

# Ethics Demonstrated in Geometrical Order

Benedict Spinoza

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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. This version contains some awkward repetitions of the word ‘God’. They could be avoided through the use of pronouns, but *they* present us with an unattractive choice. Using ‘he’, ‘him’, ‘his’ etc. of God invites the reader, over and over again, to think of God as a person; while using ‘it’, ‘itself’ etc. pokes the reader in the ribs, over and over again, with reminders that God is *not* a person. The former choice misrepresents Spinoza’s doctrine (his other name for God is ‘Nature’), while the latter misrepresents his style. Writing in Latin, which lacks the distinction between personal and impersonal pronouns, he didn’t have this problem.

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## Part I: God

### Definitions

D1: In calling something 'cause of itself' I mean that its essence involves existence, i.e. that its nature can't be conceived except as existing.

D2: A thing is said to be 'finite in its own kind' if it can be limited by something else of the same nature. For example, every body counts as 'finite in its own kind' because we can always conceive another body that is even bigger. And a thought can be limited by—i.e. can count as finite because of—another thought that somehow exceeds it. But a body can't be limited by a thought or a thought by a body.

D3: By 'substance' I understand: what is in itself and is conceived through itself, i.e. that whose concept doesn't have to be formed out of the concept of something else.

D4: By 'attribute' I understand: what the intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence.

D5: By 'mode' I understand: a state of a substance, i.e. something that exists in and is conceived through something else.

D6: By 'God' I understand: a thing that is absolutely infinite, i.e. a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, each of which expresses an eternal and infinite essence. I say 'absolutely infinite' in contrast to 'infinite in its own kind'. If something is infinite only in its own kind, there can be attributes that it doesn't have; but if something is *absolutely* infinite its essence or nature contains every positive way in which a thing can exist—which means that it has all possible attributes.

D7: A thing is called 'free' if its own nature—with no input from anything else—makes it necessary for it to exist and causes it to act as it does. We say that a thing is 'compelled' if something other than itself makes it exist and causes it to act in this or that specific way.

D8: By 'eternity' I understand: existence itself when conceived to follow necessarily from the definition of the eternal thing. A thing is eternal only if it is absolutely (logically) necessary that the thing exists; for something to be eternal it isn't merely a matter of its existing *at all times*—it must *necessarily* exist.

### Axioms

A1: Whatever exists is either in itself or in something else. As we have already seen, a substance is in itself, a mode is in something else.

A2: What can't be conceived through something else must be conceived through itself.

A3: From a given determinate cause the effect follows necessarily; and, conversely, if there is no determinate cause no effect can follow.

A4: Knowledge of an effect depends on, and involves, knowledge of its cause.

A5: If two things have nothing in common, they can't be understood through one another—that is, the concept of one doesn't involve the concept of the other.

A6: A true idea must agree with its object.

A7: If a thing can be conceived as not existing then its essence doesn't involve existence.

## Propositions

### 1: A substance is prior in nature to its states.

This is evident from D3 and D5.

### 2: Two substances having different attributes have nothing in common with one another.

This is also evident from D3. For each substance must be in itself and be conceived through itself, which is to say that the concept of the one doesn't involve the concept of the other.

### 3: If things have nothing in common with one another, one of them can't be the cause of the other.

If they have nothing in common with one another, then (by A5) they can't be understood through one another, and so (by A4) one can't be the cause of the other.

### 4: Two or more things are made distinct from one another either by a difference in their attributes or by a difference in their states.

Whatever exists is either in itself or in something else (by A1), which is to say (by D3 and D5) that outside the intellect there is nothing except substances and their states. So there is nothing outside the intellect through which things can be distinguished from one another except substances (which is to say (by D4) their attributes) and their states.

### 5: In Nature there cannot be two or more substances having the same nature or attribute.

If there were two or more distinct substances, they would have to be distinguished from one another by a difference either in their attributes or in their states (by 4). If they are distinguished only by a difference in their attributes, then any given attribute can be possessed by only one of them. Suppose, then, that they are distinguished by a difference in their states. But a substance is prior in nature to its states (by 1), so we can set the states aside and consider the substance in itself; and then there is nothing left through which one substance can be conceived as distinguished from another, which by 4 amounts to saying that we don't have two or more substances with a single attribute, but only one.

### 6: One substance can't be produced by another substance.

In Nature there can't be two substances that share an attribute (by 5), that is (by 2), there can't be two substances that have something in common with each other. Therefore (by 3) one substance can't be the cause of another, or be caused by it.

**Corollary:** A substance can't be produced by anything else. In Nature there are only substances and their states (as is evident from A1, D3, and D5). But a substance can't be produced by another substance (by 6). Therefore, a substance can't be produced by anything else at all.

This corollary is demonstrated even more easily from the absurdity of its contradictory. If a substance could be produced by something else, the knowledge of it would have to depend on the knowledge of its cause (by A4). And so (by D3) it wouldn't be a substance.

**7: It pertains to the nature of a substance to exist.**

A substance can't be produced by anything else (by the corollary to **6**), so it must be its own cause; and that, by D1, is to say that its essence necessarily involves existence, i.e. it pertains to its nature to exist.

**8: Every substance is necessarily infinite.**

[The difficult demonstration of **8** has this at its core: if *x* is finite then it is limited by something of the same kind as itself, i.e. something that shares an attribute with it; but no substance shares an attribute with any other substance, so no substance can be limited in this way, so every substance is infinite.]

**First note on 7 and 8:** Since finiteness is partly negative, while being infinite is an unqualifiedly ·positive· affirmation of the existence of some nature, it follows from **7** alone that every substance must be infinite; for in calling a substance 'finite' we partly, because of the negative element in finiteness, deny existence to its nature, and according to **7** that is absurd.

**Second note on 7 and 8:** I'm sure that the proof of **7** will be found difficult to grasp by people who judge things confusedly and haven't been accustomed to understanding things through their first causes. Such people don't distinguish the qualities of substances from the substances themselves, and they don't know how things are produced. This brings it about that they fictitiously ascribe to ·substances the ·sort of· beginning that they see ·natural things to have; for those who don't know the true causes of things confuse everything, and have no difficulty supposing that both trees and men speak, that men are formed both from stones and from seed, and that anything can be changed into anything else! So, also, those who confuse the divine nature with human nature easily ascribe human character-traits to God, particularly

when they are also ignorant of how those traits are produced in the ·human· mind.

But if men would attend to the nature of substance, they would have no doubt of the truth of **7**. Indeed, this proposition would be an axiom for everyone. . . For by 'substance' they would understand ·what is in itself and is conceived through itself, i.e. that the knowledge of which doesn't require the knowledge of anything else; and by 'quality' they would understand ·what is in something else, something the concept of which is formed from the concept of the thing *in* which it is.

[Spinoza then has an extremely difficult paragraph, omitted here. Its premises are that substances exist and are conceived through themselves, and that qualities or states exist and are conceived through something else. From these Spinoza seems to infer that we can have legitimate thoughts of states or qualities that 'don't actually exist', presumably meaning that nothing actually has them, whereas we can't have the thought of a substance that doesn't exist 'outside the intellect'.]

Hence, if someone said that he had a clear and distinct (i.e. true) idea of a substance, and nevertheless wondered whether such a substance existed, that would amount to saying that he had a true idea and wondered whether it was false. (You'll see that this is right if you think about it.) Or if someone says that a substance has been created, he is saying that a false idea has become true! Of course nothing more absurd can be conceived. So it must be admitted that the ·existence of a substance is an eternal truth, just as its ·essence is.

This lets us infer in another way that a single nature can be possessed by only one substance—I think the inference is worth presenting ·in the remainder of this Note·.

Four needed preliminaries to the argument:

1. The true definition of each thing neither involves nor expresses anything except the *nature* of the thing defined.

From which it follows that

2. No definition involves or expresses any certain *number* of individuals,

since a definition expresses only the *nature* of the thing defined. For example, the definition of *triangle* expresses only the simple nature of the triangle, not any particular number of triangles. It should also be noted that

3. There must be, for each existing thing, a certain cause for its existing.

Finally, it should be noted that

4. The cause on account of which a thing exists must either •be contained in the very nature and definition of the existing thing (which means that it pertains to the nature of the thing to exist) or •be outside it.

From these propositions it follows that if in Nature a certain number of individuals exists, there must be a cause why just *those* individuals exist and not more or fewer.

For example, if twenty men exist in Nature—and for clarity's sake let's assume that they are the first men to exist and that they all exist at the same time—how are we to explain this? To show why there are exactly twenty men, no more and no fewer, it doesn't suffice to show the cause of human nature in general. For (by **3**) there must be a cause why each particular man exists. But this cause (by **2** and **3**) can't be contained in human nature itself, since the true definition of man doesn't involve the number twenty. So (by **4**) the cause why these twenty men exist—and thus why *each* of them exists—must lie outside each of them.

From that it follows that if something has a nature such that there can be many individuals ·of that nature·, there

must be an external cause of its existing. Now since it pertains to the nature of a substance to exist (already shown in this note), its definition must involve necessary existence, and so its existence must be inferred from its definition alone. But, as we have shown in **2** and **3**, the existence of a number of substances can't follow from a definition. So it follows that there can exist only one substance having a given nature.

**9: The more reality or being each thing has, the more attributes belong to it.**

This is evident from D4.

**10: Each attribute of a substance must be conceived through itself.**

An attribute is what the intellect perceives concerning a substance, as constituting its essence (by D4); so (by D3) it must be conceived through itself.

**Note on 10:** From these propositions it is evident that although two attributes can be conceived to be really distinct (each conceived without the aid of the other), we still can't infer from that that they constitute—that is, constitute the natures of, i.e. are possessed by—two different substances. . . . It is far from absurd to ascribe many attributes to one substance. Indeed, nothing in Nature is clearer than that each thing must be conceived under some attribute, and the more reality a thing has the more attributes it has—attributes that express necessity, or eternity and infinity. So it is utterly clear that an absolutely infinite thing must be defined (as in D6) as a thing that consists of infinite attributes, each of which expresses a certain eternal and infinite essence. If you want to know how we can tell when there are many substances, read on: in the following propositions I shall show that in Nature there exists only one substance, which is absolutely infinite. So there is nothing to 'tell'.

**11: God, or a substance consisting of infinite attributes each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists.**

If God didn't exist, then (by A7) God's essence would not involve existence; and (by 7) that is absurd. Therefore God necessarily exists.

**A second proof:** For each thing there must be assigned a cause or reason for its existence (if it exists) and for its nonexistence (if it doesn't). . . . This reason or cause must be either contained in, or lie outside of, the nature of the thing. For example, the very nature of *a square circle* indicates the reason why it doesn't exist, namely because it involves a contradiction; and the very nature of *a substance* explains why it *does* exist, because that nature involves existence (see 7). But the reason why [changing Spinoza's example] a coin exists, or why it doesn't exist, does not follow from its nature but from the order of the whole of the physical world. For from this *order* it must follow either that the coin necessarily exists now or that it is impossible for it to exist now.

These things are self-evident. From them it follows that *a thing necessarily exists if there is no reason or cause that prevents it from existing*. So if there is no reason or cause that prevents God from existing or takes God's existence away, it certainly follows that God necessarily exists.

But if there were such a reason or cause, it would have to be either •in God's very nature or •outside it and in another substance of a different nature. It couldn't be in a substance of the same nature as God's, for the supposition that there is such a substance is, itself, the supposition that God exists. So it would have to be a substance of a nature different from God's; but such a substance would have nothing in common with God (by 2) and so could neither give existence to God nor take it away. So a reason or cause that takes away God's existence couldn't lie outside the divine nature.

It would, then, have to be in God's nature itself. That would mean that God's nature involved a contradiction, *like the square circle*. But it is absurd to affirm this of a thing that is absolutely infinite and supremely perfect. (That is because •a contradiction must involve something of the form 'P and *not*-P—a 'square circle' would be something that was 'square and not square' because 'not square is contained in the meaning of 'circle'—and •a thing that is infinite and perfect is one whose nature involves nothing negative, so nothing of the contradictory form.) So there is no cause or reason—either in God or outside God—that takes God's existence away. Therefore God necessarily exists.

**A third proof:** [slightly expanded from Spinoza's very compact statement of it] To be unable to exist is to lack power, and conversely to be able to exist is to have power (this is self-evident). Now, suppose that God doesn't exist but some finite things do exist necessarily. In that case, these finite things are more powerful than an absolutely infinite thing (because they *can* exist and the absolutely infinite thing *can't*). But this is self-evidently absurd. So either nothing exists or an absolutely infinite thing also exists. But *we* exist, either in ourselves as substances that necessarily exist or as qualities of something else that necessarily exists (see A1 and 7). Therefore an absolutely infinite thing—that is (by D6) God—necessarily exists.

**Note on the third proof of 11:** In this last demonstration I wanted to show God's existence *a posteriori* (*bringing in the contingent fact that we exist*), so as to make the demonstration easier to grasp—but not because God's existence doesn't follow *a priori* from the same premises. For since being able to exist is power, it follows that the more reality belongs to the nature of a thing the more powers it has, of itself, to exist. Therefore an absolutely infinite thing (God) has of itself an absolutely infinite power of existing. For that

reason, God exists absolutely. Still, there may be many who won't easily see the force of this proof because they have been accustomed to think only about things that flow from external causes. And of *those* things they see that •the ones that quickly and easily come into existence also easily perish. And conversely, they judge that •complicated and intricately structured things are harder to produce, i.e. that they don't exist so easily. I might free them from these prejudices by looking into •what truth there is in the proposition that what quickly comes to be quickly perishes, and considering whether •all things are equally easy in respect to the whole of Nature (-I think they are-). But I shan't go into any of that. All I need here is to point out that I am here speaking not of things that come into existence from external causes but only of substances, which (by 6) can't be produced by any external cause. For things that come to exist from external causes—whether they have many parts or few—owe all their perfection or reality to the power of the external cause; and therefore their existence arises only from the perfection of their external cause and not from their own perfection. On the other hand, whatever perfection a *substance* has is not due to any external cause; so its existence must follow from its nature alone; so its existence is nothing but its essence. So perfection doesn't take away the existence of a thing, but on the contrary asserts it. But imperfection takes it away. So there is nothing of whose existence we can be more certain than we are of the existence of an absolutely infinite thing, i.e. a perfect thing, i.e. God. For since God's essence •excludes all imperfection and •involves absolute perfection, by that very fact it removes every cause of doubting God's existence and gives the greatest certainty concerning it. I think this will be clear to you even if you are only moderately attentive!

**12: No attribute of a substance can be truly conceived from which it follows that the substance can be divided.**

Suppose that a substance *can* be conceived as being divisible; then either its parts will also have the nature of the substance or they won't. If they •do, then (by 8) each part will be infinite, and (by 7) will be its own cause; and (by 5) each part will have to consist of a different attribute. And so many substances can be formed from one, which is absurd (by 6). Furthermore, the parts would have nothing in common with their whole (by 2), and the whole (by D4 and 10) could exist without its parts and be conceived without them; and no-one can doubt that *that* is absurd. But if on the other hand the parts •do not retain the nature of substance, then dividing the whole substance into equal parts would deprive it of the nature of substance, meaning that it would cease to exist; and (by 7) that is absurd.

**13: A substance that is absolutely infinite is indivisible.**

If it were divisible, its parts would either retain the nature of an absolutely infinite substance or they wouldn't. If they did, then there would be a number of substances of the same nature, which (by 5) is absurd. If they didn't, then (as in 12) an absolutely infinite substance could •be divided into such parts and thereby• cease to exist, which (by 11) is also absurd.

**Corollary:** No substance is divisible, and thus no *corporeal* substance, insofar as it is a substance, is divisible. [This use of 'insofar as' is explained on page 9 just above the start of section V.]

**Note on 12–13:** That *substance is indivisible* can be understood more simply merely from this: the nature of substance can't be conceived other than as infinite, whereas 'a part of



a substance' can only mean *a finite substance*, which (by **8**) implies a plain contradiction.

**14: God is the only substance that can exist or be conceived.**

Since God is an absolutely infinite thing, of whom no attribute expressing an essence of substance can be denied (by **6**), and God necessarily exists (by **11**), if there were a substance other than God it would have to be explained through some attribute of God; ·but explanations can flow only within attributes, not from one attribute to another·; and so two substances with an attribute in common would exist, which (by **5**) is absurd. So no substance other than God can exist; and none such can be conceived either, for if it could be conceived it would have to be conceived *as existing*, and the first part of this demonstration shows that to be absurd. Therefore, God is the only substance that can exist or be conceived.

**First corollary:** God is unique, i.e. (by **6**) in Nature there is only one substance, and it is absolutely infinite.

**Second corollary:** An extended thing and a thinking thing are either attributes of God or (by A1) states of God's attributes.

**15: Whatever exists in God, and nothing can exist or be conceived without God.**

**14** secures that apart from God there cannot exist (or be conceived) any *substance*, i.e. (by D3) any thing that is in itself and is conceived through itself. But (by D5) *modes* can't exist or be conceived without a substance ·that they are modes of·. So modes can exist only in the divine nature, and can be conceived only through that nature. But (by A1) substances and modes are all there is. Therefore, *everything* is in God

and *nothing* can be or be conceived without God.

**Note on 15:** [This text follows Curley in numbering sections of this note, and of the note on **17** and the Appendix, as an aid to reference.]

**I.** Some people imagine a God who is like a man, consisting of a body and a mind, and subject to passions. But how far they wander from the true knowledge of God is shown well enough by what I have already demonstrated, and I shan't talk about them any more. Everyone who has to *any* extent contemplated the divine nature denies that God is corporeal. This is best proved from the fact that by 'a body' we understand *a quantity that has length, breadth, and depth*, • *by some specific shape*. Nothing could be more absurd than to say this about God, i.e. about a thing that is infinite [= •unlimited·.]

In trying to demonstrate this same conclusion by different arguments from mine, some people clearly show that ·as well as denying that God is or has •*a body*· they conclude that the divine nature doesn't in any way involve corporeal or •extended substance. They maintain that the corporeal world, ·rather than being part of God's nature·, has been *created by* God. But by what divine power could it be created? They have no answer to that, which shows clearly that they don't understand what they are saying.

At any rate, I have demonstrated clearly enough—in my judgment, at least—that no substance can be produced or created by any other (see the corollary to **6** and the second note on **8**). Next, I have shown (**14**) that God is the only substance that can exist or be conceived, and from this I have inferred in the second corollary to **14** that extended substance is one of God's infinite attributes. To explain all this more fully, I shall refute my opponents' arguments, which all come down to these two.

**II.** First, they think that corporeal substance, insofar as it is substance, consists of parts. From this they infer

that it cannot be infinite, and thus cannot pertain to God. They explain this through many examples, of which I shall mention three.

•If corporeal substance is infinite, they say, let us conceive it to be divided into two parts. If each part is finite, then an infinite is composed of two finite parts, which is absurd. If each part is infinite, then there is one infinite twice as large as another, which is also absurd. •Again, if an infinite quantity is measured by parts each equal to a foot, it will consist of infinitely many of them, as it will also if it is measured by parts each equal to an inch. So one infinite number will be twelve times as great as another, which is no less absurd. •Finally, suppose that from one point in something of infinite extent two lines are extended to infinity. Although near the beginning they are a certain determinate distance apart, the distance between them is continuously increased as they lengthen, until finally it stops being determinate and becomes indeterminable; which is also absurd. Since these absurdities follow—so they think—from the supposition of an infinite quantity, they infer that corporeal substance must be finite and consequently cannot pertain to God's essence.

**III.** Their second argument is also drawn from God's supreme perfection. For, they say, God as a supremely perfect thing cannot be acted on. But corporeal substance, since it is divisible, *can* be acted on; anything that is divisible can be pulled apart by outside forces. So it follows that corporeal substance does not pertain to God's essence.

**IV.** These are the arguments that I find being used by authors who want to show that corporeal substance is unworthy of the divine nature, and cannot have anything to do with it. But anyone who is properly attentive will find that I have already replied to them, since these arguments are based wholly on the supposition that corporeal substance is composed of parts, which I have already (**12** and corollary to

**13**) shown to be absurd. Anyone who wants to consider the matter rightly will see that all those absurdities (if indeed that's what they are) from which they infer that extended substance is finite don't at all follow from •the supposition of an infinite quantity, but from •supposing that an infinite quantity might be measurable and composed of finite parts. All they are entitled to infer from the absurdities they have uncovered is that infinite quantity is not measurable and is not composed of finite parts. This is just what I have already demonstrated above (**12**, etc.). So the weapon they aim at me turns against themselves. . . .

Others, imagining that a line is composed of points, know how to invent many arguments showing that a line can't be divided to infinity. And indeed it is just as absurd to say that corporeal substance is composed of bodies, or parts, as it is to say that a body is composed of surfaces, the surfaces of lines, and the lines of points.

This must be admitted by all those who know that clear reason is infallible, and especially those who deny that there is a *vacuum*. For if corporeal substance could be divided into parts that were really distinct, why couldn't one part be annihilated while the rest remained inter-related as before (thus creating a vacuum)? Why must they all be so fitted together that there is no vacuum? If two things are really distinct from one another rather than being different modes or aspects of a single substance, one of them can stay where it is whatever the other does. But there *isn't* any vacuum in Nature (a subject I discuss elsewhere, namely in my *Descartes's Principles*, part 2, propositions 2 and 3); all the parts of Nature *do* have to hang together so that there is no vacuum; so it follows that those parts are not really distinct from one another, i.e. that they are not distinct *things*, which is to say that corporeal substance, insofar as it is a substance, cannot be divided. [Spinoza

means that it isn't subject to divisions that go all the way down, so to speak—divisions that really split it up into separate things. He does allow that corporeal substance—i.e. the entire material world—can be divided into (for example) wet bits and dry bits, soft bits and hard bits; but none of these bits is an independent and self-sufficient *thing*. Its existence consists merely in the fact that *the extended world*—which is God considered under the attribute of extension—has a certain property at a certain location.]

**V.** Why are we by nature so inclined to divide quantity? The answer involves the fact that we have two ways of thinking about quantity: we can think of it •abstractly or superficially, which is how we depict it to ourselves in our imagination; and we can also think of it •*as substance*, which is done by the intellect alone without help from the imagination. If we attend to quantity as it is in the imagination—which we often do, finding it easy—it will be found to be finite, divisible, and composed of parts; but if we attend to it as it is in the intellect, and conceive it insofar as it is a substance—which we don't do often, finding it hard—then (as I have already sufficiently demonstrated) it will be found to be infinite, unique, and indivisible.

This will be clear enough to anyone who knows how to distinguish the intellect from the imagination—particularly if he bears in mind that matter is everywhere the same, and that parts are distinguished in it only through our conceiving it to have different qualities, so that its parts are distinguished only modally but not really. [That is: its parts have different qualities or modes, but are not genuinely and deeply distinct *things*. 'Really' (Latin *realiter*) comes from the Latin *res*, meaning 'thing'.]

For example, we conceive that water is divided and its parts separated from one another—considered as *water*, but not considered as corporeal *substance*, for considered as substance it is neither separated nor divided. Again, water

considered as water can come into existence and go out of existence, but considered as substance it can do neither. When water considered as water goes out of existence, what happens at the level of *substance* is, roughly speaking, that an area in the one extended substance changes from being wet to being dry.

**VI.** I think this also answers the second argument—the one in III above—because that is based on the supposition that matter, insofar as it is *substance*, is divisible and made up of parts. Even if this reply were not sufficient, the argument would not succeed, because there is no reason why divisibility should be unworthy of the divine nature. For (by 14) apart from God there can be no substance by which the divine nature would be acted on, and so God's being made up of parts would not bring with it a vulnerability to a dismantling attack from the outside, so to speak. All things, I repeat, are in God, and whatever happens does so through the laws of God's infinite nature and follows (as I'll show) from the necessity of God's essence. So it can't be said in any way that God is acted on by something else, or that extension is unworthy of the divine nature—even if it is supposed to be divisible—provided that God is granted to be eternal and infinite.

[In 16 and its appendages, 'unlimited' translates a word that often means 'infinite'.]

**16: From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many ways i.e. everything that can fall under an unlimited intellect.**

This proposition must be plain to anyone who attends to the fact that the intellect infers from a thing's definition a number of properties that really do follow necessarily from it (i.e. from the very essence of the thing); and that •the more reality the definition of

the thing expresses, i.e. •the more reality the essence of the defined thing involves, •the more properties the intellect infers. But the divine nature has absolutely infinite attributes (by D6), each of which also expresses an essence that is infinite in its own kind, and so from its necessity there must follow infinitely many things in infinite ways (i.e. everything that can fall under an unlimited intellect).

**First corollary to 16:** God is the efficient cause of all things that can fall under an unlimited intellect. [An 'efficient cause' is just what we today call a *cause*. It used to be contrasted to 'final cause': to assign an event a final cause was to explain it in terms of its purpose, what it occurred *for*. See pages 18–19 below.]

**Second corollary to 16:** God is a cause through himself/itself and not an accidental cause.

**Third corollary to 16:** God is the absolutely first cause.

**17: God acts from the laws of the divine nature alone, and is not compelled by anything.**

I have just shown (16) that from •the necessity of the divine nature alone, or (what is the same thing) from •the laws of God's nature alone, absolutely infinite things follow; and in 15 I have demonstrated that nothing can be or be conceived without God—that all things are in God. So there can't *be* anything outside God by which God could be caused or compelled to act. Therefore, God acts from the laws of the divine nature alone, and is not compelled by anything.

**First corollary to 17:** There is no cause, either extrinsically or intrinsically, which prompts God to action, except the perfection of the divine nature.

**Second corollary to 17:** God alone is a free cause.

God alone exists only from the necessity of the divine nature (by 11 and first corollary to 14), and acts from

the necessity of the divine nature (by 17). Therefore (by D7) God alone is a free cause.

**Note on 17: I.** Some people think, regarding the things that I have said follow from God's nature (i.e. are in God's power), that God could bring it about that they *don't* happen, are *not* produced by God; from which they infer that God is a free cause. But this is tantamount to saying that God can bring it about that the nature of a triangle *doesn't* require that its three angles are equal to two right angles, or that from a given cause the effect would *not* follow—which is absurd.

Further, I shall show later, without help from 17, that God's nature doesn't involve either intellect or will. I know of course that many think they can demonstrate that a supreme intellect and a free will pertain to God's nature; for, they say, they know nothing they can ascribe to God more perfect than what is the highest perfection *in us*.

Moreover, while thinking of God as actually •understanding things in the highest degree, they don't believe that God can bring it about that all those understood things •exist. For they think that would destroy God's power. If God had created all the things in the divine intellect (they say), then God *couldn't have created anything more*, which they believe to be incompatible with God's omnipotence. So these thinkers prefer to maintain that God has no leanings in any direction, not creating anything except what God has decreed to create by some fundamental free choice.

But I think I have shown clearly enough (see 16) that from God's supreme power or infinite nature infinitely many things in infinitely many ways—that is, *all* •possible• things—*have* necessarily flowed or *do* always follow, with the same necessity and in the same way as from the nature of a triangle it follows from eternity that its three angles equal two right angles. So God's omnipotence has been actual from eternity and will remain actual to eternity. I think that this maintains

God's omnipotence better than does the view that there are things God *could* do but *chooses not to*.

Indeed—to be frank about it—my opponents seem to *deny* God's omnipotence. For they have to admit that God understands infinitely many creatable things which nevertheless God will never be able to create. For creating everything that God understands to be creatable would (according to them) exhaust God's omnipotence and render God imperfect. To maintain that God is perfect, therefore, they are driven to maintaining that God *cannot* bring about everything that lies within the scope of the divine power. I don't see how anything more absurd than this, or more contrary to God's omnipotence, could be dreamed up!

**II.** I shall add a point about the intellect and will that are commonly attributed to God. If 'will' and 'intellect' do pertain to the eternal essence of God, we must understand by each of these something different from what men commonly understand by them. For the 'intellect' and 'will' that would constitute God's essence would have to differ entirely from *our* intellect and will, not agreeing with them in anything but the name. They wouldn't match one another any more than Sirius the 'dog-star' matches the dog that is a barking animal. I shall demonstrate this.

We have intellect, and *what* we understand through it is either •earlier than the act of understanding (as most people think) or •simultaneous with it; but if the divine nature includes intellect, it can't be like ours in this respect, because God is •prior in causality to all things (by the first corollary to **16**). •So far from its being the case that God's intellect represents something *because* the thing exists, the fundamental nature of things is what it is *because* God's intellect represents it in that way. So God's intellect, conceived as constituting the divine essence, is really the cause of the essence and of the existence of things. Some

writers seem to have realized this—the ones who have said that God's •intellect, •will and •power are one and the same.

Therefore, since God's intellect is the only cause of things—of their essence as well as of their existence—God *must* differ from other things both in essence and in existence. •I shall explain this•. Something that is caused differs from its cause precisely in what it gets from the cause. For example, a man may be the cause of the existence of another man, but not of his essence—that is, not of the human nature that he has, not of the-possibility-of-being-human—for the latter is an eternal truth. So they can agree entirely in their essence, •having the very same human nature•. But they must differ in their existences: if one of the men goes out of existence, that need not destroy the other's existence. But if the essence of one could be destroyed and become false—that is, if it could become the case that there was no such thing as human nature, no possibility-of-being-human—then the essence of the other would also be destroyed.

So if something causes both the essence and the existence of some effect, it must differ in essence and existence from the effect. But God's intellect is the cause both of the essence and of the existence of our intellect. Therefore God's intellect, conceived as constituting the divine essence, differs from our intellect both in essence and in existence and can't agree with it in anything but in name—which is what I said. It is easy to see that there is a similar proof regarding God's will and our will.

**18: God is the in-dwelling and not the going-across cause of all things.**

In-dwelling because: everything that exists is in God and must be conceived through God (by **15**), and so (by the first corollary to **16**) God is the cause of all

things that are *in God*. Not going-across because: by **14** there can't *be* anything outside God ·for God to act on·. So God is the in-dwelling and not the going-across cause of all things.

[The expressions 'in-dwelling-' and 'going-across' render technical terms of Spinoza's that are usually translated by 'immanent' and 'transeunt' respectively. The distinction itself is plain: I am the in-dwelling cause of my hand's moving when I move it, and the going-across cause of the fall of the tumbler that I knock off the table.]

**19: God is eternal, and all God's attributes are eternal.**

God (by D6) is a substance which (by **11**) necessarily exists, that is (by **7**) to whose nature it pertains to exist. . . and therefore (by D8) God is eternal.

Next point: God's •attributes are to be understood (by D4) as •what expresses an essence of the Divine substance. So the attributes partake of the nature of substance, and I have already shown (**7**) that eternity pertains to the nature of substance. Therefore each of the attributes must involve eternity, and so they are all eternal.

**Note on 19:** This proposition is also utterly clear from my way of demonstrating God's existence (**11**), for that demonstration established that God's existence is an eternal truth just as God's essence is. I have also demonstrated God's eternity in another way in my *Descartes's Principles*, Part I, proposition 19, and there is no need to repeat that here.

**20: God's existence and God's essence are one and the same.**

God is eternal and so are all of God's attributes ((by **19**), that is (by D8) each of God's attributes expresses existence. Therefore, the attributes of God that (by D4) explain God's eternal essence at the same time

explain God's eternal existence, which is to say that what constitutes God's essence also constitutes God's existence. So God's existence and God's essence are one and the same.

**First corollary to 20:** God's existence, like God's essence, is an eternal truth.

**Second corollary to 20:** God is unchangeable, or all of God's attributes are unchangeable.

If they changed as to their existence, they would also (by **20**) change as to their essence, . . . which is absurd.

**21: All the things that follow from the absolute nature of any of God's attributes have always had to exist and be infinite, and are through the same attribute eternal and infinite.**

[The lengthy and *extremely* difficult demonstration of this is constructed in the form 'Suppose this is false. . .' and then trying to deduce an absurdity from the supposition. For the first part of the proposition it takes an *example* of what the 'something that is finite and has a limited existence or duration' might be supposed to be, and makes the first part of the proposition stand or fall with that example. For the second part of the proposition, it again lets everything rest on an example, indeed *the same* example, of something that might be supposed not to be eternal and infinite. The demonstration also gives trouble by allowing heavy overlap between the first and second parts of the proposition.]

**22: Anything that follows from some attribute of God when it is modified or enriched or added to by a quality which that same attribute causes to exist necessarily and to be infinite must itself also exist necessarily and be infinite.**

The demonstration of this proposition proceeds in the same way as the demonstration of 21. [21 concerns the likes of: what follows from God's being *extended*. 22 concerns the likes of: what follows from God's involving *motion and rest*; this is not extension as such, extension considered 'absolutely', but it necessarily follows from extension.]

**23: Every mode that exists necessarily and is infinite must have followed either from the absolute nature of some attribute of God—that is, some attribute taken all by itself—or from some attribute that is modified, i.e. enriched or added to, by a quality that exists necessarily and is infinite.**

A mode is in something other than itself, through which it must be conceived (by D5), that is (by 15) it is in God alone and can be conceived only through God. So if a mode is thought of as existing necessarily and being infinite, it must be inferred from or perceived through some attribute of God that is conceived to express infinity and necessity of existence. It may follow from the absolute nature of the attribute—the unadorned attribute, so to speak—or from the attribute modified or enriched or added to by some mediating quality which itself follows from the attribute's absolute nature and is therefore (by 22) necessarily existent and infinite.

**24: The essence of things produced by God does not involve existence.**

This is evident from D1. For if something's nature involves existence, is *its own* cause, existing only from the necessity of *its own* nature, and so cannot be caused by God.

**Corollary to 24:** God is the cause not only of things' beginning to exist, but also of their continuing to exist.

If we attend to the essence of any caused thing—not considering whether the thing actually exists or not—we shall find that this essence involves neither existence nor duration. So such an essence can't be the cause either of the thing's coming into existence or of its staying in existence; and the only cause of both is God (by the first corollary to 14).

**25: God is the efficient cause not only of the existence of things but also of their essence.**

Suppose this is wrong. Then God is not the cause of the essence of things, and so (by A4) the essence of things can be conceived without God. But (by 15) this is absurd. Therefore God is also the cause of the essence of things.

**Note on 25:** This proposition follows more clearly from 16, which implies that from the given divine nature both the essence of things and their existence must necessarily be inferred; and, in brief, God must be called the cause of all things in the same sense in which God is said to be *self-caused*. This will be established still more clearly from the following corollary.

**Corollary to 25:** Particular things are nothing but states of God's attributes, or modes by which [= 'ways in which'] God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way.

The demonstration is evident from 15 and D5.

**26: A thing that has been caused to produce an effect has necessarily been caused in this way by God; and one that has not been caused by God cannot cause itself to produce an effect.**

[The demonstration of this is omitted.]

**27: A thing that has been caused by God to produce an effect cannot make itself be uncaused.**

This proposition is evident from A3.

**28: A particular thing (that is, a thing that is finite and has a limited existence) can't exist or be caused to produce an effect unless it is caused to exist and produce an effect by another cause that is also finite and has a limited existence; and the latter can't exist or be caused to produce an effect unless it is caused to exist and produce an effect by yet another. . . and so on, to infinity.**

[Somewhat simplified version of the demonstration:] Anything that follows necessarily from something infinite and eternal must itself be infinite and eternal; so something that is finite and has a limited existence—that is, a finite item that comes into existence, lasts for a while, and then goes out of existence—can't be an upshot or effect of something infinite and eternal. So its source must be of the other sort, that is, must be finite and non-eternal. And that line of thought re-applies to the latter item, and then to *its* source, and so on ad infinitum. Each finite and temporally limited item is to be thought of not as •something entirely other than God, but rather as •God-considered-as-having-such-and-such-attributes-and-modes.

**Note on 28:** Certain things had to be produced by God immediately, namely those that follow necessarily from God's nature alone, and others. . . had to be produced through the

mediation of these first things. From this it follows:

I. That God is *absolutely* the proximate cause of the things produced immediately by God, and not a proximate cause *in God's own kind*, as they say. For God's effects can neither be nor be conceived without their cause (by **15** and **24C**).

II. That God cannot properly be called the 'remote' cause of singular things (except perhaps to distinguish them from things that God has produced immediately, i.e. that follow from God's absolute nature). A 'remote' cause is one that isn't conjoined in *any* way with its effect; but every existing thing is in God, and depends on God in such a way that it can't exist or be conceived without God.

**29: In Nature there is nothing contingent; all things have been caused by the necessity of the divine nature to exist and produce an effect in a certain way.**

Whatever exists is in God (by **15**); and (by **11**) God exists necessarily, not contingently. Next, the modes of the divine nature—the *ways* in which God exists—have also followed from that nature necessarily (by **16**)—either •following from the divine nature just in itself (by **21**) or •following from it considered as caused to act in a certain way (by **28**). Further, God is the cause not only of the existence of these modes (by corollary to **24**) but also of their having such-and-such causal powers. For if they hadn't been caused by God, then (by **26**) they could not possibly have caused themselves. And conversely (by **27**) if they have been caused by God, it is impossible that they should render themselves uncaused. So all things have been caused from the necessity of the divine nature not only to exist but to exist in a certain way, and to produce effects in a certain way; and all of this is necessary, not contingent. There is nothing contingent.



[At this point Spinoza inserts a note explaining in terms of his philosophy a pair of mediaeval technical terms, the Latin of which can be translated as ‘naturing Nature’ (Nature as a cause) and ‘natured Nature’ (Nature as an effect) respectively. The distinction has attracted much attention from scholars, but in itself it is fairly trivial, and it has no structural role in the *Ethics*. Spinoza uses the terms only in **31**, to which he makes no further reference anywhere in the work. The note and that proposition are omitted from the present version, and along with them **30**, which has almost no role except in **31**.]

**32: The will cannot be called a free cause, but only a necessary one.**

The will, like the intellect, is only a certain mode or way of thinking. And so (by **28**) each volition—each act of the will—can exist and be fit to produce an effect only if it is caused by another cause, and this cause again by another, and so on, to infinity. So the will requires a cause by which it is caused to exist and produce an effect; and so (by D7) it cannot be called a ‘free’ cause but only a necessary or compelled one.

That was based on the will’s being a finite entity to which **28** applies. Suppose it is infinite, making **28** irrelevant to it. Then it falls under **23**, which means that it has to be caused to exist and produce an effect by God—this time by God-as-having-the-infinite-and-eternal-essence-of-thought rather than God-as-having-this-or-that-temporary-and-local-quality. So on this supposition also the will is not a free cause but a compelled one.

**Corollary to 32:** God doesn’t produce any effect through freedom of the will.

**Second corollary to 32:** *Will and intellect* are related to God’s nature as *motion* and *rest* are, and as are absolutely all natural things, which (by **29**) must be caused by God to exist and produce an effect in a certain way.

The will, like everything else, requires a cause by which it is caused to exist and produce an effect in a certain way. And although from a given will or intellect infinitely many things may follow, God still can’t be said on that account to act from freedom of the will, any more than God can be said to act from ‘freedom of motion and rest’ on account of the things that follow from motion and rest! So will doesn’t pertain to God’s nature any more than do other natural things; it is related to God in the same way as motion and rest. . . . In short: acts of the will, such as human choices and decisions, are natural events with natural causes, just as are (for example) collisions of billiard balls. And to attribute will to God, saying that because the cause of each volition is God (= Nature) therefore God has choices and makes decisions, is as absurd as to suppose that God is rattling around on the billiard table.

**33: Things could not have been produced by God in any way or in any order other than that in which they have been produced.**

All things have necessarily followed from God’s given nature (by **16**), and have been caused from the necessity of God’s nature to exist and produce an effect in a certain way (by **29**). To think of them as possibly being different in some way is, therefore, to think of God as possibly being different; that is to think that there is some other nature that God could have—some other *divine* nature—and if such a nature is possible then

it is actually instantiated, which means that there are two Gods. But it is absurd to suppose that there could have been two Gods. So things could not have been produced in any other way or in any other order than they have been produced.

**Note on 33:** Since by these propositions I have made it as clear as day that there is absolutely nothing in things on the basis of which they can be called contingent, I wish now to explain briefly what we *should* understand by ‘contingent’—but first, what we should understand by ‘necessary’ and ‘impossible’. A thing is called ‘necessary’ either •by reason of its essence or •by reason of its cause. For a thing’s existence follows necessarily either from its essence and definition or from a given efficient cause. And a thing is also called ‘impossible’ for these same reasons—namely, either because its essence or definition involves a contradiction, or because no external cause has been caused to produce such a thing •in which case the external causes that *do* exist will have been enough to prevent the thing from existing•.

A thing is called ‘contingent’ only because of a lack of our knowledge. If we don’t know that the thing’s essence involves a contradiction, or if we know quite well that its essence *doesn’t* involve a contradiction, but we can’t say anything for sure about its existence because the order of causes is hidden from us, it can’t seem to us either necessary or impossible. So we call it ‘contingent’ or ‘•merely• possible’.

**Second note on 33:** From this it clearly follows that things have been produced by God with the highest perfection, since they have followed necessarily from a most perfect nature. God’s producing everything there is doesn’t mean that God is in any way imperfect. The suggestion that God *could have* acted differently is, as I have shown, absurd. . . .

I’m sure that many people will reject my view as absurd, without even being willing to examine it. Of course they

will! because they have been accustomed to credit God with having an *absolute will*—that is, with just non-causally *deciding* what to do—which attributes to God a ‘freedom’ quite different from what I have taught (D7). But I am also sure that if they would consent to reflect on the matter, and pay proper attention to my chain of our demonstrations, they would end up utterly rejecting the ‘freedom’ they now attribute to God, not only as futile but as a great obstacle to science. I needn’t repeat here what I said in the note on 17.

Still, to please them •or at least meet them half-way•, I shall argue on the basis that God’s essence *does* involve *will*, and shall still prove that it follows from God’s perfection that things could not have been created by God in any other way or any other order. It will be easy to show this if we consider •two things•. First, as my opponents concede, it depends on God’s decree and will alone that each thing is what it is; for otherwise God wouldn’t be the cause of all things. Secondly, all God’s decrees have been established by God *from eternity*; for otherwise God would be convicted of imperfection and inconstancy. But since in eternity there is neither *when*, nor *before*, nor *after*, it follows purely from God’s perfection that God could never have decreed anything different. It is a mistake to think of God as having existed for a while without making any decrees and *then* making some.

The opponents will say that in supposing God to have made another nature of things, or supposing that from eternity God had decreed something else concerning Nature and its order, one is not implicitly supposing any imperfection in God.

Still, if they say this, they will •have to• concede also that God’s decrees *can* be changed by their maker. Their supposition that God *could have* decreed Nature and its order to be different from how they actually are involves supposing that God *could have* had a different intellect

and will from those that God actually has; and they—the opponents—hold that *this* could have been the case without any change of God's essence or of God's perfection. But if that is right, why can't God *now* change God's decrees concerning created things while remaining just as perfect? It is absurd to suppose that God can do this—e.g. that from now on the laws of physics will be slightly different every second Tuesday—but my opponents have left themselves with no basis for ruling this out as the absurdity that it really is. . . .

Therefore, since things could not have been produced by God in any other way or any other order, and since the truth of this follows from God's supreme perfection, we have to accept that God willed to create all the things that are in God's intellect, with the same perfection with which God understands them.

The opponents will say that there is no perfection or imperfection in things: what is to count in things as making them perfect or imperfect, and thus called 'good' or 'bad', depends only on God's will. So God could have brought it about, simply by willing it, that what is now perfection would have been the greatest imperfection, and conversely that what is now an imperfection in things would have been the most perfect. Thus the opponents. But God necessarily understands what God wills; so what the opponents say here is tantamount to saying outright that God could bring it about through an act of will that God understands things in a different way from how God does understand them. And this, as I have just shown, is a great absurdity. . . .

I confess that •this opinion that subjects all things to a certain unguided will of God and makes everything depend on God's whim is nearer the truth than •the view of those who maintain that God does all things for the sake of the good. For the latter seem to suppose something outside God,

something not depending on God, to which God in acting attends as a model and at which God aims as at a goal. This is simply to subject God to fate [Latin *fatum*, here = 'something independently fixed and given']. Nothing more absurd can be maintained about God—shown by me to be the first and only free cause of the essence of all things and of their existence. I shan't waste any more time refuting this absurdity.

**34: God's power is God's essence itself.**

It follows purely from the necessity of God's essence that God is the cause of God (by **11**) and (by **16** and its corollary) the cause of all things. So God's power, by which God and all things exist and act, is God's essence itself.

**35: Whatever we conceive to be in God's power, necessarily exists.**

Whatever is in God's power must (by **34**) be so related to God's essence that it necessarily follows from it, and therefore necessarily exists.

**36: Nothing exists from whose nature some effect does not follow.**

Whatever exists expresses the nature, or essence of God in a certain and determinate way (by the corollary to **25**), that is, whatever exists expresses in a certain and determinate way the power of God, which is the cause of all things. So (by **16**) from everything that exists some effect must follow.

## Appendix

With these demonstrations I have explained God's nature and properties:

- God exists necessarily;
- God is unique;
- God exists and acts solely from the necessity of the divine nature;
- God is the free cause of all things (and I have shown how);
- all things are in God and depend on God in such a way that without God they can't exist or be conceived;
- all things have been pre-caused by God, not from freedom of the will or absolute whim or good pleasure, but from God's absolute nature or infinite power.

Further, I have taken care, whenever the occasion arose, to remove prejudices that could prevent my demonstrations from being grasped. But because many prejudices remain that could—that *can*—be a great obstacle to men's understanding my way of explaining how things hang together, I have thought it worthwhile to consider those prejudices here, subjecting them to the scrutiny of reason. All the prejudices I here undertake to expose depend on the common supposition that *all natural things act, as men do, on account of an end*. Indeed, people maintain as a certainty that *God directs all things to some definite end*, this being implicit in their view that God has made all things for man and has made man to worship God.

So I shall begin by considering this one prejudice, asking first •why most people are satisfied that it is true and so inclined by nature to embrace it. Then I shall show •its falsity, and finally show •how from this prejudices have arisen concerning good and evil, merit and wrong-doing, praise and blame, order and confusion, beauty and ugliness,

and other things of this kind. [Spinoza uses the word *malum* equivalently to our adjective 'bad' and the noun-phrases 'thing that is bad'. We don't have one word for both roles, except 'evil'—'That was an evil act'—'He did a great evil'—but in our senses of it 'evil' is really too strong in many of Spinoza's contexts. In this text, as a compromise, 'evil' is used for the noun and 'bad' for the adjective.]

**I.** Of course this is not the place to derive my explanations from the nature of the human mind. It will suffice here to build on two things that everyone must admit to be true: that •all men are born ignorant of the causes of things, and that •all men want to seek their own advantage and are conscious of wanting this.

From these premises it follows that men think themselves free, because they are conscious of their choices and their desires, are ignorant of the causes that incline them to want and to choose, and thus never give the faintest thought—even in their dreams!—to those causes. It follows also that men act always on account of a goal, specifically on account of their advantage, which they seek. Putting these two together, men are in a frame of mind from which •efficient causes—that is, *real* causes—are almost totally absent, and which is saturated by thought about •final causes, goals or ends or purposes. So the only explanations they look for are ones in terms of final causes—in asking 'Why did that happen?' they are asking 'For what purpose did that happen?'—and when they have heard *that* they are satisfied, having nothing more to ask. But if they can't get such explanations from others they have to turn to themselves, and to reflect on the ends by which *they* are usually led to do such things; so they necessarily judge the temperament of other men from their own temperament.

Furthermore, they find—both in themselves and outside themselves—many means that are very helpful in seeking their own advantage: eyes for seeing, teeth for chewing,

plants and animals for food, the sun for light, the sea for supporting fish, and similarly with almost everything else whose natural causes—that is, whose *efficient* causes—they are not curious about. This leads them to consider all natural things as means to their own advantage. And knowing that they had *found* these means, not *provided* them for themselves, they had reason to think there was someone else who had prepared these means for human use. . . . So they inferred that one or more rulers of Nature, endowed with human freedom, had taken care of all things for them, and made all things for their (·human·) use.

And since they had never heard anything about the character of these rulers, they had to judge it from their own characters; so they maintained that the Gods direct everything for the use of men in order to bind men to them and be held by men in the highest honour! So it has come about that each man has thought up—on the basis of his own character—his own way of worshipping God, so that God might love him above all the rest, and direct the whole of Nature according to the needs of his blind desire and insatiable greed. Thus this *prejudice* changed into *superstition*, and struck deep roots in men's minds. This is why everyone tried so hard to understand and explain the final causes—the purposes—of all things.

But while trying to show that •Nature does nothing in vain (meaning: nothing that isn't useful to men), they seem to have shown only that •Nature and the Gods are as mad as men are! Look at how they ended up! Along with many conveniences in Nature they couldn't avoid finding many inconveniences—storms, earthquakes, diseases, etc. They hold that these happen because the Gods—whom they judge on the basis of themselves—are *angry* with men for wronging them or making mistakes in their worship. And though their daily experience contradicted this, and though countless

examples showed that conveniences and inconveniences happen indiscriminately to the pious and the impious alike, that didn't lead them to give up their longstanding prejudice. It was easier for them to •put ·the Gods' reasons for· this among the other unknown things whose uses they were ignorant of, thus remaining in the state of ignorance in which they had been born, than to •destroy that whole construction and think up a new one.

So they maintained it as certain that the Gods' judgments far surpass man's grasp. This alone would have caused the truth to be hidden from the human race for ever, if mathematics hadn't shown them another standard of truth. ·It could do this because it isn't involved in the final-causes muddle, because· it is concerned not with •ends but only with •the essential properties of figures. In addition to mathematics there have also been a few other things (I needn't list them here) which have enabled a few men to notice these common prejudices and be led to the true knowledge of things.

**II.** That is enough on what I promised in the first place, ·namely, to explain why men are so inclined to believe that all things act for an end·. I don't need many words to show that Nature has no end set before it, and that all final causes are nothing but human fictions. I think I have *already* sufficiently established it, both by my explanation of the origins of this prejudice and also by **16**, the corollaries to **32**, and all the propositions by which I have shown that everything happens by a certain eternal necessity of Nature and with the greatest perfection.

Still, I shall add this: this doctrine about *ends* turns Nature completely upside down. •For what is really a cause it considers as an effect, and conversely what is an effect it considers as a cause. •What by Nature comes first it makes follow. And finally, •what is supreme and most perfect it makes imperfect.

The first two points are self-evident. [Spinoza then offers an obscure explanation of the third; omitted.]

Again, this doctrine takes away God's perfection. For if God acts for the sake of an end, it must be that God •wants something and therefore •lacks something. And though the theologians and metaphysicians distinguish different kinds of ends, •that doesn't help them with the present difficulty•. They say that God did everything for God's own sake and not for the sake of the things God was going to create. For before the creation •that they believe in• they can't find anything for the sake of which God could act—except God! And so they have to admit that God willed to make things happen as means to things that God wanted *and lacked*. This is self-evident.

I should also mention that the followers of this doctrine •about ends•, wanting to show off their cleverness in saying what things are *for*, have called to their aid a new form of argument: instead of reducing things to the impossible, they reduce them to ignorance! [This is a joke. One traditional kind of argument takes the form: 'If P were false, Q would be the case; Q is absurd or impossible; so P is true.' Spinoza is crediting his opponents with an argument of the form: 'If P were false, we would be wholly ignorant of the answers to a large range of questions; so P is true', perhaps with the added premise 'It would be intolerable to admit that much ignorance'.] Their resorting to *this* shows that no other way of defending their doctrine was open to them.

For example, if a slate falls from a roof onto someone's head and kills him, they will argue that the slate fell *in order to kill* the man. Here is how their argument goes:

If it *didn't* fall for that purpose because God wanted the man to be killed, how could so many circumstances have come together by chance? You may answer that it happened because the wind was blowing hard and the man was walking that way. But why

was the wind blowing hard just then? Why was the man walking by just then? If you answer that the wind arose then because on the preceding day, while the weather was still calm, the sea began to toss, and that the man had been invited somewhere by a friend, then we will ask: Why was the sea tossing? Why was the man invited at just that time?

And on it goes! They won't stop asking for the causes of causes until you take refuge in *the will of God*, which is the haven of •unacknowledged• ignorance.

Similarly, when they see the structure of the human body, these people are struck by a foolish wonder; and because they don't know the causes of this elaborate structure they conclude that it is constructed not by mechanical processes but by divine or supernatural skill, and constituted as it is *so that* the parts won't injure another.

So it comes about that someone who seeks the true causes of 'miracles' and is eager (like an educated man) to •understand natural things, not (like a fool) to •wonder at them, is denounced as an impious heretic by those whom the people honour as interpreters of Nature and of the Gods. For the denouncers know that if ignorance is taken away •and replaced by real knowledge of mechanical processes•, then foolish wonder is also taken away, depriving them of their only means for arguing and defending their authority.

Enough of this; I now pass on to what I decided to treat here in the third place.

**III.** After men convinced themselves that whatever happens does so on their account, they had to judge as *most important* in each thing whatever is *most useful* to them, and to rate as *most excellent* all the things by which they were *most pleased*. So they had to develop the notions:

good, bad, order, confusion, warm, cold, beauty, ugliness,

in terms of which they ‘explained’ natural things. I shall briefly discuss these here. (Because men think themselves *free*, they have also formed the notion of *praise and blame* and *sin and merit*. I’ll explain these after I have treated human nature.)

Whatever contributes to health and to the worship of God they have called ‘good’, and what is contrary to these they call ‘bad’.

Those who don’t understand the real nature of things, and have only a pictorial grasp of them, mistake their own imaginings for intellectual thought; they really have nothing to say about things, but in their ignorance of things and of their own natures they firmly believe that there is *an order* in things. When a number of items are set out in such a way that when they’re presented to us through the senses we can easily imagine them—can easily depict them to ourselves—and so can easily remember them, we say that they are ‘orderly’; but if the opposite is true we say that they are ‘disorderly’ or ‘confused’.

And since the things we can easily imagine are especially pleasing to us, men prefer ‘order’ to ‘confusion’, as if order were something in Nature more than a relation to our imagination! They also say that God has created all things to be orderly (thus unknowingly attributing imagination to God, unless they mean that God has disposed things so that *men* can easily imagine them). Perhaps they won’t be deterred—though they should be—by the fact that we find infinitely many things that far surpass our imagination, and many that confuse it on account of its weakness. But enough of this.

The other notions are also nothing but various •states of the imagination; yet ignorant people consider them to be chief •attributes of things. This is because, as I have already said, they believe that all things were made for

their sake, and call the nature of a thing ‘good’ or ‘bad’, ‘sound’ or ‘rotten’ and ‘corrupt’, according to how it affects *them*. For example, if the motion the nerves receive from objects presented through the eyes is conducive to health, the objects that cause it are called ‘beautiful’; those that cause a contrary motion are called ‘ugly’. Those that move the sensory apparatus through the nose they call ‘pleasant-smelling’ or ‘stinking’; through the tongue, ‘sweet’ or ‘bitter’, ‘tasty’ or ‘tasteless’; through touch, ‘hard’ or ‘soft’, ‘rough’ or ‘smooth’, etc.; and finally those that affect us through the ears are said to produce ‘noise’, ‘sound’ or ‘harmony’. Some men have been mad enough to believe that God is pleased by harmony! . . .

All these things show well enough that each person has judged things according to the disposition of his own brain; or rather, has accepted •states of the imagination as •things. So it is no wonder (I note in passing) that we find so many controversies to have arisen among men, and that they have finally given rise to scepticism. For although human bodies are alike in many ways, they still differ in very many. And for that reason what seems good to one seems bad to another; what seems ordered to one seems confused to another; what seems pleasing to one seems displeasing to another, and so on.

I pass over the other notions here, both because this is not the place to treat them at length and because everyone has experienced this variability sufficiently for himself. That is why we have such sayings as ‘So many heads, so many attitudes’, ‘Everyone is well pleased with his own opinion’, and ‘Brains differ as much as palates do’. These proverbs show well enough that men judge things according to the disposition of their brain, and •imagine things rather than •understanding them. For if men had *understood* natural things they would at least have been *convinced* of the truth

about them, even if they weren't all *attracted* by it. The example of mathematics shows this.

So we see that all the notions by which ordinary people are accustomed to explain Nature are only states of the imagination, and don't indicate the nature of anything except the imagination. . . .

Many people are accustomed to arguing in this way:

If all things have followed from the necessity of God's most perfect nature, why are there so many imperfections in Nature? why are things so rotten that they stink? so ugly that they make us sick? why is there confusion, evil, and wrong-doing?

I repeat that those who argue like this are easily answered. For the *perfection* of things is to be judged solely from

their nature and power; things are not more or less perfect because they please or offend men's senses, or because they are useful or harmful to human nature.

But to those who ask 'Why didn't God create all men so that they would be governed by the command of reason?' I answer only: 'Because God had the material to create *all* things, from the highest degree of perfection to the lowest'; or, to put it more accurately, 'Because the laws of God's nature have been so ample that they sufficed for producing all things that can be conceived by an unlimited intellect' (as I demonstrated in **16**)—that is, producing everything that is conceivable or possible. . . .



## Part II: The Nature and Origin of the Mind

I now move on to explain things that must necessarily follow from the essence of God, i.e. the essence of the infinite and eternal thing—not, indeed, all of them (for I have demonstrated (by I16) that infinitely many things must follow from it in infinitely many ways), but only those that can lead us by the hand, as it were, to the knowledge of the human mind and its highest happiness [beatitudinis].

### Definitions

D1: By ‘body’ I understand a mode [= ‘way of existing’] that in a certain and determinate way expresses God’s essence with God is considered as an extended thing (see corollary to I25).

D2: I say that to the ‘essence’ of a thing x belongs anything without which x can neither exist nor be conceived, and which can neither exist nor be conceived without x.

D3: By ‘idea’ I understand a concept that a mind forms because it is a thinking thing.

**Explanation:** I say ‘concept’ rather than ‘perception’ because the word ‘perception’ seems to indicate that the mind is *acted on* by the object, whereas ‘concept’ seems to express not the mind’s being *acted on* but its *acting*.

D4: By ‘adequate idea’ I understand an idea which, considered in itself and without relation to an object, has all the properties or intrinsic marks of a true idea.

**Explanation:** I say ‘intrinsic’ to exclude the idea’s agreement with its object, which is extrinsic.

D5: Duration is an indefinite continuation of existing.

**Explanation:** I say ‘indefinite’ because you can’t work out how long a thing will last from its own nature, or from its

efficient cause, because the cause implies the existence of the thing and not its non-existence. D6: By ‘reality’ and ‘perfection’ I understand the same thing.

D7: By ‘particular things’ I understand things that are finite and have a determinate [here = ‘limited’] existence. If a number of individuals work together in one process so that together they are all the cause of one effect, I consider them all as being to that extent one particular thing.

### Axioms

A1: The essence of man does not involve necessary existence; whether this or that man exists or doesn’t exist depends on the order of Nature and not on the man’s essence.

A2: Men think.

A3: Whenever there is a mental state such as love, desire, or anything else that can be called an ‘affect’ of the mind, the individual who has it must also have an idea of the thing that is loved, desired, etc. But the idea can occur without any other mental state, and thus without any corresponding affect. [In Spinoza’s use of the term, ‘affects’ include emotions (such as anger) and immoderate desires (such as ambition). All they have in common is their tendency to influence human conduct, mostly for the worse.]

A4: Each of us feels that a certain body is affected in many ways.

A5: We neither feel nor perceive any particular things except bodies and modes of thinking. See the postulates after 13.

## Propositions

### 1: Thought is an attribute of God; that is, God is a thinking thing.

Particular thoughts are modes that express God's nature in a certain and determinate way (by corollary to **I25**). Therefore (by **ID5**) God has an attribute the concept of which is involved in all particular thoughts, and through which they are conceived. So thought is one of God's infinite attributes. . . .

**Note on 1:** [This note offers a second, rather obscure, defence of 1.]

### 2: Extension is an attribute of God; that is, God is an extended thing.

The demonstration of this proceeds in the same way as that of 1.

### 3: In God there is necessarily an idea of •God's essence and of •everything that necessarily follows from God's essence.

God *can* think infinitely many things in infinitely many ways (by 1); that is God *can* form the idea of God's essence and of everything that necessarily follows from it (**I16** implies that these are the same thing). But whatever is in God's power necessarily exists (by **I35**); therefore, such an idea must exist, and (by **I15**) it must be God that has it.

**Note on 3:** By 'God's power' ordinary people understand *God's free will* and God's power of decision over everything that exists, things which on that account are commonly thought to be contingent. For people say that God has the power of destroying all things and reducing them to nothing; and they often compare God's power with the power of kings. But I have refuted this in the corollaries to **I325**, and have

shown in **I16** that God •acts with the same necessity by which God •understands God; that is, just as it follows from the necessity of the divine nature (everyone agrees about *this*) that God understands God, with the same necessity it also follows that God does infinitely many things in infinitely many ways. And then I have shown in **I34** that God's *power* is nothing but God's *active essence*. So we can no more conceive of God as not acting than we can conceive of God as not existing. If it were all right to pursue these matters further, I could also show here that the power that ordinary people fictitiously ascribe to God is not only •human (which shows that ordinary people conceive God as a man, or as like a man), but also •involves *lack* of power. But I don't want to speak so often about the same topic. I do ask you to reflect repeatedly on what I have said about this in Part I, from **I16** to the end; for you won't be able to command a clear view of what I am saying unless you are careful not to confuse God's power with the human power of kings.

### 4: God's idea, from which infinitely many things follow in infinitely many ways, must be unique.

. . . God is unique (by the first corollary to **I14**. Therefore God's idea, from which infinitely many things follow in infinitely many modes, must be unique.

[Two points about 5: (1) The phrase 'intrinsic being of ideas' points to one side of a distinction between •an idea's nature considered just as a mental particular without reference to what it is *of* and •an idea's nature considered as a representation of something. In 5 Spinoza is talking about ideas considered not representatively but intrinsically, not in terms of what they represent but just as mental things or episodes. (2) What 5 means, at the bottom line, is that the causes of mentalistic facts or events must themselves be mentalistic; for instance, your idea of your father was in no way caused by your father.]

**5: The intrinsic being of ideas can be caused by God only considered as a thinking thing, and not considered under any other attribute. That is to say, the efficient cause of an idea cannot be the ·non-mental· thing it is OF, and can only be ·something belonging to the realm of thought, i.e.· God considered as a thinking thing.**

This is evident from 3. . . .

Another way of demonstrating 5 is the following. The intrinsic being of an idea is (self-evidently) a mode ·or manner· of thinking, that is (by the corollary to <sup>I</sup>25), a mode that expresses in a certain way God's nature *as a thinking thing*. And so (by <sup>I</sup>10) it •doesn't involve the concept of any other attribute of God, and consequently (by <sup>I</sup>A4) •isn't an effect of any other attribute. So the intrinsic being of ideas admits God as its cause insofar as God is considered only as a thinking thing, etc..

**6: The modes ·or special cases or instances· of each attribute have God for their cause only considered under the attribute of which they are modes, and not considered under any other attribute.**

Each attribute is conceived through itself, having no conceptual overlap with any other attribute (by <sup>I</sup>10). So the modes of each attribute involve the concept of their own attribute but not of any other; and so (by <sup>I</sup>A4) they have God for their cause only considered under the attribute of which they are modes, and not considered under any other attribute

**Corollary:** The intrinsic being of things that are *not* modes of thinking does not follow from the divine nature because God has first known the things, ·because that would mean that a mentalistic cause had a non-mentalistic effect·; rather, they follow from their own attributes in the same way, and by

the same necessity, as I have shown that ideas follow from the attribute of thought. ·For example: Why are there any plants? Don't say 'Because God wanted, willed, or planned that there be plants', for that explains something material in terms of something mental. The existence of plants has to come from facts about the material realm—God considered as extended. This still involves causation by God, but not the mental causation of a personal God, as most people think·.

[The important 7 and its corollary seem to mean that there is a mentalistic reality matching physical reality, event for event and causal chain for causal chain.]

**7: The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.**

This is clear from <sup>I</sup>A4. For the idea of each thing that is caused depends on the knowledge of the cause of which it is the effect.

**Corollary:** God's power of thinking is equal to God's power of acting. That is, whatever follows •intrinsically from God's infinite nature follows •representatively in God from God's idea in the same order and with the same connection.

**Note on 7:** Before we go on, I should recall here what I showed in Part I, namely that ·any attribute—that is, whatever an unlimited intellect can perceive as constituting an essence of a substance—belongs to one substance only, and consequently that the thinking substance and the extended substance are one and the same substance, which is comprehended now under this attribute, now under that. So also a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways. . . .

For example, •a coin existing in Nature and •the idea of that coin (which is also in God, ·that is, which is also a part of Nature·) are one and the same thing, which is ·thought or· explained through different attributes. So whether we

conceive Nature under the attribute of extension or under thought or under any other attribute, we shall find one and the same order, or one and the same connection of causes; that is, we shall find the same ·or parallel or analogous· causal chains under all the attributes.

When I said that only as a thinking thing is God the **cause** of *the idea of a coin* (for example), and that only as an extended thing is God the **cause** of *the coin*, my point was that the intrinsic being of the idea of the coin can be **perceived** only through another mode of thinking as its proximate cause, and that mode again through another, and so on to infinity. So long as things are **considered** as modes of thinking, we must **explain** the order of the whole of Nature—the entire connection of causes—through the attribute of thought alone. And insofar as they are **considered** as modes of extension, the order of the whole of Nature must be **explained** through the attribute of extension alone. I maintain the same thing concerning other attributes. [The bold type in this paragraph is not Spinoza's. It expresses a certain interpretation of the paragraph: namely, that Spinoza is explaining the notion of *cause* in terms of perceiving, considering, and explaining. He has just said that •a coin and the idea of the coin are 'one and the same thing'; now he reminds us that according to him •what caused the coin can't belong to the same attribute as what caused the idea of the coin. His solution, according to the present interpretation, is that what can't flow from one attribute to another are explanations, conceptions, mental grasps. Even if a single thing is both the coin and the idea of the coin, we can **make sense of** a causal explanation of it *qua* coin only in physicalistic terms, and can **make sense of** a causal explanation of it *qua* idea only in mentalistic terms.]. . . .

**8: The ideas of particular things (or modes ·or ways of being·) that don't exist must be comprehended in God's infinite idea in the same way that the essences of the particular things (or modes ·or ways of being·) are contained in God's attributes.**

This proposition is evident from 7, but is understood more clearly from the note on 7.

**Corollary:** So long as particular things exist only by being comprehended in God's attributes, the ideas of them exist only because God's infinite idea exists. And when a particular thing is said to exist for a certain period of time, the idea of it also exists for that period of time.

**Note on 8:** If you want me to explain this further by an example, I can't of course give one that adequately explains the point I am making, since it is unique. Still I shall do my best to illustrate the matter. . . [Spinoza offers an unhelpful analogy drawn from geometry.]

**9: The idea of an actually existing particular thing has God for a cause. But not**

**God considered as an infinite thing.**

**Rather,**

**God considered as having another idea of a particular thing which actually exists;**

**And the cause of this second idea is also God considered as having a third idea, and so on ·backwards· to infinity.**

The idea of a particular thing that actually exists is a particular mode of thinking, and distinct from the others (by the corollary and note on 8), and so (by 6) has God for a cause only insofar as God is a thinking thing. But (by <sup>1</sup>28) it doesn't have God for a cause *just because God is a thinking thing* but *because God has another determinate mode of thinking*. And God is also the cause of this mode because God has a

third mode of thinking, and so on ·backwards· to infinity. But the order and connection of ideas (by **7**) is the same as the order and connection of causes. So the cause of one particular idea is another idea, or God-as-having-another-idea; and of this also God is the cause because God is has a third, and so on ·backwards· to infinity.

[In **9** and its demonstration this text speaks of God as ‘having’ this or that idea, whereas Spinoza speaks of God as *affectus* by this or that idea, which invites translation as ‘affected by’. But he does not mean this causally; his use of the word is related to *affectio*, which simply means *state*. For God to be *affectus* by a certain idea is just for God to be *in the state of having* that idea; hence the use here of ‘have’. In Part III Spinoza often speaks of affects that a person may be *affectus* with; and there too, ‘have’ will be used.]

**Corollary:** Whatever happens in the particular object of any idea, there is knowledge of it in God only insofar as God has the idea of the same object.

[Spinoza offers a demonstration of this corollary. By the ‘object of an idea he means the physical or bodily item that is correlated with it in accordance with the parallelism doctrine of **7** and its corollary. ‘x is the object of y’ is synonymous with ‘y is the idea of x’. The ‘object of notion will become important soon—in **12** and **13**.]

**10: The being of substance does not pertain to the essence of man; that is, substance does not constitute the form of man.**

The being of substance involves necessary existence (by **17**). So if the being of substance pertained to the essence of man, then. . . man would exist necessarily, which (by A1) is absurd.

**Note on 10:** This proposition also follows from **15**, which says that there are not two substances of the same nature.

Since a number of *men* can exist, what constitutes the form of *man* is not the being of substance. This proposition is also obvious from the other properties of substance, namely that a substance is by its nature infinite, immutable, indivisible, and so on.

**Corollary:** The essence of man is constituted by certain states of God’s attributes—or, more precisely, certain states of *God* that fall under, or are special cases of, God’s attributes.

The being of substance doesn’t pertain to the essence of man (by **10**). So (by **15**) it is something that is in God and can neither exist nor be conceived without God, or (by the corollary to **25**) it is a quality or mode that expresses God’s nature in a certain and determinate way.

**Note on 10 and its corollary:** Of course everyone must concede that nothing can either exist or be conceived without God. For everyone agrees that God is the only cause of all things, both of their essence and of their existence. That is, God is the cause not only of things’ coming into existence but also of their being ·what they are·. But many people say that if x can’t exist or be conceived without y, then y pertains to the nature of x. If they follow through on this consistently (which they usually don’t), they will be led to believe either •that the nature of God pertains to the essence of created things, or •that created things can be or be conceived without God. I think they were led into this by neglecting the ·proper· order of philosophizing. They believed that the divine nature—which they should have contemplated before anything else, because it comes first both in knowledge and in nature—is last in the order of knowledge, and that the so-called ‘objects of the senses’ come first. That is why when they thought about natural things they paid no attention at all to the divine nature; and

when later they turned their minds to the divine nature, they entirely ignored the first fictions on which they had based their knowledge of natural things, because these could not assist knowledge of the divine nature. So it is no wonder that they have generally contradicted themselves. No more of that. All I wanted here was to give a reason why I didn't say that anything without which a thing can neither exist nor be conceived pertains to its nature—namely, for the reason that particular things can neither exist nor be conceived without God, yet God doesn't pertain to their essence. Here is what I have said *does* constitute the essence of a thing: it is that which is given if the thing is given, and is taken away if the thing is taken away. In other words: x is the essence of y if x can neither exist nor be conceived without y, and vice versa.

**11: The first thing that constitutes the actual being of a human mind is nothing but the idea of a particular thing that actually exists.**

[Spinoza's demonstration of this is long and difficult, and not very helpful. The crucial point is this: Your mind is a detail in the mental side of Nature (= God); by 7 the whole of mentalistic reality runs parallel to the rest of reality, so that every mentalistic detail—every *idea*—is the idea *of* something to which it corresponds. So your mind is the idea *of* something to which it corresponds, and in 13 (with a hint in 12) we shall see what that 'something' is.]

**Corollary:** Any human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God. Therefore, when we say that a human mind perceives this or that, we are merely saying that God has this or that idea; not •God-as-infinite, but •God-as-explained-through-the-nature-of-that-human-mind, or •God-as-providing-the-essence-of-that-human-mind. And when we say that this or that idea is had by God-as-providing-the-nature-of-a-mind-

together-with-x (where x is something other than that mind), then we are saying that that human mind perceives x only partially or inadequately.

**Note on 11 and corollary:** Here, no doubt, you will come to a halt and think of many things that will give you pause. I ask you to continue with me slowly, step by step, and to make no judgment on these matters until you have read through them all.

**12: Whatever happens in the object of the idea constituting a human mind must be perceived by that human mind (which is to say that there must be an idea of that thing in the mind in question). So if the object of the idea constituting a human mind is a body, everything that happens in that body must be perceived by that mind.**

Whatever happens in the object of any idea, the knowledge of it must (by the corollary to 9) be in God-as-having-the-idea-of-that-object, i.e. (by 11) it must be in God-as-constituting-the mind-of-something. . . .

**Note on 12:** This proposition is also evident, and more clearly understood, from the note on 7, which you should consult.

**13: The object of the idea constituting a human mind is the corresponding body, or a certain mode of extension that actually exists, and nothing else.**

If the object of your mind were not your body, the ideas of the states of your body would (by the corollary to 9) not be in God-as-constituting-your-mind, but in God-as-constituting-the mind-of-something-else; that is (by the corollary to 11), the ideas of the states of your body would not be in your mind; but (by A4) you *do* have ideas of the states of your body. Therefore, the object of the idea that constitutes your human

mind is your body, and (by **11**) it actually exists. [A second paragraph argues unconvincingly for the ‘and nothing else’ part of the proposition.]

**Corollary:** A man consists of a mind and a body, and the human body exists as we are aware of it. [This does not mean that it exists *because* we are aware of it, or *insofar as* we are aware of it. The Latin clearly implies that our awareness of our bodies in some way or to some extent represents them truthfully; and that is the meaning required for the only mention of this corollary in the rest of the work, namely in the note on **17**.]

**Note on 13:** From these propositions we understand not only *that* the human mind is united to the body, but also *what* that union of mind and body consists in. But no-one will be able to understand this adequately or clearly unless he first knows enough about the nature of our body. For the things I have shown up to here have been completely general and apply not only to man but to other individuals (though all individuals are to some degree alive). Of *each* thing there must be an idea in God, of which God is the cause in the same way as God causes the idea of the human body; so everything I have said so far about the idea of the human body also holds for the idea of any thing.

Still, we can't deny that ideas differ among themselves, just as the objects of ideas do, and that one *idea* is more excellent and contains more reality than another *idea*, just as *the object of* the former is more excellent and contains more reality than *the object of* the latter. And so (I repeat) **to determine how the human mind differs from the others, and how it excels them, we must know the nature of its object, that is, of the human body.** I can't explain this here, nor do I need to for the things I want to demonstrate. But I shall make this general remark:

To the extent that a body is more capable than others of doing many things at once, or of being acted on in many

ways at once, to that extent its mind is more capable than others of perceiving many things at once. And to the extent that the actions of a body depend more on itself alone, and less on input from other bodies, to that extent its mind is more capable of understanding clearly.

From this we can know the excellence of one mind over the others, and also see why we have only a completely confused knowledge of our body, and many other things that I shall deduce in the following propositions. For this reason I have thought it worthwhile to explain and demonstrate these things more accurately. To do this I need first to premise a few things about the nature of bodies.

### Physical interlude.

A1': All bodies either move or are at rest.

A2': Each body moves now more slowly, now more quickly.

L1: Bodies are distinguished from one another by differences of motion and rest, of speed and slowness, and not by differences of substance.

I suppose that the first part of this is self-evident. As for the second part: that bodies are not distinguished by differences of substance is evident both from **15** and from **18**. But it is more clearly evident from what I said in the note on **15**.

L2: All bodies agree in certain things.

For all bodies agree in that they involve the concept of one and the same attribute (by D1), namely extension, and in that they can move more or less quickly and can be at rest.

L3: A body that moves or is at rest must be caused to move or stop moving by another body, which has also been caused to

move or stop moving by another, and that again by another, and so on, to infinity.

[The demonstration of this is omitted. It relies, in a fairly obvious way, on **128** and **6**.]

**Corollary:** A body in motion moves until another body causes it to rest; and a body at rest remains at rest until another body causes it to move.

This is also self-evident. For when I suppose that body *x* is at rest, and don't attend to any other body in motion, all I can say about *x* is that it is at rest. If later on *x* moves, that of course couldn't have come about from its being at rest! So it must have come about through the intervention of some other body.

If on the other hand *x* is moving, then while we attend only to *x* we can affirm nothing about it except that it moves. If later on it is at rest, that of course also couldn't have come about from the motion it had. So it must have come about through some external cause.

**A1**": *How* a body is affected by another body depends on the natures of each; so that one body may be moved differently according to differences in the nature of the bodies moving it. And conversely, different bodies may be moved differently by one and the same body.

**A2**": When a body in motion collides with another that is at rest and can't give way, then it is reflected, so that it continues to move; and the reflected motion will make the same angle with the surface of the resting body as did the line of the motion leading to the collision. This is enough about the simplest bodies, that are distinguished from one another only by motion and rest, speed and slowness. Now let us move up to composite bodies.

### **The Definition:**

When a number of bodies, whether of the same or of different size, are constrained by other bodies in such a way that

- they lie on one another, and
- if they move (at the same speed or different speeds) they communicate their motions to each other in a certain fixed manner,

I shall say that those bodies are 'united' with one another and that they all together compose one 'body' or 'individual', which is distinguished from others by the structure of this union of bodies.

**A3**": The parts of an individual or composite body can be forced to change their relative positions more or less easily depending on whether they lie on one another over a smaller or larger surface. So the bodies whose parts lie on one another over a large surface, I call 'hard'; those whose parts lie on one another over a small surface I call 'soft'; and those whose parts are in motion I call 'fluid'.

[Spinoza next offers four lemmas about 'individuals', evidently thinking mainly about organisms. They provide for the fact that an organism can (4) have a turnover of its constituent matter, e.g. by ingestion and excretion, (5) become larger or smaller, (6) move its limbs and change its posture, and (7) move from place to place.]

**L4:** When a body or individual loses some of its parts which are replaced by others of the same nature, the body or individual will retain its nature as before, with no change in its form.

Bodies are not distinguished by difference of substance; what constitutes the form of the individual consists in the union of the bodies that are its parts (by The Definition); and this union is retained even if a continual change of constituent bodies occurs. So the individual will retain its nature, as before, through



such a change.

L5: If the parts composing an individual become larger or smaller, but in such a proportion that they all keep the same ratio of motion and rest to each other as before, then the individual will retain its nature, as before, without any change of form.

The demonstration of this is the same as that of L4.

L6: If certain bodies composing an individual are compelled to alter the direction of their motion, but in such a way that they continue their motions and communicate them to each other in the same ratio as before, the individual will retain its nature, without any change of form.

This is self-evident. For in this case the individual retains everything that I said in The Definition constitutes its form.

L7: Such an individual retains its nature so long as each part retains its motion and communicates it to the other parts as before, whether it as a whole moves or is at rest, and in whatever direction it moves.

This is also evident from The Definition.

**Note on L4–7:** Now we can see how a composite individual can be altered in many ways while still preserving its nature. So far we have been thinking of an individual that is composed only of *the simplest bodies*, namely ones differing from one another only by motion and rest, speed and slowness. If we now turn to an individual composed of a number of *individuals with different natures*, we shall find that this *too* can be altered in a great many other ways while still preserving its nature. For since each part of it is composed of a number of *simpler* bodies, each part (by L7) can without any change of *its* nature move at varying speeds and consequently communicate its motion at varying speeds to the others.

If we now turn to a third kind of individual, composed of many individuals of the second kind, we shall find that it *also* can be altered in many other ways while still retaining its form. And if we carry this line of thought on to infinity, we shall easily grasp that the whole of Nature is one individual whose parts—that is, all bodies—vary in infinite ways without any change of the whole individual.

If my topic had been the human body, I would have had to explain and demonstrate these things more fully. But as I explained my topic is something different—*namely, the mind*—and I brought up these points only because they can help me to demonstrate things that are part of my proper topic.

### Postulates

P1. A human body is composed of a great many individuals of different natures, each of which is highly composite.

P2. Some of the individuals of which a human body is composed are fluid, some soft, some hard.

P3. The individuals composing a human body are affected by external bodies in very many ways, and so, therefore, is the body as a whole.

P4. For a human body to be preserved, it needs a great many other bodies by which it is continually regenerated, so to speak.

P5. When a fluid part of a human body is acted on by an external body so that it frequently pushes against a soft part *of the body*, it changes its surface and impresses *on the soft part* certain traces of the external body.

P6. A human body can move and arrange external bodies in a great many ways.

## ·Back to the Mind·

**14: A human mind can perceive many things, and the more ways its body can be arranged the greater is its ability to perceive things [or: the greater is the number of things it can perceive].**

A human body (by P3 and P6) is affected in a great many ways by external bodies, and is disposed to affect external bodies in a great many ways. But the human mind must perceive everything that happens in the human body (by 12). So 14 follows.

**15: The idea that constitutes the intrinsic being of a human mind is not simple, but is composed of a great many ideas.**

The idea that constitutes the intrinsic being of a human mind is the idea of a body (by 13), which (by P1) is composed of a great many highly composite individuals. But (by the corollary to 8) there must be an idea in God of each individual composing the body. Therefore (by 7) the idea of a human body is composed of these many ideas of the parts composing the body.

**16: The idea of any effect that external bodies have on a human body must involve the natures both of that human body and of the external bodies.**

The ways in which a body is affected follow from the natures of both the affected body and the affecting body (by A1” ·in the Physical Interlude·). So the ideas of those effects will (by <sup>1</sup>A4) necessarily involve the nature of each body. And so 16 follows.

**Corollary 1:** A human mind perceives the nature of many bodies together with the nature of its own body.

**Corollary 2:** The ideas that we have of external bodies are more informative about the condition of our own body than

about the nature of the external bodies. I have explained this by many examples in the Appendix of Part I.

**17: If a human body is in a state that involves the nature of an external body, the ·corresponding· human mind will regard that external body as actually existing, or as present to it, until the body is put into a state that excludes the existence or presence of that body.**

This is obvious. For as long as the human body is in that state, the ·corresponding· human mind (by 12) will perceive that state of the body, that is (by 16), it will have. . . an idea that involves the nature of the external body, an idea that doesn't exclude but affirms the existence or presence of the external body. And so (by the first corollary to 16) the mind will regard the external body as actually existing, or as present, until it is put into a state etc..

**Corollary:** Even if the external bodies by which a human body was once affected neither exist nor are present, the ·corresponding· mind will still be able to regard them as if they were present.

[Spinoza's demonstration of this—using materials from the Physical Interlude—is long and difficult. Its basic thrust is that an external body can leave in your body an imprint that is reflected in your mind, this imprint can remain even after the external body has gone away, and so its mental reflection can remain also—and it will consist in a belief that the body is still present to you.]

**Note on 17:** So we see how it can happen (as it often does) that we regard as •present things that •don't exist. This can happen from other causes also, but I am content here to have shown one cause through which I can explain ·the phenomenon· as if I had shown it through its true cause. I

don't in fact think I have wandered far from the true cause, because my 'postulates' contain hardly anything that isn't established by experience that we can't doubt once we have shown that the human body exists as we are aware of it (see corollary to **13**).

Furthermore from the corollary to **17** and the second corollary to **16** we clearly understand how •the idea of Peter that constitutes the essence of Peter's mind differs from •the idea of Peter that Paul has. The •former directly expresses the essence of Peter's body, and it involves existence only so long as Peter exists; but the •latter indicates the condition of Paul's body more than it does Peter's nature, so while Paul's body remains in that condition his mind will still regard Peter as present to itself even if Peter doesn't exist.

The states of the human body whose ideas present external bodies as present to us I shall—so as to stay with ordinary usage—call 'images' of the bodies, even if they don't reproduce the shapes of the bodies themselves. And when the mind regards bodies in this way I shall say that it 'imagines', •and the states it is in when it imagines I shall call 'imaginings'.

As a start on understanding what error is, I ask you to note that the imaginings of the mind, considered in themselves, contain no error; what puts the mind into error is never just its imagining •things that don't exist•, but rather its lacking an idea that excludes the existence of the things that it imagines to be present to it. For if the mind •imagines nonexistent things as present to it while at the same time •knowing that those things don't exist, it would regard this power of imagining not as a vice but as a virtue of its nature—especially if this faculty of imagining depends only on its own nature, i.e. if the mind's faculty of imagining is free.

**18: If a human body has once been affected by two or more bodies at the same time, then when the •corresponding• mind subsequently imagines one of them it will immediately recollect the others also.**

[Spinoza's rather enigmatic demonstration of this seems to come down to: A mind will now imagine x only if the corresponding body is in its x-indicating state; but if that body was previously in an x-and-y-indicating state, that's the state it will be in *now* when it provides the physical basis for the mind to imagine x; so the mind's imagining x will bring with it an imagining or recollecting of y.]

**Note on 18:** From this we clearly understand what memory is. For it is nothing but a certain connection of ideas •involving the nature of things outside the human body—a connection that is in the mind •according to the order and connection of the states of the •corresponding• human body. I say, first, that this connection is only of ideas that •involve the nature of things outside the human body, not of the ideas that •explain the nature of those things. For they are really (by **16**) ideas of states of the human body which involve both its nature and that of external bodies. I say, second, that this connection happens according to •the order and connection of the states of the human body in order to distinguish it from •the connection of ideas that happens according to the order of the intellect, by which the mind perceives things through their first causes, and which is the same in all men. [This means, roughly, that the relevant 'connections' are not those laid down in fundamental physics but rather ones that track the history of the individual human body.] From this we clearly understand why the mind immediately passes from the thought of one thing to the thought of another that is quite unlike the first: for example, from the thought of the word *pomum* a Roman will immediately pass to the thought of an *apple*, which has

no similarity to that articulate sound; the two have nothing in common except that the body of the Roman has often been affected by these two at the same time, hearing the word *pomum* while he saw the fruit. In this way each of us will pass from one thought to another, according to how the images have come to be associated in the body. For example, a soldier who sees hoof-prints in the sand will immediately think of a horse, then a horseman, then a war, and so on; while a farmer will think of a horse, then a plough, then a field, and so on. . . .

**19: The only way in which a human mind knows the ·corresponding· human body—and the only way it knows that the body exists—is through ideas of the states of that body.**

[Spinoza's demonstration of this is extraordinarily obscure and difficult. Omitted.]

**20: There is also in God an idea of the human mind—i.e. knowledge of the human mind—which follows in God in the same way and is related to God in the same way as the idea (i.e. knowledge) of the human body.**

Thought is an attribute of God (by **1**), and so (by **3**) there must be in God an idea both •of thought ·in general· and •of every specific state of affairs that involves thought, and consequently (by **11**) •of each human mind also. Now, this idea (i.e. knowledge) of the mind is caused not by God's nature as an unlimited thinking thing, but rather by God considered as having some other idea of a particular thing (by **9**). But the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of causes (by **7**). Therefore, this idea (i.e. knowledge) of the mind follows in God and is related to God in the same way as the idea (i.e. knowledge) of the body.

**21: This •idea of the mind is united to the •mind in the same way as the •mind is united to the •body.**

I have shown that what *unites* a mind to its body is the fact that the body is the *object of* the mind (see **12** and **13**); and so by the same reasoning the idea of the mind must be united with its own object, i.e. with the mind itself, just as the mind is united with the body.

**Note on 21:** This proposition is understood far more clearly from what I said in the note on **7**; for there I showed that a •body and the •idea of it (which by **13** is the ·corresponding· mind) are one and the same individual, which can be conceived ·as a mind· under the attribute of •thought or ·as a body· under the attribute of •extension. So the •mind and the •idea of it are one and the same thing, which is conceived under one and the same attribute, namely thought. The mind and the idea of it follow in God from the same power of thinking and by the same necessity. For the idea of the mind (i.e. the idea of an idea) is nothing but the form of the idea considered as a mode of thinking without relation to an object. For as soon as someone knows something, he thereby knows that he knows it, and at the same time knows that he knows that he knows, and so on, to infinity. But more on these matters later.

**22: A human mind perceives not only •the states of the ·corresponding· body but also •the ideas of these states.**

The *ideas of the ideas* of the states follow in God in the same way and are related to God in the same way as the *ideas* of the states (this is demonstrated in the same way as **20**). But the ideas of the states of a body are in the ·corresponding· human mind (by **12**), that is, they are (by the corollary to **11**) in God—as-constituting-the-essence-of-that-human-mind. So the ideas of these ideas will be in God insofar as God

has the knowledge (i.e. the idea) of the human mind ·in question·, which is to say (by **21**) that they will be in that human mind itself, which for that reason perceives not only the states of the body but also the ideas of the states.

**23: A mind knows itself only through perceiving the ideas of the states of the ·corresponding· body.**

[Like his demonstration of the related proposition **19**, Spinoza's demonstration of this is very hard to follow. His only significant subsequent use of it (demonstrating the corollary to **29**) helps us to understand the main thrust of this proposition, which is as follows. A human mind is the mental counterpart of the corresponding human body; every state of the mind matches a corresponding state of the body; and a mind's knowledge of *itself* can only be its knowledge of *its particular states*, i.e. of the ideas of the states of its body. What this rejects is the thought that a mind might survey its whole self in a unitary global manner that was somehow above a mere survey of all the particular facts about its states. [(**23**) is also invoked in a marginal way in demonstrating **47**, and even more marginally in **III30** and **III53**.]

**24: A human mind does not involve adequate knowledge of the parts composing the ·corresponding· human body.**

The parts composing a human body contribute to the essence of that body itself only insofar as they communicate their motions to one another in a certain fixed manner (see The Definition on page 30); they can be considered as individuals, without relation to the human body, but that aspect of them is irrelevant to the human body's being the body that it is. For

(by P1) the parts of a human body are themselves highly composite individuals, whose parts (by L4) can be separated from the human body and ·go their own way·, communicating their motions (see A1" after L3) to other bodies in some other way, while the human body ·in question· completely preserves its own nature and form. So the idea (that is, the knowledge) of each part will be in God (by **3**) insofar as God is considered to have another idea of a particular thing (by **9**), a particular thing which is prior in the order of nature to the part itself (by **7**). This holds for *each* part of the individual which is a human body. And so, the knowledge of each part composing a human body is in God insofar as God has a great many ideas of things, and not insofar as God has only the idea of the human body, i.e. (by **13**), the idea that constitutes the nature of the human mind. And so, by (the corollary to **11**) the human mind does not involve adequate knowledge of the parts composing the human body.

**25: The idea of any state of a human body does not involve adequate knowledge of an external body.**

I have shown (**16**) that the idea of a state of a human body involves the nature of an external body to the extent that the external body causes that human body to be in that state. But the ·adequate· idea (or knowledge) of the external body. . . [The rest of this demonstration is obscure, but its underlying point is clear enough. In Spinoza's •usage—though not according to his •official definition—an 'adequate' idea of x is an idea of x *and of its causes*. The causes of the tree I now see don't lie within my body; so the ideas of those causes are not in my mind; so any idea of the tree that I have must be inadequate.]

**26: The only way a human mind perceives any external body as actually existing is through the ideas of the states of its own body.**

Insofar as a human body is affected by an external body in some way, to that extent the mind in question (by 16 and its first corollary) perceives the external body. But if a human body is not affected by an external body in any way, then (by 7) the idea of that human body—that is (by 13), the corresponding human mind—is also not affected in any way by the idea of that body; which is to say that it does not perceive the existence of that external body in any way.

**Corollary:** Insofar as a human mind *imagines* an external body, it does not have adequate knowledge of it.

[Spinoza's demonstration of this appeals to 25 and 26.]

**27: The idea of any state of a human body does not involve adequate knowledge of the human body itself.**

Any idea of any state of a human body involves the nature of that body insofar as it is considered to be in a certain definite qualitative state (see 16). But insofar as the human body is an individual which can be—and indeed *is*—in many other states, the idea of this one state must omit the others, and thus cannot be adequate. See the demonstration of 25.

**28: The ideas of the states of a human body, insofar as they are related only to the corresponding human mind, are not clear and distinct, but confused.**

The ideas of the states of a human body involve the nature of external bodies as much as that of the human body (by 16), and must involve the nature not only of that human body as a whole but also of

its parts; for the states are (by P3) ways in which the parts of the human body and consequently the whole of it are affected. But (by 24 and 25) adequate knowledge of external bodies and of the parts composing a human body is in God—not God as having the idea that constitutes the human mind, but God as having other ideas. Or, in different words: adequate ideas of the external bodies and of the parts of the human body occur in the mental realm only as corresponding to those bodies and body-parts; so they don't occur in the mind corresponding to that human body. Therefore any ideas of a human body's states that occur in the corresponding mind are not adequate because they don't include ideas of all the causes of the states in question; and so they are like conclusions without premises, which as anyone can see is equivalent to saying that they are confused ideas.

**Note on 28:** In the same way we can demonstrate that the idea that constitutes the nature of a human mind is not, considered in itself alone, clear and distinct. . .

**29: The idea of the idea of any state of a human body doesn't involve adequate knowledge of the human mind.**

The idea of a state of a human body (by 27) doesn't involve adequate knowledge of that body itself (meaning that it doesn't express the body's nature adequately), that is (by 13) it doesn't agree adequately with the nature of the mind; and so (by <sup>I</sup>A6) the idea of this idea doesn't express the nature of the human mind adequately, or doesn't involve adequate knowledge of it.

**Corollary:** So long as a human mind perceives things from the common order of nature, it does not have an adequate

but only a confused and mutilated knowledge of itself, of its own body, and of external bodies.

A mind knows itself only by perceiving ideas of the states of the corresponding body (by **23**). But (by **19**) it perceives its own body only through ideas of that body's states and that is also how it perceives external bodies (by **26**). So its having these ideas doesn't give it adequate knowledge either of itself (by **29**) or of its own body (by **27**) or of external bodies (by **25**); such knowledge as it has of these is (by **28** and the note on it) mutilated and confused.

**Note on 29:** To spell this out a little: A mind has not an adequate but only a confused and mutilated knowledge of itself, of its own body, and of external bodies, so long as it perceives things from the common order of Nature, i.e. so long as what happens in it is caused *from the outside* through chance encounters with things; but not when, regarding a number of things at once, it is caused *internally* to understand their agreements, differences, and oppositions. For when its set of mind is caused from within, it is regarding things clearly and distinctly, as I shall show below.

**30: We can have only an entirely inadequate knowledge of the duration of our body.**

Our body's duration depends neither on its essence (by A1), nor even on God's absolute nature (by **I21**). But (by **I28**) it is caused to exist and produce an effect by other causes that are also caused by others. . . and so on to infinity. So the duration of our body depends on the common order of Nature and the constitution of things. But adequate knowledge of how things are constituted is in God considered as having the ideas of *everything*, and not in God considered only as having the idea of a human body (by the corollary

to **9**). So the knowledge of the duration of our body is quite inadequate in •God considered as constituting only the nature of the human mind, which is to say (by the corollary to **11**) that this knowledge is quite inadequate in •our mind.

**31: We can have only an entirely inadequate knowledge of the duration of particular things outside us.**

Each particular thing, like the human body, must be caused by another particular thing to exist and produce effects in some definite way, and this again by another, and so to infinity (by **I28**). But in **30** I demonstrated from this common property of particular things that we have only a very inadequate knowledge of the duration of our body; so we have to draw the same conclusion concerning the duration of particular things outside us, namely that we can have only a very inadequate knowledge of *their* duration.

**Corollary:** All particular things are contingent and destructible.

We can have no adequate knowledge of their duration (by **31**), and that is what we must understand by things' being 'contingent' and by their being 'destructible' (see the first note on **I33**). For (by **I29**) there is no contingency other than that.

**32: All ideas, insofar as they are related to God, are true.**

All ideas that are in God agree entirely with their objects (by the corollary to **7**), and so (by **IA6**) they are all true.

**33: There is nothing positive in ideas on account of which they are called false.**

If you deny this, try to conceive a positive way of thinking that embodies the form of error, or falsity. This way of thinking cannot be *in* God (by **32**). But

it can't either be or be conceived *outside* God either (by <sup>I</sup>15). So there can be nothing positive in ideas on account of which they are called false.

**34: Every idea that in us is absolute (or adequate and perfect) is true.**

When we say that there is in us an adequate and perfect idea, we are saying only that (by the corollary to 11) there is an adequate and perfect idea in God insofar as God constitutes the essence of our mind; so (by 32) we are saying only that such an idea is true.

**35: Falsity consists in the lack of knowledge that inadequate (or mutilated and confused) ideas involve.**

There is nothing positive in ideas that embodies the form of falsity (by 33). Then what *can* falsity (or error) consist in? It can't consist merely in *lacking* something; for minds are said to err or to be deceived while bodies are not, yet anything relevant that minds lack is also lacked by bodies. Minds are said to be 'ignorant', while bodies are not; but falsity or error can't consist in merely *being ignorant* either; for ignorance and error are different. So it consists in the lack of knowledge that is involved in inadequate and confused ideas.

**Note on 35:** In the note on 17 I explained how error consists in the lack of knowledge. But to explain the matter more fully I shall give one or two examples: men are deceived in thinking themselves free—that is, they think that of their own free will they can either do a thing or refrain from doing it—an opinion that consists only in this, that *they are conscious of their actions and ignorant of the causes that make them act as they do*. So this—their not knowing any cause of their actions—is their idea of freedom! Of course they *say* that human actions 'depend on the will', but these

are only words for which they have no idea and thus have no meaning. For nobody knows what 'the will' is, or how it moves the body. . . .

Similarly, when we look at the sun, we imagine it as about 200 feet away from us, an error that doesn't consist simply in this imagining, but in our imagining it in this way while being ignorant of its true distance and of the cause of our imagining it as we do. Don't think that the cause of our imagining is the fact that we don't know any better, i.e. don't know how far away the sun really is. For even if we later come to know that it is more than 600 diameters of the earth away from us, we nevertheless *imagine* it—we *picture* it—as near. For we imagine the sun as so near not because we don't know its true distance but because the sun causes our body to be in a certain state.

**36: Inadequate and confused ideas follow with the same necessity as adequate (or clear and distinct) ideas.**

All ideas are in God (by <sup>I</sup>15); and so far as their relation to God goes they are true (by 32) and adequate (by the corollary to 7). So the only way ideas can be inadequate or confused is in relation to some particular person's mind (see 24 and 28). So all ideas—both the adequate and the inadequate—follow with the same necessity (by the corollary to 6).

**37: What is common to all things (on this see L2 in the physical interlude), and is equally in the part and in the whole, does not constitute the essence of any particular thing.**

Try to conceive something (call it A) that is common to all things and is equally in the part and in the whole, and that *does* constitute the essence of some particular thing, call it B. Then (by D2) A can neither be nor be conceived without B. But this is contrary



to the hypothesis that A is common to all etc. and that B is merely one particular thing. So A does not pertain to the essence of B and does not constitute the essence of any other particular thing either.

**38: Things that are common to all, and are equally in the part and in the whole, can only be conceived adequately.**

[Spinoza's demonstration of this is hard to follow. What drives it seems to be this thought: If A is something that is common to all bodies and is equally in the part of each body and in the whole, then my idea of A—though it is the mental counterpart only of a state of *my* body—won't have the kind of 'mutilation' and confusion that inadequate ideas have. That is because, although the over-all state of my body is mostly caused from the outside, the A-involving aspects of my bodily state are caused by the A-involving aspects of the bodies that are acting on mine; the A-ness holds without a bump or interruption clear through the causal transaction, introducing no 'mutilation' in my idea of A, which is therefore adequate.]

**Corollary:** Certain ideas or notions are common to all men. For (by L2 ·in the physical interlude·) all bodies agree in certain things, which (by **38**) must be perceived adequately (that is, clearly and distinctly) by everyone.

**39: If something is common to a human body and certain external bodies by which that human body is usually affected, and is equally in the part and in the whole of each of them, its idea will also be adequate in the ·corresponding· mind.**

[Another difficult demonstration. Its basic thrust is almost exactly the same as that of the demonstration of **38**. The above statement of the latter serves equally

for **39** except for the addition of one phrase at the start: 'If A is something common to all bodies *with which my body interacts* and is equally in the part of each body and in the whole, then. . .'.]

**Corollary:** A mind is the more capable of perceiving many things adequately as its body has many things in common with other bodies.

**40: Whatever ideas follow in the mind from ideas that are adequate in the mind are also adequate.**

This is obvious. For when we say that an idea in a human mind follows from ideas that are adequate in it, we are saying only (by the corollary to **11**) that the cause of this idea is not •God-considered-as-infinite or •God-considered-as-involving-many-particular-things but just •God-considered-as-including-the-essence-of-that-human-mind; so it must be adequate.

**First note on 37–40:** With this I have explained the cause of so-called 'common notions', which are the foundations of our reasoning. But some axioms or notions result from other causes which it would be helpful to explain by my method. For my explanations would enable us to establish which notions are more useful than the others, and which are nearly useless; and then to show •which are 'common', •which are clear and distinct only to those who have no prejudices, and finally •which have no good basis. Moreover, we could establish what is the origin of the so-called 'second notions' and thus of the axioms based on them, and other things I have thought about from time to time concerning these matters. But since I have set these aside for another treatise, and don't want to annoy you with too long a discussion, I have decided to pass over them here. ['Second notions' are concepts of concepts, corresponding to such general terms as 'genus', 'species', 'proposition' and so on.]

But I don't want to omit anything that you need to know, so I shall briefly add something about the source of the so-called 'transcendental' terms—I mean ones like 'being', 'thing' and 'something'. These terms arise from the fact that a human body, being limited, can form distinctly only a certain number of images at the same time (I have explained what an image is—especially that it is a *bodily* state—in the note on **17**). If that number is exceeded, the images will begin to be confused, and when the excess becomes big enough the images will all be completely confused with one another.

Since this is so, it is evident from the corollary to **17** and from **18** that a human mind will be able to imagine distinctly, at the same time, as many bodies as there can be distinct images formed at the same time in its body. But when the images in the body are completely confused, the mind will imagine all the bodies confusedly, running them all together, and treat them as though they all fall under one attribute, namely the 'attribute' of *being, thing, etc.* This also follows from the fact that images are not always equally vigorous, and from other such facts; but I needn't go into these here. For my purposes the one I have chosen is enough, for all the reasons come down to this: these 'transcendental' terms signify ideas that are highly confused.

The notions they call 'universal', like *man, horse, dog etc.*, have arisen from similar causes. To take one example: So many images of *men* are formed at one time in a human body that they surpass the power of imagining, to the extent that the corresponding mind can't imagine slight differences amongst the particular men (such as the colour and size of each one) or their determinate number, and imagines distinctly only what is common to them all in their effects on the body in question. For the body has been affected most forcefully by what is common to all the men, since each

particular man has affected it by this property. And the mind expresses this what-is-common by the word 'man', and predicates it of countless particulars. . . .

These 'universal' notions are not formed by all people in the same way, but vary from one person to another, depending on what the body of each person has more often been affected by, and on what the mind of each imagines or recollects more easily. For example, those who have mostly been impressed by men's stature will understand by the word 'man' an animal that stands upright. But those who have generally focussed on something else will form another common image of men—e.g. that man is an animal capable of laughter, or a featherless biped, or a rational animal.

And similarly with the others—each will form universal images of things according to the disposition of his body. Hence it is not surprising that so many controversies have arisen among the philosophers, who have wished to explain natural things by mere images of things.

**Second note on 37–40:** From what I have said above, it is clear that we perceive many things and form universal notions:

1. from particular things which have been represented to us through the senses in a way that is mutilated, confused, and without order for the intellect (see corollary to **29**); for that reason I have been accustomed to call such perceptions •knowledge from *random experience*;
2. from signs, e.g. from the fact that, having heard or read certain words, we recollect things and form certain ideas of them that resemble them, through which we imagine the things (note on **18**). These two ways of regarding things I shall from now on call 'knowledge of the first kind', 'opinion' or 'imagination';

3. from the fact that we have common notions and adequate ideas of the properties of things (see the corollary to **38**, and **39** and its corollary, and **40**). This I shall call ‘reason’ and ‘the second kind of knowledge’.

4. In addition to these two kinds of knowledge, there is (as I shall show in what follows) a third kind, which I shall call ‘intuitive knowledge’. This kind of knowing goes from an •adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to •adequate knowledge of the intrinsic essences of things. I shall explain all these with one example. Suppose there are three numbers, and the problem is to find a fourth which is to the third as the second is to the first. Merchants don’t hesitate to multiply the second by the third, and divide the product by the first, because [2] •they haven’t yet forgotten what their teacher told them (without proving it), or because [1] •they have often found that this works with the simplest numbers, or [3] •from the force of Euclid’s demonstration of proposition 7 in Book 7—that is, from the common property of proportionals. But with the simplest numbers none of this is necessary. Given the numbers 1, 2, and 3, no-one fails [4] to see that the fourth proportional number is, and we see this much more clearly because we infer the fourth number from the ratio which we see *at a glance* the first number to have to the second. [In Spinoza’s day, the term ‘intuition’ was often used for a kind of all-in-one-swoop inference, in contrast to the more long drawn out procedure of ‘demonstration’.]

**41: Knowledge of the first kind is the only cause of falsity, whereas knowledge of the second and third kinds is necessarily true.**

I said in the preceding note that all the ideas that are inadequate and confused pertain to knowledge of the first kind, and so (by **35**) this kind of knowledge is the

only cause of falsity. Next, I have said that adequate ideas pertain to knowledge of the second and third kinds, and so (by **34**) this knowledge is necessarily true.

**42: Knowledge of the second and third kinds, and not of the first kind, teaches us to distinguish the true from the false.**

This proposition is self-evident. For someone who knows how to distinguish between the true and the false must have an adequate idea of the true and of the false, that is (second note on **37–40**), he must know the true and the false by the second or third kind of knowledge.

**43: He who has a true idea at the same time knows that he has a true idea, and cannot doubt the truth of the thing.**

[The difficult demonstration of **43** has this as its core: A true idea is equated with an adequate idea; when such an idea *x* occurs there must also be in that same mind an idea *y* of *x*; and *y* must (by **20**) relate to the person’s mind in exactly the same way as *x* does. So *y* must also be adequate in relation to that mind. Let Spinoza take over from there:] So someone who has an adequate idea, or (by **34**) who knows a thing truly, must at the same time have an adequate idea or true knowledge of his own knowledge. That is (by a self-evidently correct equivalence), he must at the same time be certain.

**Note on 43:** In the note on **21** I have explained what an idea of an idea is, which may help you with the foregoing demonstration. But it should be noted that the demonstration wasn’t really needed, because the truth of **43** is pretty obvious. No-one who has a true idea is unaware

that a true idea involves the highest certainty; for to have a true idea means knowing a thing perfectly or in the best way. No-one can doubt this unless he thinks that an idea is something mute, like a picture on a tablet, and not a mode of thinking—namely, the very act of understanding. That is, for a mind to ‘have an idea in it’ is not for it to contain some kind of mental lump, but rather for it to *do* something of a certain sort. And I ask, who can know that he understands something unless he first understands it? That is, who can know that he is certain about something unless he is first certain about it? What can there be which is clearer and more certain than a true idea, to serve as a standard of truth? As the light makes both itself and the darkness plain, so truth is the standard both of itself and of falsehood.

Here are three questions that are sometimes asked:

(1) If a true idea is distinguished from a false one not intrinsically but only because it agrees with its object, so that a true idea has no more reality or perfection than a false one because ‘true’ marks it off not intrinsically but only through its relation to something else, does the man who has true ideas have any more reality or perfection than the one who has only false ideas?

(2) Why *do* men have false ideas?

(3) How can someone know for sure that he has ideas that agree with their objects?

To these questions I think I have already replied. (1) As regards the difference between a true and a false idea, it is established from **35** that the true is related to the false as existence is to nonexistence. (2) And in the passage from **19** through the note on **35** I have shown most clearly the causes of falsity. From this it is also clear how a man who has true ideas differs from one who has only false ideas. (3) As for ‘How can someone know for sure that he has ideas

that agree with their objects?’, I have just shown more than adequately that this arises solely from his having an idea that *does* agree with its object—or that *truth is its own standard*. Furthermore, insofar as our mind perceives things truly it is part of the infinite intellect of God (by the corollary to **11**), so it is necessary that the mind’s clear and distinct are true as that God’s are.

**44: It is of the nature of reason to regard things as necessary, not as contingent.**

It is of the nature of reason to perceive things truly (by **41**), that is (by **A6**), as they are in themselves, that is (by **I29**), not as contingent but as necessary.

**First corollary:** It depends only on the imagination that we regard things as contingent, both in respect to the past and in respect to the future.

**Note on 44:** I shall explain briefly how this happens. I have shown above (by **17** and its corollary) that even if a thing doesn’t exist the mind still imagines it as present to itself unless causes occur that exclude its present existence. Next, I have shown (**18**) that if a human body has once been affected by two external bodies at the same time, then afterwards when the corresponding mind imagines one of them it will immediately recollect the other also—that is, will regard both as present to itself unless causes occur that exclude their present existence. Moreover, no-one doubts that our sense of *time* comes from the imagination, specifically from the fact that we imagine or experience bodies as moving at various speeds.

Let us suppose, then, a child who saw Peter for the first time yesterday in the morning, saw Paul at noon, and saw Simon in the evening, and today again saw Peter in the morning. It is clear from **18** that as soon as he sees the morning light, he will immediately imagine the sun taking

the same course through the sky as he saw the day yesterday; that is, he will imagine the whole day, and Peter together with the morning, Paul with noon, and Simon with the evening. That is, he will imagine the existence of Paul and of Simon with a relation to future time. On the other hand, if he sees Simon in the evening, he will relate Paul and Peter to the time past by imagining them together with past time. And the more often he has seen them in this same order the more uniformly he will do this. But if it should happen that on some other evening he sees James instead of Simon, then on the following morning he will imagine the ·coming· evening time accompanied now by Simon, now by James, but not by both at once. (I am stipulating that he has seen them on different evenings, never both together.) So his imagination will vacillate and he will imagine now this one, now that one, with the future evening time. That is, he will regard neither of them as *certainly* future but both of them as *contingently* future.

And the imagination will vacillate in this way whenever it imagines things that we regard as related to past time or to present time in this manner. So we shall imagine things as contingent in relation to present time as well as to past and future time.

**Second corollary:** It is of the nature of reason to perceive things as in a certain way eternal.

It is of the nature of reason to regard things as necessary and not as contingent (by **44**). And it perceives this necessity of things truly (by **41**), that is (by **I A6**), as it is in itself. But (by **I 16**) this necessity of things is the very necessity of God's eternal nature. Therefore, it is of the nature of reason to regard things as in this way eternal. Add to this that the foundations of reason are notions (by **38**) of the qualities that are common to all, and (by **37**) not of the essence

of any particular thing. So they must be conceived without any relation to time but as in a certain way eternal. [Spinoza wrote that it is of the nature of reason to perceive things *sub quadam aeternitatis specie*, which translates literally as 'under a certain species of eternity'. The difference between this and the rather free 'in a certain way eternal' seems not to affect the only subsequent use of this corollary, in the demonstration of **IV 62**.]

**45: Each idea of each body, or of each particular thing that actually exists, necessarily involves an eternal and infinite essence of God.**

The idea of a particular thing x that actually exists necessarily involves both the essence of x and its existence (by corollary to **8**). But particular things (by **I 15**) can't be conceived without God; indeed, (by **6**) the idea of x has for a cause God-considered-as-A where A is the attribute under which x is a mode; so the idea of x must involve the concept of A (by **I A4**), that is (by **I D6**), must involve an eternal and infinite essence of God. ·E.g. your mind involves *thought* and your body involves *extension*; each of those is an attribute, and thus an eternal and infinite essence of God·.

**Note on 45:** By 'existence' here I don't mean *duration*, that is, existence conceived abstractly as a certain sort of quantity ('How long will it exist?'). Rather, I am speaking of the very nature of existence, which is attributed to particular things because infinitely many things follow from the eternal necessity of God's nature in infinitely many ways (see **I 16**)—the very existence of particular things insofar as they are in God. For even if each one is caused by another particular thing to exist in a certain way, still the force by which each one stays in existence follows from the eternal necessity of God's nature. Concerning this, see the corollary to **I 24**.

**46: The knowledge of God's eternal and infinite essence which each idea involves is adequate and perfect.**

The demonstration of 45 is universal: the idea of *anything*, whether thought of as a part or as a whole, involves God's eternal and infinite essence. So a source of knowledge of an eternal and infinite essence of God is common to all, and is equally in the part and in the whole. And so (by 38) this knowledge will be adequate.

**47: Any human mind has an adequate knowledge of God's eternal and infinite essence.**

A human mind has ideas (by 22) from which it perceives as actually existing (by 23) •itself, (by 19) •its own body, and (by the first corollary to 16 and by 17) •external bodies. So (by 45 and 46) it has an adequate knowledge of God's eternal and infinite essence.

**Note on 47:** From this we see that God's infinite essence and God's eternity are known to everyone. And since all things are in God and are conceived through God, it follows that we can deduce from this knowledge a great many things that we know adequately, and so can form that third kind of knowledge of which I spoke in the second note on 37-40 and of whose excellence and usefulness I shall speak in Part V. Why do men have a less clear knowledge of God than of the common notions? It is because •they cannot *imagine* God, as they can bodies, and •they have joined the name 'God' to images of things that they are used to seeing. Men can hardly avoid this because they are *continually* affected by bodies. Indeed, most errors consist only in our not rightly applying names to things. For when someone says 'The lines drawn from the centre of a circle to its circumference are unequal', he must (at least at that moment) be meaning by 'circle' something different from what mathematicians

understand by it. Similarly, when men err in calculating they have certain numbers in their mind and different ones on the paper: attending only to what they have in mind, they don't really err, but they seem to do so because we think they have in their mind the numbers that are on the paper. If we didn't think this, we wouldn't believe that they were erring, •because we distinguish mere verbal mishaps from downright error. Recently I heard someone exclaim 'My courtyard has just flown into my neighbour's hen!'; and although this was absurd I didn't think he was in error, because I had no doubt that what he meant was that his hen had flown into his neighbour's courtyard. Most controversies have arisen from men's failure to explain their own mind, or to interpret the mind of someone else. For really, when they contradict one another most energetically they either have the same thoughts or they are thinking of different things, so that what each thinks are errors and absurdities in the other are not.

**48: In the mind there is no absolute (that is, free) will; rather, the mind is caused to will this or that by a cause which is also caused by another, and this again by another, and so to infinity.**

A mind is a certain and determinate mode of thinking (by 11), and so (by the second corollary to <sup>1</sup>17) it can't be a free cause of its own actions, that is, it can't have an absolute [= 'unconditioned'] ability to will or not will. Rather, when it wills it must be caused to do so (by <sup>1</sup>28) by a cause which is also caused by another, and this cause again by another, etc..

**Note on 48:** It can be shown in the same way that there is in the mind no absolute ability to understand, desire, love, etc. From this it follows that the •so-called• 'faculties' of intellect, will, etc. are either •complete fictions or merely

•metaphysical beings—that is, •universals that we customarily form from particulars. So the relation between these:

intellect—a particular idea,

will—a particular act of volition

Is the same as that between

‘stone-ness’—a particular pebble,

humanity (= humanness)—a particular man.

•The crucial point is that intellect, will, etc. are not *agents* or *causes* or anything like that; so crediting a man with having intellect is saying that *he thinks* or *has ideas*, and is not saying more than that. Analogously, to credit the thing in my hand with having stone-ness is to say that it is a stone, and not say anything more.

I have explained in the Appendix of Part I the cause of men’s thinking themselves free. But before I go on I should point out here that by ‘will’ I understand a capacity for •affirming and denying, and not •a capacity for •desiring. I take ‘will’ to be the faculty by which the mind affirms or denies something true or something false, and not the desire by which the mind wants a thing or avoids it.

Having demonstrated that these •so-called• ‘faculties’ are universal notions that aren’t anything over and above the particulars from which we form the notions, we must now investigate whether the •volitions themselves are anything over and above the mere •ideas of things. Does a mind engage in any affirmation or negation other than what is involved in the idea itself just because it is an idea? (On this see 49 and also D3.) If it does, then our thoughts—our ideas—are just *pictures*. •Perhaps ideas *would* be just pictures if they were the bodily images that I introduced in the note on 17. But it certainly isn’t right to claim a pictorial status for them on *that* basis. •For by ‘ideas’ I understand not the images that are formed at the back of the eye (and, if you like, in the middle of the brain), but concepts of thought.

**49: In a mind no volition—that is, no affirmation or negation—occurs except that which the idea involves just because it is an idea.**

In a mind (by 48) there is no absolute faculty of willing and not willing, but only particular volitions—this and that affirmation, this and that negation. Let us take the example of some particular volition, say a mode of thinking by which a mind affirms that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. This affirmation involves the concept—the idea—of the triangle; so the volition can’t •be conceived without the idea of the triangle. (For to say that A must involve the concept of B is the same as to say that A can’t be conceived without B.) Further, this affirmation (by A3) can’t •exist without the idea of the triangle. Therefore, this affirmation can *neither be nor be conceived* without the idea of the triangle.

Furthermore, this idea of the triangle must involve this same affirmation, namely that its three angles equal two right angles. So conversely, this idea of the triangle also can *neither be nor be conceived* without this affirmation.

So (by D2) this affirmation belongs to the essence of the idea of the triangle, and is nothing over and above that essence. And this demonstration didn’t bring in any special features of the example, so what it shows concerning this volition (or affirmation) applies to every volition, namely that it is nothing over and above the idea.

**Corollary:** The will and the intellect are one and the same.

Will and intellect are nothing apart from •particular volitions and ideas (by 48 and its note). But •these are one and the same (by 49). Therefore the will and the intellect are one and the same.

## Concluding Note

By this I have cleared away what is commonly maintained to be the cause of error. Moreover, I have shown in **35** and its note that falsity consists only in the lack of knowledge that mutilated and confused ideas involve. So a false idea, just because it is false, does not involve certainty. When we say that a man stands by some false ideas and doesn't doubt them, we aren't saying that he is certain, but only that he doesn't doubt, or that his false ideas stay with him because nothing causes him to doubt them. See the note on **44**.

Therefore, however stubbornly a man may cling to something false, I shall still never say that he is certain of it. For by 'certainty' I understand something positive (see **43** and its note), not the mere absence of doubt. But by 'lack of certainty' I do understand falsity.

However, to explain the preceding proposition more fully, I should give you some warnings. Then I must reply to the objections that can be made against this doctrine of mine; and finally, to remove every uneasiness, I thought it worthwhile to indicate some of the doctrine's advantages. I say 'some' of them, because the most important ones will be better understood from what I shall say in Part V.

### •Some warnings•

I begin, therefore, by warning you to distinguish accurately between an idea or concept of the mind and the images of things that we imagine, and between ideas and the words by which we signify things. Many people either completely confuse these three—ideas, images, and words—or don't distinguish them accurately enough or carefully enough; and that has left them completely ignorant of this doctrine concerning the will. But one needs to know it, both for the sake of philosophical theory and in order to arrange one's life wisely.

Indeed, those who think that ideas consist in images that are formed in us through encounters with external bodies are convinced that the ideas of things of which we can't form a similar image are not ideas but only fictions that we make up through a free choice of the will. They look on ideas, that is, as dumb pictures on a panel; and being in the grip of this prejudice they don't see that an idea, just because it is an idea, involves an affirmation or negation.

And then those who confuse words with ideas, or with the affirmations that ideas involve, think that they can will something contrary to what they are aware of, when really they only affirm or deny with words something contrary to what they are aware of. [This seems to mean: they think that can see that P yet *decide to disbelieve* that P, when really they only *say* that not-P.] But you can easily put these prejudices aside if you will attend to the nature of thought, which doesn't in any way involve the concept of extension. You will then understand clearly that an idea (since it is a way of thinking) is not to be identified with either an image or a series of words; for the essence of words and of images is constituted purely by bodily events, which don't at all involve the concept of thought. . . .

### •Four objections•

(1) The first objection comes from people who think it clear that the will extends more widely than the intellect, and so is different from the intellect. Why do they think the will extends more widely than the intellect? They say that it is because they know by experience that their actual faculty of assenting (that is, affirming and denying) is sufficient to enable them to assent to countless thoughts which they don't yet have, but that to *have* some of those thoughts they do require a greater faculty of understanding than they actually possess. Some enlargements of our stock of propositional



thoughts will require a greater understanding than we have; but when such enlargement has occurred, we will be able to say *yes* or *no* without needing any enlargement of our abilities of that sort. In short: the will is distinguished from the intellect because the intellect is limited and the will is not.

(2) It can be objected against me that experience seems to teach us most clearly that we can *suspend* our judgment so as not to affirm or deny thoughts that we have in our minds. This also seems to be confirmed from the fact that no-one is said to be deceived just because of some thought that he has, but only if he assents or dissents. Someone who feigns a winged horse—that is, merely entertains the thought of a winged horse—does not thereby affirm that there is a winged horse, and isn't deceived in entertaining that thought. Thus, experience makes it utterly clear that the will, or faculty of assenting, is free and is different from the faculty of understanding.

(3) It can be objected that one affirmation (it seems) doesn't contain more reality than another: we don't (it seems) require a greater power to affirm of something true that it is true than to affirm of something false that it is true. But with ideas it is different, for we perceive that one idea has more reality—that is, more perfection—than another. As some objects are more excellent than others, so also some ideas of objects are more perfect than others. This also seems to establish a difference between the will and the intellect.

(4) It can be objected that if man doesn't act from freedom of the will, what will happen if he is in a state of equilibrium, like Buridan's ass? [The ass was equidistant between food and drink, and equally in need of each, so that it couldn't choose between them.] Will he die of hunger and of thirst? If I concede that he will, I would seem to be thinking of an ass or a statue of a man, not a real man. But if I deny that he will die of hunger and

thirst, then I am admitting that he will *determine himself*, and thus that he has the capacity for going where he wants and doing what he wants.

Perhaps other objections can also be made. But I don't have to burden you with everything that anyone may dream up; so I shall confine myself to these four, replying to them as briefly as I can.

#### •Four replies•

(1) I grant that the will extends more widely than the intellect, if by 'intellect' the objector refers only to clear and distinct ideas. But I deny that the will extends more widely than 'intellect' in the sense of our capacity for having thoughts. And indeed, I don't see why our capacity for willing should be called unlimited when our capacity for sensing is not. For just as the former will enable us to affirm endlessly many things (one after another, for we can't affirm so many things all at once), so also the latter enables us to sense (that is, to perceive) endlessly many bodies one after another.

If the objectors say that there are infinitely many things that we can't perceive, I reply that since we can't reach those things by any thought we can't reach them by our faculty of willing either. 'But if God wanted to bring it about that we *did* have those thoughts,' they say, 'he would have to increase our faculty of perceiving, but not our faculty of willing.' [The rest of this paragraph is expanded, in ways that dots can't signify, from Spinoza's extremely compressed formulation.] This line of thought is based on the old mistake of thinking of a 'faculty' as some kind of agent or cause or mechanism. I have shown that 'the will' is not a concrete thing of any kind but a universal being or idea, something that gathers together all the particular volitions by expressing what is common to them all. Understood properly, then, the will is in a trivial way infinite: it is a universal that applies to any and all of

the infinitely many actual and possible particular acts of volition! But that is not the kind of infinity the objectors had in mind, as can be seen from looking at the other half of their objection—the one about ‘intellect’. They say that for us to understand things that we now don’t understand our *intellect* would have to be enlarged; whereas actually what would be needed is for us to have ideas that we don’t now have. In employing that enlarged stock of ideas, we would still be *thinking*; that is, our activity with them would fall under the universal idea of *intellect* just as our present thinking activities do; so it would be the same intellect as we now have. In short, in the only sense in which the will ‘is infinite’, the intellect ‘is infinite’ too.

(2) I reply to the second objection by denying that we have a free power of suspending judgment. For when we say that someone ‘suspends judgment’, all we are saying is that he •sees that he doesn’t perceive the thing adequately. So suspension of judgment is really a •perception, not an act of free will.

To understand this clearly, let us conceive a child imagining a winged horse while not perceiving anything else. Since this imagining involves the existence of the horse (by the corollary to 17), and the child doesn’t perceive anything else that excludes the existence of the horse, he will necessarily think the horse is there in front of him. And he won’t be able to doubt its existence, though he won’t be *certain* of it.

We find this daily in our dreams, and I don’t think anyone believes that while he is dreaming he has a free power of suspending judgment about the things he dreams, and of bringing it about that he doesn’t dream the things he dreams he sees. Yet it does sometimes happen that even in dreams we ‘suspend judgment’—namely, when we dream that we are dreaming.

Next, I agree that no-one is deceived just because of what he perceives; that is, I agree that the imaginings of the mind in themselves involve no error. But I deny that a man affirms nothing in perceiving. For what is *perceiving a winged horse* other than *affirming wings of the horse*? If a mind perceived a winged horse and nothing else, it would regard the horse as present to it, and would have no cause for doubting its existence, and no ability to dissent from the proposition that there is a winged horse on the scene. The mind can’t dissent from that proposition unless either •its imagining of the winged horse is joined to an idea that excludes the existence of that horse or •the mind perceives that its idea of a winged horse is inadequate. And then it will be *compelled* to •deny the horse’s existence (in the former case) or to •doubt it (in the latter).

(3) I think that the third objection is answered by something I have already said, namely that ‘the will’ is something universal—merely a way of referring to something that is common to all ideas, namely affirmation—so that its complete essence must be in each idea, and in this way must be the same in all. But that holds only when ‘the will’ is thus conceived abstractly, so that saying ‘The will is the same in every idea’ is just saying that ‘Every idea involves an affirmation’. The will’s being the same in every idea, understood in *this* way, doesn’t imply that there are no differences between the affirmations involved in different ideas; for in fact particular affirmations differ from one another as much as the ideas themselves do. For example, the affirmation involved in the idea of a circle differs from the affirmation involved in the idea of a triangle as much as the idea of the circle differs from the idea of the triangle.

Next, I flatly deny that •affirming of what is true that it is true requires as much power of thinking as does •affirming of what is false that it is true. Looked at just in terms of

the mind, these two activities are related to one another as existence is to non-existence. For there is nothing positive in ideas that constitutes the form of falsity (see **35** and its note, and the note on **47**). So the thing to note here, above all, is how easily we are deceived when we confuse universals with particulars, and beings of reason and abstractions with real things.

(4) As far as the fourth objection is concerned, I say that I agree entirely that a man placed in such an equilibrium—experiencing nothing but thirst and hunger, with food and drink equally distant from him—will die of hunger and thirst. If the objectors ask me whether such a man shouldn't be thought an ass rather than a man, I say that I don't know—just as I don't know how greatly we should admire someone who hangs himself, or children, fools, and madmen, etc.

#### **·Four advantages of the doctrine·**

It remains now to indicate how greatly the knowledge of this doctrine is to our advantage in life. We shall see this easily from the following ·four· considerations. ·The doctrine is good for us because·:

(1) It teaches that we act only from God's command, that we share in the divine nature, and that the more perfect our actions are and the more thoroughly we understand God the more thoroughly we share in the divine nature. This doctrine, then, as well as giving us complete peace of mind, also teaches us what our greatest happiness consists in—namely, in the knowledge of God alone, which leads us to do only the things that love and morality advise. This shows clearly how far people stray from the true valuation of virtue

when they expect to be honoured by God with the greatest rewards for their virtue and best actions, this ·attitude· being the greatest bondage—as if virtue itself and the service of God were not happiness itself, and the greatest freedom!

(2) It teaches us how we must conduct ourselves concerning matters of luck, or things that are not in our power—that is, things that don't follow ·solely· from our nature, ·and thus depend at least in part on events external to us·. What it teaches is that we must expect and bear calmly both good luck and bad. For everything that happens follows from God's eternal decree with the same necessity as it follows from the essence of a triangle that its three angles are equal to two right angles.

(3) This doctrine contributes to communal life by teaching us not to hate, to disesteem, to mock, to be angry at, or to envy *anyone*, and also by teaching that each of us should be content with what he has, and should be helpful to his neighbour, not from soft-hearted compassion or favouritism or superstition, but from the guidance of reason, as the time and occasion demand. I shall show this in Part IV.

(4) Finally, this doctrine also contributes greatly to the common society by teaching how citizens are to be governed and led, not so that they may be slaves, but so that they may freely do what is best.

That completes what I had decided to treat in this note, and brings Part II to an end. In it I think I have explained the nature and properties of the human mind in enough detail, and as clearly as the difficulty of the subject allows, and that I have set out doctrines from which we can infer many excellent things that are highly useful and necessary to know, as will be established partly in what follows.

## Part III: The Origin and Nature of the Affects

### Preface

[In Spinoza's use of the term, 'affects' include emotions (such as anger) and immoderate desires (such as ambition). All they have in common is their tendency to influence human conduct, mostly for the worse.]

Most of those who have written about the affects and men's way of living write as though their topic was not •natural things that follow the common laws of Nature but rather •things that are outside Nature. Indeed they seem to think of man in Nature as a kingdom within a kingdom. They don't think of man as •following the order of Nature, •going through his life in accordance with the causal forces at work within him and impinging on him from the outside; rather, they think that man •acts upon and interferes with Nature, having absolute power over his own actions and being determined only by himself. And they don't explain human failings in terms of •natural causes, but instead invoke I know not what •vice of human nature which they bewail, or laugh at, or sneer at, or (as usually happens) curse. And the people who are regarded as godly are the ones who know how to censure most eloquently and cunningly the weakness of the human mind.

It is true that some very distinguished men (to whose work and diligence I admit that I owe much) have written many admirable things about the right way of living, and given men advice full of prudence. But no-one, so far as I know, has determined the nature and powers of the affects, nor what the mind can do to moderate them. I know, of course, that the famous Descartes, although he too believed that the mind has absolute power over its own actions, nevertheless sought to explain human affects through their first causes,

while also showing how a mind can have absolute dominion over its affects. But in my opinion, he showed nothing but the cleverness of his intellect, as I shall show in the proper place.

Let us now return to those who prefer to curse or laugh at the affects and actions of men, rather than understand them. To them it will doubtless seem strange that I should undertake to treat men's vices and absurdities in the geometric [here = 'deductive'] style, so that where *they* •proclaim various things to be *empty, absurd, and horrible* I aim to •prove rigorously that those things are *contrary to reason*.

My reason •for my procedure• is this: nothing that happens in Nature can be attributed to any *defect* in it; for •Nature is always the same—•the laws and rules of Nature that govern all events are the same at every place and every time, which is to say that •Nature's excellence and power of acting are everywhere the same. So our way of *understanding* the nature of anything, no matter what it is, must also be uniform; specifically, it must be through the universal laws and rules of Nature. •And it is never appropriate to throw aside the attempt to *understand*, and instead rail against things that happen as *wrong*, as *mishaps* or *defects* in the natural order•. So the affects of hate, anger, envy etc., considered in themselves, follow from the same necessity and force of Nature as other particular things. And therefore they •can be assigned to certain causes through which they are understood, and •have certain properties that are as worth knowing about as are the properties of other things that we find more attractive. So I shall treat the nature and powers of the affects, and the power of the mind over them, by the same method I used in Parts I and II in

treating of God and the mind, approaching human actions and appetites in the way I would approach questions about lines, planes, and bodies. [In Spinoza's usage, an 'appetite' is a conscious or unconscious desire; he reserves 'desire' for the conscious ones.]

## Definitions and Postulates

D1: I call a cause 'adequate' if its effect can be clearly and distinctly perceived through it. I call it 'partial' or 'inadequate' if its effect cannot be understood through it alone.

D2: I say that we 'act' when something happens, in us or outside us, of which we are the adequate cause—that is (by D1) when something happens that follows from our nature, and can be clearly and distinctly understood through it alone. On the other hand, I say that we are 'acted on' when something happens in us. . . of which we are a *partial* cause.

D3: By 'affect' I understand •states of a body by which its power of acting is increased or lessened, helped or hindered, and also •the ideas of these states. Thus, if we can be the adequate cause of any of these states, the affect in question is what I call an 'action'; otherwise it is a 'passion' [= 'passive state'].

Postulate 1: A human body can be in many states in which its power of acting is increased or lessened, and also in others which render its power of acting neither greater nor less. This postulate or axiom rests on postulate P1 and lemmas L5 and L7 ·in the physical interlude· after <sup>II</sup>13.

Postulate 2: While a human body undergoes many changes it can retain impressions or traces of objects ·that it has interacted with· (on this see postulate P5 between <sup>II</sup>13 and <sup>I</sup>14); and consequently it can retain the same images of things. (For the definition of 'image' see the note on <sup>II</sup>17.)

## Propositions

**1: Our mind ·actively· does certain things and ·passively· undergoes other things; specifically, in having adequate ideas it necessarily does certain things, and in having inadequate ideas it necessarily undergoes other things.**

[The demonstration of this is needlessly difficult. It rests on understanding 'Idea x is adequate in (or: relative to) mind y' to mean 'Idea x occurs in mind y, and its causes also occur wholly in y'. That easily yields the result that a mind is active with respect to its adequate ideas and at least partly passive with respect to its inadequate ideas. Spinoza's version does bring out the important point that *every* idea is adequate relative to God's mind.]

**Corollary:** A mind is more liable to passions the more it has inadequate ideas, and more active the more it has adequate ideas.

**2: A body cannot cause a mind to think, and a mind cannot cause a body to be in motion or at rest or in any other state (if there are any others).**

All modes of thinking have for a cause God-considered-as-thinking and not God-considered-as-having-A where A is any other attribute (by <sup>II</sup>6). So what causes a mind to think is some detail of the realm of thought and not of extension, that is (by <sup>II</sup>D1), it is not the body. This was the first point. [The argument for the second half of **2** is strictly analogous to that: the motion and rest of a body must be caused by God-considered-as-extended, and thus not caused by the mind.]

**Note on 2:** These things are more clearly understood from what I said in the note on <sup>II</sup>7, namely that a mind and the

·corresponding· body are one and the same thing conceived under different attributes. The result is that there is just *one* natural order or connection of events, whether Nature is conceived under this attribute or that; so the order of actions and passions of our body naturally corresponds with the order of actions and passions of our mind. This is also evident from my way of demonstrating <sup>II</sup>12.

But although there is no real room for doubt about these points, I don't expect people to be willing to consider them fairly unless I confirm them by experience. ·That is because· men are so firmly convinced that the body moves and stops moving at the mind's command, and that it does a great many things that depend only on the mind's will and its skill in thinking. ·This firm conviction is unreasonable, because· no-one has yet determined *what a body can do*—that is, experience hasn't yet taught anyone what a body can do •purely through the laws of physics and what ·if anything· a body can do only if it is •acted on by a mind. For no-one has yet come to know the structure of the ·human· body so accurately that he could explain all its functions—not to mention that many things are observed in the lower animals that far surpass human ingenuity, and that sleepwalkers do a great many things in their sleep that they wouldn't venture to do when awake. This shows well enough that the body itself, simply from the laws of its own ·physical· nature, can do many things that its mind is amazed by!

Again, no-one knows *how* the mind moves the body, or in how many ways it can make it move, or how fast. So when men say that this or that action of the body 'arises from the mind, which rules over the body', they don't know what they are saying. All they communicate in their fine-sounding words is an admission that •they are ignorant of the true cause of that action and that •they do not wonder at it!

But they will say that even if they don't know *how* the mind moves the body, they still know by experience [i] *that* it does so, i.e. that if a human mind couldn't think the ·corresponding· body couldn't act. And then they know by experience [ii] that only the mind can decide whether a man shall speak or be silent, and other such things that they therefore believe depend on the mind's decision.

I. As far as the first ·objection· is concerned, I reply:

Doesn't experience also teach that if a body is inactive the ·corresponding· mind can't think? For when a body is at rest in sleep, the mind at the same time remains senseless, with no power of thinking such as it has when awake. And I think everyone has found from experience that the mind isn't always equally capable of thinking of the same object, and that the man's ability to think about this or that object depends on how capable the body is of having the image of the object.

They will say, of course, that the causes of buildings, paintings, and other such products of human skill can't be stated purely in terms of the laws of physics; a human body—they will say—couldn't build a temple if it weren't pushed and guided by the ·corresponding· mind.

But I have already shown that they *don't know* what a body can do, or what can be explained purely through its physical nature, and that they do know from experience that many things happen through the laws of ·material· Nature alone which they would never have thought could happen without the direction of the mind—such as the things sleepwalkers do in their sleep, which amaze them after they have woken up.

Bear in mind also the ·astonishingly complex· *structure* of the human body, which in the ingenuity of its construction far surpasses anything made by human skill; not to mention

the fact (shown above) that Nature produces infinitely many things under *each* of its attributes.

**II.** As for the second objection, human affairs would of course go better if it *were* equally in a man's power to be silent or to speak! But experience teaches all too plainly that men have nothing *less* in their power than their tongues, and can do nothing *less* than moderate their appetites.

That is why most men believe that the only things we do *freely* are the ones toward which we have a weak inclination (because desires for those things can be lessened by the memory of something else that is relevant), and that we aren't at all free in doing things toward which we are strongly drawn, because those inclinations can't be damped down by the memory of something else. But nothing would prevent them from believing that we are free in *everything* we do if they hadn't found by experience that we do many things we afterwards regret, and that often we see the better and follow the worse (namely when we are conflicted, having contrary affects).

So the infant thinks that he freely wants the milk, the angry child that he freely wants vengeance, and the timid one that he freely wants to flee. The drunkard think it is from a free decision of the mind that he says things which when he sobers up he regrets having said. So the madman, the chatterbox, the child, and a great many people of this kind believe they speak from a free decision of the mind, when really they cannot contain their impulse to speak.

So experience itself, no less clearly than reason, teaches that men think they are free because they are conscious of their own actions and ignorant of the causes that make them act as they do, and that the decisions of the mind are nothing but the appetites themselves, so they vary as the disposition of the body varies. Everyone governs all his behaviour on the basis of his affects; someone who is

conflicted, having contrary affects, doesn't know what he wants; and someone who is not moved by any affect is very easily driven here and there.

All these things, indeed, show clearly that the decision of the mind and the appetite and physical drive of the body naturally exist together—or, rather, they are one and the same thing, which we label differently according to the context. We say that we *decide* to do something when we are thinking about and explaining the event through the attribute of thought; and we say that something *makes* us do it do it when we are thinking about it—the very same event—under the attribute of extension and explaining it in terms of physics, i.e. the laws of motion and rest. This will be still more clearly evident from what I shall have to say shortly.

First, there is something else I particularly wish to note here. We couldn't do anything from a decision of the mind unless we recollected it; for example, we can't speak a word unless we recollect it. And everyone knows that it is not up to the mind to decide freely whether to recollect a thing or to forget it! That is why the mind's freely exercised power is restricted by the believers in such freedom to deciding, given that we *do* recollect something, whether to be silent or to speak it.

But even this very restricted theory of mental freedom is based on an *impression* of freedom that we know can't be trusted. When we dream that we speak, we *think* we speak from a free decision of the mind—and yet we don't speak at all; or if we do it is from a spontaneous [here = 'involuntary'] motion of the body. . . .

So I should like to know: Are there in the mind two kinds of decisions—fantasizing ones in dreams and free ones when we are awake? And if you don't want to carry this madness that far, you must admit that this decision of

the mind that is believed to be free isn't marked off in any way that the imagination or the memory can detect. In fact, there is nothing to it except the affirmation that the idea necessarily involves just because it is an idea (see **I49**). So these decisions of the mind arise by the same necessity as the ideas of things that actually exist; and those who think they speak or are silent or do anything from a free decision of the mind, are dreaming with their eyes open.

**3: A mind's actions arise from adequate ideas alone; its passions depend on inadequate ideas alone.**

... Insofar as a mind has inadequate ideas (by **1**) it is acted on. Therefore, the actions of a mind follow from adequate ideas alone; hence, a mind is acted on only because it has inadequate ideas.

**Note on 3:** We see, then, that a mind's passions—its passive states—all come from its having something that involves a *negation*—that is, its being a part of Nature that *cannot* be perceived clearly and distinctly through itself without bringing in other things that act upon it. . . .

**4: No thing can be destroyed except through an external cause.**

This proposition is self-evident. For the definition of any thing affirms the thing's essence and doesn't deny it; that is, it posits the thing's essence and doesn't take it away. So if we attend only to the thing itself and not to any external causes, we shan't be able to find in it anything that could destroy it.

**5: If one thing can destroy another, those two things are of a contrary nature—that is, they cannot be in the same subject.**

If they could agree with one another or be in the same subject at once, then that subject could contain something that could destroy it, which (by **4**) is absurd.

**6: Each thing, as far as it can by its own power, tries to stay in existence.**

Particular things are modes by which [= 'ways in which'] God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way (by the corollary to **I25**)—that is (by **I34**) things that express in a certain and determinate way God's power, by which God exists and acts. And no thing has in itself anything by which it can be destroyed or which can take its existence away (by **4**). On the contrary, each thing is opposed to everything that can take its existence away (by **5**). Therefore each thing tries, as far as it can through its own resources, to stay in existence.

[Very often, starting with the next proposition, Spinoza writes of 'effort' and of what a thing 'tries' to do. In his Latin these are expressed by the noun *conatus* and the related verb *conatur*. That link can be preserved in English by 'striving' and 'strive', but 'effort' and 'try' read better. Still, the link should not be forgotten.]

**7: The effort by which each thing tries to stay in existence is nothing but the actual essence of the thing.**

From the essence of each thing some things necessarily follow (by **I36**), and things can produce *only* what follows necessarily from their nature (by **I29**). So the power of each thing—i.e. the effort by which it (either alone or with others) does anything or tries to do anything—i.e. (by **6**) the power or effort by which it tries to stay in existence—is nothing but the actual essence of the thing itself.

**8: The effort by which each thing tries to stay in existence involves no finite time, but an indefinite time.**

If the effort by which a thing tries to stay in existence involved a limited time which fixed how long the thing would last, then that very power by which the thing



exists would also imply that it couldn't exist *after* that limited time, and it would have to be destroyed. But (by 4) this is absurd. So the effort by which a thing exists involves no definite time. On the contrary, since (by 4) it will always continue to exist through the same power by which it now exists, unless it is destroyed by an *external* cause, this effort involves indefinite time.

**9: Having clear and distinct ideas and also having confused ones, a mind tries for an indefinite length of time to stay in existence and it is conscious of this effort that it makes.**

The essence of the mind is constituted by adequate and by inadequate ideas (as I have shown in 3). So (by 7) it tries to stay in existence both as a possessor of inadequate ideas and as a possessor of adequate ones; and it does this (by 8) for an indefinite length of time. But since the mind (by <sup>II</sup>23) is necessarily conscious of itself through ideas of the body's states, it (by 7) is conscious of its effort.

**Note on 9:** When this effort is related only to the mind, it is called 'will', but when it is related to mind and body together it is called 'appetite'. This *appetite*, therefore, is nothing but *the very essence of the man*, from whose nature there necessarily follow the things that promote his survival. And so the man is caused to do those things.

Between *appetite* and *desire* there is no difference, except that men are usually said to have 'desires' when they are conscious of their appetite. So 'desire' can be defined as 'appetite together with consciousness of it'.

From all this, then, it is clear that we don't try for or will or want or desire anything because we judge it to be good; on the contrary, we judge something to be good because we try for it, will it, want it, and desire it.

**10: An idea that excludes the existence of our body cannot be in our mind, but is contrary to it.**

Whatever can destroy our body can't be in it (by 5), and so the idea of this thing can't. . . (by <sup>II</sup>11 and <sup>II</sup>13) be in our mind. On the contrary, since (by <sup>II</sup>11 and <sup>II</sup>13) the first thing that constitutes the essence of a mind is the idea of an actually existing body, the first and principal tendency of the effort of our mind (by 7) is to affirm the existence of our body. And so an idea that denies the existence of our body is contrary to our mind.

**11: The idea of anything that increases or lessens, helps or hinders, our body's power of acting also increases or lessens, helps or hinders, our mind's power of thinking.**

This proposition is evident from <sup>II</sup>7 and from <sup>II</sup>14.

**Note on 10 and 11:** We see, then, that the mind can undergo great changes, and pass now to a greater, now to a lesser perfection. These passions, indeed, explain to us the affects of pleasure and unpleasure. [Translators have rendered the Latin words *laetitia* and *tristitia* as 'joy' and 'sadness', as 'pleasure' and 'pain', and in other ways. Spinoza means them to mark the fundamental absolutely general difference between (emotionally) up and down, good and bad, pleasure and its opposite; 'joy' is too strong and specific for the former, and 'sadness' and 'pain' are too specific and strong for the latter. The best choice seems to be 'unpleasure'—a good English word, which has been used in translating Freud's *Unlust*; his *Lust/Unlust* dichotomy is not unlike Spinoza's *laetitia/tristitia*, and is used for it in a standard German translation of the *Ethics*.] By 'pleasure', therefore, I shall always mean: *the passion by which a mind passes to a greater perfection*. And by 'unpleasure' I shall mean *the passion by which it passes to a lesser perfection*. When the affect of pleasure is thought of in terms of the mind and body at once, I call it *titillatio* or 'cheerfulness', and

when unpleasure is thought of in that way I call it ‘pain’ or ‘sadness’. [*Titillatio* means, literally, the action of tickling someone.]

But it should be noted that *titillatio* and pain are ascribed to a man when one part of him is affected more than the rest, whereas cheerfulness and sadness are ascribed to him when all are equally affected.

Next, I have explained in the note on **9** what desire is, and these three—pleasure, unpleasure, and desire—are the only primary affects that I acknowledge. For I shall show that the rest arise from these three. But before continuing I want to explain **10** more fully here, so that you can clearly understand how one idea can be contrary to another.

In the note on **II17** I showed that •the idea constituting the essence of a mind involves the existence of the •corresponding• body so long as the body itself exists. Next, from what I showed in the corollary to **II7** and the note on it, it follows that •the present existence of our mind depends only on its involving the actual existence of the body. Finally, I showed that •the power of a mind by which it imagines things and recollects them also depends on its involving the actual existence of the •corresponding• body (see **II17** and **II18** and the note on it).

From these things it follows that a mind’s present existence and its power of imagining are taken away as soon as it stops affirming the present existence of the •corresponding• body. But (by **4**) a mind can’t cause itself to stop affirming the existence of the body, and it can’t be caused to do so by the body’s ceasing to exist. (Why? Because (by **II6**) the cause of the mind’s *affirming* the body’s existence is not the body’s *starting* to exist; so by the same reasoning it isn’t caused to *stop affirming* the body’s existence by the body’s *ceasing* to exist.) By **II7**, the mind could cease to affirm the body’s existence only if caused to do so by another idea that excluded the present existence of our body, *and consequently*

*of our mind*; such an idea would be contrary to the idea that constitutes our mind’s essence.

**12: A mind tries its utmost to imagine the things that increase or aid the •corresponding•body’s power of acting.**

So long as •a human body is in a state that involves the nature of an external body, •the •corresponding• mind will regard that external body as present (by **II17**), that is (by the note on **II17**), it will imagine it; and consequently (by **II7**) so long as •a human mind does that •the •corresponding• human body will be in a state that involves the nature of that external body. Hence, so long as a mind imagines the things that increase or aid our body’s power of acting, the body is in states that *do* increase or aid its power of acting (see Postulate 1), and consequently (by **11**) the mind’s power of thinking is increased or aided. Therefore (by **6** or **9**) the mind tries its utmost to imagine those things.

**13: When a mind imagines things that lessen or hinder the body’s power of acting, it tries its utmost to recollect things that exclude their existence.**

So long as a mind imagines •anything of this kind, the power both of it and of the •corresponding• body is lessened or hindered (as I demonstrated in **12**); but the mind will continue to imagine this thing until it imagines something else that excludes the thing’s present existence (by **II17**); which means that the power of both mind and body is lessened or hindered until the mind imagines something else that excludes the existence of •this thing. So (by **9**) the mind will try its utmost to imagine or recollect that other thing.

**Corollary:** A mind avoids imagining things that lessen or hinder its power or that of the corresponding body.

**Note on 13:** From this we understand clearly what love and hate are. Love is just *pleasure with the accompanying idea of an external cause*, and hate is just *unpleasure with the accompanying idea of an external cause*. We see, then, that someone who loves will be bound to try to be in the presence of and to preserve the thing he loves; and on the other hand someone who hates will try to remove and destroy the thing he hates. All this will be discussed more fully later.

**14: If a mind has once had two affects at once, then afterwards when it has one of them it will also have the other.**

If a human body has once been affected by two bodies at once, then afterwards when the corresponding mind imagines one of them, it will immediately recollect the other also (by <sup>II</sup>18). But the imaginings of the mind indicate the affects of our body more than they do the nature of external bodies (by the second corollary to <sup>II</sup>16). Therefore, if the body—and consequently the mind (see D3)—has once had two affects at once, then afterwards when the mind has one of them it will also have the other.

**15: Anything can be the accidental cause of pleasure, unpleasure, or desire.**

[Spinoza's demonstration of this depends on 14. His point is that anything at all may be involved in an affect x which *happens to accompany* a different affect y of pleasure, unpleasure, or desire. Even if for you x is in itself neutral, neither up nor down, neither increasing nor lessening your power, it may through this association come to be connected in your mind with pleasure, unpleasure, or desire.]

**Corollary:** We can come to love or hate something because it has been associated for us with pleasure or unpleasure, even if we know that the thing wasn't the efficient cause of our pleasure or unpleasure.

[Spinoza offers a demonstration of this. Its relation to what has gone before is pretty obvious.]

**Note on 15:** From this we understand how it can happen that we love or hate some things without any cause known to us, but only (as they say) from sympathy or antipathy. A related phenomenon: some objects give us pleasure or unpleasure only because they somewhat *resemble* objects that usually give us these affects, as I shall show in 16. . . .

**16: We love or hate a thing x that we imagine to be LIKE an object y that usually affects the mind with pleasure or unpleasure, loving or hating it just because of that resemblance, even if the respect in which x resembles y has no part in y's causing those affects.**

[The demonstration of this is brief but hard to follow. It relies in a fairly obvious way on 14 and 15.]

**17: If we imagine that a thing that usually gives us an affect of unpleasure is like something else that usually gives us an equally great affect of pleasure, we shall hate the former thing and at the same time love it.**

[Spinoza's demonstration of this amounts to something fairly obvious: the hate is guaranteed by the note on 13, and the love by 16.]

**Note on 17:** This constitution of the mind that arises from two contrary affects is called 'vacillation of mind'; it is strictly comparable with the vacillation with respect to the imagination that I spoke of in the note on <sup>II</sup>44. I didn't say back there, but do say now, that the latter kind of vacillation can also be called 'doubt', for it and doubt differ from one another only in degree.

Notice that in **17** I have explained how these ·affect-·vacillations of mind can arise from causes that are the *direct* cause of one affect and the *accidental* cause of the other. I did this so that they could more easily be understood in terms of what had gone before, not because I deny that such vacillations mostly arise from an object that is the efficient ·and direct· cause of each affect. For a human body (by postulate P1 just before **¶14**) is composed of a great many individuals of different natures, and so (by **A**” after **¶13**) it can be affected in many different ways by one and the same body. And on the other hand, because one and the same thing can be in many different states, it will also be able to bring about many different affects in one and the same part of the body. From this we can easily conceive that one and the same object can be the cause of many and contrary affects.

**18: A man gets the same affect of pleasure or unpleasure from the image of a past or future thing as from the image of a present thing.**

So long as a man has the image of a thing, he will regard the thing as present even if it doesn't exist (by **¶17**) and its corollary); and all there is to his imagining it as past or future is his joining its image to the image of a past or future time (see the note on **¶47**). The image of the thing is *in itself* the same, whether it is related to the past, the future, or the present; that is (by the second corollary to **¶16**), the constitution of the body—i.e. *the affect*—is the same, whether the image is of a past thing, a future thing, or a present thing. And so, the affect of pleasure or unpleasure is the same, no matter what time is involved.

**First note on 18:** I call a thing past or future here insofar as we

have been affected by it or will be affected by it.

For example, insofar as we

have seen it or will see it,

Or insofar as it

has refreshed us or will refresh us, or

has injured us or will injure us.

When we imagine the thing in this way, we affirm its existence, that is, our body doesn't have any affect that excludes the thing's existence. And so (by **¶17**) our body has the image of the thing in the same way as if it itself were present. However, people who have had much experience generally vacillate when they think about events as future or past, and are usually in doubt about event's outcome (see the note on **¶44**); and for that reason the affects arising from similar images of things are not so constant, but are generally disturbed by the images of other things until the person becomes more certain of the event's outcome.

**Second note on 18:** From what I just have said, we understand what hope and fear, confidence and despair, gladness and regret are. [‘Regret’ is used to render a phrase of Spinoza's whose normal meaning is ‘remorse’, meaning a guilty regret for something one has done.] For hope is just an inconstant pleasure that has arisen from the image of a future or past event whose outcome we doubt, whereas fear is an inconstant unpleasure that has arisen from the image of a doubtful event. If the doubt involved in these affects is removed, •hope becomes •confidence, and •fear becomes •despair—that is, a pleasure or unpleasure arising from the image of a thing we feared or hoped for. Finally, gladness is a pleasure that has arisen from the image of a past thing whose outcome we had doubted, while regret is the corresponding unpleasure.

**19: Someone who imagines that what he loves is destroyed will have unpleasure, whereas someone who imagines it to be still in existence will have pleasure.**

The mind tries its utmost to imagine things that increase or aid the body's power of acting (by **12**), that is (by the note on **13**), things that it loves. But the imagination is helped to imagine a thing *x* by whatever posits the existence of *x*, and hindered by whatever excludes the existence *x* (by **17**). Therefore, the images of things that posit the existence of a loved thing help the mind's effort to imagine that thing, that is (by the note on **11**), give the mind pleasure. Whereas images that exclude the existence of a loved thing hinder that effort of the mind, that is (by the note on **11**), give the mind unpleasure.

**20: Someone who imagines that what he hates is destroyed will have pleasure.**

A mind (by **13**) tries to imagine things that exclude the existence of things by which the corresponding body's power of acting is lessened or hindered, that is (by the note on **13**), it tries to imagine things that exclude the existence of things it hates. So the image of a thing that excludes the existence of what the mind hates helps this effort of the mind, that is (by the note on **11**), it gives the mind pleasure. So someone who imagines that what he hates is destroyed will have pleasure.

**21: Someone who imagines what he loves to have pleasure or unpleasure will himself have pleasure or unpleasure; and each of those affects will be great in the lover in proportion as they are great in the object of his love.**

I have demonstrated in **19** that the images of things that posit the existence of a loved thing help the effort

by which the mind tries to imagine that thing. But pleasure posits the existence of the pleasurable thing, and the greater the pleasure the more it does this. For (by the note on **11**) pleasure is a transition to a greater perfection. So the image in the lover of the loved thing's pleasure helps his mind's effort, that is (by the note on **11**), gives him pleasure, which is great in proportion as the loved thing's affect is great. This was the first thing to be proved.

Next, any thing's unpleasure tends to its destruction, and the more so the greater the unpleasure that it has (by the note on **11**). So (by **19**) someone who imagines what he loves to have unpleasure will himself have unpleasure, which will be great in proportion as the loved thing's unpleasure is great.

**Note on 21:** This explains to us what pity is, We can define 'pity' as *unpleasure that has arisen from someone else's having been harmed*. I don't know what name we should give to the pleasure that arises from someone else's good. Next, love toward him who has done good to someone else I shall call 'favour', and hatred toward him who has done evil to someone else we shall call 'indignation'. [Spinoza uses the word *malum* equivalently to our adjective 'bad' and the noun-phrases 'thing that is bad'. We don't have one word for both roles except 'evil', which is really too strong in many of Spinoza's contexts. In this text, as a compromise, 'evil' is used for the noun and 'bad' for the adjective.]

Finally, it should be noted that we don't pity only things we have loved (as I showed in **21**). We will also pity one toward whom we have previously had no affect, provided that we judge him to be •like us (as I shall show below). Similarly, also we favour him who has benefited someone •like us, and are indignant at him who has injured someone •like us.

**22: If we imagine someone to give pleasure to something we love, we shall have love toward him. If on the other hand we imagine him to give that same thing unpleasure, we shall have hate toward him.**

Someone *x* who gives pleasure (or unpleasure) to something *y* that we love gives *us* pleasure (or unpleasure)... (by **21**). This pleasure (or unpleasure) of ours is accompanied by the idea of an external cause, namely our imagining of *x* as the cause of *y*'s affect. Therefore (by the note on **13**) if we imagine that someone gives pleasure (or unpleasure) to something we love, we shall have love (or hate) toward him.

**23: Someone who imagines what he hates to have unpleasure will himself have pleasure; whereas if he imagines it to have pleasure he will have unpleasure. Each of these affects will be great or small in proportion as its contrary is imagined to be great or small in the thing he hates.**

To the extent that a hated thing has unpleasure, it is destroyed; and the greater the unpleasure, the greater the destruction (by the note on **11**). Therefore (by **20**) someone who imagines a thing he hates to have unpleasure will himself have pleasure; and the greater the unpleasure he imagines the hated thing to have, the greater his own pleasure. This was the first point. Next, pleasure posits the existence of the pleasurable thing (by the note on **11**); and the more so, the greater the pleasure is conceived to be. So if someone imagines him whom he hates to have pleasure, this imagining (by **13**) will hinder his own effort to stay in existence. That is (by the note on **11**) someone who hates will have unpleasure, etc.

**Note on 23:** These affects can hardly be unmixed and without any conflict of mind. As I shall show in **27**, to the extent that one imagines a thing *like* oneself to have pleasure (or unpleasure), one must oneself have pleasure (or unpleasure). Hatred—my present topic—is a special case in which the relation between one person's affect and another's is the reverse of that.

**24: If we imagine someone to give pleasure to something that we hate, we shall have hate toward him also. On the other hand, if we imagine him to give unpleasure to that thing, we shall have love toward him.**

This proposition is demonstrated in the same way as **22**.

**Note on 24:** These and similar affects of hate are related to *envy* which, therefore, is simply *hate that disposes a man to be glad at another's ill fortune and displeased by his good fortune*.

**25: We try to affirm whatever we imagine to bring pleasure to ourselves or what we love. And we try to deny whatever we imagine brings unpleasure to ourselves or what we love.**

Whatever we imagine brings pleasure or unpleasure to what we love brings pleasure or unpleasure to us also (by **21**). But the mind (by **12**) tries its utmost to imagine things that bring us pleasure, that is (by **17**) and its corollary) to regard them as present; and on the other hand (by **13**) it tries to exclude the existence of things that bring us unpleasure. So we try to affirm whatever we imagine brings pleasure to ourselves or to what we love, and similarly with denial and unpleasure.

**26: We try to affirm whatever we imagine to bring unpleasure to what we hate, and we try to deny whatever we imagine to bring it pleasure.**

This proposition follows from **23**, as **25** follows from **21**.

**Note on 26:** From these propositions we see that it easily happens that a man thinks more highly than he should of himself and of what he loves, and less highly than he should of what he hates. Thinking too highly of oneself is called ‘pride’. It is a sort of *madness*, because the man dreams—with open eyes—that he can actually do all the things that he achieves only in his imagination; he regards them as real, and exults in them; and this continues for as long as he can’t imagine things that exclude the existence of these achievements and set limits to his power of acting.

Pride, therefore, is *pleasure born of the fact that a man thinks more highly of himself than he should*. Pleasure born of the fact that a man thinks more highly of someone else than he should is called ‘over-rating’, while pleasure that comes from thinking less highly of someone else than one should is called ‘scorn’. [Oddly, English has no one short idiomatic word that does what ‘over-rating’ is being made to do here.]

**27: If we imagine a thing like us, toward which we have previously had no affect, to have some affect, this gives us a similar affect.**

Images of things are states of the human body whose ideas represent external bodies as present to us (by the note on **II17**), that is (by **II16**), whose ideas involve the nature of our body *and* the present nature of the external body. So if the external body is like our body, then our idea of the external body will involve a state of our body like the state of the external body. Consequently, if we imagine someone like us to have

some affect, this imagining will express a state of our body that is like the affect in question. And so, by imagining a thing that is like us to have an affect, we have a similar affect ourselves. That supposes that we previously had no affect toward the thing or person in question. If we already hate a thing that is like us, then (by **23**) we shall have an affect *contrary* to its affect, not like it.

**Note on 27:** This imitation of the affects when related to unpleasure is called ‘pity’ (on which, see the note on **21**); when related to desire it is called ‘emulation’. So emulation is just *the desire we have for a thing because we imagine others like us to want it also*.

**First corollary:** If we imagine that someone toward whom we have had no affect gives pleasure to a thing like us, we shall have love toward him. On the other hand, if we imagine him to give it unpleasure, we shall have hate toward him.

This is demonstrated from **27** in the same way that **22** is demonstrated from **21**.

**Second corollary:** Pity is a form of unpleasure, but when we pity something our unpleasure can’t make us hate the thing we pity.

If we could hate it because of our unpleasure, then (by **23**) we would have pleasure in its unpleasure; but it has been stipulated that what we have is *unpleasure*.

**Third corollary:** We try our utmost to free a thing we pity from its suffering.

Something (x) that gives unpleasure to something that we pity gives it to us also (by **27**). And so (by **13**) we shall try to think of whatever can take away x’s existence; that is (by the note on **9**), we shall want to destroy it, that is, shall be causally set up to destroy it. And so we try to free the thing we pity from its suffering.

**Note on the third corollary:** This will or appetite to do good, born of our pity for the thing we want to help, is called ‘benevolence’. So benevolence is just *a desire born of pity*. As for love and hate toward him who has done good or done harm to a thing we imagine to be like us, see the note on **21**.

**28: We try to further the occurrence of whatever we imagine will lead to pleasure, and to avert or destroy what we imagine will lead to unpleasure.**

We try our utmost to imagine anything that we imagine will lead to pleasure (by **12**), that is (by **II17**), we try our utmost to regard such things as present, that is, as actually existing. But the mind’s effort or power of thinking is equal to and of the same nature as the body’s effort or power of acting (as clearly follows from the corollaries to **II7** and **II11**). Therefore, we try absolutely—not just try mentally or try physically, but all-out in-every-way *try*—to bring it about that it exists. . . . This was the first point.

[The demonstration of the ‘second point’ makes it a special case of the ‘first point’. By **20** the destruction of what we think will lead to unpleasure brings us pleasure; so the endeavour to destroy such things is *itself* part of the endeavour to achieve what we think will bring pleasure.]

**29: We shall try to do whatever we imagine men to look on with pleasure, and shall be averse to doing what we imagine men are averse to.** [Spinoza adds a footnote saying: Here and in what follows, I’m talking about men toward whom we do not have any affect.]

When we imagine men to love (hate) something, we love (hate) it too (by **27**), that is (by the note on **13**), we come to have pleasure (unpleasure) in the thing’s presence. And so (by **28**) we shall try to do whatever

we imagine men to love, or to look on with pleasure, etc..

**Note on 29:** This effort to do (or omit doing) something solely to please men is called ‘ambition’, especially when we try so eagerly to please the mob that our actions (or failures to act) bring harm to ourselves or to others. In other cases, the effort is usually called ‘human kindness’. When someone acts in an attempt to please us, the pleasure we have in thinking of his action I call ‘praise’. On the other hand, the unpleasure with which we are averse to his action I call ‘blame’.

**30: If someone has done something that he imagines brings pleasure to others, he will have pleasure accompanied by the idea of himself as cause, that is, he will regard himself with pleasure. If on the other hand he has done something that he imagines brings unpleasure to others, he will regard himself with unpleasure.**

Someone who imagines that he brings pleasure (unpleasure) to others will thereby (by **27**) have pleasure (unpleasure) himself. But since (by **II19** and **II23**) a man is conscious of *himself* through the states that make him act, this man will have, along with his pleasure (unpleasure), a consciousness of *himself* as the cause; which is to say that he will regard himself with pleasure (unpleasure).

**Note on 30:** By the note on **13**, love is pleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause, and hate is unpleasure accompanied also by the idea of an external cause; so the pleasure and unpleasure spoken of in **30** are kinds of love and hate. [Adapting an expansion of the rest of this paragraph, proposed by Curley:] But love and hate, considered simply as such, involve *only* the idea of an external cause; whereas in the case treated in **30** my love (hate) has not only an



external cause (the pleasure (unpleasure) of others), it also has an *internal* cause (namely, *myself* as the cause of the external cause, and thus as the cause of my love or hate). So I shall give these two special affects names of their own: I shall call pleasure accompanied by the idea of an internal cause 'love of esteem', and the corresponding unpleasure I shall call 'shame'. I mean when the pleasure or unpleasure arise from the man's thinking he is praised or blamed by others. If it doesn't come from that source, I shall call pleasure accompanied by the idea of an internal cause 'self-satisfaction', and the contrary unpleasure I shall call 'repentance'.

Next, because (by the corollary to <sup>II</sup>17) it can happen that the pleasure that someone imagines that he gives to others is only imaginary, and (by 25) everyone tries to imagine concerning himself whatever he imagines will give him pleasure, it can easily happen that someone who is universally disliked is proud of how much pleasure he gives (he thinks) to everyone.

**31: If we imagine that someone loves, desires or hates something that we ourselves love, desire, or hate, that will make us love, desire or hate it with greater constancy. But if we imagine that he is averse to what we love, or loves what we hate, then we shall undergo vacillation of mind.**

Our imagining that someone loves something is (by 27) enough on its own to get us to love the same thing; but if we *already* love it, this imagining provides a new cause for our love, by which it is further encouraged. So we shall love the thing with greater constancy. Next, our imagining someone to be averse to something will make us averse to it (by 27). But if at the same time we love the thing, then we shall both love

it and be averse to it, which is to say (see the note on 17) that we shall undergo vacillation of mind.

**Corollary:** From this and from 28 it follows that each of us tries his utmost to bring it about that everyone loves what *he* loves and hates what *he* hates. . . . **Note on: 31:** This effort to bring it about that everyone goes along with one's own loves and hates is really *ambition* (see the note on 29). And so we see that each of us, by his nature, wants others to live according to *his* temperament; when all alike want this, they are alike an obstacle to one another; and when all want to be praised or loved by all, they hate one another.

**32: If we imagine that someone enjoys something that only one person can possess, we shall try to bring it about that he does not possess it.**

Our imagining someone to enjoy something is (by 27 and its first corollary) enough to get us to love that thing and want to enjoy it. But in the present case where only one can possess the thing in question we imagine the other person's enjoyment of this thing as an obstacle to our own pleasure. Therefore (by 28) we shall try to stop him from possessing it.

**Note on 32:** We see, therefore, that for the most part human nature is so constituted that men pity the unfortunate and envy the fortunate; and (by 32) when x envies y, he does so with greater hate the more he (x) loves the thing he imagines y to possess. So we see that the property of human nature that makes men compassionate also makes them envious and ambitious.

Finally, if we consult experience we'll find that *it* teaches all these things, especially if we attend to early childhood. For we find that children, because their bodies are continually in a state of equilibrium (so to speak), laugh or cry simply because they see others laugh or cry. And they want to

imitate whatever they see others do. And, finally, they want for themselves everything that they imagine others find pleasing. . .

**33: When we love a thing that is like ourselves, we try our utmost to bring it about that it loves us in return.**

We try our utmost to imagine, above everything else, the thing we love (by **12**). So if a thing is like us, we shall try to give it pleasure above all others (by **29**); which is to say that we shall try our utmost to bring it about that the thing we love has pleasure accompanied by the idea of ourselves ·as cause·, that is (by the note on **13**), that it loves us in return.

**34: The greater the ·favourable· affect we imagine a thing we love to have toward us, the more we shall exult**

[*gloriabimur* = ‘congratulate ourselves’, ‘gloat’, ‘silently boast’ or the like].

We try our utmost (by **33**) to get a thing we love to us back, that is (by the note on **13**) to bring it about that a thing we love should have pleasure accompanied by the idea of ourselves ·as cause·. So the greater the pleasure we imagine a loved thing to have on our account, the more this effort of ours is helped, that is (by **11** and the note on it), the greater the pleasure we have. But when we have pleasure because we have given pleasure to someone else who is like us, we regard *ourselves* with pleasure (by **30**). Therefore, the greater the ·favourable· affect with which we imagine a thing we love to have toward us, the greater the pleasure with which we shall regard ourselves—which is to say (by the note on **30**), the more we shall exult at being esteemed.

**35: If someone imagines that an object of his love x is united with someone else y by a bond of friendship as close as, or closer than, the bond that HE used to have exclusively with x, he will hate x and envy y.**

If someone x loves someone else y, the more x imagines that y loves him the more he will exult at being esteemed (by **34**), that is (by the note on **30**), the more pleasure he will have. And so (by **28**) x will try his utmost to imagine y to be bound to him as closely as possible. This effort—this appetite—is •encouraged if he imagines someone else to want what he does (by **31**). But in the case now in question, this effort—this appetite—is •hindered by the image of y accompanied by the image of someone z with whom y is united. So (by the note on **11**) x will have *unpleasure*, accompanied by the idea of y as a cause, together with the image of z; that is (by the note on **13**), x will have hate toward y whom he loves, and at the same time toward z (by the corollary to **15**), whom x will envy because of the pleasure z takes in y whom x loves (by **23**).

**Note on 35:** This hatred toward a thing we love, combined with envy, is called ‘jealousy’, which is therefore just *a vacillation of mind born of love and hatred together, accompanied by the idea of someone else who is envied*. Moreover, this hatred the jealous man has toward the object of his love y will be greater in proportion to the pleasure he usually derived from the love returned to him by y, and also in proportion to the affect he has toward z, the person with whom he imagines y has united himself. For if the jealous man hates z, he will thereby hate the object of his love y (by **24**), because he imagines that y gets pleasure from what he (the jealous man) hates, and also (by the note on **15**) because he is forced to join the image of the object of his love to the image of the object of his hate.

This latter reason is found mostly in love toward a woman. For a man who imagines that the woman he loves has sexually surrendered herself to someone else will not only have unpleasure because his own desire is blocked, but will also be disgusted by her because he is forced to picture her in contact with the private parts (including the excretory parts) of the other person. To this, finally, is added the fact that she no longer gives the jealous man the warm welcome she used to offer him; and this saddens him too, as I now show.

**36: Someone who recollects something by which he was once pleased wants to possess it in the same circumstances as when he first was pleased by it.**

Whatever a man sees together with something that pleased him will (by **15**) be the accidental cause of pleasure to him. And so (by **28**) he will want to possess it all, together with the thing that pleased him; which is to say that he will want to possess the thing with all the same attendant circumstances as when it first gave him pleasure.

**Corollary:** If the lover has found that one of those circumstances is lacking, he will have unpleasure.

[A demonstration is given, but hardly needed.]

**Note on the corollary to 36:** When this unpleasure concerns the absence ·not of an attendant circumstance, but· of what we love, it is called ‘longing’.

**37: The desire that arises from unpleasure or pleasure, and from hatred or love, is greater in proportion as the affect is great.**

Unpleasure lessens or hinders a man’s power of acting (by the note on **11**), that is (by **7**), it lessens or hinders the effort by which he tries to stay in existence; so it is *contrary* to this effort (by **5**), and all a man tries

to do when he has unpleasure is to try to remove it. But (by the definition of ‘unpleasure’ ·on page 55·) the greater •the unpleasure, the more of •the man’s power of acting that it is opposed to; and so the greater •the unpleasure, the greater •the power of acting that he will employ in trying to remove it; that is (by the note on **9**), the greater the desire or appetite with which he will try to remove the unpleasure.

Next, since pleasure (by the note on **11** again) increases or helps a man’s power of acting, it is easily demonstrated in the same way that the man who has pleasure wants nothing but to keep it going, and wants this more intensely the greater the pleasure is. Finally, since hate and love are themselves affects of unpleasure or of pleasure, it follows in the same way that the effort, appetite, or desire that arises from hate or love will be greater as the hate and love are greater.

**38: If someone begins to hate a thing he has loved, so that his love is completely extinguished, then... he will have a greater hate for it than if he had never loved it; and the greater his earlier love was, the greater his hate will now be.**

If x loves y and then starts to hate y, more of his appetites will be hindered ·by this hate· than if he had not loved y in the first place. For love is a pleasure (by the note on **13**) which x (by **28**) tries his utmost to preserve; and (by the note on **13**) he does this by regarding y as present and by giving y as much pleasure as he can (by **21**). This effort (by **37**) is great in proportion to the greatness of the love x has for y, as is x’s effort to bring it about that y loves him in return (see **33**). But, by the corollary to **13** and **23**,

x's hatred toward y hinders these efforts; therefore, the lover x will (by the note on 11) get unpleasure from this cause also, and the more so as his love was greater. That is, apart from the unpleasure that was the cause of x's hate, another unpleasure arises from his having loved y. And consequently he will regard y with greater unpleasure—that is (by the note on 13), he will have a greater hatred for y—than if he had not loved y. And this hate will be the greater as the love was greater.

**39: If someone hates someone else, he will try to do evil to him, ·i.e. to harm him·, unless he is afraid that this would bring a greater harm to himself; and the same mechanism brings it about that if someone loves someone else he will try to benefit him.**

To hate someone (by the note on 13) is to imagine him as the cause of one's unpleasure; and so (by 28), someone who hates someone will try to remove or destroy him. But if he is afraid that that would lead to something more unpleasant—that is, more harmful—for himself, and thinks he can avoid this by not harming the one he hates in the way he was planning, he will want to abstain from doing that harm (by 28 again)—and (by 37) he will put more effort into this abstention than there was in his drive to do harm. So this greater effort will prevail, as 39 says.

The second part of this demonstration proceeds in the same way.

**Note on 39:** By 'good' here ·in this book· I understand every kind of pleasure and whatever leads to it, and especially what satisfies any kind of longing. By 'evil' ·I understand here· every kind of unpleasure, and especially what frustrates longing. For I have shown above (in the note on 9) that we

don't want a thing because we judge it to be good, but on the contrary we call it 'good' because we want it; and so what we are averse to we call 'evil' ·or 'bad·.

So each person on the basis of his own affect judges (evaluates) what is good or bad, better or worse, best or worst. The greedy man judges wealth as best and poverty as worst. The ambitious man wants public acclaim more than anything else, and fears disgrace above all. To the envious man nothing is more agreeable than another's unhappiness, and nothing more burdensome than another's happiness. And so each one judges a thing good or bad, useful or useless, on the basis of his own affect, .

The affect by which a man is so disposed that he doesn't do what he would like to do, and does do what he would prefer not to do, is called 'timidity', which is therefore just *fear that disposes a man to put up with an evil in order to avoid a greater evil that he thinks is threatening* (see 28). If the feared greater evil is shame, then the man's timidity is called his 'sense of shame'. Finally, if the desire to avoid a future evil is hindered by timidity regarding *another* evil, so that the man doesn't know *what* he would rather do, then his fear is called 'consternation', particularly if each evil he fears is of the greatest.

**40: Someone who imagines he is hated by someone, and thinks he has given the other no cause for hate, will hate the other in return.**

Someone x who imagines someone y to have hatred ·toward something· will thereby also have hatred (by 27), that is (by the note on 13), will have unpleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause. But in the present case the only cause x imagines for this unpleasure of his is the person y who hates him. So from imagining himself to be hated by y he will come

to have unpleasure accompanied by the idea of y, which is to say that he will hate y in return.

**Note on 40:** Another source of this returning of hatred for hatred is the fact that hatred is followed by a effort to harm the person who is hated (by 39). Because of that, a person who imagines that someone hates him will imagine the other to be the cause of harm, that is of unpleasure. So he will have unpleasure—specifically, *fear*—accompanied by the idea of the hater as its cause, which is to say that he will hate the person in return. (If the man imagines he has given just cause for the other's hatred, he will suffer shame (by 30 and the note on it). But this rarely happens (by 25).)

**First corollary:** Someone who imagines one he loves to have hate toward him will be tormented by love and hate together. [Spinoza explains why; it is pretty obvious.]

**Second corollary:** If someone imagines that another person toward whom he has previously had no affect has done him some harm, out of hatred, he will immediately try to return the same harm.

If x imagines y to hate him, he will hate y in return (by 40), and (by 26) will try to think of everything that can bring unpleasure to y, and will be eager to bring it to him (by 39). But in the present case the first thing x imagines of this kind is the harm that he imagines y has done to him. So he will immediately try to harm y in the same way.

**Note on the second corollary:** The effort to harm someone we hate is called 'anger'; and the effort to return a harm that has been done to us is called 'vengeance'.

**41: If someone imagines that someone loves him, and doesn't believe he has given any cause for this, he will love ·that person· in return.**

This is demonstrated in the same way as 40.

**Note on 41:** But if he believes that he has given just cause for this love, he will exult at being esteemed (by 30 and its note). This indeed happens rather frequently (by 25) and is the opposite of what I said happens when someone imagines that someone hates him (see the note on 40),

This reciprocal love, and the consequent (by 39) effort to benefit someone who loves us and tries (also by 39) to benefit us, is called 'gratitude'.

So it is evident that men are far more ready for vengeance than for returning benefits.

**Corollary:** Someone who imagines he is loved by someone he hates will be conflicted, having hate and love together.

This is demonstrated in the same way as the first corollary to 40.

**Note on corollary to 41:** But if the hate has prevailed, he will try to do evil to the person who loves him. This affect is called 'cruelty', especially if it is believed that the one who loves has given no ordinary cause for hatred.

**42: Someone who has benefited someone else—whether moved to do so by love or by the hope of esteem—will have unpleasure if he sees his benefit accepted in an ungrateful spirit.**

Someone who loves a thing like himself tries his utmost to be loved by it in return (by 33). So someone who has benefited someone else from love does this from a tenacious longing to be loved in return—that is (by 34) from the hope of esteem, which is pleasure; so (by 12) he will try his utmost to imagine this cause of esteem, regarding it as actually existing. But in the case in question he imagines something else that excludes the existence of this cause. So (by 19) he will have unpleasure.

**43: Hate is increased by being returned, but can be destroyed by love.**

Someone who imagines that someone he hates has hate toward him will feel a new hate (by 40) while the original hate continues. But if he imagines that the person he hates has love toward him, then to the extent that he imagines this he regards himself with pleasure (by 30) and tries to please the one he hates (by 29), that is (by 41) tries not to hate him and not to give him unpleasure. This effort (by 37) will be greater or lesser in proportion to the affect from which it arises. So if it is greater than his hate-caused effort to bring unpleasure to the thing he hates, then it will prevail over it and efface the hate from his mind.

**44: Hate completely conquered by love gives way to love, and the love is therefore greater than if hate had not preceded it.**

The proof of this proceeds in the same way as that of 38. For someone who begins to love a thing he has hated—that is, used to regard with unpleasure—has pleasure because he loves, and to this pleasure that love involves (see its definition in the note on 13) there is added a further pleasure arising from the fact that the effort to remove the hate-caused unpleasure is greatly helped by the accompaniment of the idea of the one he hated, ·who is now regarded· as a cause ·of pleasure·.

**Note on 44:** Although this is so, no-one will try to hate a thing. . . in order to have this greater pleasure ·when hate gives way to love·; that is, no-one will want to injure himself in the hope of recovering, or long to be sick in the hope of getting better! For everyone will always try to stay in existence and to avoid unpleasure as far as he can. If it

were conceivable that a man should want to hate someone in order afterwards to love him all the more, he would *always* want to hate him. For as the hate intensified, so would the love, and so he would always want his hate to become greater and greater. . . .

**45: If someone x imagines that someone y like himself hates a thing z that is also like himself (x) and that he (x) loves, he will hate that ·person· y.**

If y hates z, then z hates y in return (by 40); so x, who imagines that someone y hates z the object of x's love, thereby imagines z to have hate, which is unpleasure. And consequently (by 21) x has unpleasure which is accompanied by the idea of y regarded as the cause ·of this unpleasure·, which means (by the note on 13) that x will hate y.

**46: If ·someone has been given pleasure or unpleasure by someone of a class or nation different from his own, and ·this pleasure or unpleasure is accompanied by the idea of that person as its cause, with that person being thought of as belonging to that class or nation, then ·he will love or hate not only that person but everyone of the same class or nation.**

The demonstration of this is obvious from 16.

**47: The pleasure that arises from our imagining that a thing we hate is destroyed or harmed in some way is not devoid of some unpleasure.**

This is evident from 27. For to the extent that we imagine a thing like us to have unpleasure, we have it too.

**Note on 47:** This proposition can also be demonstrated from the corollary to <sup>II</sup>17. For as often as we recollect a thing—even if it doesn't actually exist—we still regard it as

present, and the body is in the same state as if the thing were present. So when a man's memory of a hated thing is strong, he is caused to regard it with unpleasure. For as long as the image of the thing still remains, this push toward unpleasure will remain also (though it maybe hindered by the memory of things that exclude the existence of the hated thing). And so the man has pleasure only to the extent that this push toward hatred is hindered.

That is how it comes about that the pleasure arising from the misfortune occurring to the thing we hate is repeated as often as we bring the thing to mind. For, as I have said, the aroused image of this thing involves the existence of the thing, and so it makes the man regard the thing with the same unpleasure as he used to have back at the time when it existed. But because the man in question has joined to the image of this hated thing other images that exclude its existence, this push toward unpleasure is immediately hindered, and the man has pleasure again. This happens as often as this sequence of events is repeated.

This is also the cause of men's rejoicing when they recall some evil now past, and why they get pleasure from telling of dangers from which they have been freed. For when they imagine a danger, they regard it as future, and are made to fear it. This push toward fear is hindered anew by the idea of freedom, which they have joined to the idea of the danger because they have been freed from it. So they are safe again, and have pleasure again.

**48: Love or hate for someone (call him Peter) is destroyed if the unpleasure involved in the hate, or the pleasure involved in the love, is attached to the idea of another cause; and each is lessened to the extent that we imagine that Peter was not the only cause of the pleasure or unpleasure.**

This is obvious simply from the definitions of love and hate—see the note on **13**. For this pleasure (unpleasure) is called love (hatred) *of Peter* only because he is considered to be its cause. If his causal role is taken away or reduced, the affect toward him is also taken away or reduced.

**49: Our love for a thing will be greater if we imagine the thing to be free than it would be, other things being equal, if we imagined it to be necessary. And similarly for hate.**

[The demonstration of this can be put simply. If you love or hate something that you think is necessitated in all its behaviour, your love or hate will be distributed across the thing itself and the causes that make it as it is. But if you imagine it to be free—not acted on from outside itself—your love or hate is concentrated entirely on the thing itself, not dissipated by being spread across the thing and its causes.]

**Note on 49:** From this it follows that because men consider themselves to be free they have a greater love or hate toward one another than toward other things. To this is added the imitation of the affects, on which see **27**, **34**, **40** and **43**.

**50: Anything whatever can be the accidental cause of hope or fear.**

This proposition is demonstrated in the same way as **15**. Consult it together with the second note on **18**.

**Note on 50:** Things that are accidental causes of hope or fear are called good or bad 'omens'. And these omens, by being causes of hope or fear, are causes of pleasure or unpleasure (see the definitions of 'hope' and 'fear' in the second note on **18**); and so (by the corollary to **15**) we love them or hate them, and try (by **28**) either to use them as means to the

things we hope for or to remove them as obstacles or causes of fear.

Also, as follows from **25**, we are so constituted by Nature that we easily believe the things we hope for, but believe only with difficulty those we fear, and that we regard such things more or less highly than is just. This is the source of the superstitions by which men everywhere are troubled.

For the rest, I don't think it's worth the trouble to set out in detail here the vacillations of mind that stem from hope and fear—since it follows simply from the definition of these affects that there is no hope without fear, and no fear without hope (as I shall explain more fully in due course). Moreover, in hoping for or fearing something, we love it or hate it; so what I have said about love and hate can easily be applied to hope and fear.

**51: Different men can be affected differently by one object; and one man can be affected differently at different times by one object.**

A human body (by postulate P3 between **II13** and **II14**) is affected in a great many ways by external bodies. Therefore, two men can be differently affected at the same time, and so (by A1" between **II13** and **II14**) they can be affected differently by a single object.

Next (by postulate P3 again) a human body can be affected now in this way, now in another. Consequently (by A1" again) it can be affected differently at different times by one and the same object.

**Note on 51:** This shows us that it can happen that one man loves what another hates, one fears what another does not, and one now loves what he used to hate and now dares what he used to be too timid for.

Next point: because each person judges on the basis of his own affect what is good and what bad, what is better

and what worse (see the note on **39**), it follows that men can vary as much in judgment as they do in affect. (I have shown in the note on **II17** that this can be so even though human minds are parts of the divine intellect.) So it comes about that when we compare people with one another, we distinguish them only by the differences in their affects; we call some 'fearless', others 'timid', and others by other names again.

For example, I shall describe as 'fearless' someone who disdains an evil that I usually fear. If his fearlessness shows in his wish to harm someone he hates or benefit someone he loves, I shall describe him as 'daring'. Someone will seem timid to me if he is afraid of an evil that I disdain. If his timidity shows in his wish to harm those he hates and benefit those he loves, I shall call him 'cowardly'. This is how everyone judges. [Following Curley, 'disdain' is used here and below to render Spinoza's *contemptus*. The meaning is weaker than our meaning for 'contempt'; disdaining something, in the sense used here, usually means something like *treating it as negligible*—for example, plunging ahead with some project and disdaining the risks.]

Finally, because this is what men are like—

- because of the inconstancy of their judgment,
- because they often judge things purely on the basis of an affect,
- because many of the things they think will make for pleasure or unpleasure (and which they therefore try to promote or prevent (by **28**) are only imaginary, and
- because of various other things that I proved in Part II about the uncertainty of things

—we can easily understand that a man can often be the cause of both his own unpleasure and his own pleasure, that is, that he has both pleasure and unpleasure accompanied by the idea of himself as their cause. So we easily understand what repentance and self-satisfaction are: Repentance is



*unpleasure accompanied by the idea of oneself as cause, and self-satisfaction is pleasure accompanied by the idea of oneself as cause.* Because men believe themselves free, these affects are very violent (see 49).

**52: If we imagine an object to have something special about it, we shall attend to it for longer than we would to an object that we had previously seen as one in a crowd, or one that we imagine has no properties that aren't common to many things.**

As soon as we imagine an object that we have seen along with others, we shall immediately recollect the others as well (by **18** and the note on it), and so from considering the one object we immediately pass to considering the others. Similarly with an object that we imagine to have no properties that aren't common to many things: when we imagine *that*, we assume that we have nothing to consider in it except properties that we have previously seen in other objects.

But in supposing that we imagine in an object something special to it that we have never seen before, we are only saying that when the mind considers that object it is not led thereby to consider something else (such as its recollections of previous encounters with related objects). And so it is caused to consider only that one object. From this **52** follows.

**Note on 52:** This state of the mind—this imagining of a special thing—is called 'wonder' when it occurs alone. When aroused by something that we fear, it is called 'consternation', a kind of confusion, because wonder at a threatened evil keeps a man so paralysed by fear that he can't think of things he could do to avoid that evil. But if what we wonder at is someone's prudence, diligence, or the like, because we

see him as far surpassing ourselves in this respect, then our wonder is called 'veneration'. And if what we wonder at is the man's anger, envy, or the like, our wonder is called 'horror'.

If we wonder at the prudence, diligence, etc. of someone whom we love, our wonder will (by **12**) increase our love; and this combination of love and wonder—this veneration—we call 'devotion'. In this way we can also conceive hate, hope, confidence, and other affects to be combined with wonder, and so we can explain affects other than the ones there are standard labels for. So it is clear that the names of the affects owe more to the ordinary usage of words than to an accurate knowledge of the affects. If that weren't so, we would have names for more kinds of affects than we actually do.

The opposite of wonder is disdain. The cause of this attitude is generally the following. We are caused to wonder at, love or fear something by seeing that others do so, or by seeing that the thing is like other things that we admire, love, fear, etc. (by **15** and its corollary and **27**); but then we come into the thing's presence, or we consider it more accurately, and have to admit that there is nothing about it that could cause wonder, love, fear, etc. In that case, our mind is caused by the thing's presence to think more about what it *doesn't* have than about what it *does*, thereby treating the thing itself as negligible. Usually an object's presence makes the mind think chiefly of the properties it *does* have.

Just as devotion stems from wonder at a thing we love, and veneration from wonder at someone's prudence, so mockery stems from disdain for a thing we hate or fear, and contempt comes from disdain for someone's folly. Finally, we can conceive love, hope, love of esteem, and other affects combined with disdain; those combinations yield other affects, for which we don't have any one-word labels.

**53: When the mind considers itself and its power of acting, it has pleasure, which is greater in proportion to how distinctly the mind imagines itself and its power of acting.**

A man knows himself only through states of his body and the ideas of them (by **II19** and **II23**). So when it happens that the mind can consider itself, it is thereby supposed to pass to a greater perfection, that is (by the note on **11**), to have pleasure, and the more so the more distinctly it can imagine its power of acting.

**Corollary:** This pleasure is encouraged when the man imagines himself to be praised by others.

The more he imagines himself to be praised by others, the greater the pleasure he thinks he gives to others, a pleasure accompanied by his idea of himself (by the note on **29**). And so (by **27**) he himself has a greater pleasure, accompanied by the idea of himself.

**54: A mind tries to imagine only those things that affirm its power of acting.**

A mind's effort—its power—is its very essence (by **7**); but it is self-evident that a mind's essence affirms only what the mind is and can do, not what it isn't and can't do. So it tries to imagine only what affirms its power of acting.

**55: When a mind imagines its own lack of power, this brings it unpleasure.**

... It is of the nature of the mind to imagine only things that affirm its power of acting (by **54**). So when we say that a mind in considering itself imagines its lack of power, we are saying that its effort to imagine something that affirms its power of acting is hindered, which (by the note on **11**) is to say that it has unpleasure.

**Corollary:** This unpleasure is encouraged if we imagine ourselves to be blamed by others.

This is demonstrated in the same way as the corollary to **53**.

**Note on 55:** This unpleasure, accompanied by the idea of our own weakness, is called 'humility'. But when we get pleasure from considering ourselves, this is called 'self-love' or 'self-satisfaction'. And because this is renewed as often as a man considers what he is capable of—considers his power of acting—it comes about that everyone is anxious to tell of his own exploits and to show off his powers of body and of mind; which makes men annoying to one another.

From this it follows also that men are by nature envious (see the notes on **24** and **32**)—that is, that they are glad of their equals' weakness and displeased by their equals' strengths. For whenever anyone imagines his own actions, he has pleasure (by **53**), and the pleasure is greater in proportion to how much perfection his actions express and to how clearly he imagines them—that is (by the first note on **II40**) to how thoroughly he can distinguish his own actions from other people's, and regard them as special. So everyone will have the greatest gladness from considering himself, when he considers something in himself that he denies concerning others.

But if he thinks of what he affirms of himself in terms of the universal idea of *man* or *animal*, he will not be so greatly gladdened. (•We don't congratulate ourselves on having the use of language, or on being able to walk. •) And if he imagines that his own actions are weaker than those of others, he will have unpleasure (by **28**), and will try to get rid of it either by misinterpreting his equals' actions or by magnifying his own as much as he can. It is clear, therefore, that men are •naturally inclined to hate and envy. Not only naturally, but also •by their upbringing; for the

main incentives that parents use to spur their children on to excellence are honour and envy.

You may be doubtful about this on the grounds that not infrequently we admire and venerate men's capacities. To remove this doubt I shall add the following corollary.

**Corollary:** No-one envies another's virtue unless he is an equal.

Envy is hatred (see the note on **24**), that is (by the note on **13**), an unpleasure, that is (by the note on **11**) a state by which a man's power of acting—his effort—is hindered. But a man (by the note on **9**) doesn't try or want to do anything that can't follow from his given nature. So no-one wants to have attributed to him any power of acting that is special to someone else's nature and alien to his own. Hence, his desire is not hindered—that is (by the note on **11**), he cannot have unpleasure—from considering a power in someone unlike himself. So he cannot envy such a person either. But he can envy *his equal*, who is supposed to be of the same nature as he.

**Note on this corollary:** In the note on **52** I spoke of our venerating a man because we wonder at his prudence, strength of character, etc. As the word 'wonder' makes clear, this is a case where we imagine these virtues to be special to that man, and not as common to our nature. So we shan't envy him these virtues any more than we envy trees their height, or lions their strength.

**56: There are as many kinds of pleasure, unpleasure, and desire as there are kinds of objects by which we are affected. And so there are also just as many kinds of affect composed of these (like vacillation of mind) or derived from them (like love, hate, hope, fear, etc.).**

Pleasure and unpleasure—and consequently the affects composed of them or derived from them—are passions (by the note on **11**). ·Having a passion involves being passive, being acted on·. But we are necessarily acted on (by **1**) when we have inadequate ideas; and *only* when we have them (by **3**) are we acted on. That is to say (see the note on **II40**) we are acted on only when we *imagine*, that is (see **II17** and the note on it) when we have an affect that involves both the nature of our body and the nature of an external body. So a full account of the nature of each passion must bring in the nature of the ·external· object by which the person having the passion is affected.

For example, the pleasure arising from object A involves the nature of A, that arising from object B involves the nature of B; so these two affects of pleasure are by nature different, because they arise from causes that are unlike. So also the affect of unpleasure arising from one object is different in nature from the unpleasure stemming from another cause. The same holds for love, hate, hope, fear, vacillation of mind, etc.

Therefore, there are as many kinds of pleasure, unpleasure, love, hate, etc., as there are kinds of objects by which we are affected.

As for desire: A man's desire ·to do x· is that aspect of his essence or nature that causes him—*given the rest of his constitution*—to act in a certain way, ·specifically, to try to do x· (see the note on **9**). Therefore, as external causes give varying kinds of pleasure, unpleasure, love, hate, etc. to a man, thus varying his constitution, so his desires must vary, with one desire being as unlike another as the affects leading to one are unlike those that lead to the other.

Therefore, there are as many kinds of desire as there are kinds of pleasure, unpleasure, love, etc., and consequently (through what I have already shown) as there are kinds of objects by which we are affected.

**Note on 56:** Noteworthy among these kinds of affects—which (by 56) must be very numerous—are gluttony, drunkenness, lust, greed, and ambition, which are only kinds of love or desire differentiated by the external objects to which they are related. For by ‘gluttony’, ‘drunkenness’, ‘lust’, ‘greed’, and ‘ambition’ we understand simply an immoderate love or desire for eating, drinking, sexual union, wealth, and esteem.

When affects are thus classified in terms of the objects to which they are related, they don’t have opposites that are also affects. For moderation which we usually oppose to gluttony, sobriety which we usually oppose to drunkenness, and chastity which we usually oppose to lust, are not affects or passions; but indicate the power of the mind, a power that moderates these affects.

I cannot explain the other kinds of affects here—for there are as many as there are kinds of objects. And anyway, there is no need to. For my purpose, which is to determine the powers of the affects and the power of the mind over them, it is enough to have a general definition of each affect. All we need is to understand the common properties of the affects and of the mind, so that we can work out what sort of power, and how great a power, the mind has to moderate and restrain the affects. So though there is a great difference between this or that affect of love, hate or desire—for example, between your love for your children and your love for your wife—we don’t need to know these differences, or to go any further into the nature and origin of the affects.

**57: Each affect of each individual differs from the affect of another individual as much as the essence of one differs from the essence of the other.**

This proposition is evident from **“A1”** on page 30. Still, I shall demonstrate it from the definitions of the three basic affects. All the affects are related to desire, pleasure, or unpleasure, as the definitions I have given of them show. But desire is the very nature or essence of the individual who has the desire (see the definition of desire in the note on 9). So the desires of two individuals differ from one another as much as do their natures or essences.

As for pleasure and unpleasure: [The remainder of the demonstration is hard to grasp. The basic idea seems to be that pleasure and unpleasure can variously help or hinder the individual’s effort to stay in existence, which means that they can variously encourage or impede his desires; from which Spinoza infers that the variousness of the desires is passed along to the other affects, making them various in the same way.]

**Note on 57:** From this it follows that the affects of animals that are said not to have reason differ from men’s affects as much as their nature differs from human nature. Both the horse and the man are driven by a lust to procreate; but the one is driven by an equine lust, the other by a human lust. So also the lusts and appetites of insects, fish, and birds must vary. Therefore, though each individual lives content with its own nature, . . . that is not significantly something that all individuals have in common. For the life with which each individual is content, and his contentment with it, are simply the idea—the mental aspect—the soul—of that individual. So the gladness of one differs from the gladness of another as much as the essence of one differs from the essence of the other. (I spoke of animals that are said to lack

reason, not of animals that lack minds altogether. Now that we know how minds fit into the over-all scheme of things, we can't possibly doubt that the lower animals have feelings.)

Finally, I note in passing that from **57** it follows that the gladness by which a drunkard is led differs greatly from the gladness a philosopher possesses.

That is enough about the affects that men have •passively. I shall now add a few words about affects that men have when they •act.

**58: Apart from the pleasure and desire that are passions, there are other affects of pleasure and desire that we have because we act.**

When the mind conceives itself and its power of acting, it has pleasure (by **53**). But the mind necessarily considers itself when it conceives a true idea—that is (by **II43**), an adequate idea. Now, the mind does conceive some adequate ideas (by the second note on **II40**). Therefore, it also has pleasure when conceiving adequate ideas, that is (by **1**) in acting.

Next, the mind tries to stay in existence, both when having clear and distinct ideas and when having confused ideas (by **9**). But by 'effort' we understand *desire* (by the note on **9**). Therefore, desire also is something we have when we understand, that is (by **1**), when we act.

**59: Affects that a mind has in acting are all related to pleasure or desire.**

All the affects are related to desire, pleasure, or unpleasure, as the definitions I have given of them show. But by 'unpleasure' we understand a lessening or hindering of a mind's power of acting (by **11** and the note on it). So to the extent that a mind has unpleasure its power of understanding—that is (by **1**),

its power of acting—is lessened or hindered. So no affects of unpleasure can be related to a mind because of its activity; only affects of pleasure and desire can do that.

**Note on 59:** All actions that follow from affects that a mind has because it *understands* I classify as examples of *strength of character*, which I divide into *resoluteness* and *nobility*. By 'resoluteness' I understand the desire by which everyone tries, solely from the dictate of reason, to stay in existence. By 'nobility' I understand the desire by which everyone tries, solely from the dictate of reason, to help other men and make them his friends.

So I classify under 'resoluteness' actions that aim only at the agent's advantage; actions aiming at someone else's advantage I count as 'nobility'. Thus, moderation, sobriety, calmness in the face of danger, etc., are kinds of resoluteness, whereas courtesy, mercy, etc., are kinds of nobility.

I think I have now explained and shown through their first causes the main affects and vacillations of mind arising from combinations of the three basic affects—desire, pleasure, and unpleasure. What I have said makes it clear that we are driven about in many ways by external causes, and that we toss about like waves on the sea driven by contrary winds, not knowing our outcome and fate.

I have shown only *the main ·affects·*, not *all* the conflicts of mind there can be. For by proceeding in the same way as I have done we can easily show that ·there can be ever so many others; for example, that· love can be combined with repentance, contempt, shame, etc. Indeed, I think that what I have already said will make it clear to everyone that the various affects can be combined with one another in so many ways, yielding so many variations that there's no way of enumerating them all. For my purpose it was sufficient to enumerate only the main affects. ·To consider· the ones I

have omitted would be more curious than useful.

Nevertheless, this remains to be noted about love: it very often it happens that while we are getting pleasure from a thing we have wanted, this pleasure makes changes in the constitution of our body; these alter how it is acted on, and other images of things are aroused in it; and at the same time the mind begins to imagine other things and want other things.

For example, when we imagine something that usually pleases us by its taste, we desire to enjoy it—that is, to consume it. But while we are thus enjoying it, the stomach is filled and the body constituted differently. So if (while the body has this new constitution) the presence of the food or drink encourages the image of it and consequently also the effort or desire to consume it, the new constitution will oppose this desire or effort; and so the presence of the food or drink that we used to want will repel us. This is what we call ‘satiety’ and ‘weariness’.

As for the external states of the body that are observed in the affects—such as trembling, paleness, sobbing, laughter, etc.—I have left them out because they involve the body only, with no relation to the mind. Finally, there are certain things to be noted about the definitions of the affects. I shall therefore repeat them here in order, adding the observations required on each one.

## Definitions of the Affects

**1. Desire** is a man’s essence, insofar as it is conceived to be determined, from any given state of it, to do something. [This seems to mean: ‘A man’s *desire* to do x is just the aspects of his nature that tend to cause him to do x’.]

**Explanation:** I said in the note on **9** that desire is appetite together with the consciousness of it. And appetite is the

essence of a man, insofar as it is determined to do what promotes his survival.

But in the same note I also warned that I really recognize no difference between human appetite and desire. For an appetite is exactly the same whether or not the man is conscious of it. And so—not wanting to seem to be guilty of a tautology—I didn’t want to explain ‘desire’ by ‘appetite’, and wanted to define it so that it covers all the efforts of human nature that we label as ‘appetite’, ‘will’, ‘desire’, or ‘impulse’. [Spinoza goes on to explain that he stated the definition in terms of ‘insofar as it is *conceived to be* determined’ rather than merely ‘insofar as it is determined’ because—he says (obscurely)—the latter version doesn’t imply ‘that the mind could be conscious of its desire or appetite’. He continues:] By ‘a state of a man’s essence’ I understand *any* constitution of that essence, whether it is innate or caused from outside, and whether conceived through the attribute of thought alone, or through extension alone, or through both at once.

By the word ‘desire’, therefore, I understand here any of a man’s efforts, impulses, appetites, and volitions, which vary as the man’s constitution varies, and which are often so opposed to one another that the man is pulled different ways and doesn’t know where to turn.

**2. Pleasure** is a man’s passing from a lesser perfection to a greater.

**3. Unpleasure** is a man’s passing from a greater perfection to a lesser.

**Explanation:** I say ‘passing’. For pleasure is not perfection itself. If a man had been born with the perfection to which he passes, he would have possessed it without an affect of pleasure.

This is clearer from the affect of unpleasure, which is the opposite of pleasure. For no-one can deny that unpleasure

consists in passing to a lesser perfection, not in the lesser perfection itself. That is because the lesser perfection would still be a *perfection*, and a man can't have unpleasure from participating in a perfection. Nor can we say that unpleasure consists in the lack of a greater perfection. For a lack is *nothing*, whereas the affect of unpleasure is a *happening*, and the only happening it can be is the man's passing to a lesser perfection, that is, an event through which the man's power of acting is lessened or hindered (see the note on **11**).

As for the definitions of *titillatio* [see explanation in the note on **11**], 'cheerfulness', 'pain' and 'sadness', I omit them because they are chiefly related to the body, and are merely kinds of pleasure or unpleasure.

**4. Wonder** is an imagining of a thing in which the mind remains fixed because this particular imagining has no connection with any others. (See **52** and note on it.)

**Explanation:** In the note on **118** I showed the cause why the mind immediately passes from considering one thing to thinking of another—namely because the bodily images of these things are connected with one another, and so ordered that one follows the other. And of course this can't happen for this reason when the image of the thing is a strange and unprecedented one, because there won't have been any past experience to connect the image of it with any other images. Rather, the mind will be held by the same thing until other causes make it think of other things.

[Spinoza goes on to say that an episode of wondering is in itself just like any other imaging, and that he therefore doesn't count wonder as an affect. He defends this choice, apparently thinking of the prominent place Descartes give to wonder in *his* catalogue of 'passions'.]

So as I pointed out in the note on **11**, I recognize only three primitive, or primary, or basic affects: pleasure,

unpleasure, and desire. I have spoken of wonder only because it has become customary for some writers to give special names to these when they are related to objects we wonder at. For the same reason I shall also add the definition of 'disdain'.

**5. Disdain** [see page 70] is an imagining of a thing that makes so little impact on the mind that its presence moves the mind to imagining what is *not* in it more than what *is*. See the note on **52**. I omit here the definitions of 'veneration' and 'contempt' because no affects that I know of derive their names from them.

**6. Love** is a pleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause.

**Explanation:** This definition explains the essence of love clearly enough. But the definition of those authors who define 'love' as *the lover's wish to be united with the object of his love* expresses a property of love, not its essence. And these authors didn't even have a clear concept of this property, because they didn't see clearly enough the essence of love. That is why everyone has found their definition to be quite obscure.

Be it noted that when I say that the lover 'wishes to be united with the object of his love' I don't mean by 'wish' a consent, or a deliberation of the mind, or a free decision (for I have demonstrated in **148** that this freedom is a fiction). Nor do I mean that the lover wants to unite with the object of his love when it is absent or wants to continue in its presence when it is present. For love can be conceived without either of these desires. Rather, by 'wish' I mean that the lover gets contentment from the presence of the object of his love, a contentment by which his pleasure is strengthened or at least encouraged.

**7. Hate** is unpleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause.

**Explanation:** The things to be noted here can easily be seen from what I have just said in explaining ‘love’. See also the note on **13**.

**8. Inclination** is pleasure accompanied by the idea of a thing that is the accidental cause of the pleasure.

**9. Aversion** is unpleasure accompanied by the idea of something that is the accidental cause of the unpleasure. On this see the note on **15**.

**10. Devotion** is a love of someone whom we wonder at.

**Explanation:** I showed in **52** that wonder arises from the newness of the thing; so if it happens that we often imagine something that we wonder at ·it will cease to be new to us, and so· we shall cease to wonder at it. This shows that the affect of *devotion* easily changes into simple *love*.

**11. Mockery** is pleasure born of the fact that we imagine something that we disdain in a thing that we hate.

**Explanation:** To the extent that we disdain a thing that we hate, we deny existence to it (see the note on **52**), and to that extent we have pleasure (by **20**). But since we are supposing that what a man mocks he also hates, it follows that this pleasure is not unalloyed. (See the note on **47**.)

**12. Hope** is an inconstant pleasure, born of the idea of a future or past thing whose outcome we are in some doubt.

**13. Fear** is an inconstant unpleasure, born of the idea of a future or past thing whose outcome we are somewhat unsure of. See the second note on **18**.

**Explanation:** From these definitions it follows that there is no hope without fear and no fear without hope. For someone who is in suspense, hoping for something while being unsure

that he will get it, is assumed (from his unsureness) to be imagining something that would exclude the existence of the thing he hopes for; to that extent he has unpleasure (by **19**); and so while he is in his suspenseful hope he fears that the thing that ·he imagines· will happen ·and thus that thing he hopes for won’t happen·.

Conversely, someone who is in fear—i.e. who is unsure of the outcome of a thing that he hates—also imagines something that excludes the existence of the thing he fears. So (by **20**) he has pleasure, and thus to that extent he has hope that the ·feared· thing won’t happen.

**14. Confidence** is a pleasure born of the idea of something—future or past—concerning which the cause of doubting has been removed.

**15. Despair** is an unpleasure born of the idea of something—future or past—concerning which the cause of doubting has been removed.

**Explanation:** So confidence is born of hope, and despair is born of fear, when the cause of doubt about the thing’s outcome is removed. This ·doubt-free condition· occurs because •a man imagines that the past or future thing is right at hand, and regards it as present, or because •he imagines other things that exclude the existence of the things that had put him in doubt. For though we can never be certain of the outcome of particular events (by the corollary to **II31**), it can still happen that we have no doubt about their outcome. As I have shown (see the note on **II49**), it is one thing *not to doubt* a thing and another *to be certain of* it. And so it can happen that the image of a past or future thing gives us the same pleasure or unpleasure as the image of a present thing (as I showed in **18**; see also the first note on it).

**16. Gladness** is pleasure accompanied by the idea of a past thing that has turned out better than we had hoped.



**17. Regret** is unpleasure accompanied by the idea of a past thing that has turned out worse than we had hoped.

**18. Pity** is unpleasure accompanied by the idea of an evil that has happened to someone else whom we imagine to be like us. (See the notes on **21** and **27**.)

**Explanation:** There seems to be no difference between pity and compassion, except perhaps that ‘pity’ applies to the particular affect—the particular episode—whereas ‘compassion’ refers to the habitual disposition to pity things.

**19. Favour** is love toward someone who has benefited someone else.

**20. Indignation** is hate toward someone who has harmed someone else.

**Explanation:** I know that in their common usage these two words mean something else. But my purpose is to explain the nature of things, not the meanings of words. I intend to indicate these things by words whose usual meaning is not entirely opposed to the meanings I want to give them. You have been warned! As for the causes of these two affects, see the first corollary of **27** and the note on **21**.

**21. Over-rating** is thinking too highly of someone, out of love.

**22. Scorn** is thinking not highly enough of someone, out of hate.

**Explanation:** Over-rating, therefore, is an effect or property of love, and scorn an effect of hate. So ‘over-rating’ can also be defined as *love that affects a man so that he thinks too highly of the object of his love*. And ‘scorn’ can be defined as *hate that affects a man so that doesn’t think highly enough of the object of his hate*. See the note on **26**.

**23. Envy** is hate that affects a man so that he has unpleasure from another person’s happiness and rejoices at that

person’s misfortune.

**Explanation:** Envy is commonly opposed to compassion, which can therefore . . . be defined as follows.

**24. Compassion** is love that affects a man so that he is glad at someone else’s good fortune and gets unpleasure from his misfortune.

**Explanation:** Regarding envy, see the notes on **24** and **32**. These—that is, affects 4-24—are the affects of pleasure and unpleasure that are accompanied by the idea of an •external thing as cause, either directly through itself or accidentally (see **15**). I now move to the other affects, which are accompanied by the idea of an •internal thing as cause.

**25. Self-satisfaction** is pleasure that a man has from considering himself and his own power of acting.

**26. Humility** is unpleasure that a man has from considering his own lack of power, his weakness.

**Explanation:** Taking self-satisfaction to be pleasure •arising from our considering our power of acting, it is the opposite of humility. But taking it to be pleasure •accompanied by the idea of something we think we have done from a free decision of the mind, it is the opposite of repentance, which I define as follows.

**27. Repentance** is unpleasure accompanied by the idea of some deed that we think we have done from a free decision of the mind.

**Explanation:** I have shown the causes of these affects in the note on **51**, and in **53**, **54**, and **55** and its note. On the free decision of the mind see the note on **35**.

It isn’t surprising that absolutely all the •acts that are customarily called wrong are followed by unpleasure, and that the •acts customarily called right are followed by pleasure. What I have said above makes it easy to see that this

depends chiefly on upbringing. Parents blame •acts of the former kind and scold their children for performing them, and approve and praise •acts of the latter kind; which brings it about that unpleasant emotions are joined to the one kind of act, and pleasant ones to the other.

Experience itself also confirms ·the role of upbringing in forming moral consciousness·. For people don't all have the same custom and religion. What is holy for some is unholy for others; what is honourable for some is dishonourable for others. So each individual repents of a deed or exults [see 34] in it, depending on how he has been brought up.

**28. Pride** is thinking too highly of oneself, out of self-love.

**Explanation:** So pride differs from over-rating in that the latter is related to an external object whereas pride is related to the man himself, who thinks more highly of himself than he should. Also, just as over-rating is an effect or property of love, so pride is an effect or property of self-love. So pride can also be defined as *love of oneself, or self-satisfaction, which leads a man to think more highly of himself than he should* (see the note on 26).

This affect has no opposite. For no-one thinks less highly of himself than he should out of hate ·for himself·. Indeed, no-one is led to think less highly of himself than he should by imagining that he can't do this or that. For while a man imagines that he can't do x he has to be imagining x; and this imagining makes him genuinely unable to do x. For so long as he imagines that he can't do x, he is not caused to do it, so it really is impossible for him to do it. ·Thus, his thoughts about what he can't do don't make him think less highly of himself *than he should* because he actually *can't* do those things·.

But if we attend to mere opinions that a man may have about himself—·specifically, beliefs about himself that are

*not* actually true·—we can see how a man might think less highly of himself than he should. ·Here are three examples of that·. •A man contemplates his own weakness, with unpleasure, and imagines that he is looked down on by everyone—though in fact their attitude to him is nothing like that. •A man thinks less highly of himself than he should because of some belief he has about himself in the future—for example, he ·wrongly· thinks he will never become certain of anything, or will never want or do anything that is right and honourable. •We can infer that someone thinks less highly of himself than he should when we see that his exaggerated fear of failure stops him from risking things that others equal to him would risk.

So this affect—which I shall call 'despondency'—can be seen as the opposite of pride. For as pride is born of self-satisfaction, so despondency is born of humility. We can therefore define it as follows.

**29. Despondency** is thinking less highly of oneself than one should, out of unpleasure.

**Explanation:** We often treat *humility* and *pride* as opposites; but that is when we are attending less to the nature of the two affects than to the behaviour they lead to. For we usually call someone 'proud' if he: •exults too much at being esteemed (see the note on 30), •talks all the time about his own virtues and the faults of others, •wants to be given precedence over everyone else, or •goes about with the pomp and style of dress usually adopted by those who are far above him in station. And we call someone humble if: he quite often blushes, confesses his own faults and recounts the virtues of others, gives precedence to everyone else, or walks with his head bowed and shabbily dressed.

These affects—humility and despondency—are very rare. For basic human nature strains against them as hard as it

can (see **13** and **54**). Those who are *thought* to be the most despondent and humble are usually the most ambitious and envious.

**30. Love of esteem** is pleasure accompanied by the idea of some action of ours that we imagine that others praise.

**31. Shame** is unpleasure accompanied by the idea of some action of ours that we imagine that others blame.

**Explanation:** On these see the note on **30**. Notice that *shame* is not the same as *sense of shame*. For *shame* is the unpleasure that follows a deed one is ashamed of; whereas *sense of shame* is the fear of shame that hinders a man from doing something dishonourable. Sense of shame is usually taken to be the opposite of shamelessness, but the latter is not really an affect, as I shall show in the proper place [which in fact Spinoza never does]. But, as I have already pointed out, the names of the affects are guided more by usage than by their natures.

That brings me to the end of what I had to say about the affects of pleasure and unpleasure. I turn now to the affects that I relate to desire.

**32. Longing** is a desire—an appetite—to possess something, a desire encouraged by the memory of that thing and at the same time hindered by the memory of other things that exclude its existence.

**Explanation:** As I have often said already, our recollecting a thing disposes us to regard it with the same affect as if it were present. But while we are awake, this disposition—this effort—is generally hindered by images of things that exclude the existence of the thing we recollect. So when we remember a thing that gives us some kind of pleasure, we try to regard it as present with the same affect of pleasure—an effort which is of course immediately hindered by the memory of things that exclude the thing's existence.

So longing is really an unpleasure that is opposite to the pleasure that arises from the absence of a thing we hate (see the note on **47**). But because the word 'longing' seems to involve desire, I include this affect among the affects of desire.

**33. Emulation** is a desire for a thing which we have because we imagine that others have the same desire.

**Explanation:** If someone flees because he sees others flee, or is timid because he sees others timid, or on seeing someone else burn his hand withdraws his own hand and moves his body as if his hand were burned, we say that he 'imitates' the other's affect, but not that he 'emulates' it. It's not that we know of any difference in how emulation and imitation are caused; it's just that in ordinary usage we reserve 'emulous' for the person who imitates what we judge to be honourable, useful, or pleasant. As for the cause of emulation, see **27** and the note on it; and on why envy is generally joined to this effect, see **32** and the note on it.

**34. Gratitude** is the desire—the eagerness of love—by which we try to benefit someone who has benefited us from a similar affect of love. See **39** and the note on **41**.

**35. Benevolence** is a desire to benefit someone whom we pity. See the note on **27**.

**36. Anger** is a desire by which we are spurred, out of hate, to harm a person we hate. See **39**.

**37. Vengeance** is a desire by which, out of reciprocal hate, we are roused to harm someone who from a similar affect has injured us. See the second corollary to **40** and the note on it.

**38. Cruelty** is a desire by which someone is roused to harm someone whom *we* love or pity.

**Explanation:** Cruelty is the opposite of mercy, which is not a passion but a power of the mind by which a man governs anger and vengeance—something active, not passive.

**39. Timidity** is a desire to avoid a greater evil that we fear, by a lesser one. See the note on **39**.

**40. Daring** is a desire by which someone is spurred to do something dangerous which his equals fear to undertake.

**41. Cowardice** is ascribed to someone whose desire is hindered by timidity concerning a danger that his equals are willing to risk.

**Explanation:** So cowardice is just •fear of some evil that most people don't usually fear; so I don't count it among the affects of •desire. But I wanted to include it here because it is the opposite of daring so far as its relation to desire is concerned.

**42. Consternation** is attributed to someone whose desire to avoid an evil is hindered by wonder at the evil he fears.

**Explanation:** So consternation is a kind of cowardice. But because it arises from a double timidity, it can be more conveniently defined as *a fear that keeps a man senseless or vacillating so that he can't avert the evil*. I say 'senseless' because part of the meaning is that his desire to avert the evil is hindered by wonder; and I say 'vacillating' because part of the meaning is that the desire is hindered by timidity concerning another evil which torments him equally, so that he does not know which of the two to avoid. On these see the notes on **39** and **52**. For cowardice and daring, see the note on **51**.

**43. Human kindness**—or in other words, courtesy—is the desire to do what pleases men and not do what displeases them.

**44. Ambition** is an excessive desire for esteem.

**Explanation:** Ambition is a desire by which *all* the affects are encouraged and strengthened (by **27** and **31**); so this affect can hardly be overcome. For as long as a man is bound by *any* desire he must at the same time be bound by *this* one. As Cicero says, 'The best men are those who are most led by love of esteem. Even philosophers who write books disparaging esteem put their names on them!'

**45. Gluttony** is the immoderate desire for and love of eating.

**46. Drunkenness** is the immoderate desire for and love of drinking.

**47. Avarice** is the immoderate desire for and love of wealth.

**48. Lust** is the desire for and love of sexual intercourse.

**Explanation:** This desire for sexual union is usually called 'lust', whether or not it is moderate.

These five affects (as I pointed out in the note on **56**) have no opposites. For courtesy is a sort of ambition (see the note on **29**), and I have already pointed out also that moderation, sobriety, and chastity indicate the •power of the mind and not •passions. Even if it can happen that an avaricious, ambitious or timid man abstains from too much food, drink, and sex, that doesn't make greed, ambition, and timidity opposites of gluttony, drunkenness or lust.

For the •greedy man generally longs to gorge himself on other people's food and drink. And the •ambitious man won't be moderate in anything, provided he can hope not to be discovered; if he lives among the drunken and the lustful, then his ambition will make him all more inclined to these vices. And the •timid man does what he wants not to do; for although he may hurl his wealth into the sea to avoid death, he is still avaricious. And if the lustful man has unpleasure because he can't indulge his inclinations, that doesn't mean that he has stopped being lustful.

Basically these affects have less to do with the acts of eating, drinking, and so on than with the underlying appetite itself and the love. So their only opposites are nobility and resoluteness, which will be discussed later on.

I pass over the definitions of jealousy and the other vacillations of mind, both because they arise from combinations of affects that I have already defined and because most of them don't have names. Their not having names shows that it is sufficient for practical purposes to know them only in a general way. Furthermore, from the definitions of the affects that I have explained it is clear that they all •arise from desire, pleasure, or unpleasure—or rather, that they •are nothing but those three, with different names given to them according to their different contexts and relations to other things. If we want now to attend to these basic affects, and to what I have said about the nature of the mind, we can define the mental side of the affects as follows.

### General Definition of the Affects

An affect that is called a *passion* of the mind is a confused idea through which a mind affirms of its body (or of some part of it) a greater or lesser force of existing than it had before—an idea which, when it is given, makes the mind think of one thing rather than another.

**Explanation:** I say that an affect—a passion of the mind—is a *confused* idea because I have shown (3) that it is only when it has inadequate or confused ideas that the mind •is passive, i.e. • is acted on.

Next, I say 'through which a mind affirms of its body (or of some part of it) a greater or lesser force of existing

than it had before' because *all* the ideas that we have of bodies indicate the actual constitution of our own body (by the second corollary to **II16**) more than the nature of the external body. But an idea that makes an affect what it is has to be one indicating or expressing a state of the body (or of some part of it) which the body (or the part) is in because its power of acting—its force of existing—is increased or lessened, helped or hindered.

Please understand what I say about 'a greater or lesser force of existing than before'. I do *not* mean that the mind compares its body's present constitution with a past constitution and *thinks that* its force has increased or lessened, but rather that the idea which makes the affect what it is affirms of the body something that *really does* involve more or less of reality •or force• than before.

And because •the essence of the mind consists in this (by **II11** and **II13**), that it affirms the actual existence of its body, and •we understand by 'perfection' the very essence of a thing, it follows that •the mind passes to a greater or lesser perfection when it happens to affirm of its body (or of some part thereof) something that involves more or less reality than before. So when I said above that the mind's power of thinking is increased or lessened, I meant merely that the mind has formed of its body (or of some part of it) an idea that expresses more or less reality than it had previously affirmed of the body.

Finally, I added 'which makes the mind think of one thing rather than another' in order to bring *desire* within the scope of the definition along with *pleasure* and *unpleasure*.

## Part IV: Human Bondage, or the Power of the Affects

### Preface

[In Spinoza's use of the term, 'affects' include emotions (such as anger) and immoderate desires (such as ambition). All they have in common is their tendency to influence human conduct, mostly for the worse.] ['Bondage' is my name for man's lack of power [Latin *impotentia*; often translated as 'weakness'] to moderate and restrain the affects. It's a good name, because anyone who is subject to affects is not under his own control and is at the mercy of fortune, i.e. of whatever mood or passion *happens* to come over him. He is so much in its power that often, though he sees what would be better for him, he is compelled to go after something worse. In this Part I shall demonstrate the cause of this 'bondage', and shall show what is good and what is bad in the affects. Before starting on that, though, I want to say a few words about perfection and imperfection, good and bad.

#### 'PERFECT' AND 'IMPERFECT'

[In the passage that follows, Spinoza relies on the fact that the Latin word from which 'perfect' comes often means 'completed', 'made all through'.] If you finish something that you have set out to make, you will call it 'perfect'—and so will anyone who knows what you were aiming at—or thinks he knows! Suppose you are building a house, and haven't yet finished it; someone who knows what you are aiming at will say that your construction is 'imperfect'; but as soon as he sees that the work has been carried through to the end that you wanted to give it, he will call it 'perfect'. Now consider someone who sees a work that isn't like anything he has seen before, and who doesn't know what its maker is up to. He of course can't know whether what he sees is perfect or imperfect.

This seems to have been the first meaning of the words 'perfect' and 'imperfect'. But after men began to form universal ideas, constructing mental models of houses, buildings, towers, etc., and began to prefer some models of things to others, it came about that everyone called 'perfect' what he saw agreed with his universal idea of this kind of thing, and called 'imperfect' what he saw agreed less with the model in his mind, even when its maker thought he had entirely finished it.

That is the only reason I can find why men commonly describe as 'perfect' or 'imperfect' natural things that haven't been made by human hand. For they form universal ideas of natural things as much as they do of artificial ones. They treat these universal ideas as models of things, and believe that Nature (which they think always acts with a purpose) looks to these ideas and sets them before itself as models for what it aims to achieve. So when they see a natural thing that doesn't agree with their model for that kind of thing, they believe that Nature itself has failed or erred, and left the thing imperfect.

[Spinoza will refer to two supposed kinds of cause: a *final* cause is the end or aim or purpose for which something is done; and *efficient* cause is what you and I would simply call a 'cause', with no adjective. With final causes thought of as *effective*, the difference is like that between *pulling* and *pushing*; and Spinoza, as we shall see, thinks there are no pulls, only pushes.] So we see that men are given to calling natural things 'perfect' or 'imperfect' on the basis not so much of knowledge of the things as of pre-conceived ideas about them. For I showed in the Appendix of Part I that Nature never acts with an end in view. The eternal and infinite being we call 'God' or 'Nature' necessarily acts as it does, just as it

*necessarily exists*—and it's the same necessity in each case, as I showed in **I16**. So the questions

Why does God or Nature act thus and so? and

Why does God or Nature exist?

have exactly the same answer. In the case of the second question, we know that the answer doesn't involve ends or purposes; God or Nature doesn't *exist* for the sake of some end. So God or Nature doesn't *act* for the sake of any end either. A so-called 'final cause' is nothing but a human appetite that is being thought of as the *basic* cause of something. [In Spinoza's usage, an 'appetite' is a desire, whether conscious or unconscious; he reserves 'desire' for the conscious ones.] For example, when we say that having-somewhere-to-live was the final cause of a certain house, all we mean is that some man, because he imagined the conveniences of domestic life, had an appetite to build a house. So when having-somewhere-to-live is thought of as a final cause, it is really just this particular appetite. It is really an *efficient* cause, and it is thought of as a *basic* cause because men usually don't know the causes of their appetites. For as I have often said before, they are conscious of their actions and appetites, but not aware of the causes that drive them to want something.

As for the common remarks about Nature occasionally failing or going wrong and producing 'imperfect' things—I number these among the fictions that I discussed in the Appendix of Part I.

So perfection and imperfection are only ways of thinking, i.e. notions that we are led to invent by our comparisons among the individual members of some species or genus. This is the basis for explaining why I said in **ID4** that by 'reality' and 'perfection' I mean the same thing. The explanation goes as follows. We are accustomed to think of absolutely all the individual things in Nature as belonging to

one genus, the most general genus, the notion of *being* or *existing thing*. So we compare individual things in Nature to one another, in the light of this genus; we find that some have more being or more reality than others; and so we say that those ones are more 'perfect' than others. And to the extent that we attribute to a thing something that involves negation—a limit, a terminus, lack of power, or the like—we call it 'imperfect'. That's because the thing doesn't affect our mind as much as do the things we call 'perfect', and not because the thing lacks something that belongs to it—i.e. something that belongs to its nature, something it ought to have—or because Nature has erred. For nothing belongs to a thing's nature except what its efficient cause gives it, so a thing can't *lack* something that belongs to its nature! And the efficient cause works as it does because of *its* nature, which it has necessarily, so whatever follows from it is also necessary.

·'GOOD' AND 'BAD'·

'Good' and 'bad' also stand for ways of thinking, or notions we form because we compare things to one another. They don't indicate anything positive in things, considered in themselves. For one and the same thing can at the same time be good, and bad, and neither; as music is good for someone who is melancholy, bad for someone who is mourning, and neither good nor bad for someone who is deaf.

But though this is so we should retain these four words. We want to form an idea of man as a *model* of human nature that we may keep in view; and so it will be useful to us to retain 'good' and 'bad' with the meanings I have indicated. From here on, therefore, I shall apply 'good' to anything that we know for sure to be a means to getting ever nearer to the model of human nature that we set before ourselves. And I shall call 'bad' anything that we know for sure prevents us from becoming like that model. And I

shall also characterize men as •‘perfect’ or •‘imperfect’ to the extent that they approach more or less near to this model.

Please note that when I say that someone passes from a lesser to a greater perfection or vice versa, I don’t mean that he is changed from one essence or form to another, ·i.e. that he becomes a different kind of being·. All I mean is that his intrinsic power of acting—so far as it depends on him ·and not his circumstances·—is increased or diminished. [Between those two sentences Spinoza inserts the remark, which is bewildering in this context: ‘For example, a horse is destroyed as much if it is changed into a man as if it is changed into an insect.’ It may be this sentence that Spinoza is referring to after his demonstration of **39**.]

Finally, I shall, as I have said, use ‘perfection’ in its general sense to mean ‘reality’, so that a thing’s perfection is just its essence as something that exists and acts. Its perfection has nothing to do with how long it lasts, for no particular thing is called ‘more perfect’ just because it stayed in existence for a longer time. ·The link between •perfection and •essence doesn’t yield a link between •perfection and •duration, because· a thing’s essence doesn’t involve any definite time of existing, so that how long a thing will last can’t be determined from its essence. But any thing whatever, whether more or less perfect, will always be able to stay in existence by the same force by which it began to exist; so in this respect—that is, in respect of their *intrinsic* ability to survive—all things are equal.

## Definitions and Axiom

D1: By ‘good’ I shall understand what we certainly know to be useful to us.

D2: By ‘bad’ I shall understand what we certainly know prevents us from being masters of some good.

**Explanation:** On these definitions, see the Preface.

D3: I call an individual thing ‘contingent’ if we can’t find in its essence anything that necessarily requires it to exist or necessarily excludes it from existing.

D4: I call an individual thing ‘possible’ if we don’t know whether the causes that would be needed to produce it *are* bound to produce it.

In the first note on **133** I didn’t distinguish ‘possible’ from ‘contingent’, because there was no need *there* to distinguish them accurately.

D5: By ‘opposite affects’ I shall mean affects that pull a man in different directions though they are of the same genus—such as greed for food and greed for wealth. These are both species of *love*, and they are opposite not intrinsically but because of circumstances—it is a matter of *fact* rather than of *logic* that ·food costs money, so that· one can’t fully indulge both greeds at the same time·.

D6: I have explained in the two notes on **118** what I shall mean by an ‘affect toward’ a future thing, a present one, and a past. Another point to be noted: just as we can distinctly imagine spatial distance only up to a certain limit, the same holds for imagining temporal distance. We ordinarily imagine as being the same distance from us, and thus being all on the same plane, all the physical objects that are further away than we can clearly imagine (say, more than 200 feet away). And similarly with past or future events: if they are further off than we can ordinarily clearly imagine, we mentally place them all at the same time.

D7: By the ‘end’ for the sake of which we do something I understand *appetite*.

D8: By ‘virtue’ and ‘power’ I understand the same thing. That is (by **117**) the *virtue* of a man is his very essence or nature insofar as it gives him the power to do things that are purely upshots of his nature.



## Axiom

There is no individual thing in Nature that isn't surpassed in strength and power by some other thing. Given *any* individual thing, there is another more powerful one that can destroy it.

## Propositions

### 1: Nothing positive that a false idea has is removed by what is true in a true idea.

Falsity consists only in the *lack* of knowledge which inadequate ideas involve (by <sup>II</sup>35), and such ideas aren't called 'false' because of anything *positive* that they contain (by <sup>II</sup>33). On the contrary, in being related to God they are true (by <sup>II</sup>32). So if •what is positive in a false idea were removed by •what is true in a true idea, then a true idea would be removed by itself, which (by <sup>II</sup>4) is absurd. So **1** follows.

**Note on 1:** This proposition is understood more clearly from the second corollary to <sup>II</sup>16. For an imagining is an idea that is more informative about the present constitution of the person's body than it is about the nature of anything outside him; but it represents the body in a confused way, not clearly, which is how it happens that the mind is said to err.

For example, when we look at the sun, we see it as being about 200 feet away from us. In this we are deceived if we don't know its true distance; but when we *do* know its true distance, that removes our •error but not our •imagining of the sun—i.e. our seeing it *as* 200 feet away. It leaves our imagining untouched, because it is the idea of the sun that is informative about the sun only through the sun's affecting our body. So even when we come to know how far away the sun is, we shall still see it *as* being quite close. For, as I said

in the note on <sup>II</sup>35, we picture the sun as being so near not •because we don't know how far away it is but •because the mind's conception of the sun's size depends •only on how the body is affected by the sun. Thus, when the sun shines on a pond and the rays are reflected to our eyes, we see it as being in the water although know where it really is.

It's the same with all the other imaginings by which the mind is deceived—that is, every case of perceiving something *as* F when really it isn't F. It makes no difference *what kind of* bodily state the imagining reflects—whether it reflects the body's basic constitution or rather its changing for the better or the worse—in any case the imagining is not *contrary to the true*, and doesn't disappear in the presence of the truth.

It does of course happen that when we wrongly fear something bad our fear disappears when we hear news of the truth. But it also happens that when we *rightly* fear some bad thing that *is* going to come, our fear vanishes when we hear *false* news. So what makes an imagining x disappear is not *the truth* in something true, but just the occurrence of some other imagining that is *stronger* than x and •conflicts with x, i.e. •excludes the present existence of whatever it was we imagined in x. I showed in <sup>II</sup>17 how this happens.

### 2: To the extent that we are a part of Nature that can't be conceived through itself without bringing other things in, we are acted on.

We say that we are acted on when there occurs in us •something of which (by <sup>III</sup>D2) we are only the partial cause, that is (by <sup>III</sup>1) •something that can't be deduced from the laws of our nature alone. So **2** follows.

**3: The force by which a man stays in existence is limited, and infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes.**

This is evident from the axiom of this Part. Take any man you like: according to the axiom there is something else more powerful than him, and something else again more powerful than *it*, and so on, to infinity. So **3** follows.

**4: (1) It is impossible for a man not to be a part of Nature, and (2) it is impossible for a man to undergo only changes that can be understood through his own nature alone (changes of which he is the total cause).**

**Corollary:** A man •can't avoid being subject to passions, •follows and obeys the common order of Nature, and •accommodates himself to it as much as the nature of things requires.

[Here and in what follows, a *passio* on the part of *x* can be a *passion* of *x*'s but can also be an episode in which *x* is *passive*. Spinoza evidently doesn't distinguish these.]

(1) The power by which an individual thing stays in existence is the very power of God or Nature (by the corollary to **I24**)—not insofar as it is infinite but insofar as it involves the individual's actual essence (by **III7**). [Where the text has 'involves', Spinoza's Latin literally means 'can be explained through'. The proposition means, roughly, that the cause of a thing's staying in existence is *Nature*, considered not just as a set of universal causal laws but also as bringing in detailed facts about that individual.] And what holds for any individual holds for any man. So a man's power, considered as involving his actual essence, is part of God's or Nature's infinite power, that is (by **I34**), a part of Nature's essence.

(2) If a man could undergo only changes that could

be understood through his nature alone, it would follow (by **III4** and **III6**) that he couldn't perish—i.e. that necessarily he would always exist. The cause of his lasting for ever would have either •finite power, meaning that

•the man himself would have the resources to protect himself from •potentially harmful• changes that could come from external causes, or •infinite power, meaning that

the power of •Nature as a whole would direct all individual things in such a way that the man could undergo no changes except ones that helped him to stay in existence.

But the former option is absurd (by **3**, whose demonstration is perfectly general and can be applied to all individual things). So the latter option would have to be right: the man's lasting for ever would have to follow from God's infinite power; and (by **I16**) the only way for that to happen would be for the order of the whole of material and mental Nature to follow from the necessity of the divine nature *considered as involving the idea of this man*. [Meaning, roughly, that all the basic laws of physics and psychology could be derived from an accurate account of this one man.] And so (by **I21**) the man would be infinite. But, as the first part of this demonstration shows, that is absurd.

•Neither option is possible•, so a man can't possibly undergo only changes of which he himself is the adequate cause.

**5: What sets the limits to how strong a given passion is, to how it grows and to how long it lasts, is not the power of the person whose passion it is (the power by which he tries to stay in existence), but the amount by which that power is less than the power of some external cause.**

The detailed facts about your passion can't be explained through your nature alone (by **III D1** and **III D27**); that is, (by **III 7**), how far your passion goes can't be settled just by the power by which you try to stay in existence, but (as I have shown in **II 16**) its limits must depend on how your power compares with the power of some external cause.

**6: The force of someone's passion = affect can be greater than all his power, so that the affect stubbornly clings to him.**

How strong and growing and long-lasting someone's passion is depends on how *his* power compares with the power of an external cause (by **5**). The difference between those can be greater than his power; that is, the external cause may have more than twice the power the man has. And so (by **3**) the passion can surpass all his power etc.

**7: An affect can't be restrained or removed except by another affect that is opposite to it and stronger than it.**

An affect considered as •mental is an idea by which the mind affirms of its body either a greater or lesser force of existing than it had before (by the General Definition of the Affects at the end of Part III.). So when someone's mind is troubled by some affect, his body is at the same time in a state by which its power of acting is either increased or diminished.

This state of the body (by **5**) gets its force for staying in existence from its cause, and (by **II 6**) that cause must be a bodily one. So it can't be restrained or removed except by a *stronger* cause that •drives the body in the opposite direction (by the Axiom and **III 5**). If such a •stronger• cause *does* intervene, then (by

**II 12**) the mind will come to have the idea of a •bodily• state stronger than its previous state and opposite to it, that is (by the General Definition of the Affects), the mind will come to have an affect stronger than and opposite to the previous one, which will abolish the previous one. So **7** follows.

**Corollary:** An affect considered as •mental can't be restrained or removed except by the •idea of an opposite state of the •body that is stronger than the •bodily• state involved in the affect. That is because an affect can't be restrained or removed except by *an affect* stronger than it and opposite to it (by **7**), i.e. (by the General Definition of the Affects) except by *an idea of a state of the body* stronger than and opposite to the previous state.

**8: The •so-called• knowledge of good and evil is nothing but an affect of pleasure or unpleasure of which we are conscious.** [The noun 'evil' translates the same word—in Latin a noun or an adjective—that is translated as the adjective 'bad'.]

We call 'good' or 'bad' what tends for or against our staying in existence (by **D1** and **D2**), that is (by **III 7**), what increases or lessens our power of acting. And so, by the definitions of 'pleasure' and 'unpleasure' in the note on **III 11**, when we see that a thing gives us pleasure or unpleasure we call it 'good' or 'bad'. So •knowledge of good and evil is nothing but •an idea of pleasure or unpleasure which follows necessarily from the pleasure or unpleasure itself (by **II 22**). But really this idea *is* the pleasure or unpleasure: we have here merely two ways of conceptualizing the same thing (see **II 21** and its note). So •the knowledge of good and evil is nothing but •the affect •of pleasure or unpleasure• when we are conscious of it.

**9: When we have an affect whose cause we imagine to be with us right now, the affect is stronger than it would have been if we hadn't imagined this.**

An imagining is an idea by which the mind considers an external thing as present (see its definition in the note on <sup>II</sup>17), though it is more informative about the constitution of the person's body than it is about the external thing (by the second corollary to <sup>II</sup>16. Now, by the General Definition of the Affects, an affect considered as informative about the person's body is just an imagining. But by <sup>II</sup>17 an imagining is more intense while we don't imagine anything that excludes the present existence of the external thing—that is imagined. Hence, an affect whose cause we imagine to be with us right now is more intense, stronger, than if we hadn't imagined it to be with us.

**Note on 9:** I said in <sup>III</sup>18 that when we imagine a future or past thing we have the same affect as we would if we were imagining something present; but I explicitly warned in the demonstration that this is true only about the thing's image taken in isolation, for *it* is just the same whether we have imagined the thing as present or not. But I didn't deny that the affect is weakened when we consider as present to us *other* things that exclude the present existence of the future thing—toward which we have the affect. I omitted this point back there because I had decided to treat the powers of the affects in this Part.

**Corollary:** Other things being equal, the image of a future or past thing (i.e. one we consider in relation to a future or past time, the present being excluded) is weaker than the image of a present thing; and so an affect toward a future or past thing is milder, other things being equal, than an affect toward a present thing.

**10: Our affect toward a future thing will be more intense if we imagine that the thing will soon be present than it would have been if we had imagined the thing to be further off in the future. We also have a more intense affect from the memory of a thing we imagine as recent than we would have if we imagined it to be long past.**

In imagining that a thing will soon be present, or that it is recent, we imagine something that excludes the thing's being present, but the exclusion is *less*—severe or strong or obvious—than the exclusion that would be involved in imagining the thing to be further off in the past or in the future. (This is self-evident.) And so (by 9) to that extent our affect toward it will be more intense.

**Note on 10:** From the note after D6 it follows that if we have affects toward two objects each of which is separated from the present by an interval of time longer than that we can determine by imagining [= longer than we can have any imaginative or intuitive *sense of*], our affects toward the two will be equally mild even if we know that the objects are separated from one another by a long interval of time. I mean that this will be so *other things being equal*; it's a point just about the effect of temporal distance on the affects; two affects of the kind described here might have different strengths because, for instance, one is a fear of falling ill fairly soon while the other is a fear of dying in agony next year.

**11: An affect toward something we imagine as necessary is more intense, other things being equal, than an affect toward a thing we imagine as possible or as contingent = not necessary.**

In imagining a thing to be necessary we affirm that it exists. On the other hand, to the extent that we imagine a thing not to be necessary, to that extent

we deny its existence (by the first note on **I33**), and therefore (by **9**), •an affect toward a necessary thing is more intense, other things being equal, than toward one •imagined as• not necessary. [To make the second premise of this argument less puzzling, think of it in terms of imagining x to be ‘possible’ in the sense of D4. That is close to imagining x as not *inevitable*, which involves making some room in one’s mind for the thought of x as not happening at all. But the premise seems quite implausible when thought of in terms of imagining x to be ‘contingent’ in the sense of D3; for one might think x to be ‘contingent’ in *that* sense while regarding it as quite inevitable for causal reasons.]

**12: An affect toward something that we know doesn’t exist right now, and which we imagine as •possible •in the future•, is more intense, other things being equal, than one toward a thing we imagine as •contingent.**

It is stipulated that we imagine certain things that exclude x’s present existence (•because we know that it doesn’t exist right now•), and our imagining it as •contingent doesn’t involve having any image of something that implies x’s existence (by D3); •so *that* frame of mind doesn’t include anything that positively suggests that x will come about•. But imagining x to be •possible in the future involves imagining certain things that imply its existence (by D4), i.e. (by **III18**) that encourage hope or fear. So an affect toward a thing that is •imagined as• possible is more violent, •other things being equal, than an affect toward one imagined as contingent•. [To see how this is meant to work, consider: according to D4 the thought of x as •possible includes a thought *about* things that might cause x to happen. The making-x-happen element is buried in the thought that x is possible, but not in the thought that x is •contingent.]

**Corollary:** An affect toward something that we imagine as contingent is much milder if we know that it doesn’t exist in the present than it would be if we imagined the thing as with us in the present.

[The text of the demonstration of this seems to be faulty, and different repairs have been proposed. It isn’t hard to see intuitively how Spinoza would think that this corollary follows from **12** aided by the corollary to **9** and by **10**. It may be worth noting •that **12** is not used in any later demonstration, •that this corollary to it is used only once, in an off-hand manner, in the demonstration of **17**; and •that **17** is not heard from again in the rest of the work.]

**13: An affect toward a thing that is •imagined as• contingent and that we know doesn’t exist in the present is milder, other things being equal, than an affect toward a thing that is •imagined as• past.**

Imagining a thing as contingent doesn’t involve having any image of something else that implies the thing’s existence (by D3); and knowing that it isn’t in the present involves imagining things that exclude its present existence. But imagining a thing x as being in the past involves imagining something that brings x back to our memory, or that arouses the image of x (see **II18** and the note on it), and therefore brings it about that we consider x as if it were present (by the corollary to **II17**). And so (by **9**) an affect toward a contingent thing that we know doesn’t exist in the present will be milder, other things being equal, than an affect toward a thing that is •imagined as• past.

**14: True knowledge of good and evil can't restrain any affect through the •truth that it contains, but only through its strength •as an affect.**

An affect is an idea by which a mind affirms of its body a greater or lesser force of existing than before (by the General Definition of the Affects). So (by 1) it has nothing positive that could be removed by the presence of the true. Consequently the *truth of* any true knowledge of good and bad can't restrain any affect.

But knowledge of good and bad is itself an affect (see 8), so *as an affect* it can restrain another affect that is weaker than it is (by 7)

**15: A desire arising from a true knowledge of good and evil •is not made invulnerable by its coming from that source. On the contrary it• can be extinguished or restrained by many other desires arising from •other• affects by which we are tormented.**

[What follows slightly simplifies and re-arranges Spinoza's extraordinarily difficult demonstration.] According to <sup>III</sup>37 a desire of yours arising from an affect is strong in proportion as the affect is strong; and by 8 true knowledge of good and evil is just an affect. Since it is *true knowledge* etc., it belongs to the *active* aspects of your nature (see <sup>III</sup>3 which connects activeness with having adequate ideas, which are connected with truth); and that means that it comes purely from •your nature, which means that its strength and ability to grow is limited to what •your nature can give it. The strength and growth potential of affects by which you are tormented, on the other hand, is not limited in that way, and can draw on the power of external causes,

which (by 3) is indefinitely much greater than your own power. And the violence of these affects generates strength in the desires arising from them. By 7 the stronger can restrain or extinguish the weaker. So 15 follows.

**16: A desire arising from a true knowledge of good and evil, when the knowledge concerns the future, can quite easily be restrained or extinguished by a desire for things that are attractive now.**

A desire arising from a true knowledge of good and evil can be restrained or extinguished by some rash desire (as 15 implies), and that holds for the special case where the true knowledge of etc. concerns things that are good *now*. So it is even *more* true that some rash desire can restrain or extinguish a desire arising from true knowledge etc. relating to *the future*, because, by the corollary to 9, an affect toward a thing we imagine as future is milder than one toward a present thing.

**17:** [This proposition says in effect that the x-can-be-restrained-by-y thesis of 16 is even truer—the restraining is even easier—if x concerns contingent things. Spinoza says that this can be proved from the corollary 12, by an argument like the one for 16.]

**Note on 14–17:** With this I believe I have shown why men are moved more by opinion than by true reason, and why the true knowledge of good and evil creates disturbances of the mind, and often yields to low desires of all kinds. Hence that words of the poet •Ovid•, 'I see and approve the better; I follow the worse.' The author of Ecclesiastes seems to have had the same thing in mind when he said: 'He who increases knowledge increases sorrow' [Ecclesiastes 1:18]. In saying these things I don't mean to imply that ignorance is better than knowledge, or that when it comes to moderating

the affects the fool is on a par with the man who understands. I'm saying them because we *must* come to know both our nature's •power and its •weakness, so that we can settle what reason •can do in moderating the affects and what it •can't do. ·I have been focussing on the dark or negative side of this matter here, because· I said that in this Part of the work I would treat only of man's •weakness, reserving reason's •power over the affects for separate treatment ·in Part V·.

**18: A desire arising from pleasure is stronger, other things being equal, than one arising from unpleasure.**

[In this demonstration, 'IIIAD1' refers to the first Affect Definition in Part III. Similarly for other 'IIIAD' references from now on.] Your desire is your very essence (by IIIAD1), that is (by III7), it is your effort to stay in existence. So a desire arising from pleasure is aided or increased by the affect of pleasure itself; whereas a desire arising from unpleasure is lessened or restrained by the affect of unpleasure. (Both these points come from the definition of 'pleasure' in the note on III11.) And so the limits on the strength of a desire of yours arising from pleasure must be set by the combination of •your power and •the power of the external cause, whereas the limits on the strength of a desire arising from unpleasure must be set by •your power alone. So the former is stronger than the latter.

**Note on 18:** With these few words I have explained men's weakness and inconstancy, and why men don't follow the precepts of reason. Now it remains for me to show what reason prescribes to us—•which affects are in harmony with the rules of human reason and •which affects conflict with them. But before starting to demonstrate these things in my long-winded 'geometrical order', I want first to sketch the

dictates of reason themselves, so that everyone can more easily grasp my thought.

Since reason demands nothing contrary to Nature, it demands that everyone

- love himself,
- seek his own advantage (his *real* advantage),
- want what will really lead him to a greater perfection, and—unconditionally—
- try as hard as he can to stay in existence.

This, indeed, is as necessarily true as that the whole is greater than its part (see III4). Further, since *virtue* (by D8) is simply *acting from the laws of one's own nature*, and (by III7) no-one tries to stay in existence except from the laws of his own nature, it follows:

- (i) that the basis of virtue is this same effort to stay in existence, and that a man's happiness consists in his being able to succeed in this;
- (ii) that we ought to want virtue *for its own sake*, and that there is nothing preferable to it, nothing more useful to us, for the sake of which we ought to want virtue;
- (iii) that people who kill themselves are weak-minded and completely conquered by external causes that are opposed to their nature.

·Let me remind you of postulate P4 in the Physical Interlude in Part II: 'For a human body to be preserved, it needs a great many other bodies by which it is continually regenerated, so to speak·.' From this postulate it follows that we can never escape the need for outside help to stay in existence, or find a way of life in which we don't have to deal with things outside us. And consider our mind: our intellect would of course be *less* perfect if the mind were isolated and didn't understand anything except itself. So there are many things outside us that are useful to us and should therefore be sought.

Of these, I can think of none more excellent than those that are in complete harmony with our nature. For example, if two individuals with completely the same nature are joined to one another, they compose an individual twice as powerful as either of them separately. (See the account of ‘individuals’ in the Physical Interlude in Part II.) So there is nothing more useful to a man than a man. Men, I repeat, can wish for nothing more helpful to their staying in existence than •that all •men• should be in such harmony that the minds and bodies of them all would be like *one* mind and *one* body; •that all together should try as hard as they can to stay in existence; and •that all together should seek for themselves the common advantage of all.

From this it follows that men who are governed by reason—i.e. men who are guided by reason to seek their own advantage—want nothing for themselves that they don’t want also for other men. So they are just, honest, and honourable.

Those are the dictates of reason that I said I would sketch here, before starting to demonstrate them in a more laborious •geometrical• way. In sketching them I have been trying to attract the attention of those who believe that the principle *Everyone is bound to seek his own advantage* is the basis not of virtue and morality [*pietas*] but of moral laxity! Having now briefly indicated that this is the reverse of the truth, I shall now get back to demonstrating that with the same method that I have been using all through. I shall reach the end of *that* part of my task in the note on 37.

**19: Everyone, from the laws of his own nature, necessarily wants what he judges to be good and is repelled by what he judges to be bad.**

Knowledge of good and evil (by 8) is itself a conscious affect of pleasure or unpleasure. And so (by <sup>III</sup>28),

everyone necessarily wants what he judges to be good and is repelled by what he judges to be bad. And a man wants this ‘from the laws of his own nature’ because his *wanting*—his appetite—is nothing but *his very essence or nature* (see the definition of ‘appetite’ in the note on <sup>III</sup>9, and see also <sup>III</sup>AD1. So 19 follows.

**20: The more a man successfully tries to seek his own advantage, i.e. to stay in existence, the more he is endowed with virtue. Conversely, to the extent that a man neglects his own advantage, i.e. neglects •to do things favourable to• his staying in existence, he is weak.**

A man’s virtue is his power, the limits of which are set purely by his own essence (by D8), that is, (by <sup>III</sup>7) purely by his efforts to stay in existence. So the harder anyone tries to stay in existence, and the more he succeeds, the more he is endowed with virtue = power. And so (by <sup>III</sup>4 and <sup>III</sup>6) to the extent that he neglects •to do things favourable to• his staying in existence, he is weak.

**Note on 20:** No-one, therefore, unless he is defeated by causes that are external and contrary to his nature, neglects to seek his own advantage or to stay in existence. No-one, I say, is driven *by the necessity of his own nature* to avoid food or to kill himself. Those who do such things are compelled by outside causes, which can happen in many ways. Someone may kill himself because •he is compelled by someone else who twists his right hand (with a sword in it) and forces him to direct the sword against his heart; or because •he is forced by the command of a tyrant (as Seneca was) to open his veins, so that in doing this bad thing he is avoiding something even worse; or finally because •hidden external causes act on his imagination and affect his body in such a way that his body takes on another nature, contrary to its



former nature, this new deformed nature being one that he can't have any idea of in his mind (by **III10**). But that a man should from the necessity of his own nature try not to exist, or try to be changed into something different, is as impossible as that something should come from nothing. Anyone who gives this a little thought will see it.

**21: No-one can want to be happy, to act well and to live well, unless at the same time he wants to be, to act, and to live—that is, to actually exist.**

The demonstration of this is self-evident; indeed, the proposition itself is self-evident! It can also be derived from the definition of 'desire'. For (by **IIIAD1**) a man's desire to live happily, or to live well, etc., is his very essence, that is (by **III7**) the effort through which he tries to stay in existence. So **21** follows.

**22: No virtue can be conceived prior to this virtue, that is, prior to the effort to stay in existence.**

A thing's effort to stay in existence is its very essence (by **III7**). So the notion of a virtue that is prior to this one, i.e. to this effort, is the thought of the thing's very essence being prior to itself (by D8), which is self-evidently absurd. So **22** follows.

**Corollary:** The effort to stay in existence is the first and only foundation of virtue. For no other principle can be conceived prior to this one (by **22**) and no virtue can be conceived without it (by **21**).

**23: When a man is caused to do something because of inadequate ideas that he has, he can't be said unqualifiedly to be 'acting from virtue'; for THAT he must be caused to act as he does because he understands and thus has adequate ideas.**

To the extent that a man is caused to act by inadequate ideas that he has, he

•is acted on (by **III1**),  
that is (by **III D1** and **III D2**) he  
•does something that can't be grasped purely  
through his essence,  
that is (by D8) he  
•does something that doesn't follow from his  
virtue.

But to the extent that he is caused to act by his understanding something, he

•is active (by **III1**),  
that is (by **III D2**)  
•does something that is grasped through his  
essence alone,  
that is (by D8) he  
•does something that is entirely caused by his  
virtue.

**24: To say without qualification that someone 'acts from virtue' is just to say that he acts, lives, and stays in existence (three labels for one thing!) by the guidance of reason, on the basis of seeking his own advantage.**

Acting from virtue is nothing but acting from the laws of our own nature (by D8). But we *act* only to the extent that we *understand* (by **III3**). So our acting from virtue is nothing but our acting, living, and staying in existence by the guidance of reason, and (by the corollary to **22**) on the basis of seeking our own advantage.

**25: No-one tries to stay in existence for the sake of anything else.**

The effort through which each thing tries to stay in existence is defined purely by its essence (by **III7**). Given just this essence, it follows necessarily that the thing tries to stay in existence—but this doesn't follow

necessarily from the essence of anything else (by **III6**). This proposition is also evident from the corollary to **22**. For if a man tried to stay in existence for the sake of something else, then the latter thing would be the first foundation of ·his· virtue (this is self-evident). But the corollary to **22** says that that is absurd. So again **25** follows.

**26: The only thing that reason makes us try to get is understanding; and our mind, to the extent that it uses reason, doesn't judge anything to be useful to it except what leads to understanding.**

A thing's effort to stay in existence is nothing but the thing's essence (by **III7**); and that essence, existing as it does, is conceived to have a force for staying in existence (by **III6**) and for doing the things that necessarily follow from its given nature (see the definition of 'appetite' in the note on **III9**). But the essence of ·our· ·reason is nothing but ·our mind in its aspect as something that understands clearly and distinctly (see the definition of 'reason' in the second note on **III37–40**). Therefore (by **II40**) what reason leads us to try to do, ·in trying to preserve *itself*·, is simply to *understand*. So the first part of **26** follows.

Next, since this effort through which the reasoning mind tries to stay in existence is nothing but understanding (by the first part of this demonstration), this effort for understanding (by the corollary to **22**) is the first and only foundation of virtue; and (by **25**) we don't try to understand things for the sake of some ·further· end. On the contrary, to the extent that the mind reasons it can't conceive anything to be good for it except what leads to understanding (by D1); ·so there can be no question of its seeking understanding

as a means to something *else*·. So the second part of **26** follows.

**27: The only things we know for sure to be good (or to be bad) are things that really lead to understanding (or that can prevent us from understanding).**

All the mind wants in reasoning is to understand, and it doesn't judge anything else to be useful to it except as a means to understanding (by **26**). But (by **II4** and **II41** and **II43** and the note on it) the mind knows things for sure only to the extent that it ·has adequate ideas, or (what is the same thing, by the ·second· note on **II37–40**, to the extent that it ·reasons. So **27** follows.

**28: (1) The mind's greatest good is knowledge of God; (2) its greatest virtue is to know God.**

(1) The greatest thing the mind can understand is God, that is (by **ID6**, an absolutely infinite being without which (by **I15**) nothing can exist and nothing can be conceived. And so (by **26** and **27**), the mind's greatest advantage, or (by D1) its greatest good, is knowledge of God. (2) Next, only in *understanding* is the mind *active* (by **III1** and **III3**, and only in understanding can it be said without qualification to act from virtue (by **23**). So the unqualified or unconditional virtue of the mind is understanding. But the greatest thing the mind can understand is God (already demonstrated). So the greatest virtue of the mind is to understand or know God.

**29: (1) A particular thing whose nature is entirely different from ours can neither help nor hinder our power of acting, and (2) absolutely nothing can be either good or bad for us unless it has something in common with us.**

(1) The power of each •particular thing, and consequently the power by which each •man exists and acts, is subject to causal influences only from other particular things (by <sup>I</sup>28) whose nature must (by <sup>II</sup>6) be understood through the same attribute through which human nature is conceived. [That is: if you are asking about causal influences on a man's mind, you must look to other *minds*, or anyway other particulars *thought of under the attribute of thought*. And if you are asking about causal influences on a man's body, you must look to other bodies.] So our power of acting, however it is conceived—whether as mental or as physical—can be influenced by the power of another particular thing that has something in common with us, and not by the power of a thing whose nature is completely different from ours; and the limits on what something can be •influenced by are limits on what it can be •helped or •hindered by.

(2) And because we call 'good' or 'bad' what causes pleasure or unpleasure (by 8), that is (by the note on <sup>III</sup>11) what increases or lessens, helps or hinders, our power of acting, something whose nature is completely different from ours can't be either good or bad for us.

**30: Nothing can be bad ·for us· because of what it has in common with our nature. To the extent that a thing is bad for us it is contrary to us ·in its nature·.**

We call 'bad' what causes unpleasure (by 8), that is (by the definition of 'unpleasure' in the note on <sup>III</sup>11) what lessens or restrains our power of acting. So if a thing were bad for us because of what it has in common

with us, then the thing could lessen or restrain what it has in common with us, and that (by <sup>III</sup>4) is absurd. So nothing can be bad for us because of what it has in common with us. On the contrary, to the extent that something is bad ·for us·, i.e. can lessen or restrain our power of acting, it is contrary to us (by <sup>III</sup>5).

**31: To the extent that a thing agrees with our nature, it is necessarily good.**

To the extent that a thing agrees with our nature it can't be bad (by 30). So it must either be •good or •indifferent. Suppose the latter, i.e. that the thing is neither good nor bad ·for us·: in that case nothing will follow from its nature that helps the preservation of our nature, i.e. that helps the preservation of the nature of the thing itself, ·because it and we have *the same* nature·. But this is absurd (by <sup>III</sup>6). ·That knocks out the 'indifferent' option, leaving only the 'good' one·. So, to the extent that the thing agrees with our nature it must be good.

**Corollary:** The *more* a thing agrees with our nature the *more* useful it is to us (the better it is for us), and conversely the more a thing is useful to us the more it agrees with our nature.

[The demonstration of this doesn't cast any further light.]

**32: To the extent that men are subject to passions, they can't be said to agree in nature.**

Things that are said to agree in nature are understood to agree in the powers that they *have* (by <sup>III</sup>7), but not the powers that they *lack*, and consequently (see the note on <sup>III</sup>3) not in their passions either. So to the extent that men are subject to passions, they can't be said to agree in nature.

**Note on 32:** This is also self-evident. If someone says ‘Black and white agree only in not being *red*’ he is saying outright that black and white don’t agree in anything. Similarly, if someone says ‘A stone and a man agree only in that each •is finite, •lacks power, •doesn’t exist from the necessity of its nature, and •is indefinitely surpassed by the power of external causes’, he is saying that a stone and a man don’t agree in anything; for things that agree only in a negation, or in what they *don’t* have, really agree in nothing.

**33: Men can disagree in nature to the extent that they are tormented by passive affects; and to that extent also one and the same man is changeable and inconstant.**

The nature or essence of our ·passive· affects can’t be explained through our essence or nature alone (by **I**D1 and **I**D2), but must be determined by how the *power* of external causes compares with our own power—i.e. (by **III**7) by how their *nature* compares with our own. ·So the details of what any given passive affect is like come partly from the external causes that contribute to its existence·. That is why •there are as many species of each ·kind of· affect as there are species of objects by which we are affected (see **III**56); it is why •men are affected differently by one and the same object (see **III**51), and in being affected differently disagree in nature. And finally it is why •one and the same man (by **III**51 again) has different affects ·at different times· toward the same object, and to that extent is changeable, etc.

**34: To the extent that men are tormented by passive affects they can be contrary to one another.**

Suppose that Peter is a cause of Paul’s displeasure •because he has something similar to a thing that Paul hates (by **III**16), or •because he has sole possession of

something that Paul also loves (see **III**32 and the note on it), or on account of other causes (for the main ones see the note on **III**55). This (by **III**AD7) will have the result that Paul hates Peter. Hence (by **III**40 and the note on it) Peter hates Paul in return, and so (by **III**39) they try to harm one another; that is (by **30**), they are contrary to one another. But an affect of displeasure is always a passive one (by **III**59). So **34** follows.

**Note on 34:** I have said that Paul hates Peter because he imagines that Peter owns something that Paul also loves. At first glance this seems to imply that these two men are injurious to one another because •they love the same thing, and hence because •they agree in nature. If this were right, **30** and **31** would be false.

But if we examine the matter fairly we shall see that there is no inconsistency here. What the two men agree in is *love for x*, where *x* is the same thing in each case. *This* doesn’t make them troublesome to one another; on the contrary, by **III**31 these loves encourage one another, and so (by **III**AD6 each one’s pleasure is encouraged by the other’s. Their enmity comes from the fact that Peter has the idea of *x-which-I-own* while Paul has the idea of *x-which-I-don’t-own*. It is in that respect that they are contrary to one another; it is a difference between their natures; it is why one has pleasure and the other displeasure.

All the other causes of hate depend purely on the men’s disagreeing in nature, not on anything in which they agree. We can show this in each case, by means similar to those I have just used in the Peter-Paul example.

**35: Only to the extent that men live by the guidance of reason are they sure always to agree in nature.**

To the extent that men are tormented by passive affects, they can be different in nature (by **33**), and contrary to one another (by **34**). But they are said to be *active* to the extent that they live by the guidance of reason (by **III3**). Hence, whatever follows from the reasoning aspects of a man's nature must be understood through his nature alone (by **III D2** as its immediate cause, ·not having any causal input from anything else·. But because ·each man is led by the laws of his own nature to want what he judges to be good, and tries to avoid what he judges to be bad (by **19**), and also because ·what we *judge to be* good or bad when we follow the dictate of reason must *be* good or bad (by **II4**), it follows that to the extent that men live by the guidance of reason they are sure to do only things that are good for human nature, and thus good for each man, i.e. (by the corollary to **31**) things that agree with the nature of each man. Hence, to the extent that men live by the guidance of reason they are sure always to agree among themselves.

**First corollary:** No individual thing in Nature is more useful to a man than a·nother· man who lives by the guidance of reason.

What is most useful to a man is ·what most agrees with his nature (by the corollary to **31**)—that is, obviously, ·a man. But a man acts entirely from the laws of his own nature when he lives by the guidance of reason (by **III D2**), and only to that extent is he sure to agree always with the nature of the other man (by **35**). So the corollary follows.

**Second corollary:** Men are most useful to one another when each man most seeks his own advantage for himself.

The more each one seeks his own advantage and tries to stay in existence, ·the more virtue he has (by **20**), or—the same thing (by D8)—·the greater is his power of acting according to the laws of his own nature, that is (by **III3**), ·the greater is his power of living from the guidance of reason. But men agree in nature *most* when they live by the guidance of reason (by **35**). Therefore (by the first corollary to **35**), men will be *most* useful to one another when each man *most* seeks his own advantage.

**Note on 35 and its corollaries:** What I have just shown is also confirmed by daily experience, which provides so much and such clear evidence for it that *Man is a God to man* is a common saying. Still, men don't often live by the guidance of reason. Instead, they live in such a way that they are usually envious and burdensome to one another. But they can hardly lead an entirely solitary life, which is why most people approve of the definition of man as 'a social animal'. And surely we gain much more than we lose by living in the society of our fellow men.

So let satirists laugh as much as they like at human affairs, let theologians curse them, let misanthropes do their utmost in praising a life that is uncultivated and wild, despising men and admiring the lower animals. Men still find from experience that by helping one another they can have their own needs met more easily, and that only by joining forces can they avoid the dangers that threaten on all sides. Also: thinking about how *men* behave is greatly preferable to thinking about how *the lower animals* behave—preferable and more worthy of our knowledge. No more of that now; I shall treat the topic more fully elsewhere.

**36: The greatest good of those who seek virtue is common to all, and all can enjoy it equally.**

To act from virtue is to act by the guidance of reason (by **24**), and anything that reason leads us to attempt is a case of *understanding* (by **26**). And so (by **28**) the greatest good of those who seek virtue is to know God, and *that* (by **II47** and the note on it) is a good that is common to all men; all men can have it to the extent that they are of the same nature.

**Note on 36:** You may ask: ‘What if the greatest good of those who seek virtue were *not* common to all? Wouldn’t it follow from that (see **34**) that men who live by the guidance of reason, and who thus (by **35**) agree in nature, would be contrary to one another?’

The answer to this is that ‘the antecedent of your conditional supposition is *absolutely impossible*, so that we can’t coherently theorize about what would be the case *if it were true*, any more than we can speculate about how things would be if twice two equalled five’. The proposition that *man’s greatest good is common to all* doesn’t just *happen* to be true; rather, it arises from the very nature of reason, because it is deduced from the very essence of man in his capacity as a reasoner, and because man could neither be nor be conceived if he didn’t have the power to enjoy this greatest good. For (by **II47** it belongs to the essence of the human mind to have an adequate knowledge of God’s eternal and infinite essence.

**37: If someone seeks virtue, then (i) the good that he wants for himself he also wants for other men; and (ii) the intensity of this desire is proportional to how much he knows of God.**

(i) By **24**, anyone who seeks virtue lives according to the dictate of reason, and so (by **26**) ‘the good that he wants for himself is understanding. And men are

most useful to us when they live by the guidance of reason (by the first corollary to **35**); and so (by **19**) reason guides us into ‘trying to bring it about that other men do live in that way. Putting the two bits together’: the good that everyone who seeks virtue wants for himself he also wants for other men.

(ii) Desire, considered as a mental phenomenon, is the very essence of the mind (by **IIIAD1**). Now the essence of the mind consists in knowledge (by **II11**), which involves knowledge of God (by **II47**), without which the mind can neither be nor be conceived (by **I15**). Hence, for someone who seeks virtue, the greater the knowledge of God that his mind involves the more intense will be his desire that others have the good he wants for himself.

**Another demonstration:** The good that a man wants for himself and loves, he will love more constantly if he sees that others also love it (by the corollary to **III31**). So (by the corollary to **III31**), he will try to bring it about that others *do* love it too. And because this good is common to all (by **36**) and all can enjoy it, (i) he will try to bring it about that all enjoy it. And (ii) the more he enjoys this good the harder he will try (by **III37**).

**First note on 37:** Someone who is led ‘not by ‘reason but by some ‘affect to get others to love what he loves and to live according to his way of thinking is acting only from impulse; and he makes himself hated—especially by people whose preferences are different from his and who are led by a similar impulse to try to get other men to live according to *their* way of thinking! And since the greatest good that men pursue *from an affect* is often something that only one person can possess, those who love such a thing are divided in their minds: though ‘happy to sing the praises of the thing

they love, they •fear to be believed! But someone who is led by reason to try to guide others is not acting by impulse; he is acting kindly, generously, and with the greatest harmony of mind. I classify under ‘religion’ any of our wants and actions that we cause through having the idea of God or through knowing God. I label as ‘morality’ [*pietas*] the desire to do good that arises in us because we are living by the guidance of reason. I classify under ‘being honourable’ [*honestatem*] the desire by which a man who lives by the guidance of reason is bound to join others to himself in friendship. I call ‘honourable’ [*honestum*] anything that is praised by men who live by the guidance of reason, and I call ‘base’ [*turpe*] anything that is contrary to the formation of friendship.

I would add that ·in making these points· I have shown what the foundations of *the civil State* are. ·I shall take that up in the next note·.

From what I have said you can easily see how true virtue differs from weakness: true virtue is simply living by the guidance of reason; so weakness consists purely in allowing yourself to be guided by things external to you, so that your conduct is dictated by •the state of external things in general, not by •your own nature in particular.

These are the things I promised, in the note on **18**, to demonstrate. They make it clear that a law against killing animals owes more to empty superstition and womanish compassion than to sound reason. Our reason for seeking our own advantage teaches us that we must unite with men, but not with the lower animals or with anything else whose nature is different from human nature. We have the same right against them that they have against us. Indeed, because each individual’s virtue = *power* settles what *right* it has, men have a far greater right against the lower animals than they have against men. I’m not denying that the lower animals can *feel*. But I do deny that their having feelings

debars us from considering our own advantage, using them as we please, and treating them in whatever way best suits us. For their natures are unlike ours, and their affects are different in nature from human affects (see the note on **III57**).

It remains now for me to explain what justice and injustice are, what wrong-doing is, and what merit is. I shall do that in the following note.

**Second note on 37:** I promised in the Appendix of Part I to explain what praise and blame, merit and wrong-doing, and justice and injustice are. As for as praise and blame, I explained them in the note on **III29**. This is the place to deal with the others. But first I should say a little about man in the state of Nature and man in a civil ·or governed· State.

Everyone, by the highest right of Nature,

- exists, and
- does the things that follow from the necessity of his own nature; and therefore
- makes his own judgments about what is good and what is bad,
- considers his own advantage according to his own way of thinking (see **19** and **20**),
- seeks revenge (see the second corollary to **III40**), and
- tries to preserve what he loves and to destroy what he hates (see **I28**).

If men lived by the guidance of reason, everyone would have ·and act upon· this right of his (by the first corollary to **35**) without any injury to anyone else. But because men are subject to the affects (by the corollary to **4**), which far surpass the power = virtue of the men (by **6**), they are often pulled in different directions (by **33**) and are opposed to one another (by **34**), while also needing one another’s help (by the note on **35**). So: for men to live in harmony and be helpful to one another, they have to give up their natural right and to make one another confident that they won’t do anything

that could harm others. How can men who are necessarily subject to affects (by the corollary to 4), and are inconstant and changeable (by 33), create mutual confidence and trust? The answer is made clear by 7 and III39. No affect can be restrained except by a stronger affect pulling the opposite way, and everyone refrains from doing harm to others out of timidity regarding a greater harm to himself.

Society can be maintained on these terms, provided it claims *for itself* everyone's right of avenging himself and of judging for himself what is good and what is bad. This will give society the power to prescribe a common rule of life, to make laws, and to enforce them—not by reason (which can't restrain the affects—see the note on 17) but by threats. This society, held in place by its laws and by the power it has of preserving itself, is called a 'civil State', and those who are under the protection of its laws are called 'citizens'.

This makes it easy for us to understand that in the state of Nature there is no common agreement about what is good and what bad, because in the state of Nature everyone considers only his own advantage, deciding what is good and what is bad on the basis of his own way of thinking, and taking account only of his own advantage. No law obliges him to submit to anyone but himself. So in the state of Nature there is no place for the notion of wrong-doing.

But in the civil State it is decided by common agreement what is good and what is bad, and everyone is obliged to submit to the State. So wrong-doing is simply *disobedience*, which can be punished only by the law of the State. And *obedience* is regarded as a merit in a citizen because it leads to his being judged worthy of enjoying the advantages of the State.

Again, in the state of Nature there is no-one who by common consent is the owner [*dominus*, literally = 'master'] of anything: nothing in the state of Nature can be said to be

this man's and not that man's. Instead, everything belongs to everyone. So in the state of Nature there is no room for the notion of *intending to give to each what is his* or that of *intending to deprive someone of what is his*. This means that in the state of Nature nothing can be called 'just' or 'unjust'. That can happen only in the civil State, where common consent decides who owns what.

All this makes it clear that the notions of just and unjust, wrong-doing and merit, are applicable to someone on the basis not of his state of mind but of how he relates to something external to him, namely the laws of the State. That's enough on this topic.

**38: Anything that enables a human body to be affected in many ways and to affect external bodies in many ways is useful to the man whose body it is, and how useful it is depends on how able it makes the body to do how many of those things.** This is praise for sensory acuity and physical dexterity. **And anything that makes a body less capable of these things is harmful.**

The better a body is at these things, the more its mind is capable of perceiving (by II14). So anything that makes a body capable of these things is necessarily good = useful (by 26 and 27), and useful in proportion to *how* capable of doing these things it makes the body. On the other hand (by the converses of the three propositions just cited), it is harmful if it renders the body less capable of these things.

**39: (i) Things that preserve the proportion of motion and rest in the parts of a human body are good; and (ii) things that alter that proportion are bad.**

(i) To stay in existence a human body requires a great many other bodies (postulate P4 in the Physical Interlude in Part II). But what constitutes the *form* of the



human body—that is, the set of features that make it *that body* and not a different one—is the proportion in which its parts communicate their motions to one another (by The Definition in the Physical Interlude in Part II). So things that enable the parts of a human body to •preserve that same proportion of motion and rest to one another thereby •preserve that body's form. So they bring it about that the body can be affected in many ways and can affect external bodies in many ways (by Postulates 3 and 6 in the Physical Interlude in Part II). So they are good (by **38**).

(ii) Things that cause a change in the proportion of motion and rest in a human body's parts bring it about (by The Definition again) that that body

- takes on another form, i.e.
- is destroyed, and thereby
- is made completely incapable of being affected in many ways.

So (by **38**) those things are bad.

(The link between change-of-form and destruction is self-evident. I pointed it out on page 86.)

**Note on 39:** I shall explain in Part V how much these things can harm or help the mind. But here it should be noted that I understand a body to *die* when its parts come to have a different proportion of motion and rest to one another. I'm willing to maintain that a human body can be changed into another nature entirely different from its own—and thus die—even when its blood is circulating and the other so-called 'signs of life' are maintained. For no reason compels me to hold that a body dies only if it is changed into a corpse.

Indeed, experience seems to urge a different conclusion. Sometimes a man goes through such changes that it would hard to maintain that he was still the same man. I have heard stories about a Spanish poet who suffered an illness

after which he had so completely forgotten his past life that he didn't believe that the stories and plays he had written were his work. If he had also forgotten his native language, he could easily have been taken for a grown-up infant.

If this seems incredible, what are we to say about infants? An elderly man believes their nature to be so different from his own that he couldn't be persuaded that he ever *was* an infant if he didn't infer that he was from the example of others! But I don't want to provide superstitious folk with material for raising new questions, so I prefer to leave this discussion unfinished.

**40: Things that are conducive to men's having a common society = to their living together in harmony are useful, whereas ones that bring discord to the State are bad.**

Contributing to men's living harmoniously is contributing to their living by the guidance of reason (by **35**). And so (by **26** and **27**) such things are good. And (by the same reasoning) things that arouse discord are bad.

**41: In itself pleasure is not bad, but good; but unpleasure is inherently bad.**

Pleasure (by <sup>III</sup>**11** and the note on it) is an affect by which the body's power of acting is increased or aided. Whereas unpleasure is an affect by which the body's power of acting is lessened or restrained. And so (by **38**) **41** follows.

**42: Cheerfulness cannot be excessive, but is always good; melancholy, on the other hand, is always bad.**

Cheerfulness (see how it is defined in the note on <sup>III</sup>**11**) is a pleasure which, on its bodily side, involves all parts of the body being equally affected. That is (by <sup>III</sup>**11**, the body's power of acting is increased or

aided ·right across the board·, so that all of its parts maintain the same proportion of motion and rest. And so (by **39**) cheerfulness is always good, and can't be excessive ·in the way it might be if it involved some parts of the body and not others·.

Melancholy (see its definition in that same note) is an unpleasure which on its bodily side involves a lessening or restraining, clear across the board, of the body's power of acting. So (by **38**) it is always bad.

[In the next proposition and the next two demonstrations, the Latin word *titillatio* (literally = 'tickling') is left untranslated, as it was in Part III. The note on **III11** ties it to *localized* pleasure—the pleasure of a swallow of good wine, or of a back-rub, or the like—whereas pain is localized unpleasure.]

**43: (i) *Titillatio* can be excessive and bad; and (ii) to the extent that that can happen, pain can be good.**

(i) *Titillatio* is a pleasure which in its bodily aspect involves some parts of the body being pleased more than all the others. The power of this affect can be so great that it surpasses the other actions of the body (by **6**), remains stubbornly fixed in the body, and so prevents the body from being capable of being affected in a great many *other* ways. Hence (by **38**) it can be bad.

(ii) Pain, being an unpleasure, can't be good in itself (by **41**). But how intense a pain is, and how much it grows, are fixed by how the power of some external cause compares with our power (by **5**); ·there are no limits to the different ways in which, and different extents to which, an external power can surpass our own power (by ·**3**); so there are no limits to the different kinds and degrees of pain that are conceivable. So it's conceivable that a pain should be just right

in its degree and kind to restrain *titillatio* that would otherwise be excessive; a pain like *that* would prevent the body from being made less capable etc. (by the first part of **43**); and so to that extent it would be good.

**44: (i) Love can be excessive, and (ii) so can desire.**

(i) Love is pleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause (by **IIIAD6**). So (by the note on **III116**, *titillatio* accompanied by the idea of an external cause is love. And so (by **43**) love can be excessive.

(ii) The greater the affect from which a desire arises, the greater the desire (by **III37**). Now, an affect (by **6**) can swamp the rest of a man's actions, so that a desire arising from such an affect can swamp the rest of his desires. So it can be excessive in the same way that I have shown in **43** that *titillatio* can be excessive.

**Note on 44:** Cheerfulness, which I have said is good, is easier to think about than actually to find ·in human life·. The affects by which we are daily tormented generally concern one part of the body that is affected more than the others. Usually, then, our affects are excessive, and keep the mind obsessed with some one object to the exclusion of everything else. Men are liable to a great many different affects, so that it's not often that one man is always agitated by the very same affect; but there *are* people in whom one affect is stubbornly fixed. We sometimes encounter men who are so affected by one object that they think they have it with them even when they don't.

When this happens to a man who isn't asleep, we say that he is delirious or insane; and we take the same view of anyone who burns with love, and dreams night and day only of his beloved. For we usually laugh at such people. But when a greedy man thinks of nothing but gain or money, and an ambitious man of nothing but glory, we don't think

*they* are mad, because they are harmful and therefore fit to be hated. But greed, ambition, and lust really *are* kinds of madness, even though we don't classify them as diseases.

**45: Hate can never be good.**

We try to destroy the man we hate (by **III39**, that is (by **37**), we try to do something bad. So **45** follows.

**Note on 45:** Note that here and in what follows I use 'hate' only to refer to *hate toward men*.

**First corollary:** Envy, mockery, disdain, anger, vengeance, and the rest of the affects that are related to hate or arise from it are bad. This too is evident from **37** and **III39**.

**Second corollary:** Whatever we want because we have been affected with hate is base; and ·if we live· in a State it is unjust. This too is evident from **III39**, and from the definitions of 'base' and 'unjust' (see the notes on **37**).

**Note on those corollaries:** I recognize a great difference between *mockery* (which in the first corollary I said was bad) and *laughter*. For laughter and joking are pure pleasure, and so they are good in themselves (by **41**), provided they are not excessive. There's nothing against our having pleasure, except grim and gloomy superstition. Why should it be more proper to relieve our hunger and thirst than it is to rid ourselves of gloom?

Here is what I think, and what guides me in my life. No god or anyone else—unless he is envious of me!—takes pleasure in my weakness and my misfortune, or counts as virtuous our tears, sighs, fears, and other such signs of a weak mind. On the contrary, the greater the pleasure we have, the more we move upwards in perfection, that is, the more fully we share in the divine nature. So it is the part of a wise man to use things and delight in them as far as possible—though not *ad nauseam*, for there is no delight in that.

It is the part of a wise man, I repeat, to refresh and restore himself in moderation with pleasant food and drink, with scents, with the beauty of green plants, with decoration, music, sports, the theatre, and other things of this kind, which anyone can use without harming anyone else. For a human body has many parts with different natures, constantly needing new and varied nourishment, so that the whole body can be equally capable of doing all the things in its potential repertoire, and thus that the mind may also be capable of taking in many things at once.

This way of life agrees best both with my principles and with common practice. So this is the best way of living, and is to be commended in every way. I don't need to go on any longer, or any more clearly, on these matters.

**46: Anyone who lives by the guidance of reason tries as hard as he can to repay any hate, anger, and disdain that others have toward him with love or nobility.**

All affects of hate are bad (by the first corollary of **45**). So someone who lives by the guidance of reason will try as hard as he can to avoid being tormented by affects of hate (by **19**), and so (by **37**) he will try to bring it about that others don't have those affects either. Now, hate is increased by being returned, whereas it can be destroyed by love (by **III43**) so that the hate turns into love (by **III44**). So anyone who lives by the guidance of reason will try to repay others' hate, etc. with love = with nobility (see how that is defined in the note on **III59**).

**Note on 46:** If you try to avenge wrongs ·that you have suffered· by *hating* in return, you'll live a miserable life indeed. Whereas if you devote yourself to battling against hate with love, you'll have a fight that you can take pleasure in, with no fear ·of coming to any harm in it·; you can take

on many men as easily as one, and you'll have the least need of help from luck! Those whom you conquer will take pleasure in their 'defeat', which comes not from weakness but from an increase in their powers. All these things follow so clearly just from the definitions of 'love' and of 'intellect' that there is no need to demonstrate them separately.

**47: Affects of hope and fear cannot be good in themselves.**

There are no affects of hope or fear without unpleasure. For fear is an unpleasure (by **IIIAD13**, and there is no hope without fear (see the explanation following **IIIAD12–13**). Therefore (by **41**) these affects can't be good •in themselves; when there is any good in them it's because they •restrain excesses of pleasure (by **43**).

**Note on 47:** A further point: these affects show a lack of knowledge and weakness of mind; and because of that, these also are signs of a weak mind: confidence and despair, gladness and regret. [On 'regret', see comment inserted in the second note on **III18**.] For although confidence and gladness are affects of pleasure, they presuppose that an unpleasure—hope and fear—has preceded them. So the more we try to live by the guidance of reason, the more we try to avoid depending on hope, to free ourselves from fear, to conquer fortune as much as we can, and to direct our actions by the certain counsel of reason.

**48: Affects of over-rating and scorn are always bad.**

These affects are contrary to reason (by **IIIAD2** and **IIIAD22**). So (by **26** and **27**) they are bad.

**49: Over-rating easily makes the man who is over-rated proud.**

If we see that someone has too high an opinion of us because he loves us so much, we shall (by the

note on **III41**) find it easy to exult—i.e. (by **IIIAD30**) to have pleasure—at being esteemed, and we'll also find it easy to *believe* the good things we hear being said of us (by **III25**). And so our self-love will lead us to think more highly of ourselves than we should, which means (by **III28**) that we shall easily become proud.

**50: (i) Pity is bad in itself, and (ii) in a man who lives by the guidance of reason it is also useless.**

(i) Pity (by **IIIAD18**) is an unpleasure, and therefore (by **41**) it is in itself bad. (ii) The good that comes from pity—namely trying to free the pitied man from his suffering (by the third corollary on **III27**—we want to do purely from the dictate of reason (by **37**), and it's only when we act on the dictate of reason that we know for sure that we are doing good (by **27**). So pity is bad in itself, and in a man who lives by the dictate of reason, it is useless.

**Corollary:** A man who lives by the dictate of reason tries as hard as he can not to be touched by pity. **Note on 50 and its corollary:** Someone who rightly knows that all things follow from the necessity of the divine nature, and happen according to the eternal laws and rules of Nature, won't find anything worthy of hate, mockery or disdain, or anyone whom he will pity. Instead, as far as human virtue allows he will try—as the saying goes—'to act well and rejoice'. A further point: someone who is easily touched by the affect of pity, and moved by the suffering or tears of others, often does things that he later regrets—both because affects never enable us to know for sure that we are doing good, and because we are easily deceived by false tears. I'm saying this specifically about those who live by the guidance of reason. •For someone who *doesn't* live in that way, pity is better than nothing•. Someone who is not moved to help others either

by reason or by pity is rightly called inhuman, because (by **III27**) he seems to be unlike a man.

**51: Favour is not contrary to reason; it can agree with reason and arise from it.**

Favour is *love* toward someone who has benefited someone else (by **IIIAD19**), and so it comes from the *active* aspects of the mind (by **III59**), which implies (by **III3**) that it comes from the *understanding* aspects of the mind. So it agrees with reason, etc.

**Alternate demonstration:** Someone who lives by the guidance of reason wants for others the good he wants for himself (by **37**). So when he sees someone benefiting a third person, his own effort to do good is aided, so that (by the note on **III11**) he will have pleasure. And this pleasure will be accompanied by the idea of the person who has benefited the third party. So he will (by **IIIAD19**) favour that person.

**Note on 51:** Indignation, as I define it in **IIIAD20**, is necessarily bad (by **45**). But ·don't think that I mean to condemn civil punishments·. When the sovereign power ·of the State·, in its resolve to preserve peace, punishes a citizen who has wronged someone else, I don't say that it is *indignant* toward the citizen. It punishes him not because it has been aroused by hate to destroy him, but from a sense of duty.

**52: (i) Self-satisfaction can arise from reason, and (ii) self-satisfaction that does arise from reason is the greatest self-satisfaction there can be.**

(i) Self-satisfaction is pleasure born of a man's thinking about himself and his power of acting (by **IIIAD25**). But his true power of acting = his virtue is reason itself (by **III3**), and when a man thinks about *that* he thinks clearly and distinctly (by **II40** and **II43**). So self-satisfaction arises from reason.

(ii) When a man is thinking about himself, the only things he perceives clearly and distinctly (= adequately) are the things that follow from his power of acting (by **II D2**), that is (by **III3**), things that follow from his power of understanding. So this kind of reflection is the only source for the greatest self-satisfaction.

**Note on 52:** Self-satisfaction is really the highest thing we can hope for. Because it is more and more encouraged and strengthened by praise (by the corollary to **III53**), and more and more disturbed by blame (by the corollary to **III55**), we are guided most by ·our wish for· honour, and can hardly bear a life in disgrace. (·You might think: 'That can't be right! Whatever it is that we *live for* must provide us with a higher goal than that'. Not so. We don't 'live for' anything·; as I showed in **25**, no-one tries to stay in existence for the sake of any ·further· end.)

**53: Humility is not a virtue; that is, it doesn't arise from reason.**

Humility is an unpleasure that arises from a man's thinking about his own weakness (by **IIIAD26**). Moreover, to the extent that a man knows himself by true reason, it is assumed that he *understands* his own essence, that is (by **III7**) his own power. So if a man when thinking about himself perceives some weakness, the source of this is not ·his ·accurate· understanding of himself but rather ·some limitation on his power of acting (as I showed in **III55**). If a man gets the thought of his lack of power from his understanding that something else is more powerful than he is, and from his measuring his power by that comparison, that *can* come from reason, i.e. from his understanding himself distinctly; ·but it isn't humility! It doesn't come from a depressed sense of

how weak he is, but from an accurate estimate of how his powers compare with those of some other things. So humility—the unpleasure arising from a man’s reflecting on his own weakness—doesn’t arise from accurate thinking = reason, and is not a virtue but a passivity.

**54: (i) Repentance isn’t a virtue = doesn’t arise from reason. (ii) Someone who repents what he has done is doubly wretched or weak.**

Clause (i) is demonstrated as **53** was. Clause (ii) is evident simply from how ‘repentance’ is defined in **IIIAD27**: the repentant person first allows himself to be conquered by a bad desire, and then allows himself to be conquered by unpleasure.

**Note on 54:** Because men rarely live from the dictate of reason, more good than harm is done by humility and repentance, and by hope and fear. Since men will inevitably act wrongly, it is preferable that they should act wrongly in the direction of those affects. If weak-minded men were all equally proud, ashamed of nothing, and afraid of nothing, how could they be united or restrained by any bonds? A mob without fear is a terrifying thing. So it is not surprising that the ·old testament· prophets, thinking of the welfare of the whole community and not just of a few, so warmly commended humility, repentance, and reverence. In fact, those who are subject to these affects can be guided far more easily than others, so that in the end they may live by the guidance of reason, that is, be free and enjoy the life of the happy.

**55: Extreme pride and extreme despondency are both cases of extreme ignorance of oneself.**

This is evident from **III28–29**.

**56: Extreme pride and extreme despondency both indicate extreme weakness of mind.**

The primary basis of virtue is keeping oneself in existence (by the corollary to **22**), doing this by the guidance of reason (by **24**). So someone who is ignorant of himself is ignorant of •the basis of all the virtues, and thus ignorant of •all the virtues. ·From that it follows that he doesn’t *act from* virtue, because· acting from virtue is simply acting by the guidance of reason (by **24**), and anyone who acts by the guidance of reason must know that he is doing so (by **II43**). So someone who is ignorant of himself, and consequently of all the virtues, doesn’t act from virtue at all, and **D8** makes it evident that this means that he is extremely weak-minded. And so (by **55**) extreme pride and extreme despondency indicate extreme weakness of mind.

**Corollary:** The proud and the despondent are highly liable to affects.

**Note on 56 and its corollary:** Yet despondency can be corrected more easily than pride, since pride is an affect of pleasure, whereas despondency is an affect of unpleasure. That implies (by **18**) that pride is stronger than despondency.

**57: The proud man loves the company of parasites or flatterers, but hates to be with noble people.**

Pride is pleasure arising from a man’s thinking more highly of himself than he should (see **IIIAD28** and **IIIAD6**). The proud man will try as hard as he can to encourage this opinion (see the note on **III13**), so he will love to be with parasites and flatterers (I have omitted the definitions of these because they are too well known), and will shun the company of noble people, who will value him as he deserves!

**Note on 57:** It would take too long to list here everything that is bad about pride, since the proud are subject to all the affects (though less to love and compassion than to any of the others).

But I oughtn't to go on suppressing the fact that 'proud' is also used in a different sense from mine, a sense in which a man is called 'proud' if he thinks less highly of others than he should. So 'pride' in this sense should be defined as 'pleasure arising from a man's false opinion that he is superior to others'. And 'despondency', taken as naming the opposite to this pride, would need to be defined as 'unpleasure arising from a man's false opinion that he is inferior to others'.

On this basis, we can easily grasp that •the proud man must be envious (see the note on **III55**) and hate those most who are most praised for their virtues, that •his hatred of them is not easily conquered by love or benefits (see the note on **III41**), and that •he takes pleasure only in the company of those who humour his weakness of mind, •thereby turning a mere fool into a madman!

Although despondency is the opposite of pride, the despondent man is very near to the proud one. His unpleasure arises from his judging his own weakness against the power = virtue of others; so it will be relieved, i.e. he will have pleasure, if his imagination lingers on the faults of others. Hence the proverb: *Misery loves company*.

On the other hand, the more he thinks he is inferior to others, the more unpleasure he will have. That is why •no-one is more prone to envy than the despondent man is, and why •he is especially watchful over men's actions (so as to find fault with them, not improve them), and why •eventually despondency is the only thing he praises and exults over—though in such a way that he still seems despondent.

These things follow from this affect as necessarily as it follows from the nature of a triangle that its three angles are equal to two right angles. As I have already explained, when I call affects like these 'bad' I mean this only in relation to the welfare of humans. The laws of Nature concern the common order of Nature, of which man is a part. I want to remind you of this in passing, so that you won't think that my aim has been only to tell about men's vices and follies rather than to demonstrate the nature and properties of things. For as I said in the Preface of Part III, I consider men's affects and properties to be on a par with other natural things. And human affects, though they aren't signs of man's power, do indicate the power and skill of Nature—just as much as do many other things that we wonder at and take pleasure in thinking about. •Having said this, I shall now return to the topic of what in the affects brings advantage to men and what brings them harm.

**58: Love of esteem is not opposed to reason, but can arise from it.**

This is evident from **IIIAD30** and from the definition of 'honourable' in the first note on **37**.

**Note on 58:** Vainglory [Spinoza writes: 'the love of esteem (*gloria*) which is called •empty (*vana*)'] is self-satisfaction that is nourished only by the opinion of the multitude. When that stops, so does the self-satisfaction, which (by the note on **52**) is the highest good that each person loves. That is why someone who exults at being esteemed by the multitude is made anxious daily, and struggles, sacrifices, and schemes to preserve his reputation. For the multitude is fickle and inconstant; unless one's reputation is guarded it is quickly destroyed. Indeed, because everyone wants to be applauded by the multitude, each one is ready to put down the reputation of someone else. And, since what is at stake is thought to

be the highest good, this gives rise to a fierce desire on the part of each to crush the other in any way he can. The one who finally comes out on top exults more in having harmed the other than in having benefited himself. So this love of esteem—this kind of self-satisfaction—really is •empty, because it is nothing.

What matters regarding *shame* can easily be inferred from what I have said about *compassion* and *repentance*. I have only this to add: shame is like *pity* in that it is not a virtue •but can still have something good about it. Specifically, shame is good to the extent that it indicates that the ashamed person wants to live honourably. (In the same way *pain* is said to be good to the extent that it is a sign that the injured part is not yet decayed.) So although a man who is ashamed of some deed has real unpleasure, he is still more perfect than a shameless man who has no desire to live honourably.

I undertook to discuss affects of pleasure and unpleasure, and now I have done that. And desires are good or bad according to whether they arise from good or bad affects. When a desire is generated in by a passive affect, it is *blind* (as you can easily work out from what I said in the note on **44**), and would be useless if men could easily be led to live by the dictate of reason alone. I shall now show this, briefly.

**59: Anything that we are caused to do by a passive affect is something that we could be caused to do by reason, without that affect.**

Acting from reason is simply doing things that follow from the necessity of our nature all by itself (by **III3** and **III D2**). But unpleasure is bad to the extent that it decreases or restrains this power of acting (by **41**). So unpleasure •reduces our powers, and so it• can't cause us to do anything that we couldn't do if we were led by reason.

Furthermore, pleasure is bad to the extent that it prevents one from being able to act (by **41** and **44**), so bad pleasure can't cause us to do anything that we couldn't do if we were guided by reason.

[Two sentences are omitted: they are *extremely* obscure, and seem not to contribute anything to the demonstration.]

All affects are related to pleasure, unpleasure, or desire (see the explanation of **III AD4**). •But **59** is about passive affects, and a desire can't be one of those, because• (by **III AD1**) a desire is just an effort to *act*. •So the ground is covered by what has been demonstrated concerning passive or bad unpleasure and passive or bad pleasure•. So **59** has been demonstrated.

Alternate demonstration: An action is called 'bad' to the extent that it arises from the person's being subject to hate or some •other• bad affect (see the first corollary to **45**). But no action is good or bad in itself (as I showed in the Preface of this Part). Rather, one and the same action can be now good, now bad. Therefore, an action which is now bad = arises from some bad affect is one that we can (by **19**) be led to by reason.

**Note on 59:** An example will make this clearer. Consider an act of beating, in which a man clenches his fist and moves his whole arm forcefully up and down: considered in that way just as a physical event, this act is •a sheer exercise of power, and considered as such it• is a virtue, which is to be explained in terms of the structure of the human body. If a man moved like that because of anger or hate, that would be an example of the general fact (shown in Part II) that one and the same action can be joined to any images whatever. So we can be led to one and the same action both by images of things that we conceive confusedly and by ones that we



conceive clearly and distinctly.

This makes it obvious that if men could be guided by reason they would have no use for desires arising from passive affects.

Now let me show why I describe as 'blind' any desire arising from a passive affect.

**60: A desire arising from a pleasure or unpleasure that is related to one or more parts of the body but not to all of them takes no account of the welfare of the whole man.**

Suppose that one part of a body is •strengthened by the force of some external cause so that it prevails over the other parts (by 6). This *prevailing* won't lead the part to try to lose •some of• its powers so as to allow the body's other parts to perform their function. For that would require it to have a force = power to lessen its own powers, which (by <sup>III</sup>6) is absurd. So that part will try, and consequently (by <sup>III</sup>7 and <sup>III</sup>12) the mind also will try, to keep things as they are. So the desire arising from such an affect of pleasure doesn't take account of the whole.

The demonstration goes through in the same way if we start by supposing that some part of a body is •weakened by an external cause so that other parts of the body prevail over it. That would involve an affect of unpleasure; •the upshot would again be a bodily imbalance, and again• the desire arising from the affect would not take account of the whole.

**Note on 60:** Therefore, since pleasure is (by the note on 44) usually related to just one part of the body, we usually want to stay in existence without regard to our health as a whole. Also, by the corollary to 9 the wants that grip us most tightly take account only of the present and not the future.

**61: A desire arising from reason cannot be excessive.**

Desire (by <sup>III</sup>AD1) is a man's essence, insofar as it is conceived to be determined, from any given state of it, to do something. [This seems to mean: 'A man's *desire* to do x is just the aspects of his nature that tend to cause him to do x.'] And so a desire arising from reason, that is (by <sup>III</sup>3) a desire generated in a man by his *active* aspects, is his essence = nature considered as the source of actions that flow purely from his essence alone •with no input from external causes• (by <sup>III</sup>D2). So if this desire could be excessive, then unaided human nature could exceed itself, i.e. do more than it can; which is a plain contradiction. So such a desire cannot be excessive.

**62: In conceiving things by the dictate of reason, the mind is affected in the same way whether the idea is of a past, a present, or a future thing.**

Everything that the mind conceives under the guidance of reason it conceives in terms of the same kind of eternity = necessity (by the second corollary to <sup>II</sup>44), and is accompanied by the same certainty (by <sup>II</sup>43 and the note on it). So whether the idea is of a past, present, or future thing,

- the mind conceives it with the same necessity,
- the mind has the same certainty about it, and
- the idea is equally true (by <sup>II</sup>41), that is (by <sup>II</sup>D4) it has the properties of an adequate idea.

So far as the mind conceives things by the dictate of reason, therefore, it is affected in the same way, whether the idea is of a past, present, or future thing.

**Note on 62:** If we could have adequate knowledge of how long things last, finding out *by reason* how long they last, we would regard future things with the same affect as we do

present ones, and the mind would want the good it thinks of as future just as it wants the good it thinks of as present. And then it would necessarily prefer a greater future good to a lesser present one, and wouldn't want *at all* something that would be good right now but would cause something bad in the future. I shall soon demonstrate this.

But we can have only a quite inadequate knowledge of how long things do or will last (by **II31**), and our ideas about that are based on the imagination (by the note on **III44**), which is not equally affected by the image of a present thing and the image of a future one. That is why our true knowledge of good and evil is merely abstract = universal; and our ·more specific· judgments about what in the present is good or bad for us—judgments concerning the order of things and the connection of causes—owe more to imagination than to reality. So it is no wonder that the desire arising from a knowledge of good and evil, when it looks to the future, can rather easily be restrained by a desire for the pleasures of the moment. On this see **16**.

**63: Anyone who is guided by fear, and does good to avoid something bad, is not guided by reason.**

The only affects of the *active* mind—that is (by **III3**), the only affects that are related to reason—are pleasure and desire (by **III59**). And so (by **IIIAD13**) someone who is guided by fear, and does good out of timidity concerning something bad, is not guided by reason.

**Note on 63:** Religious zealots, who know how to censure vice better than how to teach virtue, don't try to guide men by reason. Rather, they try to restrain them through fear, so that they flee from bad outcomes rather than loving virtues. Such ·narrowly dogmatic· people aim only to make others as wretched as they themselves are, so it is not surprising that

they are generally resented and hated.

**Corollary:** By a desire arising from reason, we *directly* follow the good and *indirectly* flee what is bad.

A desire arising from reason can arise solely from an affect of pleasure that is not passive (by **III59**), that is, from a pleasure that can't be excessive (by **61**). But it can't arise from *unpleasure*, and therefore this desire (by **8**)—since it doesn't come from bad pleasure or from unpleasure—comes from knowledge of the good, not knowledge of the bad. So from the guidance of reason we go directly for the good, and we flee from what is bad only insofar as that is an automatic by-product of our pursuit of the good.

**Note on the corollary:** Consider the example of the sick and the healthy. The sick man eats things he dislikes out of timidity regarding death, whereas the healthy man enjoys his food, and in this way enjoys life better than if he feared death and directly wanted to avoid it. Similarly, a judge who condemns a guilty man to death—not from hate or anger etc. but only from a love of the general welfare—is guided only by reason.

**64: Knowledge of evil is inadequate knowledge.**

Knowledge of evil (by **8**) is unpleasure of which we are conscious. But unpleasure is a passage to a lesser perfection (by **IIIAD3**), and so (by **III6** and **III7**) it can't be understood through a man's essence itself. Hence (by **IIIAD2**) it is something passive which (by **III3**) depends on inadequate ideas. Therefore (by **II29**) knowledge of evil is inadequate.

**Corollary:** From this it follows that a human mind that had only adequate ideas would form no notion of evil.

**65: By the guidance of reason we follow the greater of two goods or the lesser of two evils.**

A good that prevents us from enjoying a greater good is really an evil. For 'good' and 'evil' or 'bad' (as I have shown in the Preface of this Part) are said of things on the basis of how they compare with other things. And by the same reasoning a lesser evil is really a good. Thus, (by the corollary to **63**) by the guidance of reason we want = follow only the greater good and the lesser evil.

**Corollary:** By the guidance of reason, we shall follow a lesser evil as a greater good, and reject a lesser good that is the cause of a greater evil. For the so-called 'lesser evil' is really good, and the so-called 'lesser good' is bad. So (by the corollary to **63**) we want the former and reject the latter.

**66: By the guidance of reason we want a greater future good in preference to a lesser present one, and a lesser present evil in preference to a greater future one.**

If the mind could have an adequate knowledge of a future thing, it would have the same affect toward it as toward a present one (by **62**). So when we are attending just to reason, the thing will be the same, whether the greater good or evil is supposed to be future or present. And therefore by the guidance of reason (by **65**) we want the greater future good in preference to the lesser present one, etc.

**Corollary:** By the guidance of reason, we shall want a lesser present evil that is the cause of a greater future good, and reject a lesser present good that is the cause of a greater future evil. This corollary relates to **66** as the corollary to **65** does to **65**.

**Note on 66 and its corollary:** Compare these results about the guidance of •reason• with the ones I presented in this

Part up to **18**, concerning the powers of •the affects, and you'll easily see how a man who is led only by an affect = by opinion differs from one who is led by reason. For the former willy-nilly does things in utter ignorance, whereas the latter complies with no-one's wishes but his own, and does only what he knows to be the most important in life, which he therefore wants above all. That's why I call the former a slave, and the latter a free man.

I want now to note a few more things about the free man's character and manner of living.

**67: A free man thinks about death less than he thinks about anything else; his wisdom is a meditation on life, not on death.**

A free man, i.e. one who lives by the dictate of reason alone, isn't led by fear of death (by **63**), but wants the good directly (by the corollary to **63**), i.e. (by **24**), he acts, lives, and keeps himself in existence on the basis of his seeking his own advantage. That is, his practical thoughts always have the form 'I'll do this to get the good result x', never 'I'll do this so as to avoid the bad result y'. So he thinks of nothing less than of death. Instead his wisdom is a meditation on life.

**68: If men were born free, they would form no concept of good and evil so long as they remained free.**

As I have said, a free man is one who is led solely by reason. So someone who was born free and remained free would have only adequate ideas, and so would have no concept of evil (by the corollary to **64**). And since good and evil are correlates, he would also have no concept of good.

**Note on 68:** It is evident from **4** that no man is born free; and the only way we can even have the *thought* of a man born free is by having a thought that is restricted to

the man himself—i.e. to the aspects of God = Nature that •constitute the causing of this one man, •with no thought of his environment.

This and the other things I have now demonstrated seem to be what Moses intended in his story—in the book of *Genesis*—about the first man. For in that story the only power of God that is thought about is the power by which •God created •the first• man, i.e. the power that God exercised to the man's advantage. •So in the story Adam starts off *free*. We are then told •that God forbade the free man to eat •fruit• from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and •that if he were to eat of it he would immediately start fearing death rather than wanting to live; and then •that the man acquired a wife whose nature agreed completely with his own, and he knew that there could be nothing in Nature more useful to him than she was; but •that after he believed the lower animals to be like himself he immediately began to imitate their affects (see **III27**) and to lose his freedom; and •that afterwards this freedom was recovered by the church fathers, guided by the spirit of Christ, i.e. by the idea of God—the idea that is the sole basis for a man's being free and wanting for other men the good he wants for himself (as I have demonstrated in **37**).

**69: A free man exhibits as much virtue = power in avoiding dangers as he does in overcoming them.**

An affect can't be restrained or removed except by an opposite affect that is stronger than it is (by **7**). Now, blind daring and fear are affects that can be conceived as equally strong (by **3** and **5**). So it takes as much virtue of the mind to restrain daring as it does to restrain fear, that is (by **IIIAD40–41**), a free man •avoids dangers by the same virtue of the mind by which he tries to •overcome them. (See **III59**) on

the equation of virtue of the mind with strength of character.)

**Corollary:** In a free man, a timely flight is considered to show as much resoluteness as fighting; which is to say that a free man chooses flight with the same resoluteness or presence of mind as he chooses battle.

**Note on the corollary:** I have explained in the note on **III59** what I mean by 'resoluteness'. And by 'danger' I mean anything that can be the cause of something bad—unpleasure, hate, discord, or the like.

**70: A free man who lives among the ignorant tries his hardest not to take favours from them.**

Everyone follows his own way of thinking in judging what is good (see **III39**). So an ignorant person who has conferred a favour on someone else will value it according to his own lights, and will suffer unpleasure if he sees that the recipient values it less than he does (by **III42**). But a free man tries to join other men to him in friendship (by **37**), not so as •to repay them with benefits that they value as he does, but rather •to bring it about that he *and they* are led by the free judgment of reason, and •to do only things that he himself knows to be most excellent. Therefore, a free man will do all he can to avoid the favours of the ignorant, wanting not to be hated by them, and wanting to be guided not by their wishes but only by reason.

**Note on 70:** I say 'all he can'. For even ignorant men are still *men*, who in time of need can bring *human* help—which is the best kind. So it often happens that it is necessary •for a free man• to accept favours from them, and hence to return thanks to them in a way they will appreciate. I would add that when we decline a favour we should take care not

to seem to disdain what is offered, or to be meanly afraid of having to repay them—for that would get us hated by the very act of trying to avoid their hate. So in declining favours we must take account of what is useful as well as of what is honourable.

**71: The greatest gratitude is the gratitude that only free men have toward one another.**

Only free men •are very useful to one another, •are united by the strongest bonds of friendship (by **35** and its first corollary), and •are equally loving in their attempts to benefit one another (by **37**). So (by **IIIAD34**) only free men are maximally grateful to one another.

**Note on 71:** The ‘gratitude’ that men are led by blind desire to display toward one another is more like a bargain or an inducement than ·genuine· gratitude.

Ingratitude is not an affect. Still, it is base, because it generally indicates that the man has too much hate, anger, pride, greed, or the like. When someone stupidly doesn’t know the value of a favour he has received, *that’s* not ingratitude. Still less is it ingratitude when someone isn’t moved by the gifts of a loose woman who is trying to seduce him, or by what a thief offers him to buy his silence, or by the gifts of other people like those. On the contrary, he shows firmness of mind in not allowing any gifts to corrupt him to the detriment of himself or of society at large.

**72: A free man always acts honestly, not deceptively.**

If a free man in his freedom did anything deceitful, he would do it by the dictate of reason (that’s what we mean in calling him ‘free’). So it would be a virtue to act deceptively (by **24**), and hence everyone would be better advised to act deceptively so as to stay in existence. This self-evidently implies that men would

be better advised to agree only in words but to be opposed to one another in fact. But this is absurd (by the corollary to **31**). So **72** follows.

**Note on 72:** You may ask: ‘What if a man could save himself from the present danger of death by treachery? Wouldn’t the principle of staying in existence urge him, *outright*, to be treacherous?’ The reply to this is the same. If reason recommended this, it would recommend it to all men. And so reason would recommend, *outright*, that men be deceitful whenever they make agreements, join forces, and establish common laws—which would be to urge that they really they have no common laws, which is absurd.

**73: A man who is guided by reason is more free •living under a system of laws in a State than he is •living in solitude and having only himself to obey.**

A man who is guided by reason isn’t led by fear to obey ·the laws of the State· (by **63**). Rather,

•being guided by reason in his endeavour to stay in existence,

that is (by the note on **66**),

•wanting to live freely,

he wants to hold to considerations of the life and welfare of the community (by **37**), and therefore (as I have shown in the second note on **37**) he wants to live according to the laws of the State. So a man who is guided by reason wants to abide by the common laws of the State in order to live more freely.

**Note on 73:** These and similar things that I have presented concerning a man’s true freedom are related to strength of character, that is (by the note on **III59**), to resoluteness and nobility. I don’t think it is worthwhile at this point to demonstrate separately all the properties of strength of character, much less that a man who is strong in character hates

no-one, is angry with no-one, envies no-one, is indignant with no-one, despises no-one, and is not at all proud. For these results, and everything relating to true life and religion, are easily proved from **37** (everyone who is led by reason wants others also to have the good he wants for himself) and **46** (hate is to be conquered by returning love).

To this I shall add something that I have already said in the note on **50** and elsewhere, namely: A man who is strong in character has in the forefront of his mind •that whatever happens does so from the necessity of the divine nature, and therefore •that whatever he thinks is injurious and bad—and whatever strikes him as immoral, dreadful, unjust, and base—arises from the fact that he conceives the things themselves in a way that is disordered, mutilated, and confused. [Spinoza says that things that are base etc. arise from confusion etc., but he almost certainly means that *thinking of things as base etc. arises from confusion etc.*] For this reason, he tries above all to conceive things as they are in themselves, and to get rid of obstacles to true knowledge, such as hate, anger, envy, mockery, pride, and the other things I have discussed. And so, as I said in the note on **50**, he tries as hard as he can to act well and to rejoice.

I shall demonstrate in Part V how far human virtue can go in attaining these things, and what it is capable of.

## Appendix

In this Part I haven't arranged my doctrines concerning the right way of living in such a way that they could be seen at a glance. Instead, I have presented them in a scattered fashion, taking up each at the point where I could most easily deduce it from what had gone before. So I propose now to collect them here and arrange them under their main headings.

**1 app:** All our efforts or desires follow from the necessity of our nature in such a way that they can be understood either •through our nature alone as their •entire• immediate cause, or •through our nature considered as a part of Nature, a part that can't be understood without reference to other individuals.

**2 app:** •The desires that follow from our nature in such a way that they can be understood through it alone are the ones that relate to the mind conceived of as consisting of adequate ideas. •Other desires relate to the mind as conceiving *inadequately*. What fixes the strength and growth of those ideas is not human power but the power of external things. So •the former are rightly said to be *active* and •the latter to be *passive*. For the former are always signs of our power, whereas the latter indicate our weakness and mutilated knowledge.

**3 app:** Our *actions*—i.e. desires that are shaped by man's power = reason—are always good; but other desires can be either good or bad.

**4 app:** So it is especially useful in life for us to perfect our intellect = reason as much as we can; and men's highest happiness consists in just this. Perfecting the intellect is nothing but understanding God, God's attributes, and God's actions, which follow from the necessity of God's nature; and happiness is nothing but the satisfaction of mind that stems from intuitively knowing God. So the ultimate end of the man who is led by reason—i.e. his highest desire, by which he tries to moderate all his other desires—is that by which he is led to conceive adequately both himself and everything that falls within the scope of his understanding.

**5 app:** So there is no rational life without understanding, and things are good only to the extent that they aid a

man to enjoy the life of the mind that is determined by understanding. On the other hand, things that prevent man from being able to perfect his reason and enjoy the rational life—those are the ones, the only ones, I call bad.

**6 app:** But because all the things of which a man is the ·complete· efficient cause must be good, nothing bad can happen to a man except by external causes, i.e. to the extent that he is a part of the whole of Nature, whose laws human nature is compelled to obey, and to which it is forced to adjust itself in almost endlessly many different ways.

**7 app:** A man *has to* be a part of Nature and *has to* follow the common order of Nature. But if he lives among individuals whose nature agrees with his own, this will aid and encourage his power of acting. Whereas if he is among individuals whose nature doesn't at all agree with his, he will scarcely be able to accommodate himself to them without greatly changing himself.

**8 app:** When we judge something to be bad, i.e. an obstacle to our existing and enjoying a rational life, it is permissible for us to get it out of our way in whatever manner seems safest. On the other hand, when we judge something to be good, i.e. useful for preserving us and letting us enjoy a rational life, it is permissible for us to take it for our own use, and to use in any way. And—this is an absolute rule—everyone is entitled by the highest right of Nature to do whatever he thinks will be to his advantage.

**9 app:** Nothing can be more in harmony with the nature of any thing than other individuals of the same species. And so (by 7 app) nothing helps a man to stay in existence and enjoy a rational life more than a man who is guided by reason. Also, the most excellent particular thing we know of is a man who is guided by reason; so our best way of showing what

our skill and understanding are good for is by educating men so that at last they live under the sway of their own reason.

**10 app:** To the extent that there is hatred or envy between men, they are contrary to one another; and so they have reason to fear one another—all the more so because men can do more than other individuals in Nature.

**11 app:** Minds, however, are conquered not by weapons but by love and nobility.

**12 app:** It is especially useful to men to relate closely to one another, binding themselves by whatever bonds are apt to make them *one*, and—another absolute rule—to do whatever will strengthen their friendship.

**13 app:** But this takes skill and alertness. Although men are ·unstable and· changeable (for few of them live by the rule of reason), ·there is something fairly steady in their make-up, namely· their usually being envious and more inclined to vengeance than to compassion. So one needs a notably powerful mind to put up with each one in the light of his ·level of· understanding, and to restrain oneself from imitating his affects.

But those who are good at finding fault with men—at scolding vices rather than teaching virtues, and at shattering men's minds rather than helping them to become strong—are burdensome to themselves as well as to others. That is why many people, over-impatient . . . , have preferred to live among the lower animals rather than among men. (They are like adolescents who can't take parental scoldings in their stride, and escape into the army. They prefer the hardships of war and the discipline of an absolute commander to the conveniences of home and the admonitions of a father; and are willing to bear any burden so long as they can get revenge on their parents!)

**14 app:** So although men for the most part conduct themselves ·not under the guidance of reason, but· on the basis of their own lust, their forming a common society still brings more advantages than disadvantages. So it is better to bear their injuries patiently, and devote one's energies ·not to revenge, but· to things that help to bring men together in harmony and friendship.

**15 app:** Harmony is created by things related to •justice, •fairness, and •honourable conduct. ·I include the third of those· because it's not only injustice and unfairness that men can hardly bear, but also what is thought base, i.e. what tramples on the accepted practices of the State. But especially necessary for bringing people together in love are things that concern religion and morality [*pietas*]. On this, see both notes on **37** and the notes on **46** and **73**.

**16 app:** A common basis for harmony is fear, but •that ·sort of harmony· is without trust, and •it isn't based on reason, because· fear arises from weakness of mind and so has nothing to do with the exercise of reason. (Nor does pity, though it looks like morality.)

**17 app:** Men are also won over by generosity, especially those who aren't in a position to get what they need to sustain life. It is far beyond the powers and resources of any private person to bring aid to everyone who needs it, for no-one's wealth is equal to that task. And anyway no-one has what it takes to be friends with everyone! So the care of the poor falls upon society as a whole; it's an issue of *general* welfare.

**18 app:** In accepting favours and in returning thanks, care of a different kind must be taken. See the notes on **70** and **71**.

**19 app:** A purely sensual love, i.e. sexual lust stimulated by physical beauty, easily turns into hate unless (which is worse) it is a sort of madness—in which case it owes more to discord than to harmony, ·and so barely qualifies as 'love' at all·. This applies to absolutely *all* 'love' that has a cause other than freedom of mind. See the corollary to **III31**.

**20 app:** As for marriage: it certainly agrees with reason, if the desire for intercourse is generated not only by physical attractions but also by a love of begetting children and bringing them up wisely; and if in addition the love of the man and of the woman is caused not only by physical beauty but also—and mainly—by freedom of mind.

**21 app:** Another source of harmony is flattery, but ·that 'harmony'· is achieved through a servility that is either •base or •perfidious—that is, the flatterer either •does put himself on a much lower level than the person he flatters or he •pretends to do so·. No-one is more taken in by flattery than the proud, who wish to be first—and are not!

**22 app:** In despondency there is a false appearance of morality and religion. And though despondency is the opposite of pride, still the despondent man is very like the proud one. See the note on **57**.

**23 app:** Shame also contributes to harmony, ·but· only in those things that can't be hidden. ·Our shared shame concerning some kinds of *public* behaviour tends to produce some uniformity in our conduct by steering us all away from these, but there can be any amount of variety and potential conflict in the shameful things we do in *private*·. Also, because shame itself is a sort of unpleasure, it doesn't involve the exercise of reason.

**24 app:** The other unpleasant affects toward men are directly opposed to justice, fairness, being honourable, morality, and



religion. And though *indignation* at someone else's bad behaviour looks like fairness, it is not to be encouraged, because it would be a lawless society where anybody x was allowed to pass judgment on the deeds of someone else y, and to enforce the rights of y's victim, whether that be x himself or some third person.

**25 app:** Courtesy, i.e. the reason-based desire to please men, is related to morality (as I implicitly said in the first note on **37**). But if the desire to please men arises not from reason but from an affect, it is not courtesy but *ambition*—a desire through which men, while seeming to behave morally, stir up discord and quarrels. This is in strong contrast with a different way of pleasing men. Someone who wants through words or deeds to help others to enjoy the highest good along with him will chiefly aim to get them to love him, but not to create in them the kind of admiration that would lead to his doctrines' being named after him or would give anyone cause to envy him. In ordinary conversations this man, unlike the ambitious one, will beware of talking about men's vices, and will take care to speak only sparingly of human weakness, but will speak generously of men's virtue = power, and of how it can be perfected so that men will be moved not by fear or dislike but only by an affect of pleasure, trying as hard as they can to live by the rule of reason.

**26 app:** The only particular things in Nature whose minds we can enjoy, and with which we can join in friendship or in some kind of settled society, are *men*. Apart from men, then, the principle of seeking our own advantage doesn't require us to preserve anything else in Nature. Rather, it teaches us, given any particular thing other than a man, to destroy it or to preserve it and adapt it to our use in any way we like.

**27 app:** The chief benefit we get from things outside us—apart from the experience and knowledge we acquire from

observing and manipulating things—lies in the preservation of our body. So the things most useful to us are the ones that can feed and maintain our body, so that all its parts can perform their functions properly. The maintenance of all the functions is important because: the greater a body's ability to affect and be affected by external bodies in a great many ways, the more the corresponding mind is capable of thinking (see **38** and **39**).

But there seem to be very few things of this kind in Nature. So to nourish the body in the required way, we have to use many different kinds of food. Indeed, the human body is composed of a great many parts of different kinds, requiring a steady intake of various kinds of food so that the whole body may be equally capable of doing everything that its nature permits, and thus so that the mind can be capable of conceiving many things.

**28 app:** But the power of a single man would hardly be sufficient for him to bring this about for himself, so what is needed is for men to help one another to get what is needed for the support of life. Money has provided a convenient instrument for acquiring all these aids; which is why the image of money looms larger than anything else in the thoughts of the multitude, for they can imagine hardly any sort of pleasure without the accompanying idea of money as the way to it.

**29 app:** This is a great vice in those who seek money not because they are poor or because they need it because they take pride in their money-making skill. These people feed their bodies in the usual ways, but sparingly, because of their thought that anything they devote to the preservation of their bodies *costs money*. On the other hand, those who know what money is really for, and limit their wealth to what they *need*, live contentedly with little.

**30 app:** •Pleasure consists in an •increase in a man's mental and bodily power; and whatever •increases a man's power because it helps the parts of the body to perform their function is •good; so everything that brings •pleasure is •good. •But there is a down-side to this, for three reasons:

Things don't act *in order to* bring us pleasure;

The way things act is not adjusted to suit our advantage; and thirdly

Pleasure is usually related to one part of the body in particular.

This has the result that most affects of pleasure are excessive unless we are thoughtful and alert, and so the desires generated by them are also excessive. And a further point about pleasure should be noted: when we follow our affects, we put the highest value on the pleasures of the moment, and can't feel as strongly about future things. See the notes on **44** and **60**.

**31 app:** Religious zealotry, on the other hand, seems to maintain that what brings unpleasure is good, and what brings pleasure is bad. But, as I have already said (see the note on **45**), only someone who is envious would delight in my weakness and misfortune. For as we come to have greater

pleasure we pass to a state of greater perfection, and thus participate even more in the divine nature. And pleasure that is governed by the true principle of our advantage can't ever be bad. But someone who is led by fear, and does the good only to avoid the bad, is not governed by reason.

**32 app:** But human power is very limited and infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes; so we aren't unrestrictedly able to adapt things outside us to our use. •When things go against us•, if we are conscious that

•we have done our duty, that •we hadn't the power to avoid those things, and that •we are a part of the whole of Nature, whose order we follow,

then we shall patiently put up with events that go against our advantage. If we understand this clearly and distinctly, the part of us that is defined by understanding—the *better* part of us—will be entirely satisfied with this and will try to stay satisfied. For to the extent that we understand, we can't want anything except what is necessary = inevitable, and we can't be satisfied with anything except what is true. To the extent that we rightly understand these things, the efforts of the better part of us are in harmony with the order of the whole of Nature.

## Part V: The Power of the Intellect, or Human Freedom

### Preface

At last I come to the final Part of the *Ethics*, which concerns the method—the way to be followed—to achieve freedom. In this Part, then, I shall deal with reason's power, showing

what reason can do against the affects, and  
what freedom of mind = happiness is.

This will show us how much more the wise man can do than the ignorant. But it's not my concern to go into •how the intellect is to be perfected, or •in what way the body must be cared for if it is to function properly. The former is the province of •logic, the latter of •medicine. So here, I repeat, I shall deal only with the power of the mind, i.e. of reason, and shall show above all *how* and *how far* it can restrain and moderate the affects.

•I say 'how far' because, as I have already demonstrated, reason doesn't have unrestricted command over the affects. The Stoics thought •otherwise: they held that •the affects depend entirely on our will, and that we can have complete control over them. But experience cries out against this, and forced the Stoics to admit—in spite of their principles—that restraining and moderating the affects requires a lot of practice and concentration. (I seem to remember that someone tried to illustrate this by the example of two dogs, a house dog and a hunting dog: he was finally able to train the house dog to hunt and the hunting dog to leave the game animals alone!)

Descartes was inclined to this opinion •that the affects can be completely controlled by the will. His position regarding this can be summed up in the following four bits of doctrine:

(1) The soul (i.e. the mind) is united in a special way to a certain part of the brain called the pineal gland. •This enables the mind to be aware of all the motions aroused in the body (and, •through those movements, to be aware also of external objects), and •in the opposite direction •the mind can make this gland move in various ways simply by willing.

(2) The gland is suspended in the middle of the brain in such a way that it can be moved by the least motion of the animal spirits. [Descartes accepted and helped to popularize the view that human physiology involves 'animal spirits'—an *extremely* finely divided fluid that transmits pressures through tiny cracks and tunnels—the body's 'hydraulic system', as it has been called.] The different ways in which the gland can be suspended in the middle of the brain corresponds to the different ways in which the animal spirits can strike against it; and when external objects •acting through the sense-organs •drive the animal spirits against the gland, differences among those objects correspond to differences in the traces that are made on the gland. . . .

(3) Each of the mind's acts of the will is united by nature to a certain fixed motion of this gland. For example, if someone sets himself to *look at a distant object*, this •act of the will •brings it about that the pupil •of his eye •is dilated. But if he sets himself only to *dilate the pupil*, nothing will happen, and here is why. The gland can move so that it drives the animal spirits against the optic nerve in a way that dilates or contracts the pupil; but Nature has joined •that motion with •the will to look at distant or near objects, not with •the will to dilate or contract the pupil.

(4) Although each motion of this gland seems to have been connected by Nature from the beginning of our life with

a particular thought, these motions can through training be joined to *other* thoughts. (Descartes tries to prove this in his *Passions of the Soul* I: 50.) So any soul, however weak, can when well directed acquire an absolute power over its passions. For passions are 'perceptions or feelings or emotions of the soul that are particularly related to the soul, and (pay special attention to this!) are produced, preserved, and strengthened by some motion of the spirits (see *Passions of the Soul* I: 27). But since to any act of the will we can join any motion of the gland (and consequently any motion of the spirits), and since it is absolutely up to us what we *will*, we can acquire complete control of our passions if we bring our will under the control of firm and certain judgments according to which we will to direct the actions of our life, and join to these judgments the motions of the passions we choose to have.

As far as I can gather from his words, *that* is what the distinguished Descartes believed. If it hadn't been so *clever* I would hardly have credited that it came from so great a man. Descartes had firmly decided to draw conclusions only from self-evident principles and to affirm only things that he perceived clearly and distinctly, and had often scolded the scholastics for trying to explain obscure things in terms of 'occult qualities'; yet here he is adopting a hypothesis that is more occult than any occult quality! I am astonished at this performance by a philosopher of his calibre.

What, I want to know, does he understand by the union of mind and body? What clear and distinct concept does he have of a thought's being so closely united to some little portion of quantity [here = 'of matter']? I wish he had explained this union in terms of its immediate cause—i.e. had explained (or tried to explain) *what in detail goes on at the interface* between mind and body. But he had conceived the mind to be so distinct from the body that there was

nothing he *could* assign as the particular cause of this union—or of the mind itself. So he was forced to fall back on the cause of the whole universe, i.e. on God.

Again, I would love to know how fast the mind can make the pineal gland move, and how much force is needed to keep the gland suspended! For after reading everything Descartes has to say about this, I still don't know whether the gland is driven about more slowly by the mind than by the animal spirits, or more quickly; nor do I know whether, after our 'firm judgments' have been 'joined' to 'the motions of the passions', they can be *unjoined* again by bodily causes. If so, it would follow that this could happen:

Someone's mind has firmly resolved to face dangers, and has 'joined' to that decision the motions of brave conduct; then danger comes into view; and the gland is suspended in such a way that the mind can think only of flight.

And of course—this being a much deeper and more damaging point—there is no common measure between the will and motion, so there's no way of comparing the mind's power or strength with the body's, so the forces of the body can't possibly be determined by those of the mind.

To this we may add—coming back to matters of relative detail—that the pineal gland is *not* found to be located in the middle of the brain in such a way that it can be pushed around so easily and in so many ways, and that not all the nerves extend as far as the cavities of the brain.

Finally, I pass over everything Descartes said about the will and its freedom, since I have already shown, more than adequately, that they are false.

Therefore, because the extent of the mind's power is determined only by understanding, as I have shown above, we shall find remedies for the affects only in what the mind *knows*; and from this truth about how the affects

are to be remedied· we shall deduce all that concerns the mind's happiness. I think people all know these remedies by experience, but don't observe them accurately or see them distinctly.

## Axioms

A1: If two contrary actions are aroused in the same subject, a change will have to occur in one or both of them until they cease to be contrary.

A2: The power of an effect has its limits set by the power of its cause, insofar as its essence is explained or fixed by the essence of its cause.

This axiom is evident from **III7**.

[Four comments on this: (1) Note that the topic is not the power of an affect, but much more generally the power of an effect. (2) The second clause of the axiom means: insofar as the cause in question really is the *whole* cause of the effect. (3) The attempt to link this axiom with **III7** is bewildering. (4) A2 is used only once in the rest of the work, as an *alternative* basis for **8**.]

## Propositions about freedom.

**1: The states of a body (which are ·images of things) are ordered and connected in that body in exactly the same way that ·thoughts and ideas of things are ordered and connected in the ·corresponding· mind.**

The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things (by **II7**), and conversely the order and connection of things is the same as the order and connection of ideas (by the corollary to **II6** and **II7**). So just as ideas in the mind are ordered and connected in the same way as the states of the body (by **II18**), so conversely (by **III2**) the state of the

body are ordered and connected in the same way as thoughts and ideas are in the mind.

**2: If we separate an emotion = affect from the thought of an external cause and join it to other thoughts, then the love or hate toward the external cause is destroyed, as is the mental instability arising from these affects.**

[In the following demonstration, '**IIIAD6**' refers to the sixth Affect Definition in Part III. Similarly for other '**IIIAD**' references from now on.]

What constitutes the form of love (or hate) is pleasure (or unpleasure) accompanied by the idea of an external cause (by **IIIAD6** and **IIIAD7**). So if this ·idea· is removed, the form of love (or hate) is taken away at the same time—meaning that affect in question no longer qualifies as love (or as hate)·. So these affects are destroyed; and this holds also for affects arising from ·or involving· love (or hate).

**3: A passive affect ceases to be passive as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it.**

[What follows is an expansion—not showable by the ·dots· device—of Spinoza's clipped demonstration of **3**. In it and in **3** itself 'passive affect' translates *affectus qui passio est* = 'affect that is a passion'.]

A passive affect is a confused idea (by the General Definition of the Affects ·at the end of· Part III). Now, suppose you have such an affect, and that you then form a clear and distinct idea of it; and now consider how this idea relates to the affect itself. That is to ask how an *idea of an idea x* relates to the *idea x*. Well, according to **II21** and the note on it, they are *identical*: the idea of the affect's mental side *is* the affect's mental side; these are just two conceptualizings of what is really one thing. So, by forming a clear and

distinct *idea of the affect* you bring it about that the *affect itself* is clear and distinct, therefore no longer confused, therefore (by **III3**) no longer passive. (All of this is addressed only to affects considered as states of mind, ignoring their role as states of the body.)

**Corollary:** The more an affect is known to us the more control we have over it, and the less passive the mind is with respect to it.

**4: There is no state of the body of which we can't form a clear and distinct concept.**

Things that are common to all can only be conceived adequately (by **II38**), and so (by **II12** and L2 in the Physical Interlude in Part II) there is no state of the body of which we can't form some clear and distinct concept.

**Corollary:** From this it follows that there is no affect of which we can't form some clear and distinct concept. For an affect is an idea of a state of the body (by the General Definition of the Affects), which therefore (by **4**) must involve some clear and distinct concept.

**Note on 3 and 4:** There is nothing from which some effect does not follow (by **I36**), and we understand clearly and distinctly anything that follows from an idea that is adequate in us (by **II40**). So each of us has at least *some* power to understand himself and his affects, and thus some power to make himself less passive with respect to them. *Adequacy* has come into the discussion through the fact that according to my doctrines the following four

- idea x is adequate in me,
- x is caused from within me,
- I am active, not passive, with respect to x,
- x is a clear and distinct idea,

stand or fall together. So we should take special care to know each affect clearly and distinctly (as far as possible), so that •the affect will lead the mind have clear and distinct thoughts, ones with which it is fully satisfied, and so that •the affect can be detached from the thought of an external cause and joined to true thoughts. The result will be not only that love, hate, etc. are destroyed (by **2**), but also that the appetites = desires that usually arise from such an affect are stopped from being excessive (by **IV61**).

It is important to note that an appetite that a man has because of some active state that he is in can also be had by him because of a passive state. (This is something of a digression, but I go into it here because it was presupposed in the final clause of the preceding paragraph.) Expanding a little on an example of this that I presented in the note on **III31**, consider the appetite = desire that our human nature gives to each of us that everyone should live according to *our* temperament. In a man who is not led by reason this appetite is the passion called *ambition*, which doesn't differ much from *pride*. On the other hand, in a man who follows the dictate of reason it—this *very same appetite*—is active, i.e. is a virtue, and is called *morality* (see the second demonstration of **IV37** and the first note on it). In this way, all the appetites = desires are passions only to the extent that they arise from inadequate ideas, and are counted as virtues when they are generated by adequate ideas. For all the desires that we act on can arise as much from adequate ideas as from inadequate ones (by **IV59**).

And—coming back now to my main point—we can't devise any *usable* remedy for the affects that is better than this one—namely having true knowledge of them. For, as I have shown in **III3**, the only power the mind has is the power to think and to form adequate ideas.

**5: Other things being equal, an affect toward something is strongest in someone who merely imagines the thing—not imagining it as necessary or as possible or as contingent.**

Imagining something while being ignorant of its causes and having no thought about its causes is imagining the thing as *free* (by what I have shown in the note on **II35**). And an affect toward something we imagine to be free is greater than an affect toward something we imagine to be necessary (by **III49**), and thus greater by an even larger margin than an affect toward something we imagine as possible or contingent (by **IV11**). So **5** follows.

**6: Insofar as the mind understands all things as necessary, to that extent it has a greater power over the affects, i.e. is less acted on by them.**

The mind understands all things to be necessary (by **I29**), and to be caused to exist and act by an infinite chain of causes (by **I28**). And so (by **5**) to that extent the mind comes to be less passive with respect to the affects springing from these necessary things, and (by **III48**) to have less strong affects toward them.

**Note on 6:** The mind's control over an affect is greatest when the particular thing the affect is directed toward is imagined distinctly and vividly, with the knowledge that it is necessary. We can learn this not only from my doctrines but also from experience, as when we see that someone's displeasure over some good that he has lost is lessened as soon as he comes to realize that the loss was utterly inevitable. Another example: a baby can't speak or walk or reason, and will live for many years with (as it were) no consciousness of itself; yet we see that no one pities it, because we regard infancy as natural and inevitable. If

most people were born adults, and only a very few were born infants, everyone *would* pity the infants because they would regard infancy not as natural and inevitable but as a fault or flaw in Nature. Many other examples could be given.

**7: Affects that arise from, or are aroused by, reason are, if we take account of time, more powerful than those that are related to particular things which we regard as absent.**

[The core of Spinoza's obscure 'demonstration' of **7** says this: (i) affects arising from reason are tied to 'the common properties of things', and so are always present; whereas (ii) affects toward particular things come and go. So in a conflict between (i) and (ii) it is the permanent and thus stable (i) that will win. The demonstration has more details, but they are hard to connect with **7** as stated. The only subsequent mentions of **7**—in the notes on **10** and **20**—fit tolerably well with this truncated version of the demonstration.]

**8: An affect is greater in proportion to how many causes collaborate in producing it.**

A given number of causes together can do more than a smaller number of causes could do (by **III7**), and so (by **IV5**) the more causes that collaborate in producing an affect the stronger it is. [The switch from 'greater' to 'stronger' follows Spinoza's Latin.]

**Note on 8:** This proposition is also evident from A2.

**9: As between an affect A which is related to several different causes that the person considers together with the affect itself, and an equally great affect B which the person relates to fewer causes (and perhaps only to one), (i) A is less harmful than B, (ii) the person is less passive with respect to A than B, and (iii) the person who has A**

**has less of an affect toward each individual cause than does the person who has B.**

(i) An affect is only bad = harmful to the extent that it prevents the mind from being able to think (by **IV26** and **IV27**). So the affect A which involves the mind in considering many objects together is less harmful than B which focuses the mind on one or a few objects so that it can't think of others.

(ii) Because the mind's essence = power (by **III7**) consists only in thought (by **II11**), the mind is less acted on by affect A which has it considering many things together than by the equally great affect B which keeps the mind engaged solely in considering one or a few objects.

(iii) The more the person relates affect A to many external causes, the less affect he has toward each cause individually (by **III48**).

**10: So long as we are not attacked by affects contrary to our nature, we have it in our power to order and connect the states of the body according to the order of the intellect.**

Affects that are contrary to our nature, i.e. (by **IV30**) bad affects, are bad because they prevent the mind from understanding (by **IV27**). Therefore, to the extent that we aren't attacked by affects contrary to our nature, the power by which the mind tries to understand things (by **IV26**) is not hindered, and it has it in its power to form clear and distinct ideas, and to deduce some from others (see the second note on **II40** and the note on **II47**). So to that extent (by **1**) we have the power to order and connect the states of the body according to the order of the intellect.

**Note on 10:** Through this power to order and connect the states of the body properly, we can become less vulnerable to bad affects. For (by **7**) it takes more force to restrain affects that are ordered and connected according to the order of the intellect than to restrain ones that are uncertain and random. So when we don't have perfect knowledge of our affects it is best for us to think up a correct principle of living, i.e. fixed rules of conduct, to commit them to memory, and to apply them constantly to particular situations of kinds that are frequently encountered in life. In this way our imagination—our casual everyday thinking—will be permeated by them, and we shall always have them ready.

An example is the rule of conduct that I laid down (see **IV46** and the note on it) that hate is to be conquered by love = nobility, not by returned hate. In order to have this rule of reason always ready when it is needed, we ought to reflect often on the wrongs that men commonly commit, and on how nobility is the best defence against them. For if we combine the image of a wrong action to an imagining of this rule, it will always be ready at hand for us (by **II18**) when a wrong is done to us. If we have ready also •the principle of our own true advantage, and also •the good that follows from mutual friendship and common society, and also keep in mind that •the highest satisfaction of mind stems from the right rule of living (by **IV52**), and that •men, like other things, act as their nature compels them to act, then the wrong or the hate usually arising from such wrong actions will occupy a very small part of the imagination, and will be easily overcome.

The greatest wrongs usually cause anger that is not so easily overcome; but even this intense anger will still be overcome—though not without some vacillation—in far less time than would have been needed if we hadn't thought about these things beforehand in the way I have described (as is evident from **6**, **7**, and **8**).



To put aside fear we must in the same way reflect on *resoluteness*, often describing and imagining the common dangers of life, and how they can be best avoided and overcome by presence of mind and strength of character. [This paragraph expands a little what Spinoza wrote, in ways that ·dots· can't easily signal.] In all our ordering of our thoughts and images, we should always (by the corollary to **IV63** and **III59**) focus on what is *good* in each thing, so that in this way we shall always be led to act by pleasurable affects. For example, if someone sees that he is working too hard to win men's esteem, he should change his approach, but *not* by •brooding on how esteem is misused and how empty it is, or on men's inconstancy, or other things of this kind—these are all thoughts of a sick mind. Rather, he should •think about the proper use of esteem, the purpose for which it ought be pursued and the means by which it can be acquired. The difference between these two approaches points to a way of telling whether someone *sincerely* wishes to moderate his attitude to the esteem of others. The positive, healthy approach won't be adopted by the disappointed person who is still ambitious: when *he* despairs of attaining the honour that he has been trying to win, he will be upset by thoughts of the proper use of esteem, and so on. If he tries to seem wise by expressing such thoughts, the performance will be spoiled by the evident anger that he is spewing forth. It will be easier and more natural for him to scream about the misuse of fame and the emptiness of the world.

Not only the ambitious person; this ·negative· approach is common to everyone whose luck is bad and whose mind is weak. A poor man who is greedy won't stop talking about the misuse of money and the vices of the rich; and all he achieves by that is to distress himself and to show the rest of us that he resents not only his own poverty but the wealth of others.

Similarly, someone who has been badly received by his lover broods on women's inconstancy and deceptiveness and other well-advertised vices. As soon as his lover receives him again, he forgets all this.

So someone who is led solely by his love of freedom to moderate his affects and appetites will try his hardest •to come to know the virtues and their causes, and to fill his mind with the joy that comes from the true knowledge of them; he will *not* •think about men's vices, or disparage men, or take pleasure from putting up a show of being a free man.

If you observe these carefully (they aren't difficult) and regularly put them into practice, you will soon be able to direct most of your actions according to the command of reason.

**11: The more things an image is related to, the more often it occurs—the more often it springs into life—and the more it engages the mind.**

The more things an image or affect is related to, the more causes there are by which it can be aroused and encouraged, all of which the mind (by hypothesis) considers together with the affect. And so the affect is the more frequent, or springs up more often, and (by **8**) engages the mind more.

**12: Images are more easily joined to images related to things we understand clearly and distinctly than to other images.**

Things we understand clearly and distinctly either •are common properties of things or •are deduced from such properties (see the definition of *reason* in the second note on **II40**), and so (by **11**) they are aroused in us more often [presumably meaning: they are more often in our thoughts]. And so considering other things together with *them* can more easily happen

·than considering the things together with things we don't understand clearly and distinctly, because the latter are not in the same way *always with us*·. Hence (by <sup>II</sup>18) ·images of things· are more easily joined with ·things we understand clearly and distinctly· than with others.

**13: The more things an image is joined with, the more often it springs into life.**

The more other images an image is joined with, the more causes there are (by <sup>II</sup>18) by which it can be aroused.

**14: The mind can bring it about that all the body's states—i.e. its images of things—are related to the idea of God.**

There is no state of the body of which the mind can't form some clear and distinct concept (by 4). So (by <sup>I</sup>15) it can bring it about that they are related to the idea of God.

**15: He who clearly and distinctly understands himself and his affects loves God, and the more he understands himself and his affects the more he loves God.**

He who understands himself and his affects clearly and distinctly has pleasure (by <sup>III</sup>53), and this pleasure is accompanied by the idea of God (by 14). Hence (by <sup>III</sup>AD6) he loves God, and (by the same reasoning) loves God the more, the more he understands himself and his affects.

**16: This love toward God must engage the mind more than anything else does.**

This love is joined to all the states of the body (by 14), which all encourage it (by 15). And so (by 11) it must engage the mind more than anything else does.

**17: God has no passive states, and isn't affected with any affect of pleasure or unpleasure.**

All ideas in their relation to God are true (by <sup>II</sup>32), that is (by <sup>II</sup>D4) they are adequate ·in relation to God, which means that they are caused wholly from within God·. And so (by the General Definition of the Affects) God is without passive states. [Spinoza could have argued more simply: There is nothing other than God (by <sup>I</sup>14), so nothing other than God can act on God, so none of God's states can be passive.]

Next, God cannot go from a lower to a higher level of perfection or from a higher to a lower (by the second corollary to <sup>I</sup>20); hence (by <sup>III</sup>AD2 and <sup>III</sup>AD3) God is not affected with any affect of pleasure or unpleasure.

**Corollary:** Strictly speaking, God doesn't love anyone or hate anyone.

**18: No-one can hate God.**

The idea of God that we have is adequate and perfect (by <sup>II</sup>46 and <sup>II</sup>47). So to the extent that we are thinking about God we are active (by <sup>III</sup>3). Consequently (by <sup>III</sup>59) no-one can have unpleasure accompanied by the idea of God, which is to say (by <sup>III</sup>AD7) that no-one can hate God.

**Corollary:** Love toward God cannot be turned into hate.

**Note on 18:** But, it can be objected, in understanding God to be the cause of all things we consider God to be the cause of unpleasure. To this I reply that insofar as we understand the causes of unpleasure it ceases (by 3) to be a passion, i.e. (by <sup>III</sup>59) to that extent it ceases to be unpleasure. And so in understanding God to be the cause of unpleasure we have pleasure.

**19: Anyone who loves God cannot try to get God to love him back.**

If someone did try to do this, he would desire (by the corollary to 17) that God not be God. But he loves God, so in wanting God not to be God he would (by III19) be wanting to have unpleasure, which is absurd (by III28). So 19 follows.

**20: This love toward God can't be tainted by an affect of envy or jealousy; on the contrary, the more men we think of as joined to God by the same bond of love, the more our love is encouraged.**

This love toward God is the highest good we can want according to the dictate of reason (by IV28), and it is common to all men (by IV36); we want everyone to enjoy it (by IV37). And so (by IIIAD23) it can't be stained by an affect of envy or (by 18 and the definition of *jealousy* in the note on III35) by an affect of jealousy. On the contrary (by III31), the more men we think of as enjoying it the more it is bound to be encouraged.

**Note on 20:** In this way we can show that there is no directly opposite affect by which this love toward God could be destroyed. So we can conclude that this love is the most constant of all the affects, and in its bodily aspect it can't be destroyed unless the body itself is destroyed. As for the nature of this love in its mental aspect, I shall come to that later.

With this I have completed my account of the remedies for the affects, i.e. of everything that the mind, considered solely in itself, can do against the affects. From what I have said it is clear that the mind's power over the affects consists:

I. in sheer knowledge of the affects (see the note on 3 and 4);

II. in the mind's detaching an affect from the confused thought of an external cause (see 2 and the note on 3 and 4);

III. in the greater durability of the states related to things we understand as compared with states related to things we conceive confusedly = in a mutilated way (see 7);

IV. in the numerousness of causes of states that are related to common properties or to God (see 9 and 11);

V. in the mind's ability to order its affects and connect them to one another (see the note on 10 and also 12, 13, and 14).

[This paragraph expands what Spinoza wrote, in ways that can't be signalled by the ·dots· device.] To understand better this power of the mind over the affects, we need to have a good grasp of *differences* in the strength of the affects. These differences underlie our descriptions of affects as 'great' or 'strong'. We talk in that way when we are •comparing two men who have the same affect, and observe that one of them is troubled by it •more than the other; or when we are comparing two different affects of a single man, and observe that one of them moves him—interferes with his life—•more than the other does. But we do have the notion of how strong a given affect of a given person is, considered just in itself without comparing it with any other affect-person pair; though *this* notion of affect-strength is also comparative in a different way, as follows: How much force a given affect has depends (by IV5) purely how much power its external cause has •compared with the power of the person who has the affect. The power of the person—i.e. the power of his mind—depends purely on how much knowledge he has; whereas its weakness, i.e. its passivity, is measured by his lack of knowledge, i.e. by the state of affairs that gives him ideas that are called 'inadequate'. So an extreme case of a passive mind is one that

is mostly made up of inadequate ideas—a mind characterized more by what is done to it than by what it does. On the other side, an extremely active mind is one that is mostly made up of adequate ideas; it may have as many inadequate ideas as the extremely passive mind, but what it is notable for are not *those* ideas but rather its adequate ideas—not by its ideas that testify to human weakness but rather its ideas that are attributed to human strength = virtue.

The chief cause of unhappiness and mental sickness is excessive love for something that is liable to many variations and that we can never fully possess. No-one is disturbed or anxious about anything unless he loves it; and wrongs, suspicions, and enmities arise only from love for things that no-one can really fully possess. So it is easy for us to grasp what can be done against the affects by clear and distinct knowledge—and especially that third kind of knowledge (see the note on <sup>II</sup>47) that is based on knowledge of God. If clear and distinct knowledge doesn't absolutely remove passive affects (see **3** and the note on **3** and **4**), at least it makes them the smallest part of the mind (see **14**). Furthermore, such knowledge creates a love for ·God·, something unchangeable and eternal (see **15**) which we really fully possess (see <sup>II</sup>45), and which therefore can't be tainted by any of the faults that occur in ordinary love, but can continue to grow more and more (by **15**) until it engages the greatest part of the mind (by **16**) and pervades it throughout.

### ·Looking beyond this present life·

Now I have ·in **1–20**· completed everything that concerns this present life. In these few words I have covered all the remedies for the affects (and you will see that I have, if you attend to ·what I have said in this note, to ·the definitions of the mind and its affects, and to ·<sup>III</sup>1 and <sup>III</sup>3). So now the

time has come for me to pass to the things that pertain to the mind's duration without relation to the body.

### **21: A mind can't imagine anything or recollect any past thing except while its body endures.**

A mind doesn't express the actual existence of its body, or think of its body's states as actual, except while that body endures (by the corollary to <sup>II</sup>8). Therefore (by <sup>II</sup>26) it doesn't think of *any* body as actually existing except while *its* body endures. So it can't imagine anything (see the definition of *imagination* in the note on <sup>II</sup>17) or recollect anything from the past (see the definition of *memory* in the note on <sup>II</sup>18) except while its body endures.

### **22: Nevertheless, in God there is necessarily an idea that expresses the essence of each particular human body, under the aspect of eternity.**

[Spinoza writes something meaning 'the essence of this and that human body' (not 'this or that').]

God is the cause not only of the ·existence of this and that human body but also of its ·essence (by <sup>I</sup>25). ·That is, God = Nature didn't just cause that body of yours to *exist*; it is also the source of the abstract *possibility* of there being a body such as that one of yours. Nature is the source of the actuality of your body and also of the blueprint, so to speak, according to which it is constructed·. So each body must be conceived through God's essence (by <sup>I</sup>A4) by a certain eternal necessity (by <sup>I</sup>16), and this concept must be in God (by <sup>II</sup>3).

[In Spinoza's usage, *tempus* = 'time' always refers to time considered as cut up or portioned out into measurable stretches. Accordingly, in the next demonstration a phrase of his that literally means 'duration that can be made definite by time' will be translated as 'measurable duration'. Similarly with some later occurrences of 'measure' or its cognates.]

**23: A human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the ·corresponding· body, but something of it remains which is eternal.**

·First, let's be clear about what **is not** being said here:· We don't attribute to a human mind any measurable duration except while it expresses the actual existence of the ·corresponding· body (an existence that does involve duration and can be measured). That is to say (by the corollary to **II8**) that we don't attribute duration to the mind except while the body endures—·for example, when someone has physically died we don't say 'His mind still lingers on', implying that it has lasted *longer* than the body·.

·Now for what **is** being said·. In God there is necessarily a concept or idea that expresses the essence of your body (by **22**); so this is something that must pertain to the essence of your mind (by **II13** ·which says that a human mind is the idea of the corresponding human body·). So there is *something* that •is conceived with a certain eternal necessity through God's essence (by **22**) and •pertains to the essence of the mind and •will necessarily be eternal.

**Note on 23:** There is, as I have said, this idea that expresses the essence of the body under the aspect of eternity—a certain mode of thinking that pertains to the essence of the mind and is necessarily eternal. It is impossible that we should recollect having existed before the body—since there can't be any traces of this in the body. ·And anyway·, eternity isn't a matter of long-lastingness; it doesn't have any relation to measurable time. But still we feel and know by experience that we are eternal. ·It's all right for me to say 'feel'· because the mind feels the things that it conceives in the •understanding as much as it does those it has in its memory. For •demonstrations are the eyes of the mind,

through which it sees and observes things. So although we don't recollect existing before the body, we nevertheless feel that our mind, by involving the essence of the body under the aspect of eternity, is eternal and that this existence that it has can't be a matter of long-lastingness. ·That last clause is important. To reinforce it, I repeat·: our mind can be said to last for a certain specific length of time only while it involves the actual existence of the body. Only then can it have thoughts about when things begin and end, thoughts about how long they last.

**24: The more we understand particular things the more we understand God.**

This is evident from the corollary to **I25**.

**25: The mind's greatest effort and its greatest virtue is understanding things by the third kind of knowledge.**

The third kind of knowledge goes from an adequate idea of certain attributes of God to an adequate knowledge of the essence of things (see its definition in the second note on **II40**), and the more we understand things in this way the more we understand God (by **24**). Therefore (by **IV28**) the greatest virtue of the mind—i.e. (by **IVD8**) the mind's power or nature, i.e. (by **III7**) its strongest effort—is to understand things by the third kind of knowledge.

**26: The more •capable the mind is of understanding things by the third kind of knowledge, the more it •wants to understand them by this kind of knowledge.**

This is obvious. For the thought of the mind as able to understand things by this kind of knowledge is the thought of it as being caused to understand things in that way; and so (by **IIIAD1**) the more the mind is able to know in this way the more it wants to do so.

**27: The greatest contentment of mind there can be arises from this third kind of knowledge.**

The greatest virtue of the mind is to know God (by <sup>IV</sup>28), i.e. to understand things by the third kind of knowledge (by 25); and the more the mind knows things in this way the greater the virtue is (by 24). So someone who knows things by this kind of knowledge moves to having the greatest human perfection, and consequently (by <sup>III</sup>AD2) has the greatest pleasure accompanied (by <sup>II</sup>43) by the idea of himself and his virtue. Therefore (by <sup>III</sup>AD25) the greatest contentment there can be arises from this kind of knowledge.

**28: The effort = desire to know things by the third kind of knowledge can't arise from the first kind of knowledge, but can from the second kind.**

This proposition is self-evident. For when we understand something clearly and distinctly we understand it either •just as it stands •as self-evident• or •through something else that we understand in that way. That is to say: ideas that are clear and distinct in us, i.e. are related to the third kind of knowledge (see the second note on <sup>II</sup>40), can't follow from the mutilated and confused ideas that (by the same note) are related to the first kind of knowledge; but they can follow from adequate ideas, i.e. (by the same note again) from the second and third kind of knowledge. Therefore (by <sup>III</sup>AD1) 28 follows.

**29: When a mind understands something under the aspect of eternity, this doesn't come from its conceiving the •corresponding• body's present actual •existence, but from its conceiving the body's •essence under the aspect of eternity.**

•The negative part•: In conceiving the present existence of its body, a mind conceives of measurable duration, and that is its only way of conceiving things in relation to measurable time (by 21 and <sup>II</sup>26). But eternity isn't to be defined in terms of duration (by <sup>I</sup>D8 and its explanation). Therefore, a mind's conceiving the present existence of its body doesn't give it the power to conceive things under the aspect of eternity.  
•The positive part•: It is of the nature of reason to conceive things under the aspect of eternity (by the second corollary to <sup>II</sup>44); and it also pertains to the nature of the mind to conceive the •corresponding• body's essence under the aspect of eternity (by 23); and these two are *all* that pertains to the mind's essence (by <sup>II</sup>13). Therefore this power of conceiving things under the aspect of eternity is something a mind has only in conceiving its body's essence under the aspect of eternity.

**Note on 29:** We conceive things as actual in two ways: either conceiving them to •exist at a certain time and place, or conceiving them to •be contained in God and to follow from the necessity of the divine nature. But when we conceive things as true = real in this second way, we are conceiving under the aspect of eternity, and they involve the eternal and infinite essence of God (as I have shown in <sup>II</sup>45 and the note on it).

**30: In knowing itself and its body under the aspect of eternity, our mind necessarily has knowledge of God, and knows that it is in God and is conceived through God.**

Eternity is the very essence of God insofar as this essence involves necessary existence (by <sup>I</sup>8). So conceiving things under the aspect of eternity is

conceiving them as  
*real beings* because of their conception through  
 God's essence, or as  
*involving existence* because of their conception  
 through God's essence.

So our mind in conceiving itself and its body under  
 the aspect of eternity necessarily has knowledge of  
 God, and knows etc.

**31: The mind in being itself eternal is the formal cause  
 of the third kind of knowledge.** [This, the only occurrence of  
 'formal cause' in the *Ethics*, defies explanation.]

The mind conceives nothing under the aspect of eter-  
 nity except by conceiving its body's essence under  
 the aspect of eternity (by **29**), that is (by **P21** and **23**)  
 except by *being* eternal. So (by **30**) in being eternal  
 the mind has knowledge of God, knowledge that is  
 necessarily adequate (by **II46**). And therefore the mind  
 in being eternal is capable of knowing all the things  
 that can follow from this given knowledge of God (by  
**II40**), that is, capable of knowing things by the third  
 kind of knowledge (see the definition of this in the  
 second note on **II40**). So the mind in being eternal  
 is the adequate = formal cause of the third kind of  
 knowledge (by **III D1**).

**Note on 31:** Therefore the more knowledge of this kind that  
 each of us can achieve, the more conscious he is of himself  
 and of God, i.e. the more perfect and happy he is. This  
 will be even clearer from what follows. ·An important point  
 of procedure· should be noted here: Although we are now  
 certain that the mind in conceiving things under the aspect  
 of eternity *is eternal*, I can make a better job of explaining the  
 things I want to show if I consider a mind as having *just this  
 minute come into existence* and just starting to understand

things under the aspect of eternity (as we have just started  
 to do!). I don't run any risk of error in this way of proceeding,  
 provided I am careful to draw my conclusions only from  
 evident premises.

**32: We take pleasure in anything that we understand  
 by the third kind of knowledge, and our pleasure is  
 accompanied by the idea of God as a cause.**

From this kind of knowledge there arises the greatest  
 •contentment of mind there can be (by **27**), that is  
 (by **III AD25**) the greatest •pleasure; this pleasure is  
 accompanied by the idea of oneself, and consequently  
 (by **30**) it is also accompanied by the idea of God, as  
 its cause.

**Corollary:** From the third kind of knowledge there necessar-  
 ily arises an intellectual love of God. For from this kind of  
 knowledge there arises (by **32**) pleasure accompanied by the  
 idea of God as its cause, that is (by **III AD6**) love of God—not  
 in imagining God as present (by **29**) but in understanding  
 God to be eternal. This is what I call intellectual love of God.

**33: The intellectual love of God that arises from the  
 third kind of knowledge is eternal.**

The third kind of knowledge (by **31** and by **I A3**) is  
 eternal. And so (by **I A3** again) the love that arises  
 from it must also be eternal.

**Note on 33:** Although this love toward God has had no  
 beginning (by **33**), it still has all the perfections of love, just  
 as if it had only just come into existence (as I pretended in  
 the note on **31**). [Spinoza says 'in the corollary to the preceding  
 proposition', that is to **32**, but this has to be a slip.] The only  
 difference ·between the real case and the fictional one· is  
 that the perfections that our fictional mind has acquired  
 recently have been *eternally* possessed by the ·unfictional·  
 mind, accompanied by the idea of God as an eternal cause.

So if pleasure consists in rising to a greater perfection, blessedness—the ultimate pleasure—must surely consist in the mind's being endowed with perfection itself.

**34: Only while the body endures is the mind subject to passive affects.**

An imagining is an idea by which a mind considers an ·external· thing as present (see its definition in the note on <sup>II</sup>17), though it is more informative about the present state of the ·corresponding· human body than about the nature of external thing (by the second corollary to <sup>II</sup>16). So an imagining, because it indicates the present state of the ·corresponding· body, is an affect (by the General Definition of the Affects in Part III). So (by 21) only while the body endures is the mind subject to passive affects.

**Note on 34:** If we look to the common opinion of men we shall see that they are indeed conscious of the eternity of their mind, but that they confuse eternity with duration = long-lastingness, and credit their imagination = memory with being eternal, believing that it lasts after death.

[In 35 and 36 and their appendages, the text has 'God loves God' etc. instead of 'God loves himself' etc. For an explanation of this oddity, see the editorial paragraph before the start of this text.]

**35: God loves God with an infinite intellectual love.**

God is absolutely infinite (by <sup>I</sup>D6), i.e. (by <sup>II</sup>D6) the nature of God enjoys infinite perfection accompanied (by <sup>II</sup>3) by the idea of ·God, i.e. (by <sup>I</sup>11 and <sup>I</sup>D1) by the idea of ·God's cause. And this is what I have said (corollary to 32) intellectual love is.

**36: A mind's intellectual love of God is part of the infinite love by which God loves God. It isn't to be identified with ·God's love of God with God considered**

**as infinite, but only with ·God's love of God with God considered as including the essence of that mind considered under the aspect of eternity.**

This love that the mind has must be related to its active nature (by the corollary to 32 and <sup>III</sup>3); so it is an *action* by which the mind thinks about itself with the accompanying idea of God as its cause (by 32 and its corollary), that is (by the corollaries to <sup>I</sup>25 and <sup>II</sup>11), an action by which God—considered as including the human mind—thinks about God with the accompanying idea of God ·as the cause·; so (by 35) this love that the mind has is part of the infinite love by which God loves God.

**Corollary:** God, in loving God, also loves men, and consequently God's love of men and the mind's intellectual love of God are one and the same.

**Note on 36:** From this we clearly understand that our salvation = happiness = freedom consists in a constant and eternal love toward God, i.e. in God's love toward men. And this love = happiness is called *glory* in the holy scriptures—not without reason. For whether this love is considered as being had by God or as being had by a ·human· mind, it can rightly be called satisfaction of mind, which really the same thing as glory (by <sup>III</sup>AD25 and <sup>III</sup>AD30). For considered as had by God (by 35) it is pleasure (if I may still be permitted to use this term) accompanied by the idea of God ·as its cause·; and similarly when it is considered as had by a ·human· mind (by 27).

Again, because the essence of our mind consists solely in knowledge, of which God is the beginning and foundation (by <sup>I</sup>15 and the note on <sup>II</sup>47), it is clear to us how our mind—its essence and its existence—follows from the divine nature and continually depends on God.



I have thought it worthwhile to point this out here, so as to show by this example •how much can be accomplished by the knowledge of •particular things that I have called ‘intuitive’ or ‘knowledge of the third kind’ (see the second note on **II40**), and •how much more powerful it is than the •universal knowledge I have called ‘knowledge of the second kind’. For although I have shown in •general terms in Part I that everything (and thus the human mind also) depends on God both for its essence and its existence, and although that demonstration is legitimate and free from all chance of doubt, it still doesn’t affect our mind as much as when this result is inferred from the very essence of any •particular thing that we say depends on God.

**37: Nothing in nature is contrary to this intellectual love or able to take it away.**

This intellectual love follows necessarily from the nature of the mind considered as an eternal •truth through God’s nature (by **33** and **29**). So something contrary to this love would be contrary to the •true; consequently something could remove this love would bring it about that what is true is false, and this is self-evidently absurd. Therefore **37** follows.

**Note on 37:** I think it must be obvious to everyone that the axiom in Part IV concerns particular things considered as located in times and places.

**38: The more things a mind understands by the second and third kinds of knowledge, the less it is acted on by bad affects and the less it fears death.**

A mind’s essence consists in knowledge (by **II11**); so •the more things a mind knows by the second and third kinds of knowledge •the greater the part of it that remains ·when the body is destroyed· (by **23** and **29**), and consequently (by **37**) •the greater the part of

it that is untouched by affects that are contrary to our nature, i.e. (by **IV30**) by bad affects. Therefore, the more things the mind understands by the second and third kinds of knowledge, the greater the part of it that stays unharmed, so the less it is acted on by ·bad· affects ·and the less reason it has to fear death·.

**Note on 38:** From this we understand something that I touched on in the note on **IV39** and promised to explain in this Part, namely: the greater a mind’s clear and distinct knowledge, and thus the more it loves God, the less harm death can do.

And a second point: because (by **27**) the highest possible contentment arises from the third kind of knowledge, it follows that a human mind can be of such a nature that the part of it that I have shown perishes with the body (see **21**) is insignificant compared to the part that remains. I shall soon treat this more fully.

**39: Someone whose body is capable of a great many things has a mind whose greatest part is eternal.**

Someone who has a body capable of doing a great many things is least troubled by bad affects (by **IV38**), i.e. (by **IV30**) by affects contrary to our nature. So (by **10**) he has the power to order and connect the states of his body according to the order of the intellect, and consequently (by **14**) to bring it about that all the states of his body are related to the idea of God. The result (by **15**) is that he has a love of God that (by **16**) must occupy = constitute the greatest part of his mind. Therefore (by **33**), he has a mind whose greatest part is eternal.

**Note on 39:** Because human bodies are capable of a great many things, there is no doubt that they can be of such a nature as to be related to •minds that have a great knowledge

of themselves and of God, •minds of which the greatest or chief part is eternal, so that they hardly fear death. To get a clearer understanding of these things, consider this: We live in continuous change, and as we change for the better or worse we are called fortunate or unfortunate: someone who has gone from being a baby or a child to being a corpse is called unfortunate; whereas if we pass the whole length of our life with a sound mind in a sound body, we are considered to be fortunate. And really, he who, like an infant or child, has a body capable of very few things, and very heavily dependent on external causes, has a mind which considered solely in itself is conscious of almost nothing of itself, or of God, or of things. On the other hand, he who has a body capable of a great many things, has a mind which considered only in itself is very much conscious of itself, and of God, and of things.

In this life, then, we mainly try to bring it about that the baby's body changes (as much as its nature allows this and helps in it) into another body that is capable of a great many things and related to a mind that is very much conscious of itself, of God, and of things, in such a way that whatever is related to its memory or imagination is of hardly any moment in relation to the intellect (as I have already said in the note on •38.

**40: The more perfection each thing has, the more it acts and the less it is acted on; and conversely, the more it acts, the more perfect it is.**

The more perfect a thing is, the more reality it has (by **III D6**), and consequently (by **III 3** and the note on it) the more it acts and the less it is acted on. This demonstration also holds good in the opposite direction, proving that the more a thing acts the more perfect it is.

**Corollary:** The part of the mind that remains ·when the body dies·, however large ·or small· it is, is more perfect than the rest.

The eternal part of the mind (by **23** and **29**) is the intellect—the only part of the mind through which we are said to *act* (by **III 3**). And what I have shown to perish ·with the body· is the imagination (by **21**), the only part of the mind through which we are said to *be acted on* (by **III 3** and the General Definition of the Affects). So (by **40**) the intellect, however extensive it is, is more perfect than the imagination.

**Note on 20–40:** That completes what I wanted to show concerning the mind when considered without relation to the body's existence. From those propositions—and at the same time from **I 21** and other things—it is clear that our mind, insofar as it understands, is an eternal mode of thinking which is determined by another eternal mode of thinking which. . . and so on to infinity; so that all together they constitute God's eternal and infinite intellect.

**41: Even if we didn't know that our mind is eternal, we would still regard as of the first importance morality, religion, and absolutely all the things I have shown (in Part IV) to be related to resoluteness and nobility.**

The first and only foundation of virtue, i.e. of the method of living rightly (by the corollary to **IV 22** and **24**), is the pursuit of our own advantage. But in determining what reason prescribes as useful ·in Part IV·, I didn't take into account the eternity of the mind, which came into sight only in Part V. So back when we didn't know that the mind is eternal, we still regarded as of the first importance the things I showed to be related to resoluteness and nobility. And so, even if we still didn't know this, we would regard as of the

first importance the same rules of reason.

**Note on 41:** The usual conviction of the multitude seems to be different. For most people apparently think they are free to the extent that they can indulge their lust, and that in being obliged to live according to the divine law they are giving up their rights. In their view, then, morality, religion, and absolutely everything related to strength of character are *burdens* that they hope to put down after death, when they also hope to be receive a reward for their bondage, that is, for their morality and religion. They are induced to live according to the divine law (as far as their weakness and lack of character allows) not only by this •hope but also, and especially, by the •fear of horrible punishments after death. If men didn't have this hope and this fear, and believed instead that minds die with the body and that they—poor wretches who are exhausted with the burden of morality—have no after-life to look forward to, they would return to their natural disposition and choose to shape their lives according to their lusts, and to be ruled by fortune rather than by themselves.

These opinions seem to me as absurd as if someone, because he doesn't think he can nourish his body with good food to eternity, should prefer to fill himself with poisons; or because he sees that the mind is not eternal = immortal, should prefer to be mindless and to live without reason. These •attitudes• are so absurd they are hardly worth mentioning.

**42: (i) Happiness is not •the reward of virtue; it •is virtue. (ii) And it is not the case that we are happy because we restrain our lusts; on the contrary, we are able to restrain our lusts because we are happy.**

(i) Happiness consists in love of God (by 36 and the note on it), a love arising from the third kind

of knowledge (by the corollary to 32). So this love (by <sup>III</sup>59 and 3) must be related to the active mind. Therefore (by <sup>IV</sup>D8) it is virtue itself.

(ii) The more the mind enjoys this divine love = happiness, the more it understands (by 32), that is (by the corollary to 3) the greater its power over the affects, and (by 38) the less it is acted on by bad affects. So because the mind enjoys this divine love or happiness, it has the power to restrain lusts. And because human power to restrain the affects consists only in the intellect, no-one enjoys happiness because he has restrained the affects. Instead, the power to restrain lusts arises from happiness itself.

**Note on 42:** That brings me to the end of everything I wanted to show concerning the mind's power over the affects and concerning its freedom. What I have shown makes clear how much the wise man is capable of, and how much stronger he is than one who is ignorant and is driven only by lust. For not only is the ignorant man troubled in many ways by external causes, and unable ever to have true peace of mind, but he also lives as if he didn't know himself or God or things; and as soon as he stops *being acted on* he stops *being*. On the other hand, the wise man (considered as a wise man) is hardly troubled in spirit; and being by a certain eternal necessity conscious of himself and of God and of things, he never stops being, and always possesses true peace of mind.

The road to these things that I have pointed out now seems very hard, but it *can* be found. And of course something that is found so rarely is bound to be hard. For if salvation were ready to hand and could be found without great effort, how could it come about that almost everyone neglects it? But *excellence* is as difficult as it is rare.