors.

If we analyse the deliberate resentment that is exclusive to rational creatures we'll find that though it agrees with merely animal resentment in some respects it differs in others. Both are accompanied with an uneasy sensation that disturbs the mind's peace. Both prompt us to seek redress for our sufferings and security from harm. But in deliberate resentment—and not in animal resentment—there must be a belief that injury has been done or intended. And a belief about injury implies •an idea of justice, and consequently •a moral faculty.

The very notion of an *injury* is that it is less than we may justly claim; compare the notion of a *favour*, which is that it is more than we can justly claim. Thus, justice is the standard by which both •favour and •injury are to be estimated. Their very nature and definition consist in their exceeding or falling short of this standard ·of what is just, fair, morally right·. So no-one can have the idea either of a favour or of an injury unless he has the idea of justice.

The very idea of justice that enters into cool and deliberate resentment tends to restrain its excesses. For just as there is injustice in doing an injury so also there is injustice in punishing it too severely.

For an honest and reflective man, there is a strong case to be made against excessive resentment:

- awareness of the frailty of human nature,
- knowledge that he has often needed of forgiveness himself,
- the pleasure of renewing a good understanding after it has been interrupted,
- the inward approval of a generous and forgiving disposition, and
- the irksomeness and uneasiness of a mind ruffled by resentment.

•But there is also a case to be made against malevolent affections in general. Consider the fact that, on one hand,

- every benevolent affection is pleasant in its nature, is health to the soul, and a cordial to the spirits; and
- nature has made even the outward facial expression of benevolent affections pleasant to every beholder; . . .

and the fact that, on the other hand,

- every* malevolent affection—whether or not it is excessive—is vexation and disquiet to the mind, and even makes the face ugly.

Isn't it clear that these facts are signals by which nature loudly instructs us to use benevolent affections as our •daily bread, both for health and pleasure, and to consider the malevolent ones as a •disgusting medicine that is to be taken only when necessary, and even then in no greater quantity than is necessary.

Chapter 6: Passion

There are some things belonging to the mind that have great influence on human conduct, by arousing or damping down, inflaming or cooling, the animal principles I have been discussing. Three of these deserve special attention—I'll call them 'passion', 'disposition', and 'belief'. They will be the topics of the final three chapters of Part II of this Essay.

The meaning of the word 'passion' hasn't been settled with any precision, either in common discourse or in the writings of philosophers. I think it is commonly taken to signify some agitation of mind, in contrast with the state of tranquility and composure in which a man is most master of himself.

The Greek word for it, *παθος*, is translated by Cicero as *perturbatio* [Latin, = 'agitation'].

It has always been thought of as like a storm at sea or a tempest in the air. So it doesn't signify thing that is constant and permanent in the mind, but rather something occasional and of limited duration, like a storm or tempest.

Passion commonly produces perceptible effects on the body. It changes the voice, features, and gesture. The external signs of passion are in some cases very like those of madness; in other cases they resemble melancholy. Passion often gives the body a level of muscular force and agility far greater than it has in calm moments.

The effects of passion on the mind are at least as remarkable. It turns the thoughts involuntarily to the objects related to it, so that a man can hardly think of anything else. It often gives a strange bias to the judgment, making a man •quick-sighted in everything that tends to inflame and justify his passion, but •blind to everything that tends to moderate and soothe it. Like a 'magic lantern' it arouses spectres and apparitions that have no reality, and throws false colours

on every object. It can turn ugliness into beauty, vice into virtue, and virtue into vice.

The sentiments of a man under the influence of a passion will appear absurd and ridiculous—not only to other men but even to himself when the storm is played out and followed by a calm. Passion often gives a violent push to the will, and makes a man do something that he knows he'll repent as long as he lives.

Such are the effects of passion—I think everyone agrees about that. They have been described in lively colours by poets, orators and moralists in all ages. But more attention has been paid to passion's effects than to its nature: the effects have been copiously and elegantly described, but its nature hasn't been precisely defined.

The controversy between the ancient Aristotelians and the Stoics regarding the passions probably arose from their meaning different things by the word. One group maintained that the passions are good useful parts of our constitution as long as they are governed by reason. The other group, having the idea that nothing should be called 'passion' unless it to some degree clouds and darkens the understanding, regarded all passion as hostile to reason, and therefore maintained that in a wise man passion should have no existence but be utterly exterminated.

If the two groups had agreed about the definition of 'passion', they would probably have had no disagreement. But while one thought of passion only as the cause of the bad effects that it often produces, and the other thought of it as fitted by nature to produce good effects while under reason's control, neither group was defending anything that the other condemned. Neither group thought that the dictates of passion ought to be followed in opposition to reason. So their difference was verbal more than substantive; it came from their giving one word different meanings.

The precise meaning of this word seems to be no more clearly fixed among modern philosophers.

Hume gives the name 'passion' to every principle of action in the human mind, which leads him to maintain that every man is and ought to be led by his passions, and that it's reason's role to be subservient to the passions.

Hutcheson sees all the principles of action as determinations or motions of the will, and divides them into the calm and turbulent. The turbulent ones, he says, are our appetites and passions. He says about our passions as well as about the calm motions of our will, that some are benevolent, others are selfish; that anger, envy, indignation, and some others can be either selfish or benevolent depending on whether they come from opposition to our own interests or to those of our friends and loved ones.

It appears, therefore, that this excellent author gives the name 'passion' not to every principle of action but only to some, and to those only when they are turbulent and intense, not when they are calm and deliberate.

Our natural desires and affections can be calm enough to leave room for reflection, so that in an individual case we have no trouble deliberating coolly about whether on this occasion they ought to be gratified. On other occasions they may press so hard that they make deliberation very difficult, urging us by a kind of violence to gratify them immediately.

A man may, without being inflamed, be aware of having received an injury. He judges coolly concerning the injury and the proper means of compensation. This is resentment without passion. It leaves the man's self-control intact.

On another occasion, that same principle of resentment bursts into flame. His blood boils within him; his looks, his voice and his gesture are changed; he can think of nothing but immediate revenge, and feels a strong impulse—without thought of the consequences—to say and do things that his

cool reason can't justify. This is the passion of resentment.

What I have said about resentment can easily be applied to other natural desires and affections. When they are calm enough not to produce any perceptible effects on the body or to darken the understanding and weaken self-control, they are not called 'passions'. But the same principle, when it becomes so violent as to produce these effects on the body and the mind, is a passion or as Cicero very properly calls it, a 'perturbation'.

This meaning for the word 'passion' obviously squares much better with its use in ordinary language than the meaning Hume gives it.

When he says that men ought to be governed only by their passions, and that the use of reason is to be subservient to the passions, this sounds at first like a shocking paradox, inconsistent with good morals and with common sense; but when it is explained according to his meaning, it is—like most paradoxes!—nothing but a misuse of words.

If we give the name 'passion' to every principle of action. . . .and give the name 'reason' solely to the power of discovering what means are fit for what ends, it will be true that the use of reason is to be subservient to the passions.

Wanting to stay as close as possible to how words are ordinarily used, I shall use 'passion' to mean *not* •any principle of action distinct from the desires and affections that I have explained, *but only* •such a degree of intensity in any of them as is apt to produce the effects on body or mind that I described above.

Our appetites, even when they are intense, are not ordinarily called 'passions'; yet they are capable of being inflamed to rage, and in that case their effects are very like those of the passions; and what is said of one can said of the other.

Having explained what I mean by 'passion', I don't think I need to go through them one by one, because they differ not

in kind but only in degree from the principles I have already enumerated.

The common classification of the passions into the **trio of pairs** •desire and aversion, •hope and fear, •joy and grief, has been mentioned almost by every writer on these topics and doesn't need to be explained. But I would point out that these are ingredients or variants not only of •the passions but of •every principle of action, animal and rational.

All the principles of action imply a desire for some object [see Glossary]; there can't be a desire for an object unless there is aversion to its contrary; and the object's being present turns the desire/aversion into joy/grief, whereas it being absent turns them into hope/fear. And it's obvious that desire and aversion, joy and grief, hope and fear, can be either calm and sedate or intense and vigorous.

So the **trio of pairs** fits all principles of action, whether calm or vigorous, and I shan't spend time on it. What I shall do now is to offer three observations on passion in general, aiming to show its influence on human conduct.

1. It is passion that makes us liable to strong temptations. If we had no passions, we would hardly be under any temptation to act wrongly. That's because when we view things calmly, free from the false colours that passion throws on them, we can hardly fail to see what's right and what's wrong, and to see that the right is the one to choose.

I believe that a person's first step into vice [see Glossary] is never his coolly and deliberately preferring evil to good. ·In the King James Bible, *Genesis* 3: 6–7, we find this·:

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her and he did eat; and the eyes of them both were opened.

Inflamed desire had blinded the eyes of their understanding.

·And Milton (*Paradise Lost* IX) puts it like this·:

Fix'd on the fruit she gaz'd, which to behold
Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words impregn'd
With reason to her seeming, and with truth.
—Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
Of virtue to make wise, what hinders then
To reach and feed at once both body and mind.

Thus our first parents were tempted to disobey their Maker, and all their posterity are liable to temptation from the same cause. Passion—or violent appetite—first •blinds the understanding and then •perverts the will.

It is passion, therefore, and the vigorous motions of appetite, that make us in our present state liable to strong temptations to stray from our duty. That is the lot [see Glossary] of human nature in the present period of our existence [= in our life here on earth (as distinct from our after-life in heaven)].

Human virtue must gather strength by struggle and effort. Just as infants can walk without stumbling only after being exposed to many falls and bruises; just as wrestlers acquire their strength and agility by many combats and violent exertions; so also with the noblest powers of human nature as well as the lowest, and even with virtue itself.

Temptation and trial don't just enable virtue to be on show; they also enable it to acquire its strength and vigour.

Men must acquire patience by suffering, and fortitude by being exposed to danger, and each other virtue by situations that test it and put it to work.

For all we know to the contrary, this may be necessary in the nature of things. It is certainly a law of nature with regard to man.

It would be presumptuous for us to say whether there are orders of thinking and moral creatures who are never

subject to any temptation, never have virtue put to any trial. But it's obvious that this isn't and never was man's lot, even in the state of innocence [i.e. before Adam's fall].

Man's condition would be sad indeed if the temptations to which his natural constitution and his circumstances make him liable were irresistible. Such a state would not at all be a state of trial and discipline.

Our condition here ·on earth· is such that on the one hand passion often tempts and urges us to do wrong, and on the other hand reason and conscience oppose the dictates of passion. 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh' [*Galatians* 5:17]. And the man's character and his fate depend on the outcome of this conflict.

If reason is victorious, his virtue is strengthened; he has the inner satisfaction of having fought a good fight on behalf of his duty, and his peace of mind is preserved.

But if passion conquers the sense of duty, the man is conscious of having done something that he ought not to have done and *could have* refrained from doing. His own heart condemns him—he is guilty in his own judgment.

This conflict between •the passions of our animal nature and •the calm dictates of reason and conscience is not a **theory** invented to explain the facts of human conduct; it is a **fact** known to every man who attends to his own conduct.

The most ancient philosophy of which we have any account—namely the Pythagorean school—maintained this:

The mind of man is like a state or commonwealth in which there are various powers, some of which ought to govern while others ought to be subordinate. In this as in every commonwealth, what counts above all is *the good of the whole*, and that requires that this subordination be preserved, and that •the governing powers always have the upper hand over •the appetites and passions. All wise and good conduct

consists in this. All folly and vice consists in the prevalence of passion over the dictates of reason.

This philosophy was adopted by Plato; and it fits so well with what every man feels in himself that it is bound to be accepted by anyone who thinks about these matters without an initial bias towards some one theory.

The ‘governing powers’ that these ancient philosophers speak of are what I call ‘the rational principles of action’; I’ll discuss them later. I mention them here only because if they aren’t mentioned it’s impossible to get a clear account of the influence of the passions and their rank in our constitution.

2. The impulse of passion is not always to what is bad, but very often to what is good and what our reason approves. As Hutcheson points out, there are some passions that are benevolent as well as others that are selfish.

The intrinsic nature of the affections of resentment and emulation—and of the ones that spring from them—make them disturbing and disquieting to the mind, even when they aren’t more intense than reason would permit; which is why they are commonly called ‘passions’ even in their moderate degrees. For a similar reason the benevolent affections, which are placid in their nature and are rarely carried beyond the bounds set by reason, are very seldom called ‘passions’. We don’t give the name ‘passion’ to benevolence, gratitude, or friendship. But there’s one exception to this general rule: love between the sexes is always called a passion, because it commonly discomposes the mind and isn’t easily kept within reasonable bounds.

All our natural desires and affections are good and necessary parts of our constitution; and passion is only a certain degree of vigour in these, so its natural effect is also good, and it is by accident that it leads us wrong.

Passion is very properly said to be *blind*. It doesn’t look beyond the present gratification. It’s reason’s job to

attend to the accidental circumstances that sometimes make that gratification improper or hurtful. When there is no impropriety in it, and especially when it is our duty, passion aids reason and gives additional force to its dictates.

Sympathy with the distressed may bring them a charitable relief when a calm sense of duty would be too weak to produce that effect.

When we coolly think about something, good or bad, that we regard as very distant ·in time·, it doesn’t have the influence on us that reason would say it ought to have. Imagination is like the eye: its objects shrink in proportion to how far away they are. The passions of hope and fear must be raised, in order to give such objects their proper size in the imagination and their proper influence on our conduct.

The dread of disgrace and of the civil magistrate, and the thought of future punishment, prevent many crimes that bad men would commit if these restraints didn’t exist. The restraints contribute greatly to the peace and good order of society.

There’s no bad action that couldn’t have been prevented by some passion; and there’s no external good action that couldn’t have happened primarily as a result of some passion. It’s very probable that men’s passions, over all, do more good than harm to society.

The evil that is done attracts our attention more ·than the good·, and is said to be solely the work of human passions. The good may have better motives, and charity leads us to think that it has; but we don’t see the heart, so we can’t determine what share men’s passions have in its output.

3. If we sort out the effects of our passions into **(i)** those that are altogether involuntary and outside the range of our power and **(ii)** those that could be prevented by an exertion, perhaps a great exertion, of self-control, we’ll find that **(i)** are good and highly useful, and only **(ii)** are bad.

Moderate passions affect the health of the body, to which some agitation of this kind seems to be as useful as storms and tempests are to the wholesomeness of the air. Also, every passion naturally draws our attention to its object and interests us in it [here and below = 'makes us care about it'].

The mind of man is naturally rambling and superficial; when it's not attending to something interesting it drifts from one thing to another without fixing its attention on anything. A careless passing glance is all we give to objects in which we have no concern. It requires strong curiosity or some weightier passion to give us the interest in an object that is needed if we are to focus on it. And without such a focus we can't form a true and stable judgment about anything.

Take away the passions and who knows what proportion of mankind would resemble the frivolous people who have never had a serious and concentrated thought.

What enables a man to •excel in any art [see Glossary] or science is not mere judgment or intellectual ability; he must also have a love. . . .of it bordering on fanaticism, or a passionate desire for some advantage, e.g. fame, to be achieved through that •excellence. Without this, he wouldn't undergo the labour and fatigue of his faculties that it requires. So we can fairly credit the passions with a considerable part in the discoveries and improvements of the arts and sciences.

If the passions for fame and distinction were extinguished, it would be hard to find anyone ready to undertake the cares and toils of government; and there might not be many who would make the exertion necessary to raise themselves above the ignoble vulgar.

The involuntary signs of the passions and dispositions of the mind—in the voice, features, and action—are a part of the human constitution that deserves admiration. The meanings of those signs are known to all men by nature and independently of all experience.

They are so many openings into the souls of our fellow-men, making their thoughts and feelings visible to the eye. They are a •natural language common to all mankind, without which it would have been impossible to invent any •artificial language.

It's from the natural signs of the mind's passions and dispositions that

- the human form derives its beauty;
- painting, poetry, and music derive their expression;
- eloquence derives its greatest force, and
- conversation derives its greatest charm.

When they are kept within their proper bounds the passions give life and vigour to the whole man. Without them man would be a slug. We see what polish and animation the passion of love, when honourable and not unsuccessful, gives to both sexes.

On the day of battle the passion for military glory raises the brave commander far above himself, making his face shine and his eyes sparkle. The glory of old England warms the heart of the ordinary British sailor and makes him despise every danger.

As for the bad effects of passion: admittedly it often gives a strong impulse to a bad action, one that the man condemns himself for as soon as he has performed it. But he must be aware that the impulse, though strong, was not irresistible—otherwise he wouldn't condemn himself.

We do allow that a sudden and violent passion that takes a man by surprise partly excuses a bad action; but if it were irresistible it would not just •partly but •wholly excuse, which it never does, either in the judgment of the man himself or of others.

To sum up all this: passion provides a very strong instance of the truth of the common maxim that *the corruption of the best things is worst*.

Chapter 7: Disposition

By 'disposition' I mean a state of mind which, while it lasts, gives a tendency or proneness to be moved by •certain animal principles rather than by •others; while the same person at another time and in another state of mind may make other animal principles dominant.

I remarked earlier that it is a •defining• property of appetites that they are periodic, ceasing for a time when sated by their objects and returning regularly after certain periods.

Even principles that aren't periodic have their ebbs and flows from time to time, depending on the disposition of the mind at the time.

There's a natural affinity among some of •the principles of action, so that having one of •the tribe naturally disposes us to have others that are allied to it.

Many good authors have observed that all the benevolent affections are related by such an affinity. The exercise of one benevolent affection makes one prone to exercise others.

They all involve a certain placid and agreeable tone of mind, and that seems to be what ties them together.

The malevolent affections have also an affinity; having any one of them disposes one to have the others. Perhaps this is because of the disagreeable feeling—making the mind sore and uneasy—that is common to them all.

As far as we can trace the causes of the various dispositions of the mind, it seems that •they sometimes come from the associating powers of the principles of action that have a natural affinity and are prone to keep company with one another; •sometimes they are due to various bits of good or bad luck; and •sometimes, no doubt, the state of the body may have influence on the disposition of the mind.

At one time the state of the mind, like a serene unclouded sky, shows everything in the most agreeable light. That is when a man is prone to benevolence, compassion, and every kind affection; unsuspecting, not easily provoked.

The poets have observed that men have . . . times when they are averse from saying or doing anything harsh. . . . This disposition, I think, is what we commonly call 'good humour'. . . . No disposition is more comfortable to the person himself or more agreeable to others than good humour. It is to the mind what good health is to the body, equipping a man to enjoy everything that is agreeable in life, and to use every one of his faculties without clog or impediment. It disposes us to contentment with our lot, benevolence to all men, and sympathy with the distressed. It presents everything in the most favourable light, and disposes us to avoid giving or taking offence.

This happy disposition seems to be the natural fruit of a good conscience and a firm belief that the world is under a wise and benevolent government; and when that is its source it is an habitual sentiment of piety.

Good humour is also apt to be produced by happy success or unexpected good fortune. Joy and hope are favourable to it; vexation and disappointment are unfavourable.

This disposition seems to bring just one danger with it: if we aren't careful it may degenerate into light-mindedness, and indispose us to a proper degree of caution and of attention to the future consequences of our actions.

There is a disposition opposite to good humour that we call 'bad humour'; its effects are directly contrary, so that its influence is as malignant as that of good humour is salutary.

Bad humour is enough, all on its own, to make a man unhappy; it tinges every object with its own dismal colour; and like a sore on the skin it is hurt by everything that touches it. It takes offence where none was meant, and

disposes the man to discontent, jealousy, envy, and quite generally to malevolence.

Another couple of opposite dispositions are •elation of mind and •depression. These contrary dispositions are both ambiguous: their influence can be good or bad, depending on whether they are based on true or false beliefs, and on whether they are under control.

The elation of mind that comes from a sound sense of the dignity [see Glossary] of our nature and of the powers and faculties God has given us, is true magnanimity; it disposes a man to the noblest virtues and the most heroic actions and enterprises.

There is also an elation of mind that comes from an awareness of our worth and integrity, such as Job felt when he said:

‘Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me while I live.’ [Quoted fairly accurately from the King James Bible, *Job* 27:5–6]

This may be called the pride of virtue, but it is a noble pride. It makes a man scorn to do what is base or mean. This is the true sense of honour.

But there’s also an elation of mind that comes from a *false* belief about our talents or our value, or from our rating too highly our endowments of mind, body, or fortune. This is *pride*, the parent of many odious vices such as arrogance, undue contempt of others, self-partiality, and vicious self-love.

The disposition that is opposite to elation of mind is depression, which also has good or bad effects depending on whether it is based on true or false beliefs.

A sound sense of the weakness and imperfections of human nature and of our own individual faults and defects is true •humility. It is *not thinking of ourselves above what we*

ought to think [alluding to *Romans* 12:3], a most healthy and amiable disposition, of great value in the sight of God and man. It isn’t inconsistent with real •magnanimity and greatness of soul. They can live together with great advantage to both, each guarding the other against becoming inappropriately extreme.

There is also a depression of mind that is the *opposite* of magnanimity—one that weakens the springs of action and freezes every sentiment that might lead to some noble exertion or enterprise.

Suppose a man to have no belief in a good government of the world, no conception of the dignity of virtue, no hope of happiness in another state ·after death·. Suppose him also to be in a state of extreme poverty and dependence, with no higher aim than to •meet his bodily needs or •provide for the pleasure—or flatter the pride—of some being as worthless as himself. Isn’t the •soul of this man as depressed as his •body or his •fortune? And if fortune does smile on him while he retains the same sentiments, he is still only the slave of fortune. His mind is depressed to the state of a brute; and his human faculties serve only to make him feel that depression.

Depression of mind may be due to melancholy, a sickness of the mind that comes from the state of the body. [We’ll get near to what Reid means if we think of his ‘melancholy’ as •clinical depression and his ‘depression’ as •extreme sadness or gloom.] It throws a dismal gloom on every object of thought, cuts all the sinews of action, and often gives rise to strange and absurd beliefs in religion or in other significant matters. But where there’s real worth at bottom, some rays of it will shine out even in this depressed state of mind.

[Reid illustrates with a real-life example, which he sums up thus:] Thus this good man, when he believed that he had no soul, showed a most generous and disinterested [see

Glossary] concern for those who had souls.

Just as depression of mind may produce strange beliefs, especially when it comes from melancholy, so also our beliefs can have a very considerable influence in elevating or depressing the mind, even when there is no melancholy.

Think about two men answering to these two descriptions:

- (1) A man who believes that he is destined for an eternal existence; that he who made the world and governs it takes account of him and has provided him with the means of attaining a high degree of perfection and glory.
- (2) A man who believes nothing at all, or who believes that his existence is only the play of atoms, and that after he has been tossed about by blind fortune for a few years he'll revert to being nothing.

Can it be doubted that the former belief leads to elevation and greatness of mind and the latter to meanness and depression?

Chapter 8: Belief

When we come to explain the •rational principles of action, it will appear that belief [see Glossary] is an essential ingredient in them. My present topic is only the influence of beliefs on the •animal principles. Some of the principles that I have classified as 'animal' can't exist in the human mind, I think, without associated beliefs.

Gratitude involves the belief that a favour has been done or intended; resentment the belief that one has been injured; esteem the belief in someone's merit; the passion of love involves the belief that the loved person has uncommon merit and perfection.

Although natural affection towards parents, children, and near relations is not based on any belief about their merit,

such a belief can greatly increase it. So can every benevolent affection. On the other side, real malevolence can hardly exist except towards someone whom one believes to have no merit.

Any natural desire or aversion can be restrained by a belief. Thus, if a man were thirsty and had a strong desire to drink, the belief that there was poison in the cup would make him forbear.

It's obvious that hope and fear, which every natural desire or affection can create, depend on beliefs about future good or evil.

So we see that our passions, our dispositions, and our beliefs have great influence on our animal principles—arousing or suppressing them, strengthening or weakening them—and in that way have a great influence on human actions and characters.

It can't be doubted that brute animals have both passions and dispositions that are in many respects like those of men. Whether they have *beliefs* is not so clear. I don't think they do have *beliefs* in the proper sense of that word, but I don't want to argue about that here. In any case it will be granted, I think, that belief in men has a much wider field than in brutes. No-one will say that the brutes have systems of theology, morals, jurisprudence or politics; or that they can reason from the laws of nature in mechanics, medicine, or agriculture.

They feel the evils or enjoyments that are present; probably they imagine those that experience has associated with what they feel. But they can't take a long view into the future or into the past, and they can't see through a train of consequences.

A dog may be deterred from eating what is in front of him by the fear of immediate punishment, which he has felt on similar occasions; but he's never deterred by the

consideration of health or of any distant good. . . .

The influence of belief on the conduct of mankind is a pointer to its being one of the chief instruments in the discipline and government of men.

Everyone in the early part of life must be under the discipline and government of parents and tutors. Men who live in society must be under the government of laws and magistrates throughout their lives. The government of men is undoubtedly one of the noblest exercises of human power. And it is very important that those who have any part in domestic or in civil government should know •the nature of man and •how he is to be trained and governed.

Of all the instruments of government, belief is the sweetest and most agreeable to the nature of man. Obedience that flows from belief is real **freedom**, which every man desires. Obedience that is extorted by fear of punishment is **slavery**—a painful yoke that every man will shake off when he can do so.

The beliefs of the bulk of mankind always were and always will be what they are taught by those whom they judge to be wise and good; and therefore they are to a considerable extent in the power of those who govern them. [Reid seems to assume that those they judge to be wise and good *are* those who govern them. The omission of this premise is his, and not an artifact of this version.]

When man is not corrupted by bad habits and bad beliefs he is of all animals the easiest to lead; when he is corrupted by these he is of all animals the hardest to lead.

I infer that if civil government is ever to be brought to perfection, the state's principal concern must be to make good citizens by proper education, instruction, and discipline.

The most useful part of the **medicine •of the body•** is the part that strengthens the constitution and prevents disease

by good regimen [= 'healthy food and drink, exercise, fresh air, etc.']; the rest of medicine is somewhat like propping a collapsing building at great expense and for little purpose. The art of government is the **medicine of the mind**, and its most useful part is the part that prevents crimes and bad habits and trains men—by proper education and discipline—to have virtue and good habits.

The purpose of government is to make the society happy, which can only be done by making it good and virtuous.

Experience may convince us that men in general will be good or bad members of society depending on the education and discipline by which they have been trained,

The present age has made great advances in the art of training men to perform •military duties. It won't be said that those who become soldiers are easier to lead than their fellow-subjects in other professions. And I don't know why it should be thought impossible to train men to have equal perfection in the •other duties of good citizens.

For purposes of war there is an *immense* difference between a •properly trained army and a •militia hastily assembled out of the multitude! Why shouldn't we think that for the purposes of civil government there's a similar difference between a •civil society properly trained to have virtue, good habits and right sentiments and •the civil societies that we see these days? But I'm afraid you'll think that I am digressing from my subject into Utopian speculation.

* * * * *

We can get a complex view of the effect of the animal principles of action by considering an imagined being who is driven by them and by nothing higher: he has the superiority of understanding and the power of self-control that man actually has, but he has no conscience or sense of duty. What

patterns of conduct might be expected from this imaginary being?

Clearly he would be a very different animal from a brute, and perhaps not very different in appearance from what a great part of mankind is.

He could •consider the distant consequences of his actions, and •restrain or indulge his appetites, desires and affections on the basis of consideration of remote good or evil consequences.

He could •choose some main purpose for his life, and •plan his conduct along lines that seemed best for it. We have reason to think no brute is capable of this.

We can perhaps conceive of a balance of the animal principles of action that would, with very little self-control, make a man a good member of society, a good companion with many amiable qualities.

What we call a man's 'natural temperament' can be good or bad, independently of whether he is virtuous. It consists, I think, in the balance of his animal principles.

A man can *easily* behave properly if the dominant features of his temperament are

- the benevolent affections,
- the desire for esteem,
- good humour, and
- a calm and dispassionate nature,

and if he also has the good fortune to live among good men and associate with good companions

Such a man's natural temperament would lead him in most cases to do what virtue requires. And if he happened not to be exposed to any of the trying situations where virtue conflicts with the natural bent of his temperament, he would have no great temptation to act wrongly.

But this combination of temperament and circumstances is more ideal than real, though no doubt some men come

nearer to it than others.

The temperament and the situation of men is commonly such that the animal principles alone, without self-control, would never produce any rule-governed and consistent train of conduct.

One principle conflicts with another. Without self-control, the stronger of the two will get the upper hand; but later on the weaker may become stronger—through passion, a change of disposition, or a change of fortune.

Every natural appetite, desire and affection cares only about its own present gratification. So a man who is led solely by these will be like a ship at sea with no crew—a ship that can't be said to be heading for any port. He will have no character at all, but will be benevolent or spiteful, pleasant or morose, honest or dishonest, as the present wind of passion or tide of mood moves him.

Anyone who has a purpose, whether good or bad, must be active when he is disposed to be idle; he must rein in every passion and appetite that would lead him off his path.

Voluntary suffering and self-denial occur not only on the path of virtue only, they are common to every road that leads to a goal, which could be ambition or avarice or even pleasure itself. To maintain a uniform and consistent character a man must sweat and toil, and often struggle with his present inclination.

Yet those who steadily pursue some goal in life, though they must often restrain their strongest desires and practise much self-denial, have more enjoyment over-all than those whose only goal is to gratify the present prevailing inclination.

A dog that is made for the chase can't enjoy the happiness of a dog without that exercise. Keep him within doors, feed him with the most delicious fare, give him all the pleasures his nature is capable of, he soon becomes a dull, sluggish,

unhappy animal. No enjoyment can make up for the lack of the employment that nature has made his chief good. Let him hunt, and neither pain nor hunger nor fatigue seem to be evils. Deprived of this exercise, he can't enjoy anything, and life itself becomes burdensome to him.

It's not an insult to say that man, as well as the dog, is made for hunting and can't be happy except in some vigorous pursuit. He has indeed nobler game to pursue than the dog, but he must have some pursuit, otherwise life stagnates, all

the faculties are go numb, the spirits sag, and his existence becomes an unbearable burden.

Even the mere foxhunter, whose goal is no higher than his dogs', has more enjoyment than someone with no pursuit at all. He has an end in view, and this invigorates his spirits, makes him despise pleasure, and bear cold, hunger and fatigue, as if they were no evils. [Reid then quotes four lines from Horace, saying the same thing.]