

To my parents,

Without whose love, help, support (and patience) this would not have been possible.  
Never was there a more fortunate son.

DEMD

**Conscience and Its Referents:  
The Meaning and Place of Conscience in the Moral Thought of  
Joseph Butler and the Ethical Rationalism of Samuel Clarke,  
John Balguy and Richard Price**

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## Short Abstract

Joseph Butler's moral thought and the ethical rationalism of Samuel Clarke, and his followers, John Balguy and Richard Price, are frequently distinguished, as a result of: (a) Butler's empirical method (e.g., Kydd, Sturgeon); (b) Butler's emphasis upon self-love in the 'cool hour passage' (e.g., Prichard, McPherson); (c) Butlerian conscience, where, on a neo-Kantian reading, Butler surpassed the Clarkeans by conveying a sense of Kantian 'reflective endorsement' (e.g., Korsgaard, Darwall).

The neo-Kantian criticisms of the Clarkeans in (c) are consistent with (d) Francis Hutcheson's and David Hume's criticisms of the Clarkeans; (e) modern criticisms of rational intuitionism that follow Hutcheson and Hume (e.g., Mackie, Warnock); and (f) the contention that the Clarkeans occupied an uneasy position within 'post-restoration natural law theory' (e.g., Beiser, Finnis).

(d)-(e) thus underpin the distinction between Butler and the Clarkeans in (a)-(c), where the Clarkeans, unlike Butler, are criticised for representing moral truth as the passive, and self-evident, perception of potentially uninteresting facts.

This study responds to (a)-(f), by arguing that Butlerian and Clarkean conscience possessed more than one referent; so that conscience meant an individual's experience of his own judgement *and* God's judgement *and* the rational moral order. As a result of their shared theory of conscience, Butler and the Clarkeans held the same theory of moral development: moral agents mature as they move from obeying conscience according to only one of conscience's referents, to obeying conscience because to do so is to satisfy each of conscience's referents.

In response to (a)-(b), this study demonstrates that the Clarkeans agreed with Butler's method and 'cool hour': natural considerations of individual judgement and self-interest were necessary aspects of the progress towards moral maturity in both Butler and the Clarkeans.

With respect to (c), it is argued that Butler and the Clarkeans shared the same understanding of practical moral reasoning as part of their shared understanding of conscience and moral development. This study places limits upon proto-Kantian readings of Butler, and neo-Kantian criticisms of the Clarkeans, while making it inconsistent to divide Butler and the Clarkeans on the basis of Butlerian conscience.

In answer to (c)-(f), Clarkean conscience shows that the Clarkeans were neither complacent nor 'externalists'. Clarkean conscience highlights how the Clarkeans positioned themselves within the tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law. Consequently, in both Butler and the Clarkeans, the intuition of moral truth was not the passive perception of an 'independent realm' of normative fact, but the active encounter, in conscience, with reason *qua* the law of God's nature, human nature, and the created universe.

## **Long Abstract**

The following study seeks to establish conscience's referents as a means to understanding the meaning and place of conscience within the moral thought of Joseph Butler and the ethical rationalism of Samuel Clarke, and Clarke's followers, John Balguy and Richard Price.

In establishing conscience's referents, this study responds to central criticisms of Butlerian conscience and Clarkean ethical rationalism (CER). Moreover, as those criticisms often argue that there is a distinction between the former and the latter, this study emphasises the affinities between Butler and the Clarkeans by establishing their shared theory of conscience.

With respect to Butler scholarship, Butler has been criticised for being inconsistent in his representation of conscience. Butler's inconsistency has been assessed in terms of both internal inconsistency and inconsistency with CER.

Thus, for example, when Butlerian conscience is reduced to our intuition of intrinsic rightness, as in Henry Sidgwick and C.D. Broad, then the similarities between Butler's moral thought and CER are emphasised. However, on the Sidgwick-Broad reduced reading of Butlerian conscience, the emphasis upon self-love in the 'cool hour passage' undermines Butler's understanding of the supremacy of conscience, and so creates tensions within his moral thought, and between his moral thought and CER.

However, when, on the basis of the ‘cool hour passage’, Butlerian conscience is reduced, as in T.H. McPherson, to the reflective consideration of individual interest, Butler is not inconsistent in the ‘cool hour passage’, but rather when he appeals elsewhere to the Clarkeian language of intrinsic rightness.

Likewise, Butler’s empirical method has suggested to some scholars that he, as Rachel Kydd put it, ‘rejected’ Clarke’s ‘*a priori* method’. Again, on reduced readings that emphasise Butler’s method, Butler is internally inconsistent when he invokes CER, not when he departs from it. In this study, the most significant reduction of Butlerian conscience which draws on Butler’s method, is the proto-Kantian reading of Butler (KR). KR, as offered by the likes of Stephen Darwall, Christine Korsgaard and J.B. Schneewind, interprets Butler’s method as supporting the reduction of Butlerian conscience to the ‘self-authenticating’ activity of individual reflective moral judgement. Thus, in KR, Butlerian conscience (unlike the passive perception of independent moral truth in CER) captures the interplay between, and interdependence of, normativity and autonomy within the neo-Kantian self *qua* ‘self-legislating’ agent.

While the interpretations of Butlerian conscience outlined above depend upon its reduction, they also depend upon a narrow understanding of CER.

With respect to CER, this study is concerned with the neo-Kantian criticisms of the Clarkeans (KC); Francis Hutcheson’s and David Hume’s criticisms of the Clarkeans, as well as modern critical readings of the Clarkeans, which are consistent with the criticisms of Hutcheson and Hume, such as J.L. Mackie’s and G.J. Warnock’s (HC); and the ‘laicisation of

natural law' criticisms of the Clarkeans (LNLC), as maintained by likes of John Finnis and Frederick Beiser.

The most pervasive feature of the above criticisms of CER is the charge of complacency. KC, HC and LNLC agree that a fundamental difficulty for the Clarkeans is their claim that we self-evidently 'see' moral truth with the certainty with which we 'see' mathematical truth; and that the perception of moral truth is a sufficient motivation for the performance of moral action.

In KC, HC and LNLC, the analogies of sight and mathematics cause problems for CER. There is the problem of supervenience, as an aspect of what Mackie called the 'queerness' of the posited quality of intrinsic rightness. If we simply 'see' that which is right in itself, and intrinsic rightness is an irreducible quality, then we cannot explain why it supervenes on particular natural features. Indeed, we are forced to rely, not only on a 'mysterious' quality, but a 'mysterious' intuitive faculty that enables us to 'see' this 'mysterious' quality. Further, it is not clear how the perception of moral truth is able to engage the will. If moral truth is analogous with mathematical truth, then morality becomes a series of potentially uninteresting facts that are presented to us by the *thin is* of theoretical reason.

From the perspective of KC, HC and LNLC, therefore, the Clarkeans failed to take seriously what Korsgaard called 'the normative question'. However, crucially for this study, KC, HC and LNLC also suggest that Butlerian conscience does take seriously 'the normative question'.

Not least as a result of Hume's recognition, Butler's empirical method has been read as suggesting that moral norms are to be found, not in an independent rational moral order, but in imperatives belonging to human nature that are reflectively considered in conscience. The likes of D.D. Raphael, Nicholas Sturgeon and Alasdair MacIntyre each offers versions of this interpretation. In doing so, they not only reduce Butlerian conscience, but also (i) agree with the narrow interpretation of CER in HC and LNLC, where, as Beiser put it, the Clarkeans 'detach' moral value from 'human desires or sentiments'; and (ii) suggest that Butler is able, unlike the Clarkeans, to avoid HC and LNLC.

The fact that central criticisms of the Clarkeans underpin favourable readings of Butler that distinguish Butler from the Clarkeans, is made most explicit in the disparity between KR and KC. While Darwall and Korsgaard offer KR, they also contend KC. In KR, Butlerian conscience conveys Kantian 'reflective endorsement', but, in KC, the Clarkeans are 'externalists': they describe the intuition of moral truth as an encounter with some 'mysterious' normative entity, independent of the individual's mind, but to which the individual's mind must somehow conform.

In response to reduced readings of Butlerian conscience, this study argues that it possessed more than one referent. Further, in response to narrow interpretations of CER, this study argues that leading criticisms of the Clarkeans have neglected the Clarkean conception of conscience, and failed to appreciate that Clarkean and Butlerian conscience possessed the same referents. Consequently, the following study makes it inconsistent, as in KR and KC, to distinguish Butler from the Clarkeans, when they shared the same understanding of conscience. Likewise, in establishing conscience's referents, this study is able to resolve the internal inconsistencies in Butler that are usually associated with Butler's method and 'cool hour

passage'. Indeed, it will be argued that such aspects of Butler are consistent with his theory of conscience, and, as a result of Butler's and the Clarkeans' shared understanding of conscience, consistent with CER.

In Chapter 1 the referents of Butlerian conscience are discussed. Conscience's referents oppose the reduction of Butlerian conscience, while accounting for why commentators have offered rival reduced readings of it.

It is argued that the referents of Butlerian conscience include: (i) individual judgement, (ii) God's judgement, (iii) self-interest, (iv) the best interest of others and (v) the rational moral order. (i)-(v) are each referents of conscience, because, whenever an individual agent obeys conscience, he has acted according to (i)-(v); and because an individual agent is only able to, and expected to, act according to (i)-(v) as a result of being created by God with conscience.

The tendency to reduce Butlerian conscience to only one of its referents is compared with Karl Ameriks' and John Hare's 'false trichotomy'. Ameriks and Hare argue that neo-Kantianism approaches moral obligation from within a 'false trichotomy': obligation is either imposed by God, *or* by an independent normative order, *or* we impose it upon ourselves.

Likewise, when approaching Butler, because an understanding of conscience's referents has not been adequately developed, scholars have decided that conscience must be *either* our own reflective engagement with the system of human nature *or* our experience of God's judgement *or* our intuition of the rational moral order. Consequently, when Butler described conscience as authoritative, because to obey conscience is to act according to an

individual's own judgement *and* God's judgement *and* the rational moral order, Butler has been described as inconsistent. In opposition to such criticisms, Chapter 1 allows Butler's conscience to possess more than one referent. Thus, the chapter takes seriously each of the ways in which Butler described conscience, and allows Butlerian conscience to be our encounter with, and reflective consideration of the consequences of our actions for, (i)-(v).

Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrate that Clarkeian conscience possessed the same referents as Butlerian conscience.

It is argued in Chapter 2 that the neglect of Clarkeian conscience in KC, HC and LNLC has led to a narrow understanding of CER, because the meaning of reason, and rational intuition, has been reduced. An appreciation of Clarkeian conscience highlights how the Clarkeans were self-consciously placing themselves within the tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law. Consistent with that tradition, the referents of conscience in CER (and Butler's moral thought) are the referents of conscience, because the paradigm of conscience is the paradigm of right reason. That with which one is reflectively concerned in conscience is satisfying all that reason *is*, where reason is the law of human nature, God's nature, and the law of the created universe itself.

Thus, Chapter 2 maintains that the Clarkeans are able to explain why the supposedly 'queer' feature of non-natural intrinsic rightness supervenes on particular natural features. In CER, that which we perceive to be right in itself is that which we perceive *with* reason to be *according to* reason *qua* our law, God's law, and the law of the created universe, so that that which we perceive to be right in itself is satisfying our 'tripartite' duties, enjoined by reason, to ourselves, to others, and to God.

Although the Clarkeans are criticised for reducing morality to the thin *is* of theoretical reason, the presence of conscience within CER shows how they considered reason to be normatively *thick*. In CER, the perceptive and reflective exercise of reason is always *live* with all that reason *is qua* our law, God's law, and the law of the created universe.

Further, KC have made the Clarkeans 'heteronomous' and, even on the Clarkeans' own terms, 'externalists', when they refer to such motivations for moral action as individual, and divine, judgement, while also arguing that moral actions must be performed because they are right in themselves. It is argued in this chapter that, by stepping outside Ameriks' and Hare's 'false trichotomy', it is possible to appreciate how the Clarkean understanding of all that reason *is* makes the normative concern for one's own judgement and nature, and the normative concern to imitate God, part of the experience of perceiving intrinsic rightness, and part of the reflective consideration of what it means to do that which is right in itself because it is right in itself.

Chapter 3 addresses the charge that the Clarkeans were complacent. It highlights how they placed limits on the powers of human reason in the world as a 'state of trial', and argued, in common with other latitudinarian thinkers, that only a 'moral', as opposed to 'mathematical', certainty was possible in moral subjects.

Rather than simply maintaining that we passively and self-evidently 'see' our duty the limits of human reason mean that practical moral reasoning is necessary in CER, if a moral agent is to be confident that any act chosen as moral is, as such, an authentic acting for himself *and* for others *and* for God, according to his 'tripartite' duties. As such, in CER, rational agents are expected to develop a 'moral certainty' by reflecting, in conscience, on relevant 'material'.

The possibility for practical moral reasoning in CER helps to respond to the charge of complacency and the distinction between Butler and the Clarkeans maintained by KR and KC. Further, because an intrinsically right act is one which satisfies each of our ‘tripartite’ duties, relevant ‘material’ for practical moral reasoning in CER, in opposition to HC and LNLC, includes God’s will, our own nature and judgement, our natural affections, and the consequences of our actions for ourselves and others.

In Chapter 3, the distinction between ‘acting according to conscience’ (AATC) and ‘an act of conscience (AAOC)’ is used to explain the process of practical moral reasoning, and the process of moral development, within CER. The ability to distinguish between AATC and AAOC is a consequence of having established conscience’s referents: AATC is when an individual agent chooses to obey conscience in order to satisfy only one of conscience’s referents; AAOC is when an individual agent chooses to obey conscience in order to satisfy all of conscience’s referents.

Thus, in line with Price’s distinction between ‘the virtue of the act’ and ‘the virtue of the agent’, it is argued, in Chapter 3, that an immature moral agent performs ‘virtuous acts’ *qua* AATC. An immature moral agent cannot appreciate how an action, approved by conscience, is able to be an action for himself *and* for others *and* for God, to the satisfaction of all that reason *is*; consequently, when he obeys conscience, the immature moral agent is only AATC, because, even if the act he performs is ‘materially’ virtuous, he only intends the satisfaction of his own interests *or* the interests of others *or* divine command when he chooses to obey conscience.

By comparison, an agent with a mature moral character has fully engaged with the required process of practical moral reasoning; as a result, he has come to appreciate the relationship between acting for himself *and* for others *and* for God and satisfying the law of reason itself. Consequently, the fully-developed moral agent intends rectitude in any action he chooses as moral, precisely because he intends to satisfy each of his ‘tripartite’ duties, whenever he chooses to obey conscience. Thus, a mature moral agent, whenever he chooses to obey conscience, performs AAOC *qua* ‘virtuous agent’, because he self-consciously commits himself to the satisfaction of each of conscience’s referents, in order to do that which is right in itself according to the law of reason.

Chapter 4 discusses, in Part I, Butler’s ‘cool hour passage’. Part I argues that, in line with Butler’s and the Clarkeans’ shared understanding of conscience and its referents, Butler and the Clarkeans held the same understanding of moral development and practical moral reasoning in the world as a ‘state of trial’.

The ‘cool hour passage’ does not, then, in opposition to the likes of McPherson and H.A. Prichard, mean that Butler, contrary to the Clarkeans, founded moral distinctions in individual happiness; nor does it mean, in opposition to Broad and Sidgwick, that Butler, by appearing to found moral distinctions in individual happiness, contradicted his own understanding of conscience by contradicting CER.

Rather, the ability to distinguish between AATC and AAOC, makes it possible to appreciate that Butler, in the ‘cool hour passage’, is discussing an immature moral agent who will choose to obey conscience primarily because to do so is to act in his own interest. Thus, consistent with CER, Butler is discussing, in the ‘cool hour passage’, an underdeveloped moral

agent, who will be AATC *qua* ‘virtuous act’ when he obeys conscience. The ‘cool hour passage’ does not mean that Butler, any more than the Clarkeans, thought that it was possible for a mature moral agent to perform an AAOC *qua* ‘virtuous agent’ from considerations of self-interest alone. However, for both Butler and the Clarkeans, the process of moral development can begin from obeying conscience *qua* AATC, on the basis of such considerations; and such considerations as self-interest are relevant ‘material’ for practical moral reasoning, when a moral act is an act for ourselves *and* for others *and* for God.

Part I also maintains that Butler’s method does not indicate opposition between Butler’s moral thought and CER. Butler’s empirical method is consistent with what the Clarkeans understood as relevant ‘material’ for practical moral reasoning, and with their view that rational agents are able to start the process of moral development by obeying conscience *qua* AATC from the consideration that that which conscience commands is according to an individual’s nature and judgement.

In opposition to the distinction made between Butler and the Clarkeans in KR and KC, therefore, Chapter 4 suggests that only the same moderated form of Kantian ‘self-imposition’ and ‘reflective endorsement’ is available to both Butler and the Clarkeans. Butlerian and Clarkean moral agents, due to the limits of human reason in the world as a ‘state of trial’, are only able to choose moral acts as an act for themselves *and* for others *and* for God on the basis of a reasoned faith. It is in the moment of choice that Butlerian and Clarkean moral agents, in being aware of their capacity for error, impose upon themselves the standard for a moral action and are responsible for their decision.

Part II of Chapter 4 discusses Butler's equivocation: his synonymous use of 'conscience' with such terms as 'moral sense' and 'perception of the heart'. Butler's equivocation, like Butler's method and 'cool hour passage', has been read, by, for example, Darwall and Raphael, as indicating differences between Butler and the Clarkeans, where Butler's equivocal language suggests Butler's sympathy for Hutchesonian sentimentalism as opposed to CER. However, Chapter 4 maintains that Butler's equivocation is consistent with Butler's and the Clarkeans' shared rational discourse of conscience. In Chapter 4, Butler's equivocation is important, not for distinguishing between Butler and the Clarkeans, but for pointing to tensions between conscience's referents within their shared discourse of conscience.

By establishing conscience's referents, and the distinction between AATC and AAOC, this study highlights the neglect of Clarkean conscience, the misinterpretation of Butlerian conscience, and the mistaken separation of Butler's moral thought and CER. Consequently, it advances our approach to Butler and the Clarkeans and responds to central, and long-held, criticisms of them both.

## Abbreviations

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AAOC | an act of conscience                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| AATC | acting according to conscience                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| CER  | Clarkean ethical rationalism                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| HC   | Francis Hutcheson's and David Hume's criticisms of CER, and modern criticisms of CER derived from Hutcheson and Hume                                                                                           |
| LNLC | the 'laicisation of natural law' criticisms of CER                                                                                                                                                             |
| KC   | the neo-Kantian criticisms of CER                                                                                                                                                                              |
| KR   | the proto-Kantian reading of Butler                                                                                                                                                                            |
| RR   | reason <i>qua</i> our law, God's law, and the law of the created universe itself; and the Anglican tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law, where that understanding of reason obtained |

## Bibliographical Abbreviations

### John Balguy

|                      |                                                                        |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>DR</i>            | <i>Divine Rectitude</i>                                                |
| <i>EOR</i>           | <i>An Essay on Redemption</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> edn (Winchester, 1785) |
| <i>First Letter</i>  | <i>A Letter to a Deist</i>                                             |
| <i>LT</i>            | <i>The Law of Truth</i>                                                |
| <i>Second Letter</i> | <i>A Second Letter to a Deist</i>                                      |

*SFS*                      *Sermons on the Following Subjects*, 2 Vols., 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (London, 1790)  
(referenced by volume, sermon, page)

*TFMG*                      *The Foundation of Moral Goodness*

*TFMG.II*                      *The Second Part of the Foundation of Moral Goodness*

Except *EOR* and *SFS*, all references are to: John Balguy, *A Collection of Tracts Moral and Theological: Placed in the Order wherein they were first published* (London, 1734)

### **Joseph Butler**

*A*                      *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (referenced by book, chapter and paragraph)

*ONV*, Diss. II                      ‘Of the Nature of Virtue’ (referenced by paragraph)

*S*                      *Fifteen Sermons* (referenced by sermon and paragraph)

*SP*                      *Six Sermons, Preached Upon Public Occasions* (referenced by sermon and paragraph)

All references to: William Gladstone (ed.), *The Works of Joseph Butler*, 2 Vols. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1897)

### **Samuel Clarke**

*Collins-Clarke*                      *The Correspondence of Samuel Clarke and Anthony Collins, 1707-1708* (London, Broadview, 2011) (W.L. Uzgalis, ed.)

*Demonstration*                      *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, 10<sup>th</sup> edn (London, 1767)

*Discourse*                      *A Discourse Concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion*, 10<sup>th</sup> edn (London, 1767)

*Leibniz-Clarke*                      *The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1956) (H.G. Alexander, ed.)

*Remarks*                      *Remarks Upon A Book, Entitled, A Philosophical Enquiry Concerning Human Liberty* (London, 1717)

*Sermons*                      *Sermons by Samuel Clarke, D.D., in Eleven Volumes*, 7<sup>th</sup> edn (London, 1749) (referenced by volume, sermon, page)

**Richard Price**

- Review*                      *A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974) (D.D. Raphael, ed.)
- SVS*                         *Sermons on Various Subjects* (London, 1816) (W. Morgan, ed.)

## Introduction

Conscience has been ignored. Although we use it to guide our actions and we appeal to freedom of conscience in a variety of situations, in the last twenty-five years little has been written about conscience as a useful analytical concept.<sup>1</sup>

Conscience has been much neglected by philosophers. It is not directly treated in ancient philosophy, while, apart from Bishop Butler, who was primarily interested in the aspect of self-deception, there is scarcely a philosopher from Descartes to the present day who has touched upon it more than tangentially.<sup>2</sup>

How few words are there in the world more common than this, *Conscience*? It is in almost every one's mouth. And one would thence be apt to conclude, that no word can be found, which is more generally understood. But it may be doubted whether this is the case or no, although numberless treatises have been written upon it.<sup>3</sup>

The final quotation, from John Wesley, supports this study's overarching purpose, and supplies a caveat for it. While the diversity of interpretation concerning a commonly used expression points towards the need to pin down its meaning, and so, in this case, define conscience, that same diversity makes defining conscience difficult and necessarily limited in scope. Inevitably, the 'numberless treatises' on conscience mean that it will not be possible to find a definition of it apt for all of its uses and users. One starting-point in this study must be the intended scope of what will be called 'the referents of conscience'. Although the definite article will be used in referring to conscience's referents, as the focus of this study is the place and meaning of conscience in the thought of Joseph Butler, Samuel Clarke, and Clarke's followers, John Balguy and Richard Price, that focus necessarily qualifies both what are taken to be its referents, and their scope as a definition of conscience: *the* referents of conscience are the referents of conscience for Butler, Clarke, Balguy and Price; they need not exhaustively

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Langston, *Conscience and Other Virtues: From Bonaventure to MacIntyre* (University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Potts, *Conscience in Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

<sup>3</sup> John Wesley, 'On Conscience' in *Sermons on Several Occasions*, 8 Vols. (London, 1788), Vol.I, 215.

define what conscience *means* (or, from an historical perspective, all that conscience has meant), provided they help us to understand what conscience *meant for them*.

However, even with that caveat, the contrasts between the above quotations point to the importance of developing an understanding of conscience's referents. The quotations from Douglas Langston and Timothy Potts, in contrast with Wesley, suggest that conscience has gone from being a common subject of enquiry to a neglected one. Wesley's statement also limits Potts' declaration as to the extent of that neglect. While this study aims to avoid the neglect of conscience identified by Langston and Potts, it is further intended that, by its end, it will be difficult to understand what Potts meant by suggesting that there are limits to both Butler's interest in, and understanding of, conscience; and the importance of, and active interest in, conscience amongst Butler's contemporaries. We shall see that, as with Potts, it is not uncommon for commentators to have reduced what Butler meant by conscience; to have used a reduced understanding of Butlerian conscience as a means of separating Butler from the Clarkeans; and to have neglected the meaning and place of conscience in the Clarkeans altogether.

### **The Reduction of Butlerian Conscience**

Throughout this study, I will argue that, for Butler and the Clarkeans, conscience's referents are our own judgement, God's will, our own interest, the interest of others, and the rational moral order: we would not have the capacity to know, or to act according to, our own judgement, God's will, our own interest, the interest of others, or the rational moral order, without conscience; and, whenever we obey conscience, we act according to our own judgement, God's will, our own interest, others' interests, and the rational moral order.

A major issue for Butler scholarship is not only that scholars have reduced conscience in Butler to only one referent; they have also not always agreed about which referent Butler's conscience should be reduced to. Most commonly, it has been reduced to individual judgement *or* self-love *or* the intuition of intrinsic rightness. Failure to appreciate that Butlerian conscience possessed more than one referent has contributed to the view that his representation of conscience was inconsistent. Moreover, depending upon the referent to which Butlerian conscience has been reduced, scholars have found either affinities, or opposition, between Butler's moral thought and Clarkeian ethical rationalism (CER).

For example, we shall see in Chapter 1 that when Henry Sidgwick reduces Butlerian conscience to the intuition, and approval, of intrinsic rightness, it is possible to draw comparisons between Butler and the Clarkeans. From the perspective of this reduced reading, an instance of Butler's internal inconsistency is the 'cool hour passage' (see Chapter 4), where Butler suggested that our 'ideas' of 'happiness and misery' 'ought to prevail' over our 'ideas' of Clarkeian 'fitness'. Upon this reduced reading, the internal inconsistency marked by the 'cool hour passage' is also Butler's inconsistency with the Clarkeian position he otherwise adopted. If 'conscience' *means* our intuition, and approval, of intrinsic rightness, the extent to which Butler undermined his own position, by stating that 'self-love' should take precedence over 'conscience', can be measured by the extent to which he broke with the Clarkeian position by saying that 'ideas' of 'happiness' should take precedence over 'ideas' of Clarkeian 'fitness'.

However, when, for example, T.H. McPherson reduces Butlerian conscience to our reflective considerations of our own interest, Butler's internal inconsistency is measured differently. Now, the 'cool hour passage' helps to explain what Butlerian conscience *means*;

and what confuses Butler's position are not the places where he appears to break with the language of Clarkean 'fitness', but where he appeals to it.

In seeking to establish the referents of Butlerian conscience, this study avoids reducing its meaning, thus helping to answer the charge that Butler is internally inconsistent. However, it follows from the way in which, within reduced readings of Butlerian conscience, Butler's internal inconsistency has been measured alongside his consistency with the Clarkeans, that the referents of Butlerian conscience are not only significant from the point of view of Butler scholarship, but also for our understanding of CER. I argue that, while the meaning of Butlerian conscience has been reduced, the meaning and place of conscience within CER has often been neglected altogether. Neglect of Clarkean conscience has encouraged a narrow understanding of what reason, and so the rational intuition of intrinsic rightness, means within CER. Consequently, neglect of Clarkean conscience, and reduction of Butlerian conscience, have distorted our readings of Butler and the Clarkeans; and so also our understanding of the similarities between Butler's moral thought and CER.

### **The Neglect of Clarkean Conscience**

Thus, while Chapter 1 seeks to establish the referents of Butlerian conscience, thereby resisting various reduced readings of it, Chapters 2 and 3 seek to establish the referents of Clarkean conscience. In arguing that Butlerian and Clarkean conscience share the same referents, such that the meaning and place of conscience is the same within both, I respond to (a) reduced readings of Butlerian conscience that separate Butler from the Clarkeans, on the basis of, for example, the former's 'cool hour passage' and empirical method; and to (b) leading criticisms of CER itself.

With regard to (b), this study is principally concerned with the neo-Kantian criticisms of CER (KC); Francis Hutcheson's and David Hume's criticisms of CER, and modern criticism of the Clarkeans which endorse those of Hutcheson and Hume (HC); and the 'laicisation of natural law' criticisms of the Clarkeans (LNLC). While KC is outlined in the Introduction; HC in Chapter 2; and LNLC in Chapter 3, the common themes running through these related criticisms of the Clarkeans mean that each criticism is responded to throughout this study.

What is significant about (b) leading criticisms of CER, is that they support (a) reduced readings of Butlerian conscience that separate Butler from the Clarkeans. KC, HC and LNLC encourage both reduced readings of Butlerian conscience, and narrow interpretations of Clarkean rational intuition; as such, KC, HC and LNLC often underpin the grounds for distinguishing between Butler's moral thought and CER.

Thus, KC, like HC and LNLC, represent the Clarkeans as failing to take seriously, and of being unable to answer, what Christine Korsgaard calls 'the normative question' (see below). In KC, HC and LNLC, the Clarkean claim that we self-evidently 'see' the right thing to do as we would 'see' the truth of a basic mathematical problem means that the Clarkeans were complacent about 'the normative question'. As a result, the likes of Korsgaard (in KC), P.H. Nowell-Smith (in HC) and Frederick Beiser (in LNLC) refer to the Clarkeans as 'dogmatists' who were, at best, 'naive', and, at worst, arrogant. Moreover, in apparently dismissing 'the normative question', the Clarkeans could not explain why what they called moral truth engaged the human will.

In HC, the Clarkeans mistook reason for a faculty which supplies human ends when ends are only supplied by human sentiment. By stating that we passively and self-evidently

‘see’ the right thing to do with reason, the Clarkeans could not explain how the moral truths perceived by reason concern our ‘subjective motivational set’,<sup>4</sup> just as the Clarkeans failed to capture even an instrumental sense of reason as reasoning on the basis of, and towards the ends of, natural human desires (see Chapter 2).

The likes of Korsgaard and Stephen Darwall, in KC, and John Finnis and Beiser, in LNLC, agree with HC, so far as Hutcheson’s and Hume’s criticisms of CER highlight how the Clarkeans reduced reason, and morality, to the passive perception of potentially uninteresting facts with the *thin is* of theoretical reason.

In LNLC, the problem is not that the Clarkeans mistook reason for a normatively *thick* category, but that they *thinned out* reason as it had been understood within Thomistic natural law. The Clarkean mathematical analogy suggested that reason was simply a calculative faculty, rather than that which determined humanity’s ‘natural law’ and God’s ‘eternal law’. The passive and self-evident rational perception of moral truth *qua* mathematical truth in CER meant that reason was (i) no longer that through which we were practically engaged with moral norms by being practically engaged with the norms of human nature, and (ii) no longer a law which defined human nature and God’s nature, such that humanity’s ‘natural law’ was a ‘participation’ in God’s ‘eternal law’ (see Chapters 3 and 4).

According to KC, the Clarkeans, as rational intuitionists, had no concept of practical reason. Because, in CER, normativity is some quality belonging to objects around us, our intuitive experience of the overridingness of that quality is both automatic and unexplained. In

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<sup>4</sup> Bernard Williams, ‘Internal and External Reasons’ in *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers, 1973-1980* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981), 102.

KC, Kant, not the Clarkeans, was able to account for the binding nature of moral norms when his concept of pure practical reason allowed normativity to be something that was generated from within the exercise of the autonomous agent's own reason (see below).

Returning to (a) and (b) above, this study uses Clarkean conscience to respond to the above criticisms of CER, while also addressing a discrepancy between Butler's moral thought and CER, where, on the basis of such criticisms as those given above, Butler is treated more favourably than the Clarkeans.

Thus, in contrast with KC above, Darwall, for example, also maintains a reduced proto-Kantian reading of Butlerian conscience (KR). This uses Butlerian conscience to allow practical moral reasoning (as the condition of an individual being, and experiencing obligation as, an autonomous agent) into Butler's moral thought (see below). However, this study shows that, as Butler and the Clarkeans shared the same theory of conscience, KR actually helps to work against KC by allowing the same form of practical moral reasoning into both Butler and the Clarkeans on the basis of their shared theory of conscience.

Similar to the discrepancy between KR and KC, Hume's celebration of Butler's empirical method has meant that Butlerian conscience has sometimes been looked at as offering a natural foundation for the authority of conscience and ethical distinctions. For the likes of D.D. Raphael and Nicholas Sturgeon, Butler's method was made in opposition to CER, such that, as for Alasdair MacIntyre, Butler is better able to establish the relationship between a 'science of morals' and a 'science of human nature' than the Clarkeans. Likewise, while Kenneth Kirk places Butlerian conscience within the Thomistic tradition of conscience (see

Chapter 3), LNLC finds it difficult for the Clarkeans to convey a Thomistic understanding of conscience despite Butler and the Clarkeans sharing the same theory of conscience.

When it comes to the tension between critical readings of the Clarkeans that also offer favourable readings of Butler, this study will be principally concerned with the discrepancy between KC and KR, as discussed at the end of this Introduction. However, I will argue (p) that although any agreement with Butler from the point of view of KC, HC and LNLC must be moderated, because they offer either reduced readings of Butler and/or neglect Clarkean conscience, it is the case (q) that any moderated agreement with Butler, from the perspective of KC, HC and LNLC, must also be available to the Clarkeans, on the basis of Butler's and the Clarkeans' shared theory of conscience.

### **AATC and AAOC**

Consistent with (p) and (q) above, this study uses conscience's referents to establish the distinction between 'acting according to conscience' (AATC) and 'an act of conscience' (AAOC). The ability to distinguish between AATC and AAOC, when interpreting Butler and the Clarkeans, follows from an appreciation of the various referents possessed by Butlerian and Clarkean conscience. As the shared referents of Butlerian and Clarkean conscience have been overlooked by commentators, so too has the distinction between AATC and AAOC.

I argue that, for Butler and the Clarkeans, AATC is when an agent chooses to obey conscience in order to satisfy at least one, but not all, of conscience's referents, while AAOC is when an agent chooses to obey conscience in order to satisfy all of them. The distinction between AAOC and AATC changes our approach to Butler and the Clarkeans; not least because it highlights (r) Butler's and the Clarkeans' shared understanding of moral

development, as a result of their shared understanding of conscience; and (s) the fact that Butlerian and Clarkeian conscience possessed its particular referents, because, for both, the paradigm of conscience was the paradigm of right reason.

In line with (s), according to Butler and the Clarkeans reason was not only the law of our own nature and judgement, but the law of God's being and will, and the law of the created universe itself. I will refer to the view that reason is our law, God's law, and the law of the created universe as RR, where RR will also refer to the Anglican tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law. Thus, Butler and the Clarkeans (following the Anglican casuists, Cambridge Platonists, and their fellow latitudinarians) were placing themselves within RR (the Anglican tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law), by understanding reason *qua* RR (reason *qua* our law, God's law, and the law of the created universe).

As a result of maintaining RR, Butler and the Clarkeans considered the law of reason to enjoin 'tripartite' duties upon human beings: duties to ourselves as rational creatures created by God; to others as our fellow rational creatures within creation; and to God as creator and moral governor of the world for whom the moral law is an 'attribute' (see Chapters 2-4). Conscience's referents follow from an understanding of reason *qua* RR, therefore, because God gave conscience to human beings so that we might be aware of all that reason *is*, and be capable of reflecting upon how we might satisfy each of our 'tripartite' duties under reason.

With respect to (r), in Butler and the Clarkeans the move from AATC to AAOC is one that takes place as an agent's moral character matures. Throughout this study, the distinction between AATC and AAOC (and so Butler's and the Clarkeans' measure of an agent's moral

maturity) is explained with reference to Price's distinction between the 'virtue of the act' and the 'virtue of the agent'.

AAOC is a 'virtuous act' performed by a 'virtuous agent', which is an agent with mature moral character. Consistent with (s), the mature moral agent is not only aware through, and in, conscience of each of his responsibilities under the law of reason to himself *and* to others *and* to God; he also appreciates that satisfying each of his 'tripartite' duties in every act he chooses as moral is what it *means* to do that which is right in itself according to the law of reason. The paradigm of conscience is the paradigm of right reason, because it is only when a mature moral agent is confident that an action satisfies each of conscience's referents that he is able to choose that action as an act for himself *and* for others *and* for God, according to his 'tripartite' duties under the law of reason *qua* RR. AATC is a 'materially' 'virtuous act' performed, not by a mature 'virtuous agent', but an agent with underdeveloped moral character. AATC is still, potentially, materially virtuous, because, by obeying conscience, it is likely that the individual agent in question has performed an action that is according to the law of reason. However, the agent in question is not a mature moral agent performing AAOC, because underdeveloped moral agents are not interested in satisfying each of their 'tripartite' duties when choosing to obey conscience. The underdeveloped moral agent chooses to obey conscience, not because he is confident that the action under consideration will satisfy each of his 'tripartite' duties, but only because he is confident that that action is commanded by God *or* is in his own interest *or* is in the best interest of others *or* is according to his own judgement. Thus, the immature moral agent, unlike the mature one, only acts to satisfy at least one, but not all, of conscience's referents, and so is only AATC rather than performing AAOC.

## Conscience and Right Reason

Above is a broad outline of key categories developed in this study. It is important to turn here to a more specific discussion of conscience in a number of well-known Anglican figures. This will help to illustrate both how such key categories as conscience's referents, AATC/AAOC and RR will be drawn out from Butler and the Clarkeans, and why it is important to do so. Following discussion of conscience and right reason in Anglican thought below, therefore, it will be possible to indicate how the key categories outlined above will be used to respond to reduced readings of Butler as well as HC, KC and LNLC.

As mentioned previously, in this study RR has a dual signification: it refers to the view that reason is our law, God's law and the law of the created universe, and also to the Anglican tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law, within which that view of reason, and related understanding of 'conscience', 'intuition', and the mathematical analogy, obtained. In response to KC, HC and LNLC, I will refer back to the Anglican figures discussed below to illustrate how the Clarkeans used conscience to convey a normatively *thick* understanding of reason *qua* RR, in line with the understanding of reason and conscience within the tradition of RR.

Clearly, the claim (s) above (that the referents of conscience are the referents of conscience because the paradigm of conscience is that of right reason) pushes up against the Wesley-related caveat mentioned earlier. So, also, does the suggestion that the Clarkeans, through their use of 'conscience', 'intuition', and, in fact, the mathematical analogy itself, were attempting to position themselves within the Anglican tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law. However, this study does not seek to contravene the Wesley-related caveat by claiming that the Clarkeans, and even the Anglicans discussed below, must be placed,

definitely, and in the same sense, within the tradition of RR, as though it were one single, uniform tradition. As noted in Chapter 4, it is possible to question whether, for example, the Cambridge Platonists sat more comfortably within even an Anglican tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law than the latitudinarians, and if particular figures, including, for example, the Clarkeans, Jeremy Taylor and Nathaniel Culverwell, should be placed within that tradition at all.

Thus, in exploring the meaning and place of conscience in the Anglican figures discussed below, the intention is not to suggest that there were no differences of opinion between these figures, even within a broadly defined Anglican tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law. Rather, exploring the referents of conscience in a number of Anglican figures, suggests, while accepting the parameters of the Wesley-related caveat, that there is, at least, a wider basis for the referents of conscience in Butler and the Clarkeans than simply Butler and the Clarkeans themselves. In response to reduced readings of Butlerian conscience, and KC, HC and LNLC, it will be demonstrated that it is possible, and important, to step outside the work of Butler and the Clarkeans in order to understand what they meant by such concepts as ‘conscience’, ‘reason’ and ‘intuition’.

At the end of this Introduction, I will discuss Karl Ameriks’ and John Hare’s criticisms of ‘secular neo-Kantianism’. They criticised ‘secular neo-Kantians’ for operating within a ‘false trichotomy’: either normativity derives from divine command *or* an independent realm of ethical fact *or* self-legislation. The discussion of conscience and right reason below illustrates how it is possible to use conscience and reason *qua* RR to avoid the ‘false trichotomy’ identified by Ameriks and Hare, which, according to them, has distorted

interpretations of Kant, and which, according to this study, has distorted readings of Butler and the Clarkeans by underpinning KC and KR.

### ***Recta Ratio***

If ‘the concept of *recta ratio*’ was ‘a seventeenth-century commonplace’<sup>5</sup> then its ‘most widely read transmitter’<sup>6</sup> was Cicero.<sup>7</sup> According to his ‘classic’<sup>8</sup> definition of natural law:

True law is right reason in agreement with nature [(1)]; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting [(2)]...and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it [(3)]...one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times [(1); (2)], and there will be one master and ruler...God...for he is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge [(4)]. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst penalties [(3)]...<sup>9</sup>

Consistent with the numbered parentheses placed in the quotation above, Cicero’s definition effectively summarises both how the law of reason can be understood as our own law (3),

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<sup>5</sup> Patrick Müller, *Latitudinarianism and Didacticism in Eighteenth Century Literature: Moral Theology in Fielding, Sterne, and Goldsmith* (Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2009), 51.

<sup>6</sup> J.B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998) (hereafter ‘*Autonomy*’), 18.

<sup>7</sup> For the tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law, and its relationship with Protestant conceptions of ‘reason’, ‘conscience’ and ‘natural law’, see: Robert Hoopes, *Right Reason in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1962), *passim*; John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards Reason, Learning and Education, 1560-1640* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), 41-61; three related articles by Robert Greene: ‘Synderesis, the Spark of Conscience, in the English Renaissance’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52:2 (Apr.-Jun., 1991) (hereafter ‘*Synderesis in the English Renaissance*’), 195-219, ‘Whichcote, the Candle of the Lord, and Synderesis’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52:4 (Oct.-Dec., 1991) (hereafter ‘*Whichcote and Synderesis*’), 617-644 and ‘Instinct of Nature: Natural Law, Synderesis, and the Moral Sense’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 58:2 (Apr., 1997) (hereafter ‘*Synderesis and the Moral Sense*’), 173-198; A.A. Long, ‘Roman Philosophy’ in D. Sedley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 184-210; S.A. Seagrave, ‘Cicero, Aquinas, and Contemporary Issues in Natural Law Theory’, *The Review of Metaphysics*, 62:3 (Mar., 2009), 491-523; M.B. Crowe, *The Changing Profile of the Natural Law* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1977) (hereafter ‘*Changing Profile*’), 32-41; Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780*, 2 Vols. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), Vol.I, 59-66; Müller, *op.cit.*, 49-59; John Spurr, “‘Rational Religion’ in Restoration England”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 49:4 (Oct.-Dec., 1988), 563-585; works cited in footnote 1281.

<sup>8</sup> Neal Wood, *Cicero’s Social and Political Thought* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988), 71.

<sup>9</sup> Cicero, *De Re Publica* in C.W. Keyes (trans.) *De Re Publica, De Legibus* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1943), III.xxii.33.

God's law (4), and the law of the (Christian-created and/or Stoic-'noetic')<sup>10</sup> universe itself (1); (2), and how those claims about reason are interconnected.

The 'Law' of 'right reason', which is 'something eternal...[that] rules the whole universe',<sup>11</sup> is (1); (2) because 'the distinction between things just and unjust'<sup>12</sup> is a 'standard' 'fixed by Nature'<sup>13</sup> in which 'reason' is 'inherent'<sup>14</sup> and 'from' which reason is 'derived'.<sup>15</sup> It is because the law of right reason is (1); (2) that, 'Whatever good thing is praiseworthy must have within itself something which deserves praise'<sup>16</sup> so that 'Justice and all things honourable are to be sought for their own sake'.<sup>17</sup>

However, the fact that the likes of 'justice' and 'equity', because they are 'distinguished by Nature',<sup>18</sup> are to be pursued for their own sake is not to be isolated from (3). Because, as agents possessed of reason, to contradict the law of right reason is to contradict our own nature and judgement, we not only have knowledge of the law of right reason *qua* the law of Nature, but experience that law as our own law.<sup>19</sup> As rational agents, we have both a 'natural inclination' for the ends of benevolence, equity and justice, and experience the verdict of what is (un)just and (dis)honourable in, and as, the judgement of our own 'minds'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> R.A. Horsley, quoted by Jean Porter, *Natural and Divine Law: Reclaiming the Tradition for Christian Ethics* (Ottawa, Novalis, St. Paul University, 1999), 69.

<sup>11</sup> Cicero, *De Legibus* in Keyes, *op.cit.*, II.iii.8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, II.v.13.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xvi.44; 45.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, II.vi.16.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, II.iv.10.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xvii.46.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xviii.48.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xvi.44-45.

<sup>19</sup> See: *Ibid.*, I.vii.23-viii.25; I.xxii.58-60; I.xii.33.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xv.42-xvi.45.

But just as (1), (2) and (3) cannot be finally separated, so, too, they cannot be isolated from (4). ‘The divine mind cannot exist without reason’, ‘whose reason directs all things’, so that the law of right reason is ‘coeval with that God who guards and rules heaven and earth’,<sup>21</sup> and whom ‘the universe obeys’.<sup>22</sup> Because there is nothing ‘more divine...in all heaven and earth than reason’, reason is both a ‘gift’<sup>23</sup> from God who created us with reason, and ‘the first common possession of man and God’:<sup>24</sup> whoever is able to follow the Stoic ‘precept’ to ‘know thyself’ ‘will realise...that he has a divine element within him, and will think of his own inner nature as a kind of consecrated image of God’.<sup>25</sup> The fact that human beings and God have reason, and so ‘Law’, ‘in common’, means not only that ‘virtue exists in man and God alike’,<sup>26</sup> but that ‘we must now conceive of this whole universe as one commonwealth of which both gods and men are members’.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, the rational agent will always experience the law of right reason as the ‘highest reason, implanted in Nature’;<sup>28</sup> as our own law; and as ‘the primal and ultimate mind of God’.<sup>29</sup>

Already, Cicero’s definition, through the interconnectedness of (1)-(4), highlights the importance of appreciating, and avoiding, Ameriks’ and Hare’s ‘false trichotomy’. It is possible to continue to observe the importance of appreciating, and avoiding, the ‘false trichotomy’ in Thomistic natural law, and the works of a number of well-known Anglican figures, in the run-up to Butler and the Clarkeans.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, II.iv.8.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, III.i.3

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xii.33.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, I.vii.23.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xxii.58-59.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, I.viii.25.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, I.vii.23.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, I.vi.19.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, II.iv.8.

## Reason and the Nature of God

Aquinas ‘agreed with Cicero’s view that right reason’, ‘in showing’ us ‘the first principles of natural law’, ‘shows us principles that properly govern God’s will as well as ours’.<sup>30</sup> Of course, in line with the interconnectedness of (1), (2) and (4), the further point here (also maintained by the Clarkeans: see Chapter 2) is that to say, ‘There is a nature of goodness, and a nature of wisdom antecedent to the will of God, which is the rule and measure of it’,<sup>31</sup> is only to say: ‘God hath no law but the perfection of his own nature’.<sup>32</sup> The ‘eternal law’, ‘which God hath eternally purposed himself in all his works to observe’,<sup>33</sup> is ‘not something other than’ God,<sup>34</sup> because ‘The being of God is a kind of law to his working’,<sup>35</sup> and the ‘things pertaining to the divine nature or essence...are the eternal law itself’,<sup>36</sup> so that ‘the eternal law is nothing else than the exemplar of divine wisdom, as directing all actions and movements’.<sup>37</sup> It is because ‘The creator made the world not with hands, but by *reason*’,<sup>38</sup> that that which we encounter as according to the law of reason within creation is experienced as ‘drawn from out of the very bowels of heaven and earth’.<sup>39</sup> The ‘eternal law’ ‘hath been of God, and with God everlastingly’,<sup>40</sup> because the ‘eternal law’ is ‘the divine reason’s conception of things’.<sup>41</sup> The ‘eternal law’ is ‘laid up in the bosom of God’<sup>42</sup> and is ‘That law

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<sup>30</sup> Schneewind, *op.cit.*, 23.

<sup>31</sup> Ralph Cudworth, *A Treatise of Freewill* (hereafter ‘*Freewill*’) in S. Hutton (ed.), *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality, With A Treatise of Freewill* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), 187.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (hereafter ‘*Laws*’: referenced by book, chapter, paragraph), I.iii.1 in John Keble (ed.), *The Works of the Learned and Judicious Mr. Richard Hooker*, 3 Vols., 5th edn (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1865), Vol.I.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (hereafter ‘*Summa*’: referenced by part, question, article), I-II, Q.91, A.1 in A.C. Pegis (ed.), *The Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 2 Vols. (New York, Random House, 1945).

<sup>35</sup> Hooker, *Laws*, I.ii.2.

<sup>36</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q.93, A.4.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, Q.93, A.1.

<sup>38</sup> Hooker, *Laws*, I.ii.6, fn.6.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, I.viii.5.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, I.ii.5.

<sup>41</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q.91, A.1.

<sup>42</sup> Hooker, *Laws*, I.iii.1.

which hath been the pattern to make, and is the card to guide the world by'.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, 'the whole community of the universe is governed by the divine reason',<sup>44</sup> and 'God being the author of Nature, her voice is but his instrument'.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the law of reason is experienced as the law of created nature, and as fixed by 'Nature', in the Stoic sense, because what is 'Right and fit'<sup>46</sup> 'is determined' 'by the Nature and Reason of Things'<sup>47</sup> which we encounter, within creation, as natural 'Relations' of 'fittingness'.

However, because the 'the *Reason of Things*, and the *Rule of Right*' 'is', not only 'the Law of God's Creation',<sup>48</sup> but also the law of God's 'Understanding',<sup>49</sup> that which we encounter as 'fittingness' according to the 'nature of things' is also always our encounter with God:

The *greater Rights* of the World that Govern above and below, are determined, by the Relation things have to each other; and these Rights can never yield, or be controuled [sic]: For *These* are a Law with God, and according to his Nature; and are as unchangeable and unalterable, as God himself.<sup>50</sup>

## Reason and 'Natural Law'

While 'nature' is a 'book', 'printed all over with the passive characters and impressions of divine wisdom and goodness', it is only because human beings were created with reason as 'an intellectual eye' that 'divine wisdom and goodness' in 'the book of nature' are visible to us in 'large and legible characters'.<sup>51</sup> It is also only because we were created with reason that we

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, I.ii.5.

<sup>44</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q.91, A.1.

<sup>45</sup> Hooker, *Laws*, I.viii.3.

<sup>46</sup> Benjamin Whichcote, *Moral and Religious Aphorisms* (London, 1753) (J. Jeffery and S. Salter, eds) (hereafter '*Aphorisms*'), No.561.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, No.257.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, No.446.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, No.414.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, No.258.

<sup>51</sup> Ralph Cudworth, *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality* (hereafter '*EIM*') in Hutton, *op.cit.*, 100.

can recognise the interconnectedness of (1), (2) with (4), and so appreciate that: ‘To go against *Reason*, is to go against *God*: it is the self same thing, to do that which the Reason of the Case doth require; and that which God himself doth appoint’.<sup>52</sup> However, in possessing reason, we not only experience reason as of God, and as the law of the created universe itself, but also as (3) our own ‘natural law’. ‘Reason’ is our ‘*first* participation from God’, so that

the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good...which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the divine light.<sup>53</sup>

To be created with reason is to have a ‘share of the eternal reason...and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law’.<sup>54</sup> According to Aquinas, our possession of ‘natural law’ means that we are ‘subject’ to ‘eternal law’ in two ways: ‘first, by partaking of the eternal law by way of knowledge’; ‘secondly’, ‘by way of an inward motive principle’, so that it is as ‘rational creatures’ that we have ‘a natural inclination to that which is in harmony with the eternal law; for *we are naturally adopted to be the recipients of virtue*’.<sup>55</sup> As ‘God imprints on the whole of nature the principles of its proper actions’,<sup>56</sup> our twin subjection to the ‘eternal law’ means that, just as ‘*Sense is a Law to Sensitives; Reason is a Law to Rationals*’:<sup>57</sup>

angels and men, which are reasonable creatures, have the notions of good and evil, of right and wrong...so woven and twisted in their very natures...they can never be wholly defaced, without the ruin of their beings...<sup>58</sup>

We experience reason as our law, and so as ‘interwoven’ into our nature, in two ways, consistent with our twin subjection to ‘eternal law’. First, to go against reason is to go against

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<sup>52</sup> Whichcote, *op.cit.*, No.76.

<sup>53</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q.91, A.2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, Q.91, A.2.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, Q.93, A.6.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, Q.93, A.5.

<sup>57</sup> Whichcote, *op.cit.*, No.854.

<sup>58</sup> John Tillotson, *The Works of the Most Reverend Dr John Tillotson, Late Lord Bishop of Canterbury*, 10 Vols. (Edinburgh, 1772) (hereafter ‘*Works*’: referenced by volume, sermon, page), VI.CXLII, 459.

our own knowledge, ‘the natural dictates and suggestions of our minds’.<sup>59</sup> Second, to do so is to contradict our own ‘Rational Instincts’<sup>60</sup> after the ends of reason.

Conscience and intuition are associated with both our ‘knowledge of certain general principles’ of the ‘eternal law’, and our ‘natural inclination’ to fulfil the ‘natural law’ *qua* our ‘proper act and end’.<sup>61</sup> Our ‘Rational Instincts’ are ‘Connaturally implanted’ ‘in the Rational Soul, or Conscience, or Mind, or whatever else we please to term it’; they are ‘Moral Truths, of great Weight, and Moment, and Necessity, for due regulation of the life of man’, to which we immediately ‘assent’, ‘antecedently to any...Ratiocination of the Understanding’, as ‘fit, and just, and good’ *qua* ‘laws’ of our rational ‘nature’, akin to the ‘Rules, which we call Natural Instincts’ ‘implanted’ ‘by God’ ‘in the Sensible or Vegetable Nature’.<sup>62</sup>

It is also in conscience that we suffer what it means to contradict ‘the dictates of natural light’<sup>63</sup> *qua* our own nature and judgement. ‘The unspeakable torment of a guilty Conscience’ is, for a human being:

consciousness of having done something that contradicts the perfective principle of his being...something which did not become him, and which, being what he is...a reasonable creature, he ought not to do.<sup>64</sup>

Consistent with the interconnectedness of (1)-(4), in conscience we not only suffer from our awareness that we have failed to be true to ourselves (3), but also from awareness of our failure to pursue the ‘fixed and immutable, eternal and indispensable’ ‘intrinsic [sic] good...in

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, VI.CXLI, 434.

<sup>60</sup> Matthew Hale, *Of doing as we would be done to in Contemplations Moral and Divine. The Third Part* (London, 1700) (hereafter ‘*Contemplations*’), 155.

<sup>61</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q.91, A.2.

<sup>62</sup> Hale, *op.cit.*, 154-156.

<sup>63</sup> Tillotson, *Works*, VI.CXLII, 456.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, VI.CXLII, 456.

things' (1); (2).<sup>65</sup> Our awareness that we have contradicted our 'natural law' (3), and 'the eternal laws of goodness, and justice, and truth' (1); (2),<sup>66</sup> is also always our awareness that we have failed God (4), who is the perfection of the law of reason, and that in which we seek our perfection as agents possessed of reason. 'All things, by desiring their own perfection, desire God Himself',<sup>67</sup> 'Yet this doth nowhere so much appear as it doth in man',<sup>68</sup> because it is in the operation of reason, 'by proceeding in the knowledge of truth, and by growing in the exercise of virtue, [that] man amongst the creatures of this inferior world aspireth to the greatest conformity with God'.<sup>69</sup> We have a 'rational instinct' for *what* it is *that* is according to the law of reason, for the ends of 'goodness, and righteousness, and truth, and faithfulness', but these are themselves 'the essential, and necessary, and immutable properties of the divine nature'.<sup>70</sup> Our 'rational instinct' after the ends of reason, *qua* our own law, and the law of the 'nature of things', is also always our experience of, and desire to imitate, 'by affecting resemblance with',<sup>71</sup> God, who possesses the perfections of reason as his moral and natural attributes (see below).

## Conscience and Intuition

The interconnectedness of (1)-(4) speaks to how the perceptive and reflective exercise of reason is always *live* with all that reason *is qua* our own law, God's law, and the law of the created universe itself. Quotations from Henry More and Robert South help to summarise all that reason *is*, and how, through the operation of human reason, we experience all it *is*:

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, VI.CXLII, 453; 452; 454.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, VI.CXLII, 453; 452; 454.

<sup>67</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I, Q.6, A.1.

<sup>68</sup> Hooker, *Laws*, I.v.2.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, I.v.3.

<sup>70</sup> Tillotson, *op.cit.*, 453.

<sup>71</sup> Hooker, *Laws*, I.v.2.

the Intellect of man [(3)] is as it were a small compendious Transcript of the Divine Intellect [(4)], and we feel in a manner in our own Intellects [(3)] the firmness and immutability of the Divine [(4)], and of the eternal and immutable Truths exhibited there [(1); (2)].<sup>72</sup>

the law of nature...I take to be nothing else, but the mind of God [(4)] signified to a rational agent, by the bare discourse of his reason, and dictating to him, that he ought to act suitably to the principles of his nature [(3)], and to those Relations that he stands under [(1); (2)].<sup>73</sup>

Conscience and intuition are a feature of, and used as a means to assert, the interconnectedness of (1)-(4). While the Clarkeans have been criticised for their mathematical analogy, their use of it is consistent with the emphasis, within RR, on innate ideas *qua* those to which we immediately assent, which is itself consistent with the association of conscience with both the Socratic *daemon* and Stoic *hegemonikon* and *koinai ennoiai* (common notions) (see below).<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Henry More, *Annotations upon the Two foregoing Treatises, Lux Orientalis, Or, An Enquiry into the Opinion of the Eastern Sages Concerning the Prae-existence of Souls; and the Discourse of Truth* (London, 1682), 257.

<sup>73</sup> Robert South, *Sermons Preached Upon Several Occasions*, 6 Vols. (London, 1737) (referenced by volume, sermon, page), I.XI, 404.

<sup>74</sup> For the associations between ‘conscience’, the Socratic *daemon*, Stoic *koinai ennoiai*, and to *hegemonikon*, see: E. Zeller, *The Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, rvsd edn (London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892) (O.J. Reichel, ed.), 158-159; 212-217; 240-248; J.M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969), 22-27; 220; 231-232; 264-272; Linda Hogan, *Confronting the Truth: Conscience in the Catholic Tradition* (Mahwah, Paulist Press, 2000), 36-43; J.R. Lenz, ‘Deification of the Philosopher in Classical Greece’ in M.J. Christensen and J.A. Wittung, *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2007), 47-67; 224-225; S.M. Lee, *The Cosmic Drama of Salvation: A Study of Paul’s Undisputed Writings From Anthropological and Cosmological Perspectives* (Tubingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 123; 219-221; Walter Pannenburg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (London, T&T Clark, 1985) (M.J. O’Connell, trans.), 296-297; Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1985) (J. Raffan, trans.), 328-332; Marcia Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, Brill, 1990), 27-28; Crowe, *Changing Profile*, 126; 128; Daniel Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006) (hereafter ‘*Contesting Diversity*’), 53-58; R.D. Bedford, *The Defence of Truth: Herbert of Chesham and the Seventeenth Century* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1979), 52-54; Vivienne Brown, ‘The Dialogic Experience of Conscience: Adam Smith and the Voices of Stoicism’, *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 26:2 (Winter, 1992-1993), 233-260 and *Adam Smith’s Discourse: Canonicity, Commerce and Conscience* (London, Routledge, 1994), 48-56; Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1998) (M. Chase, trans.), 49; 83-84; 89; 112-127; 266-267; J.W. Yolton, *John Locke and the Way of Ideas* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1956), 30-39; Greene, ‘Synderesis in the English Renaissance’, 195-219, ‘Whichcote and Synderesis’, 617-644 and ‘Synderesis and the Moral Sense’, 173-198.

## Natural Conscience, Common notions, and Immediate Assent

According to the interconnectedness of (1)-(4), to have reason is to be able to know the ‘mind of God’, because ‘Reason first danc’d and triumpht in those eternal Sun-beams, in the thoughts of God himself, who is the fountain and original of Reason’.<sup>75</sup> Conscience is, like the Socratic *daemon*, our ‘domestic god’,<sup>76</sup> ‘a little God sitting in the middle of men’s hearts’,<sup>77</sup> and in the ‘middest betweene...[God] and man’,<sup>78</sup> which emphasises how human thought and activity is filled with an awareness of, and a consequent desire to imitate, God. Conscience was given to us by God as his ‘vicegerent’,<sup>79</sup> ‘substitute’, ‘vicar’;<sup>80</sup> it is ‘the Messenger of the Mind of God to the Soul of Man’<sup>81</sup> as the ‘treasury or repository’<sup>82</sup> of the natural law which is a ‘natural impression’ or ‘figure’ of ‘that eternal law which is in the mind of God’.<sup>83</sup> It is thus in line with the Pauline language of inscription in Roms.2:14-16,<sup>84</sup> ‘the

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<sup>75</sup> Nathaniel Culverwell, *An Elegant and Learned Discourse of the Light of Nature* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1971) (R.A. Greene and H. MaCallum, eds), 97.

<sup>76</sup> Jeremy Taylor, *Ductor Dubitantium. Or, The Rule of Conscience* (hereafter ‘*Ductor*’: referenced by book, chapter, rule, paragraph), I.I.i.2 in Alexander Taylor, with C.P. Eden (eds), *The Whole Works of Jeremy Taylor, D.D.*, 10 Vols. (London, 1855), Vol.IX.

<sup>77</sup> William Perkins, *A Discourse of Conscience* in T.F. Merrill (ed.), *William Perkins, 1558-1602, English Puritanist. His Pioneer Works on Casuistry: A Discourse of Conscience, and The Whole Treatises of Cases of Conscience* (Nieuwkoop, B. De Graaf, 1966), 9.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>79</sup> Benjamin Whichcote, *The Works of the Learned Benjamin Whichcote, D.D.*, 4 Vols. (Aberdeen, 1751) (hereafter ‘*Works*’: referenced by volume, discourse, page), IV.LXXXIV, 260.

<sup>80</sup> Taylor, *Ductor*, I.I.i.2.

<sup>81</sup> South, *op.cit.*, II.XI, 404.

<sup>82</sup> Taylor, *Ductor*, I.I.i.1.

<sup>83</sup> Robert Sanderson, *Several Cases of Conscience Discussed in Ten Lectures in the Divinity School at Oxford* (London, 1660) (R. Codrington, trans.), 131.

<sup>84</sup> ‘When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts excuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus’. For discussion of Paul’s use of ‘conscience’, in the form of the New Testament *suneidesis*, see: C.H. Dodd, *New Testament Studies* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1953), 114-115; 129-142; Lee, *op.cit.*, 123-124; 205-206; 218-225; C.A. Pierce, *Conscience in the New Testament* (London, SCM, 1958), 60-103. Pierce emphasises the difference between *suneidesis* and the conception of conscience (as in early modern Anglicanism) as both antecedent and subsequent, when *suneidesis* denotes only ‘subsequent pain which indicates that sin has been committed’ (*ibid.*, 117). However, it is clear that the ‘presages’ of early modern Anglican conscience recall *suneidesis qua* the uncontrollable ‘pain a man suffers when he has done wrong’ (*op.cit.*, 71). Moreover, *suneidesis*, like early modern Anglican conscience, is both the ‘internal’ experience of divine ‘wrath’ (*ibid.*, 74), as well as self-consciousness of wrongdoing. While the emotive emphasis upon pain may cause tensions within the rational discourse of early modern Anglican conscience (see Chapter 4), because early modern Anglican conscience is, like *suneidesis*, comprised of the experience of ‘internal wrath’ and the reflective ‘to know with one’s self’ (*ibid.*, 22), early modern Anglican conscience captures aspects of *suneidesis*. It will be seen in this study how

*loci classici* of the New Testament doctrine of natural law,<sup>85</sup> that the language of ‘common notions’, ‘imprinted or engraven upon the mind in fair and indelible characters’,<sup>86</sup> as the ‘stamp’ and ‘signature of Reason’,<sup>87</sup> should also be expressed in the language of ‘the dictates or principles of natural conscience’:<sup>88</sup> ‘These κοιναί έννοιαι, These common Notions, are that *Law of God*, which the Apostle *Rom. 2.* doth say is *written in the Hearts of men*’.<sup>89</sup>

The point about these ‘common notions’ or ‘dictates of conscience’ is that they are not, following John Yolton’s well-known distinction, ‘naively’ innate.<sup>90</sup> The likes of William Sherlock, John Norris and Thomas Burnet, responding to Locke’s rejection of the doctrine of innate ideas, contended that it was, at least, a helpful, because symbolic, analogy:

This is certain, no Man who believes that the Ideas of God, and of Good and Evil, were originally impress’d on our Minds when they were first made, can doubt whether there be a God, or an essential Difference between Good and Evil.<sup>91</sup>

The doctrine of ‘innate ideas’, and so also ‘natural conscience’, preserves (1)-(4), and their interconnectedness, such that to defend (or attack) one is to defend (or attack) the others. The important point here, consistent with the ‘polyvalence’ of the word ‘innate’,<sup>92</sup> is that the case for (1)-(4), and their interconnectedness, is made in terms of immediate intuitive assent and

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the former can be described in similar terms to the latter, when ‘Conscience’, in the New Testament, ‘is the reaction of the whole man to his own wrong acts’ (*ibid.*, 113), so that *suneidesis* ‘is a moral reflex action...akin, to those reactions that make a man drop a red hot poker’ and ‘refers to a man’s own acts or to his own character arising from or expressed in those acts’ (*ibid.*, 115).

<sup>85</sup> Dodd, *op.cit.*, 140.

<sup>86</sup> Thomas Burnet, *Third Remarks upon an Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in G. Watson (ed.), *Remarks on John Locke by Thomas Burnet* (Doncaster, Brynmill, 1989) (hereafter ‘*Remarks on Locke*’), 62.

<sup>87</sup> Culverwell, *op.cit.*, 79.

<sup>88</sup> Burnet, *op.cit.*, 75.

<sup>89</sup> Sanderson, *op.cit.*, 132.

<sup>90</sup> Yolton, *op.cit.*, 26-71.

<sup>91</sup> William Sherlock, *A Discourse Concerning the Happiness of Good Men, and the Punishment of the Wicked in the Next World*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn (London, 1735), 100.

<sup>92</sup> Peter Harrison, *‘Religion’ and the Religions in the English Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), 34.

conscience, thus corresponding with the Clarkeans' own use of intuition, conscience, and the mathematical analogy.

The suggestion that certain 'notions' are 'born with us'<sup>93</sup> need not mean that 'innate Ideas must be first known'<sup>94</sup> 'before the use of Reason'.<sup>95</sup> 'That grey-headed venerable Doctrine of Innate or Common Principles', with its language of inscribed 'Innate Characters', is rather helpful as an 'Analogy'.<sup>96</sup> The language of inscription 'amply' expresses the fact that we have the 'fullest, clearest, and most distinct Knowledge' of certain 'Notions and Ideas', 'after the use of reason',<sup>97</sup> and so not 'without any labour or search of the Mind, without the Use of Reason, Experience or Observation, or any external notices to bring them into view'.<sup>98</sup> However, the fact that there are not innate ideas *qua* '*Figures*' 'legibly writ' in 'the mind of man', 'like the *Red Letters* or *Astronomical Characters* in an *Almanack*', does not mean it is appropriate to speak of the mind as '*Abrasa Tabula*'.<sup>99</sup> We experience certain truths *qua* befitting to the language of inscription, because 'We all know such Truths as soon as we see them',<sup>100</sup> and we do so because they are 'Natural to the Soul'.<sup>101</sup> 'Intuition' is not only 'the most perfect and satisfactory Knowledge we have', but that through which we experience certain 'Notions and Ideas' as, if not 'naively' innate, then 'Connate, and inbred, and interwoven in the very Frame...of a rational soul'.<sup>102</sup> 'The Truths of God are Connatural to

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<sup>93</sup> South, *op.cit.*, I.II, 51.

<sup>94</sup> Sherlock, *op.cit.*, 89

<sup>95</sup> Burnet, *op.cit.*, 62.

<sup>96</sup> John Norris, *Cursory Reflections* (G.D. McEwen, ed.) (Los Angeles, Augustan Reprint Society, 1961), 21.

<sup>97</sup> Burnet, *op.cit.*, 62.

<sup>98</sup> Sherlock, *op.cit.*, 89.

<sup>99</sup> Henry More, *An Antidote Against Atheism*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (London, 1712) (hereafter '*Antidote*': referenced by book, chapter, paragraph), I.V.1-2 in *A Collection of Several Writings of Dr. Henry More*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (London, 1712).

<sup>100</sup> Sherlock, *op.cit.*, 91.

<sup>101</sup> More, *op.cit.*, I.VII.2.

<sup>102</sup> Sherlock, *op.cit.*, 82; 83.

the Soul of Man; and the Soul of man makes no more Resilience to them, than the Air does to Light'.<sup>103</sup>

### **The *Liveness* of Speculative and Practical Reason**

As for Aquinas (see Chapter 4), the 'Notions and Truths' that are 'true to the Soul at the very first Proposal',<sup>104</sup> such that they are '*naturally and unavoydably assented unto by the Soul*',<sup>105</sup> include both theoretical truths of speculative reason and moral truths of practical reason or conscience. In both cases, we need basic 'Axioms', 'For to make nothing evident of itself unto man's understanding were to take away all possibility of knowing anything'.<sup>106</sup> With respect to the 'Understanding Speculative', amongst the 'some general Maximes and Notions in the mind of Man, which are the rules of Discourse, and the basis of all Philosophy', are 'that *the same thing cannot at the same time be, and not be. That the whole is bigger than a part*';<sup>107</sup> 'that *Every finite Number is either even or odd; If you add equal to equal, the wholes are equal*'.<sup>108</sup>

With respect to the practical understanding amongst the 'some first, and Alphabetical Notions', 'stampd and printed upon the being of man' as 'cleare and undelible [sic] Principles', 'by putting together of which it can spell out the Law of Nature',<sup>109</sup> are: '*What is good is to be chosen; what is evil to be avoided, but the more excellent Good is preferable to the less*

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<sup>103</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.444.

<sup>104</sup> More, *op.cit.*, I.VI.6.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, I.VII.1.

<sup>106</sup> Hooker, *Laws*, I.viii.5.

<sup>107</sup> South, *op.cit.*, I.II, 50.

<sup>108</sup> More, *op.cit.*, I.VII.2.

<sup>109</sup> Culverwell, *op.cit.*, 54.

*excellent*’;<sup>110</sup> ‘*Everything that is unjust is to be eschewed*’;<sup>111</sup> ‘Whatsoever is injurious ought not to be done’;<sup>112</sup> ‘that God is to be worshipped’;<sup>113</sup> “‘parents to be honoured;” “others to be used by us as we ourselves would be by them”’.<sup>114</sup>

In morals, then, we have ‘*first principles*’, like Euclidean axioms in mathematics, which ‘the mind...without delay assenteth to’,<sup>115</sup> so that:

the understanding, both speculative understanding, or the soul, as considering the truth and falsehood of things, and the practical, considering their good and evil, or what is to be done and not done, both of them inferring consequences from premises in way of discursive reason.<sup>116</sup>

Now, our immediate assent to certain theoretical and practical truths means two things, also maintained by the Clarkeans. First, that an analogy can be made between mathematical and moral truths: ‘In *Morality*, we are sure as in *Mathematics*’,<sup>117</sup> because ‘Morals’, like mathematics, ‘may be known, by the *Reason* of the Thing; Morals are owned, as soon as spoken’.<sup>118</sup> Second, as it is ‘truth’ itself that is ‘*connatural* to our souls’,<sup>119</sup> our assent to ‘all truth’,<sup>120</sup> whether theoretical or practical, is always *thick* with all that reason is. ‘The image of God’ is ‘resplendent’ in both the ‘connate notions in the speculative intellect’ and the ‘connate notions’ of the ‘practical understanding’, which, like conscience, can be described as ‘that store-house of the soul, in which are treasured up the rules of action, and the seeds of morality’.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Henry More, *An Account of Virtue: Or, Dr. Henry More’s Abridgment of Morals, Put into English*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London, 1701), 22.

<sup>111</sup> Sanderson, *op.cit.*, 14.

<sup>112</sup> Taylor, *Ductor*, I.I.i.24.

<sup>113</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, II.XXIX, 63.

<sup>114</sup> Hooker, *Laws*, I.viii.5.

<sup>115</sup> Sanderson, *op.cit.*, 133.

<sup>116</sup> Cudworth, *Freewill*, 175.

<sup>117</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.298.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, No.586.

<sup>119</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, II.XXV, 13.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, I.XXII, 354.

<sup>121</sup> South, *op.cit.*, I.II, 53.

While in KC, HC and LNLC, the Clarkeans' mathematical analogy has been criticised for reducing morality to the *is* of theoretical reason, and for failing to appreciate the difference between theoretical and practical reason, the presence of conscience in their thought provides a place for practical reason, and their use of the mathematical analogy suggests that, for them, there is no *thin is* of reason in the Humean sense (see Chapter 2). Their mathematical analogy, consistent with RR, is actually part of, and should be understood in the context of, the assertion that human reason, and so the human mind itself, is always *live* with God, no matter whether the truths under consideration are practical or theoretical.

### **Reason *Live* with God**

'The natural *Notion* or *Idea* of God'<sup>122</sup> is then itself a 'common notion'. 'The Idea of God' 'is a natural Result from the free Use of Reason',<sup>123</sup> so that 'acknowledgement of a *God* is as well to be said to be according to the *Light of Nature*, as the Knowledge of *Geometry*'.<sup>124</sup> However, the 'natural notion' of God is more fundamental than other 'common notions'. 'Nothing...is more natural to the mind and understanding of men, than the knowledge of God',<sup>125</sup> because 'This Idea of God', with his necessary attributes or 'Perfections' (see below), is 'imprinted' upon 'the mind of Man' 'by that God whose Idea it is',<sup>126</sup> leaving an 'Indeleble [sic] Character of God upon our Souls'.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> More, *Antidote*, I.IX.1.

<sup>123</sup> Edward Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae: or A Rational Account of the Grounds of Natural and Revealed Religion*, 2 Vols., new edn (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1836), Vol.I.Bk.III.Ch.I.iv.

<sup>124</sup> More, *op.cit.*, I.X.6.

<sup>125</sup> Tillotson, *Works*, V.LXXXVII, 19.

<sup>126</sup> Stillingfleet, *op.cit.*, I.III.I.vi.

<sup>127</sup> More, *op.cit.*, I.IX.1.

Conscience, as ‘God’s Deputy’,<sup>128</sup> and our ‘home-God’,<sup>129</sup> that which God gave us as our ‘keeper’ to ‘pry into’ our thoughts and actions, ‘bearing witness’ to God,<sup>130</sup> emphasises how ‘the notion of a Deity is intimate to our understandings, and sticks close to them’.<sup>131</sup> As ‘Every knowing faculty is the seat of conscience’,<sup>132</sup> conscience, in conjunction with the ‘natural notion’ of God, helps to emphasise how all activity of human reason, including both intuiting, and reasoning from, self-evident theoretical and practical first principles, is *live* with God as a result of our ‘innate sense’<sup>133</sup> of him. Moreover, the fact that ‘The natural knowledge of God is the product of reason’<sup>134</sup> means not only that all rational intuition and rational reflection cannot be separated from the idea of God with ‘such a deep root in the mind of man’,<sup>135</sup> but that our experience, and knowledge, of God is inseparable from the very ideas we possess and the truths we perceive.<sup>136</sup>

when it is said...the Notion of God is natural to the Soul...[it means] there is...a faculty in the Soul of man, whereby upon the use of reason he can form within himself a settled notion of such a first and supreme Being...endowed with all possible perfection.<sup>137</sup>

Not only is it the case that our ‘natural Notions’ of such perfections as ‘Goodness and Justice’ must be applicable to God, so that God is ‘good and just’, ‘as Men understand Goodness and Justice’,<sup>138</sup> but that we perceive such perfections to be amongst God’s (moral) attributes, which we experience as ‘communicable’ with us. ‘God intended Himself to be the peculiar object of Mind and Understanding in Man’,<sup>139</sup> so that ‘the mind of man takes cognizance of

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<sup>128</sup> John Wilkins, *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, 6th edn (London, 1710), 90.

<sup>129</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, I.III, 42.

<sup>130</sup> Perkins, *op.cit.*, 8.

<sup>131</sup> Tillotson, *Works*, I.I, 31.

<sup>132</sup> Taylor, *Ductor*, I.I.ii.4.

<sup>133</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.792.

<sup>134</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, III.LVIII, 182.

<sup>135</sup> Tillotson, *Works*, I.II, 60.

<sup>136</sup> The classic text here is, of course, Descartes’ ‘Third Meditation’, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996) (J. Cottingham, ed.); see also: Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q.93, A.2; Cudworth, *EIM*, 128-133.

<sup>137</sup> Wilkins, *op.cit.*, 61.

<sup>138</sup> William Sherlock, *A Discourse Concerning the Divine Providence*, 9<sup>th</sup> edn (London, 1747), 132.

<sup>139</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.848.

God receives from him and returns to him and carries a continual sense of God within itself'.<sup>140</sup> Thus, we experience the 'Perfections' of 'Power, Wisdom [amongst God's 'natural attributes'], Goodness, Justice, Truth [amongst God's 'moral attributes']...to be in some degree in ourselves'<sup>141</sup> because they have been 'communicated' to us, 'by way of participation' in God, the 'Fountain and Author, the Rule and Measure' of all '*Perfection*'.<sup>142</sup>

Of course, some of God's attributes are 'incommunicable'.<sup>143</sup> his self-existence and eternity, for example. Moreover, even those that are 'communicable' ('although the Creatures partake of them'<sup>144</sup> as 'derived from'<sup>145</sup> God) are above 'the condition of a Creature' to possess in 'any Equality with God', and a creature is unable 'to conceive' 'that degree and perfection wherein God possesseth them'.<sup>146</sup> Nevertheless, even as there are divine attributes that can only be known by 'proportion', and still others that 'we are glad rather to admire and adore' than 'grasp' or 'comprehend',<sup>147</sup> the fact remains that it is with every operation of human reason that we experience '*God*' as 'the Object, which does *fully* exhaust and draw out,

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<sup>140</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, I.XVIII, 300.

<sup>141</sup> Tillotson, *Works*, I.I, 20.

<sup>142</sup> Wilkins, *op.cit.*, 135.

<sup>143</sup> Whichcote preferred to call God's 'incommunicable' attributes his 'natural attributes', while the likes of Tillotson and Wilkins, as well as the Clarkeans, included certain of God's 'natural attributes', such as those of 'power' and 'wisdom', amongst God's 'communicable' attributes. For Whichcote, 'the first, we partake of the divine *nature* by imitation of God in his moral perfections...In his *natural perfections* we cannot communicate with him, because we are creatures. His natural perfections are such as these, infiniteness, eternity, omniscience, omnipotence' (*Works*, II.XLVIII, 385). However, just as Whichcote maintained that 'the make of man, the natural use of mind and understanding...is enough to satisfy any one concerning the being of God, and his essential perfections' (*Works*, III.LVI, 144), there was agreement with Whichcote that, 'The first thing that we attribute to God, next to his being, is his goodness, and those other attributes which have a necessary connection with it' (Tillotson, *Works*, VI.CXLII, 454), and that God's moral 'attributes' are those of the 'Divine Nature and Perfections' 'which are most proper for our imitation' (*ibid.*, II.XLI, 397). Of course, underlying Whichcote's claim that 'Things *Moral* are better understood, than things *Natural*' (*Aphorisms*, No.645), was an emphasis upon the view, common to RR (and so also in CER, see Chapter 2), that, as God's actions are determined by his nature, 'Wisdom and Power are Perfections, only as they are *in conjunction* with Justice and Goodness' (*Aphorisms*, No.261). Although, then, it is only 'in all Moral Perfections' that 'God is imitable by us', and 'communicable to us' (*Aphorisms*, No.50), as it is not possible for God, or human beings, to practise, or to possess, wisdom and power without goodness and justice, what we mean by the former in ourselves, and in God, is determined by the latter (see: *Aphorisms*, No.26; 388; 1154).

<sup>144</sup> Tillotson, *Works*, VI.CXXVI, 354.

<sup>145</sup> Wilkins, *op.cit.*, 206.

<sup>146</sup> Tillotson, *op.cit.*, 354.

<sup>147</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, I.XXIV, 382.

which does *perfectly* exercise and employ, the Faculties of Mind and Understanding'.<sup>148</sup> We cannot do otherwise than experience 'Created Intellectual Nature' as that which has, 'as its *proper Perfection*; to have sense and apprehension of God, in whom is all Fullness and Perfection'.<sup>149</sup> Consequently, it is by the very 'motion of mind and understanding, inquiring into and discovering the reason of things'<sup>150</sup> that we are driven to 'imitation of the Divine Perfections', so far 'as Creatures are capable',<sup>151</sup> and know that, 'We must Learn of the Divine Wisdom, Imitate the Divine Goodness, Depend on the Divine Power'.<sup>152</sup>

### Knowing Ourselves with God

The truths we experience, through intuition and conscience, as 'connate' are those we experience as 'interwoven' into human nature. As a result, conscience and intuition are not only associated with our experience of God, and our drive for the ends of reason in imitation of him, but our drive for the ends of reason as that which is according to our own nature and judgement as rational agents.

The most significant Anglican casuists (see Chapter 4), Robert Sanderson, William Perkins and Jeremy Taylor, each emphasised the fact that 'conscience', according to the etymology of the Latin *conscientia* (and Greek *suneidesis*) means a 'knowing together'.<sup>153</sup> Conscience is a 'gift' from God by means of which 'man...knows together with God, the same things of himself',<sup>154</sup> so that conscience 'is a thing placed by God...as an arbitratour [sic] to

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<sup>148</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.938.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, No.845.

<sup>150</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, I.XVIII, 300.

<sup>151</sup> Tillotson, *Works*, VI.CXXXI, 271.

<sup>152</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.1019.

<sup>153</sup> Sanderson, *op.cit.*, 4-7; Perkins, *op.cit.*, 9; Taylor, *Ductor*, I.I.i.23-24. For more on *conscientia* and *suneidesis* (as well as *synderesis*: see Chapter 3), see: C.S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1960), 181-213; Pierce, *op.cit.*, 13-59; Don Marietta, Jr., 'Conscience in Greek Stoicism', *Numen*, 17:2 (Dec., 1970), 176-187.

<sup>154</sup> Perkins, *op.cit.*, 9.

give sentence & to pronounce either with man or against man unto God'.<sup>155</sup> Although conscience 'doth *internally* witness for' God,<sup>156</sup> and it is in conscience that God is active as a 'conscious witness and an inspector into all [our]...works...[and] secret thoughts',<sup>157</sup> it is also through conscience that our own 'deeds' are 'known' to us as 'conscious' witnesses of ourselves. To go against conscience is to go against God, who 'sits' in conscience 'and gives us laws',<sup>158</sup> and to go 'against the sense of our own minds and judgment',<sup>159</sup> not least because 'conscience' is the 'same thing' as our 'mind' or 'understanding'.<sup>160</sup> The fact that to contradict conscience is to contradict God and ourselves is conveyed through legal, and 'book', metaphors.

It is through conscience that 'every man' has 'a kind of court and tribunal in his own breast, where he tries himself, and all his actions'.<sup>161</sup> Further, within the 'spiritual court' of conscience, it 'sustains all parts in this trial'.<sup>162</sup> Conscience is 'the judge which declares the law', and the 'bar' at which we stand 'impleaded',<sup>163</sup> 'It is the witness to accuse' us, the 'Lord's sergeant' to 'arrest' us, 'the Jayler' to imprison us, 'the hangman to execute' us,<sup>164</sup> and 'the record and register of our crimes'.<sup>165</sup> In the latter role, 'The conscience or mind of man is...the "preserver" of the court rolls of heaven'.<sup>166</sup> Not only does 'Conscience hath the pen of a ready writer',<sup>167</sup> 'to note & record whatsoever is said or done',<sup>168</sup> it is itself the 'book'

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<sup>155</sup> Perkins, *op.cit.*, 6.

<sup>156</sup> Wilkins, *op.cit.*, 90.

<sup>157</sup> Sanderson, *op.cit.*, 4.

<sup>158</sup> Taylor, *Ductor*, I.I.i.2.

<sup>159</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, I.III, 43.

<sup>160</sup> South, *op.cit.*, III.II, 56.

<sup>161</sup> Tillotson, *Works*, II.XXXVIII, 334.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 335; 334.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 334.

<sup>164</sup> Perkins, *op.cit.*, 74.

<sup>165</sup> Tillotson, *op.cit.*, 334.

<sup>166</sup> Taylor, *Ductor*, I.I.i.21.

<sup>167</sup> Nathaniel Culverwell, *The Act of Oblivion* in Nathaniel Culverwell, *An Elegant and Learned Discourse of the Light of Nature, with several Other treatises* (W. Dillingham, ed.) (Oxford, 1669), 32.

<sup>168</sup> Perkins, *op.cit.*, 8.

in which these records are made. ‘The Book of *Conscience*’ ‘is a Book, wherein, from the first use of our Reason, till our Death, we are continually Writing all our Thoughts, Words and Actions’,<sup>169</sup> ‘And this is that book which at doomsday shall be brought forth and laid open to all the world’.<sup>170</sup>

Conscience may be ‘the judgement of a man’s own mind concerning the morality of his actions’,<sup>171</sup> but it is also ‘God’s book, the book of life or death’<sup>172</sup> and the ‘court’ in which God has ‘set up a tribunal, and a gibbet, and a rack’.<sup>173</sup> The ‘lashes of conscience’<sup>174</sup> are its ‘presages’, ‘the flashings of the fire of hell’<sup>175</sup> and God’s future judgement, as well as our experience of what it means to do ‘violence to the light of our minds’,<sup>176</sup> which is the ‘unhappiest breach in the world’ through which we ‘arm our own minds against ourselves’,<sup>177</sup> and ‘lay violent handes [sic] upon’ ourselves.<sup>178</sup> ‘Whoever commits a sin against his light, judgment, and conscience’,<sup>179</sup> because he ‘goes against his very make, and doth that which is violent, horrid and unnatural’, suffers ‘self-condemnation’, which is to enter the most ‘violent’ and ‘hellish state’ ‘that ariseth out of his own self’.<sup>180</sup>

There is no such condemnation...in this state...or...the future, as self-condemnation. The worst of hell, is not from...foreign infliction...it is from within; the *worm of conscience is the life of hell*.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Matthew Hale, *Of the Knowledge of Christ Crucified. Part II in Contemplations*, 83.

<sup>170</sup> Taylor, *Ductor*, I.II.ii.4.

<sup>171</sup> Tillotson, *op.cit.*, 335.

<sup>172</sup> Taylor, *Ductor*, I.I.ii.4.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, I.I.ii.19.

<sup>174</sup> Wilkins, *op.cit.*, 53.

<sup>175</sup> Perkins, *op.cit.*, 74.

<sup>176</sup> Tillotson, *op.cit.*, 346.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

<sup>178</sup> Perkins, *op.cit.*, 74.

<sup>179</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, IV.LXXX, 166.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, III.LVI, 145; 153.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, II.XXXV, 140.

## Reason *Live with Ourselves*

The fact that, ‘whoever goes against the clear dictate and conviction of his conscience...sins against God and his own soul’,<sup>182</sup> serves to highlight how the operation of reason is not only *live with God* but with ourselves.

We would not be capable of assenting to truth if we did not possess ‘an active sagacity in the Soul’, which allows for a ‘quick recollection’ (analogous to that described in Plato’s *Meno*) ‘whereby some small Business being hinted upon her...[the soul] runs out presently into a more clear and larger Conception’.<sup>183</sup> In our assent to truth we experience ‘the active power and innate fecundity of the mind itself’,<sup>184</sup> and, returning to the interconnectedness of (1)-(4), experience truth as not only ‘necessary’ and ‘eternal’, with its perfection in God, but as ‘the Natural Emanations of...[our] own Mind’.<sup>185</sup>

Likewise, conscience, in moral matters, emphasises how: ‘The *Rule* of Right is, the Reason of Things; the *Judgment* of Right is, the Reason of our Minds, *perceiving* the Reason of things’,<sup>186</sup> and how we possess a ‘natural sagacity to distinguish moral good and evil’ which is ‘natural conscience’.<sup>187</sup> First, conscience makes it clear that the perception of moral truth cannot be separated from our awareness that to do that which we perceive to be right in itself is to act according to our own judgement. Second, returning to its association with ‘connate ideas’, conscience is connected with our ‘rational instincts’ after the ends of reason as rational

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<sup>182</sup> Tillotson, *op.cit.*, 346.

<sup>183</sup> More, *Antidote*, I.V.2.

<sup>184</sup> Cudworth, *EIM*, 83.

<sup>185</sup> More, *op.cit.*, I.VII.1.

<sup>186</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.33.

<sup>187</sup> Burnet, *op.cit.*, 63.

agents. In both cases, the language of conscience is part of the assertion that the law of reason is our own law.

‘Self-condemnation’ in conscience demonstrates that ‘the *reason of our mind*...is our governor’ according to ‘the *reason of things*, which gives law, and is the rule of action’,<sup>188</sup> not least because it demonstrates that ‘It is the Reason of Things, and of our Minds, not the Power of God only, which condemns’.<sup>189</sup> ‘Self-condemnation’ illustrates the fact that, ‘Nothing is more *Unnatural* to men, than *Wickedness*; for wickedness is contrary to the *Reason* of the *Mind*, and to the *Reason of Things*’.<sup>190</sup> Indeed, because conscience is a ‘knowing together’ with God, and ‘the image of God’ – that ‘likeness of God in which he was pleased to make man’<sup>191</sup> – ‘self-condemnation’ in, and by, conscience, the ‘true issue of reason’,<sup>192</sup> demonstrates that ‘Our *Nature* is reconciled’ to ‘the Rule of Everlasting Righteousness, Goodness, and Truth’, as both our own ‘natural law’ and ‘the Law of Heaven’:

The *Spirit of God* in us, is a Living Law, Informing the Soul; not Constrained by a Law without, that enlivens not: but we act in the Power of an *inward Principle* of Life, which enables, inclines, facilitates, determines.<sup>193</sup>

### ***To Hegemonikon***

Conscience not only helps to assert that reason is our own, as well as God’s, law, but, further, that it is as a result of being created rational agents that human beings are, returning to Roms.2:14-16, a ‘law to ourselves’. For Aquinas:

law is in a person not only as in one that rules, but also, by participation, as in one that is ruled. In the latter way, each one is a law to himself, insofar as he shares the direction that he receives from one who rules him.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, I.XIII, 212.

<sup>189</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.129.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, No.523.

<sup>191</sup> Taylor, *Ductor*, I.I.i.2.

<sup>192</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, III.LIV, 120.

<sup>193</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.625.

<sup>194</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q.90, A.3.

Human beings are not, then, ‘makers of those laws’ which divide ‘truth from falsehood, and good from evil’, but rather ‘finders of them out’ as that which belongs to God, and which is ‘promulgated’ to human beings ‘by the very fact that God instilled’ the ‘natural law’ ‘into men’s minds so as to be known by...[them] naturally’.<sup>195</sup> However, because ‘law, by being promulgated, imprints on man a directive principle of human actions’,<sup>196</sup> the law that we know ‘naturally’, according to our ‘natural inclination to act according to reason’,<sup>197</sup> and as that by means of which we participate in the mind and ‘eternal law’ of God, is also that by means of which we are made, and know ourselves to be, a ‘law to ourselves’.

In line with Ameriks’ and Hare’s understanding of Kantian self-imposition outside the ‘false trichotomy’ (see below), the ‘meaning’ of Roms.2:14-16 is not that we are creators of the ‘law of reason’, but rather that, ‘by natural discourse attaining the knowledge thereof, [we can] seem the makers’ of that law.<sup>198</sup> However, our appearance as ‘makers’ is still illustrative of our capacity for self-governance as rational agents, and our consequent responsibility to choose with, and thereby impose upon ourselves, the law of reason *qua* the law of our own nature and judgement:

Man out of the way of right and reason, is a monster...God...made him to consist of such principles, that he *was a law given to himself*, and if he varied from this law of his creation, he must be self-condemned, and if self-condemned unavoidably miserable.<sup>199</sup>

It is from ‘remorse of conscience’, ‘from men’s blaming, accusing, and condemning themselves’, that we know our actions are not ‘necessary’.<sup>200</sup> ‘Remorse of conscience’ indicates our ‘*hegemonicon* or self-ruling power’,<sup>201</sup> whereby ‘men’s nature’ ‘has a self-

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<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, Q.90, A.4.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, Q.93, A.5.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, Q.94, A.3.

<sup>198</sup> Hooker, *Laws*, I.viii.3.

<sup>199</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, III.LXVI, 346-347.

<sup>200</sup> Cudworth, *Freewill*, 156.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

forming and self-framing power, by which every man is self-made, into what he is. And accordingly deserves either praise or dispraise, reward or punishment'.<sup>202</sup>

Although Cudworth does not call conscience '*hegemonikon*', he demonstrates why such an equivalence has been made by the likes of Butler and Hutcheson.<sup>203</sup> '*τό ἡγεμονικόν*' is 'the ruling, governing, commanding, determining principle in us',<sup>204</sup> because it is that through which the 'soul' is 'redoubled upon itself, having a power of intending or exerting itself more or less in consideration and deliberation'.<sup>205</sup> '*τό ἡγεμονικόν*' is the soul's 'power over itself',<sup>206</sup> precisely because it 'is the soul as comprehending itself'.<sup>207</sup> Cudworth thus points to the affinity between *to hegemonikon* and what would become Butler's 'conscience or reflection':

We are certain by an inward sense that we can reflect upon ourselves and consider ourselves, which is a reduplication of life in a higher degree...all cogitative beings...are self-conscious. Though conscience...be commonly attributed to rational beings only...as are sensible of the *discrimen honestorum et turpium* [distinction between right and wrong], when they judge of their own actions according to that rule...Wherefore that which is thus conscious of itself, and reflexive upon itself, may also as well act upon itself...<sup>208</sup>

Cudworth thus introduces 'conscience' into the language of 'a kind of duplicity in the human soul', where it is the power of reflection that enables 'the soul to be as it were reduplicated upon itself and so hegemonical over itself'.<sup>209</sup> Such an association between conscience and

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>203</sup> For Butler's and Hutcheson's use of *to hegemonikon*, see: Chapter 1.

<sup>204</sup> Cudworth, *op.cit.*, 175.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

‘dialogic scrutiny’<sup>210</sup> is also to be found in Adam Smith’s and Kant’s use of conscience,<sup>211</sup> as well as in Shaftesbury, an influence on Hutcheson, Butler, Smith and Kant.<sup>212</sup>

Shaftesbury discussed the ‘duplicity’ of the soul in the context of *to hegemonikon* and the Socratic *daemon*, which, as mentioned above, is another metaphor for conscience *qua* ‘the God, dwelling within us’.<sup>213</sup> For Shaftesbury, ‘the wise ancients...meant by this daemon companion’ only ‘to declare’ that:

“we had each of us a patient in ourself”...“we were properly our own subject of practice” and...“we...become due practitioners when, by virtue of an intimate recess, we...discover a certain duplicity of soul and divide ourselves into two parties”.<sup>214</sup>

It was within such a ‘home-dialect of soliloquy’ that the Stoic ‘Recognise yourself!’ means ‘Divide yourself!’, so that, in establishing the ‘subordinacy’ of ‘what was base and servile’ within us, we could actually ‘make us agree with ourselves and be of a piece within’.<sup>215</sup>

Shaftesbury’s use of *daemon* and Cudworth’s use of ‘*hegemonicon*’ both point towards the supremacy, and ‘superintendency’, of Butlerian conscience. Consequently, they both help

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<sup>210</sup> Brown, *op.cit.*, 50.

<sup>211</sup> For Smith’s use of ‘conscience, see Chapter 4; for Kant’s, see: *The Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996) (M. Gregor, trans. and ed.), 160-161; 188-191 and Allen Wood, *Kantian Ethics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 182-192.

<sup>212</sup> For Shaftesbury’s influence on such figures, see: W.R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson: His Life, Teaching and Position in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1900), 182-197; Thomas Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson* (London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1882), 183-200; J.D. Filonowicz, *Fellow-Feeling and the Moral Life* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 65-68; 91-119; Rivers, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, 154-226; 236-237; Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 Vols. (New York, NY, Harbinger, 1962), Vol.II, 17; 39-53; 59-68; Michael Gill, *The British Moralists and the Birth of Secular Ethics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), 139-145; Brown, *op.cit.*, 50-52; Henning Jensen, *Motivation and the Moral Sense in Francis Hutcheson’s Ethical Theory* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 35-39; L.W. Beck, *Early German Philosophy: Kant and His Predecessors* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1969), 329-332; David Marshall, ‘Adam Smith and the Theatricality of Moral Sentiments’, *Critical Inquiry*, 10:4 (Jun., 1984), 612, fn14.

<sup>213</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.1058.

<sup>214</sup> Lord Shaftesbury (Anthony Ashley Cooper), *Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author* (hereafter ‘*Soliloquy*’) in L.E. Klein (ed.), *Characteristics of Men Manners, Opinions, Times* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999) (hereafter ‘*Characteristics*’), 77.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

to show, not only why conscience should gather such metaphors, but what conscience and its metaphors are intended to assert about rational human agency itself, namely:

that the soul of man hath a reciprocal energy upon itself, or of acting upon itself...it is not merely passive to that which it receives from God...[but has] a power of being a [co-worker] with God...<sup>216</sup>

Reason and conscience may be ‘sparks’ of the divine, but we do not possess them as something alien from ourselves, nor is it the case that those ends to which reason and conscience direct us are alien to us, nor attained without our own reflective effort and choice. The distinguishing feature of conscience is not that it is simply our own judgement; or simply God’s judgement; or simply our awareness of a realm of normative fact. It is a ‘knowing together’ with God and with ourselves, of God and of ourselves, of that which is of God and of ourselves, namely the law of reason itself.

### **Conscience and RR in Butler and Clarke**

In this study, the parallels between Butler’s and the Clarkeans’ understanding of conscience and RR, and that in the figures reviewed above, will be drawn out. In Butler and the Clarkeans conscience is that through which we possess individual powers of agency and self-responsibility, because it is in, and through, conscience that we are aware of all that reason is, and all that it means for a rational agent to satisfy (and all that it means for a rational agent to contradict) the law of reason *qua* our law, God’s law, and the law of the created universe itself.

As indicated above with reference to Ameriks’ and Hare’s ‘false trichotomy’, the discussion of conscience and RR in the Anglican figures above not only introduces the

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<sup>216</sup> Cudworth, *Freewill*, 184.

fundamental features of conscience, reason and intuition that will be encountered within Butler and the Clarkeans in this study; it also points to how appreciating such fundamental features of conscience, reason and intuition helps to resist reduced readings of Butlerian conscience and central criticisms of CER.

Below, the ‘false trichotomy’, KC and KR are outlined. Each is outlined here, rather than in the main body of the text, because the discrepancy between KC and KR is a central concern of this study.

### **The ‘False Trichotomy’**

For John Hare, ‘secular Kantians’ have worked within the dichotomy: ‘Either there is *independence* of obligation from God...or there is *wormlike* dependence’.<sup>217</sup> As Kant contended that, ‘Reason must regard itself as the author of its principles independently of alien influences’,<sup>218</sup> and ‘that the concept of good and evil is not defined prior to the moral law...[but] must be defined after and by means of the law’,<sup>219</sup> it would appear (from within the dichotomy) that Kant maintained that morality is a ‘human creation’.<sup>220</sup> The neo-Kantians, to whom Hare is responding, have thus insisted that Kantian ethics rests on a ‘form-matter distinction’,<sup>221</sup> within which the standard of right and wrong does not exist outside human

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<sup>217</sup> John Hare, *God’s Call: Moral Realism, God’s Commands, and Human Autonomy* (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 100.

<sup>218</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997) (M. Gregor, trans. and ed.), 4:448.

<sup>219</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1956) (L.W. Beck, trans.), 65.

<sup>220</sup> J.B. Schneewind, ‘Natural Law, Skepticism, and Methods of Ethics’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52:2 (Apr.-Jun., 1991), 307.

<sup>221</sup> Stephen Darwall, *The British Moralists and the Internal ‘Ought’, 1640-1740* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995) (hereafter ‘*Internal “Ought”*’), 323.

agency in an independent ‘fitness’ of things or a divine will, because ‘values are constructed by a procedure: that of making laws for ourselves’.<sup>222</sup>

Hare contends that Kant does not have to make the choice *either* divine command theory *or* human agency when understanding authorship of, and obligation to, the moral law. Rather, Kant maintained that, ‘God and we can both be seen as authors in the one sense, namely authors of the obligation of the law, and neither God nor we can be seen as authors in the other sense, namely authors in the sense of creators’.<sup>223</sup> Indeed, although both human beings and God might be seen as authors of the obligation of the law, even this does not mean that Kant argued that God and human beings should be thought of as authors in the same sense. Instead,

We ordinary moral agents have to see our role as recapitulating in our own wills the declaration in God’s will of our duties. This is how we are lawgivers; we declare a correspondence of our wills with the law (which we do not create)...to will the law autonomously is to declare it my law...Autonomy on this reading is more nearly a kind of submission than a kind of creation.<sup>224</sup>

Hare’s reading of Kant, and objections to secular neo-Kantianism, are consistent with that of Karl Ameriks, whom Hare also references. For Ameriks, neo-Kantianism has worked within a ‘false dichotomy (or false trichotomy: either imposed by us, or imposed by another, or simply “perceived” as a natural feature)’, while ‘Kantian realism’, properly speaking:

eschews the false dichotomy...“either imposed by us or imposed by another”; it allows the standards of proper action to be beyond human making but necessarily in line with human reason, while leaving the following of those standards up to free agents.<sup>225</sup>

While there is textual support for the ‘secular neo-Kantian’ position, Ameriks and Hare are able to point to the fact that Kant insisted that, ‘The moral law is, in fact, for the will of a

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<sup>222</sup> Christine Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996) (hereafter ‘*Sources*’), 112.

<sup>223</sup> Hare, *op.cit.*, 94.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-96.

<sup>225</sup> Karl Ameriks, ‘On Schneewind and Kant’s Method in Ethics’, *Ideas y Valores*, 45:102 (Dec., 1996), 48.

perfect being a law of holiness', rather than, as for any 'finite rational being', a law of 'duty' and 'constraint'.<sup>226</sup> 'The Infinite Being as the supreme intelligence' has, unlike us, 'a will incapable of any maxims which conflict with the moral law' and 'of any maxim which could not at the same time be objectively a law'.<sup>227</sup> Thus, 'Even though' to 'stand under a *discipline* of reason' is to stand under a law 'given by our own reason', such that 'We are...legislative members of a moral realm',

we are at the same time subjects in it, not sovereigns...to mistake our inferior position as creatures...to deny, from self-conceit, respect to the holy law is...a defection from it even if its letter be fulfilled.<sup>228</sup>

In Chapter 1, I will argue that Hare's and Ameriks' understanding of Kant helps us to understand Butler's position on conscience by helping to highlight how Butler's conscience has been read within analogous constraints. The further significance of Hare's and Ameriks' 'false trichotomy' is not only that it has informed KC, but that it is from within the same 'false trichotomy' that Butler's conscience has been reduced in KR. The same neo-Kantians, to whom Hare and Ameriks are responding, promote a reduced reading of Butler, in which Butler's conscience is limited to one referent: namely, that which shall be explored in Chapter 1 as our capacity to make, and to be accountable to and for, our own judgements. As well as informing KC and KR, therefore, the 'false trichotomy' underpinning KC and KR has helped to separate Butler and the Clarkeans artificially, in the context of restricted interpretations of both.

## **KC and KR**

A lengthy quotation from Korsgaard will help to establish the essence of KC and KR, and thus the supposed contrast between Butler and the Clarkeans:

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<sup>226</sup> Kant, *op.cit.*, 84-85.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

Reflection does not have irresistible power over us. But when we do reflect we cannot but think that we ought to do what on reflection we conclude we have reason to do. And when we don't do that we punish ourselves, by guilt and regret and repentance and remorse. We might say that the acting self concedes to the thinking self its right to govern...So the reflective structure of human consciousness establishes a relation...which we have to ourselves...it is a relation not of mere power but rather of *authority*. And *that*...authority...is the source of obligation...this means that voluntarism is true after all. The source of obligation is a legislator...It is the authority of your own mind and will...It is not the bare fact that it would be a good idea to perform a certain action that obligates us to perform it. It is the fact that we *command ourselves* to do what we find it would be a good idea to do.<sup>229</sup>

On the one hand, in KC, rational intuitionism (whether Clarkean or Moorean) is looked upon as an ethical theory unable to establish autonomy, and so moral obligation, adequately. While, 'on the Kantian view, rational agency must be autonomous, in the sense that the requirements binding it are wholly self-generated and self-imposed',<sup>230</sup> an intuitionist would not 'accept the idea that moral requirements are self-legislated'.<sup>231</sup> It is, 'Because intuitionism locates moral principles externally to the will', in 'an order of intrinsic values', that 'it does not represent moral agents as legislators'.<sup>232</sup> Consequently, such intuitionists as the Clarkeans are 'heteronomous', because they 'ground morality in an end or value given independently of the will'.<sup>233</sup> Moreover, such intuitionists as the Clarkeans are not only unable to convey the binding nature of intuited intrinsic value, but cannot avoid further compounding their heteronomy when trying to do so. The suggestion that 'moral principles in some sense originate in my reason and are self-imposed' explains why, 'in reflective moments, I find that it makes no sense to ask why I should fulfil my moral obligations'; however, 'I can always ask why I should be bound' by 'an order of intrinsic values'.<sup>234</sup> The Clarkean response to such an objection, that the binding nature of perceived intrinsic value is self-evident – we simply, and

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<sup>229</sup> Korsgaard, *op.cit.*, 104-105.

<sup>230</sup> Robert Johnson, 'Value and Autonomy in Kantian Ethics' in R. Shafer-Landau (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Metaethics, Vol.2* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), 140.

<sup>231</sup> Andrews Reath, *Agency and Autonomy in Kant's Moral Theory* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2006), 118, fn.23.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 168, fn.33; 99; 168, fn.33.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

unavoidably, ‘see’ what we ought to do – is, according to KC, and the other criticisms looked at in Chapter 2, circular. To claim that ‘a principle is self-evident’ is to claim that ‘no further justification for the principle can be given’, which means that ‘its normative force is unexplained [or is only explained circularly] and it will appear to be rationally rejectable’.<sup>235</sup> If one then tries to resist that rational rejection, by ‘establish[ing] the authority of such principles’ with reference to something other than their ‘immediate authority’, one ends up (i) contradicting oneself by ‘go[ing] outside such principles and attach[ing] some further interest to them’, and (ii) in deeper heteronomy because, more often than not, what one will go on to attach is ‘some external motive or sanction’ beyond the legislative power of the rational will itself (e.g., divine or civil authority, contingent desires, and so on).<sup>236</sup>

On the other hand, KR allows Butlerian conscience to avoid the pitfalls KC associates with Clarkean intuition by understanding Butler in proto-Kantian terms. According to KR, in Butler’s *Fifteen Sermons* one finds ‘the most penetrating, philosophically acute, and widely read analysis of self-legislation as the core of morality’ ‘until Kant’.<sup>237</sup> In KR, ‘Butler’s [conscience or] principle of reflection’ is read as highlighting the ‘intrinsic authority of practical reason’,<sup>238</sup> so that the key distinction of Butler’s conscience, which supposedly helps to distinguish Butlerian conscience from Clarkean intuition, is that it is ‘self-authorising’.<sup>239</sup> KR thus places particular emphasis upon two well-known features of Butler’s thought: his

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<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 166, fn.22.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> J.B. Schneewind, ‘The Use of Autonomy in Ethical Theory’, in T.C. Heller, M. Sosna, D.E. Wellbery, with A.I. Davidson, A. Swidler and I. Watt (eds), *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1986), 65.

<sup>238</sup> Stephen Darwall, *Impartial Reason* (Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1983) (hereafter ‘*Impartial Reason*’), 191.

<sup>239</sup> Stephen Darwall, ‘Conscience as Self-Authorizing in Butler’s Ethics’ in C. Cunliff (ed.), *Jopseh Butler’s Moral and Religious Thought: Tercentenary Essays* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992), 209-241 and *Internal Ought*, 260.

distinction between strength and authority,<sup>240</sup> and his empirical method (see Chapter 1). Both have been read as indicating Butler's 'pledge to avoid reliance on intuitionistic metaphysics',<sup>241</sup> and how 'Butler defines conscience *formally*, not by its connection to an independent order'.<sup>242</sup> Within KR, Butler maintains 'that the existence of reasons for acting entails the authority of conscience',<sup>243</sup> so that conscience is 'self-authorising', because, as '*normative* ideas refer to no order that is independent of the exercise of autonomous practical reason (conscience) itself', reasons for acting are themselves internal to conscience or reflection.<sup>244</sup> In KR, Butler does not:

like Clarke...think that moral *obligation* derives from a normative fact whose existence is independent of the form of practical thinking that makes autonomous agency possible. Rather moral obligation consists in its being the case that an agent would *regard* herself as having conclusive motive *de jure*...that is, conclusive *reason*, were she to exercise the form of practical thought that makes autonomous action possible.<sup>245</sup>

It is because, 'The principle of reflection enables an agent to step back',<sup>246</sup> giving 'the agent a critical perspective on her own motives through which she can make self-motivating normative judgements', that 'Conscience...is not simply a part of our constitution; it is the very root of self-regulated constitutional order'.<sup>247</sup>

What conscience gives an agent is the capacity to guide her life by normative practical *judgement*, and this capacity, Butler seems to be saying, is a condition of the very possibility of autonomous rational (and moral) will and, for that reason, of an agent's having reasons to act.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> See: J. David Velleman, 'The Voice of Conscience' in *Self to Self: Selected Essays* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), 111; Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgement* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1993), 200, fn.25; Korsgaard, *Sources of Normativity*, 104; Schneewind, *op.cit.*, 65; Darwall, *Internal 'Ought'*, 18.

<sup>241</sup> Darwall, *op.cit.*, 269.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 275-276.

## Posing ‘The Normative Question’

Thus, in KR, Butlerian conscience can be understood in terms of a neo-Kantian ‘procedural realism’, rather than a Clarkean ‘substantive realism’,<sup>249</sup> within which ‘intuitionists do not believe in practical reason, properly speaking’.<sup>250</sup> In the latter, ‘what gives authority to the agent’s judgement of reasons...is that these reliably track independent normative facts’.<sup>251</sup> The problem here, as we shall see again in Chapters 2 and 3, is that this means, ‘According to substantive realism...ethics is really a theoretical or epistemological subject’, and that ‘reasons for acting themselves depend on nothing internal to the agent’.<sup>252</sup> Consequently, in KC, while the Clarkeans ‘insisted that reason can directly determine the will...they did not have an account of *how* it does so’.<sup>253</sup> The Clarkeans might claim that ‘fit[ness] to be done’:

is a self-evident truth built into the nature of things, in the same way that mathematical truths are...But people do not regulate their actions, love, hate, live, kill, and die for mathematical truths...Clarke’s account...leave[s] us completely mystified...why people...do these things for moral truths.<sup>254</sup>

Indeed, the Clarkeans, in KC, not only fail to ‘answer the normative question’,<sup>255</sup> but fail to take it seriously. Their ‘circular’ insistence upon ‘the irreducible character of normativity’<sup>256</sup> expresses an arrogant (and potentially dangerous: see Chapter 2) lack of concern for the often pressing, and difficult, nature of the ‘normative question’. Korsgaard uses the following quotation from Clarke<sup>257</sup> to highlight both his lack of ‘worry’ about the ‘normative question’ and his complacent lack of ‘*manners*’<sup>258</sup> towards those who find themselves, due to the

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<sup>249</sup> Korsgaard, *Sources*, 35.

<sup>250</sup> Christine Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996) (hereafter ‘*Kingdom*’), 316.

<sup>251</sup> Darwall, *op.cit.*, 329.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

<sup>253</sup> Korsgaard, *Kingdom*, 37, fn.12.

<sup>254</sup> Korsgaard, *Sources*, 12.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

‘exigencies of life’, lacking ‘confidence’ and worrying about what would be the right thing to do, and why.<sup>259</sup>

These Things are so notoriously plain and self-evident, that nothing but the extremist Stupidity of Mind, Corruption of Manners, or Perverseness of Spirit, can possibly make any Man entertain the least Doubt concerning them.<sup>260</sup>

Meanwhile, in KR, Butler both answers, and takes seriously, the ‘normative question’. Underlying Butlerian conscience is a ‘normative theory of the will’, within which it is conceived ‘as the capacity to make demands *of oneself*’.<sup>261</sup> It is through Butlerian conscience that ‘the agent has a way (procedurally) of making normative judgements and guiding herself by them’,<sup>262</sup> such that Butler represents an ‘autonomist internalist’ position, fully realised in Kant, which ‘holds that *obligation consists in conclusive motives raised through the exercise of autonomous practical reasoning*’.<sup>263</sup> Butler’s conscience, as ‘our capacity to deliberate reasonably before acting and taking proper account of our nature, circumstances, options [and so on]’,<sup>264</sup> appears to stress the situatedness and effort of moral reflection,<sup>265</sup> thus helping Butler to avoid Clarkean complacency, as well as their mistake ‘of locating morality in the metaphysical properties of actions, rather than in the motivational properties of people’.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>260</sup> Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse Concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion* (hereafter ‘*Discourse*’) in Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse Concerning the Being and Attributes of God, the Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion*, 10th edn (London, 1767), 31.

<sup>261</sup> Darwall, *op.cit.*, 20.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>264</sup> Thomas E. Hill, Jr., ‘Four Conceptions of Conscience’ in I. Shapiro and R. Adams (eds), *Integrity and Conscience, Nomos XL* (NYC, New York University Press, 1998), 28.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

<sup>266</sup> Korsgaard, *Kingdom*, 67.

## Tensions within KC and KR

KR and KC use conscience to separate Butler and the Clarkeans. However, somewhat curiously, KR and KC also indicate how conscience has been reduced in Butler and neglected in the Clarkeans. Thus, KR and KC themselves highlight how an emphasis upon the full meaning of conscience, in both Butler and the Clarkeans, can help to remedy the ‘tensions’ and ‘ambiguities’ KR and KC find within Butler and the Clarkeans; and so also remedy what are, in the end, tensions and ambiguities within KR and KC themselves.

In KR, it is admitted that there are caveats to the proto-Kantian reading of Butlerian conscience: namely, that ‘where Butler sees in self-governance only the explanation of our responsibility for our actions, Kant sees in it as well our responsibility for the principle that makes them right and wrong’.<sup>267</sup> The fact that ‘there are Clarkean, rational intuitionist elements of Butler’s thought’,<sup>268</sup> as well as ‘arguments for conscience’s authority that depend on treating human nature as a teleological/functional order’,<sup>269</sup> suggests that Butler thinks that the ‘moral law’ is ‘*given to autonomous agents*’ by conscience’s intuition of an independent moral order, and/or by ‘having its *content* fixed contingently’ ‘because of the way God has fashioned our psyche’.<sup>270</sup> In both cases, there are limits to KR, and ‘substantial tensions’<sup>271</sup> are revealed between the ‘autonomist internalist’ understanding of how Butler grounds the authority of conscience (and the overridingness of moral reasons for acting) and other aspects of his thought.

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<sup>267</sup> Schneewind, *op.cit.*, 69.

<sup>268</sup> Darwall, *op.cit.*, 247.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 331; 330; 283.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

Correspondingly, KC admits to something ‘ambiguous’ in the Clarkean position, because sometimes ‘it sounds as if Clarke is anticipating Kant’s view...that obligation derives from the dictate of the agent’s own mind’.<sup>272</sup> Korsgaard and Darwall<sup>273</sup> cite the following quotations as instances of where the Clarkeans break from their ‘more usual practice’.<sup>274</sup>

INTERNAL OBLIGATION is a State of the Mind into which it is brought by the Perception of a plain Reason for acting...arising from the Nature, Circumstances, or Relations of Persons or Things...<sup>275</sup>

For the Judgement and Conscience of a Man’s own Mind, concerning the Reasonableness and Fitness of the Thing...is the truest and formallest *Obligation*...For no Man *willingly and deliberately* transgresses this Rule [‘of Right and Equity’]...but he acts contrary to the Judgement and Reason of his own Mind, and secretly Reproaches himself for so doing.<sup>276</sup>

Indeed, Korsgaard and Darwall not only argue that there is an ‘ambiguity’ within Clarke and Balguy concerning the above quotations, but an ‘ambiguity’ between the Clarkeans themselves.

Both Darwall and Korsgaard suggest that Price disagreed with Clarke and Balguy in the quotations above.<sup>277</sup> In response to the above quotation from Balguy, Price maintained:

obligation denotes that attraction or excitement which the mind feels upon perceiving right and wrong. But this is the *effect* of obligation perceived, rather than *obligation itself*.<sup>278</sup>

In KC, the quotation from Price points to why the Clarkeans are ‘externalists’, because ‘normative facts’ are ‘independent of the operation of practical reason’.<sup>279</sup> So far as the quotation from Price expresses the ‘usual’ position of CER, Clarke and Balguy are both internally inconsistent, and inconsistent with Price, when they appear to suggest that

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<sup>272</sup> Korsgaard, *Sources*, 31.

<sup>273</sup> Darwall, *op.cit.*, 327-328’ Korsgaard, *op.cit.*, 31-32.

<sup>274</sup> Darwall, *op.cit.*, 328.

<sup>275</sup> John Balguy, *The Foundation of Moral Goodness: or, A Further Inquiry into the Original of our Idea of Virtue*, 4th edn (hereafter ‘TFMG’), in John Balguy, *A Collection of Tracts Moral and Theological: Placed in the Order wherein they were first published* (London, 1734) (hereafter ‘Collection’), 68.

<sup>276</sup> *Discourse*, 43-44.

<sup>277</sup> Darwall, *op.cit.*, 328; Korsgaard, *op.cit.*, 32.

<sup>278</sup> Richard Price, *A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals* (hereafter ‘Review’) (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974) (D.D. Raphael, ed.), 114.

<sup>279</sup> Darwall, *op.cit.*, 19-20.

‘normative force derives not from the intrinsic reasonableness of the action alone, but from the fact that the agent determines herself to do what is reasonable’.<sup>280</sup>

### **Stepping Outside the ‘False Trichotomy’: Clarkeian Conscience**

In this study, KC and KR only identify discrepancies and ambiguities within, and between, Butler and the Clarkeans because KC and KR have neglected Clarkeian conscience and reduced Butlerian conscience.

Thus, returning to the lengthy quotation from Korsgaard, which helped to summarise the neo-Kantian position, it is noteworthy that themes central to neo-Kantianism are also central to conscience in both Butler and the Clarkeans, as well as conscience in RR more generally. The Korsgaard quotation describes the ‘procedure’ of ‘reflective endorsement’<sup>281</sup> as an interaction between the ‘thinking’ and ‘acting’ ‘self’, where the failure of the latter to ‘concede’ to the former stops us from being true to ourselves and results in ‘guilt’ and ‘remorse’. Korsgaard here returns us to the associations between conscience and *to hegemonikon*, where conscience is not simply that in, and through which, we experience God’s judgement and conscience’s ‘presages’, but is that in, and as, which we experience ‘self-condemnation’ and are capable of ‘dialogic scrutiny’.

Such neo-Kantians as Korsgaard should not be surprised to find language in CER which they consider to be proto-Kantian, in the same way that they consider the language of Butlerian conscience to be proto-Kantian: in both Butler and the Clarkeans, such language is part of their shared understanding of conscience. Further, an appreciation of conscience’s referents, and the

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<sup>280</sup> Korsgaard, *op.cit.*, 32.

<sup>281</sup> Korsgaard, *op.cit.*, 91.

distinction between AATC and AAOC, means that such proto-Kantian language is not only unsurprising, but no longer ambiguous, within CER. There is a point in our moral development when we will, as Hooker put it, ‘seem’ to be the makers of law. And it is possible for the underdeveloped moral agent to begin the process of moral development by obeying conscience *qua* AATC, because to do so is to satisfy his own judgement and nature. The fully-developed moral agent appreciates that he is not the maker of law, but this does not mean that he no longer appreciates that that which is according to the law of reason concerns his own nature and judgement as a rational agent. Further, in the world as a ‘state of trial’, where the power of human reason is limited (see Chapters 3 and 4), the mature moral agent is author of his own obligation to the law of reason when he performs AAOC. The mature moral agent is not only responsible for choosing to act according to the law of reason *qua* RR; the limited powers of human reason in the world as a ‘state of trial’ means that the mature moral agent chooses to act on the basis of his own reasoning in conscience, while accepting that his act may have only been ‘formally’, as opposed to ‘materially’, the right thing to do.

Outside the ‘false trichotomy’, it becomes less convincing to say that, because, for the Clarkeans, ‘Substantive moral duties...are apprehended by reason, not created by the exercise of reason’,<sup>282</sup> it means, for them, that reason ‘is a power to see something that is independent of, and not either made true by or presupposed in, its own exercise’.<sup>283</sup> Because, in CER, that which is intrinsically right is that which is according to the law of reason, the truths we perceive *with* our own reason to be *according to* reason are not, as KC presupposes, ‘independent’ from us, any more than they are from (and from our experience of) the being of God; they are rather always our own ideas of rightness, as much as they are God’s, with whom we share reason. It

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<sup>282</sup> Stephen Darwall, ‘Ethical Intuitionism and the Motivation Problem’ (hereafter ‘Motivation Problem’), in Philip Stratton-Lake (ed.), *Ethical Intuitionism: Re-evaluations* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2002), 235, fn.18.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.* 253.

is thus in the exercise of reason that we encounter our responsibilities to reason *qua* our responsibilities to ourselves, to others, and to God, and it is only through practical moral reasoning in conscience that we are able to choose acts as moral on the basis that they are acts which appear to us to satisfy each of our ‘tripartite’ duties under reason.

According to its referents, conscience in both Butler and the Clarkeans is never simply our consciousness that an act is according to the rational moral order; it is also always our consciousness that to do that which we intuit to be according to the rational moral order is to act according to our own judgement and God’s will, in the best interests of others and ourselves. Clarkean conscience thus helps to explain, in opposition to KC, HC and LNLC, how the normative value of our own judgement, God’s judgement, and our own natural affections are part of our experience of intrinsic rightness, and part of our practical consideration of whether an action in question is, indeed, one of intrinsic rightness.

In Chapter 2, we will see that the similarity in language between the Clarkeans and such modern rational intuitionists as G.E. Moore, H.A. Prichard and W. David Ross has, understandably, meant that critics of the former have tended to treat them together with the latter, and vice versa. However, there is a notable difference between the Clarkeans and the twentieth-century rational intuitionists, which the shared epithet ‘rational intuitionist’ might mask, but which must always be pushed to the fore. The Clarkeans do not maintain, or, at least, do not simply maintain, that we perceive an irreducible, and indefinable, non-natural quality of rightness; they maintain that that which we see to be right in itself is that which we see *with*, and to be *according to*, reason, where reason is RR: the law of our nature, of God’s nature, and of the created universe itself. Conscience, when fully understood, thus helps to emphasise the fact that, for the Clarkeans, saying we must do that which we intuit to be intrinsically right is

the same as saying we must do that which is according to the law of reason, where reason has definite normative value and content. Consequently, conscience helps to show how the Clarkeans can avoid Kant's 'heteronomy of the will', while also avoiding HC and LNLC, by allowing such considerations as self-interest, benevolence and divine command to form a legitimate part of our practical moral reasoning and our intuitive experience of intrinsic rightness.

### **Stepping Outside the 'False Trichotomy': Butlerian Conscience**

While the referents of conscience help the Clarkeans to avoid the criticism that they reduced the *ought* of human morality to the immediate and passive perception of potentially uninteresting facts, the referents of conscience answer the criticism that Butler was inconsistent in his representation of conscience. According to reduced readings of Butlerian conscience, Butler undermined his account of the supremacy of conscience when, in addition to the intrinsic rightness of that which conscience commands, he referred to such motivations for obeying conscience as individual judgement, self-interest, benevolence, and divine command.

We shall see that AATC approximates to what will be described in Chapter 2 as a narrow understanding of 'conscientious right reason'. Even accepting that, by bringing in such considerations as self-love, benevolence, and God's will, Butler and the Clarkeans have introduced considerations extrinsic to what they consider to be the grounds of morality – and, as such, external to the purely moral motivation to do that which is according to the rational moral order for its own sake – they have still not stepped outside conscience. Conscience is that through which we are capable of considering our actions from the perspective of our own judgement, God's judgement, our own interests and those of others. AATC thus explains Butler's and the Clarkeans' opinion that human agents are still acting according to, and as a

result of, conscience, even when they pursue materially virtuous acts for the sake of that action's benevolence or self-interestedness or obedience to divine will without, as underdeveloped moral characters, a commitment to its intrinsic rightness.

In the second place, AAOC approximates to what will be referred to in Chapter 2 as the 'enlarged' understanding of 'conscientious right reason'. Here, the point about considerations of self-love, benevolence, and God's will is not only that they are not external to conscience, but also that they are *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself, according to the law of reason *qua* RR.

Thus, in response to KR, outside the 'false trichotomy', it is not seen as an absolute that:

Resting conscience's authority on its essential role in a self-regulating constitutional order disconnects it from anything having to do...with functional role or with some independent order of normative fact.<sup>284</sup>

Nor does it follow from the fact that Butler's conscience 'cannot *simply* be a faculty of access to metaphysically independent normative facts',<sup>285</sup> that Butler, nowhere in his works, 'appeal[s] to a Clarkeian doctrine of eternal fitness to establish the *authority* of conscience and hence moral *obligation*'.<sup>286</sup> Rather, appreciating conscience's referents allows *all* that Butler says about conscience to be taken seriously. It is not the case, as KR suggests, that other elements of Butler's thought, including his 'theology' and the Clarkeian 'theory of eternal fitnesses',<sup>287</sup> are in tension with, and even interfere with, his theory of conscience. Instead, Butlerian conscience underpins, and is underpinned by, those supposedly 'other' elements. To

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<sup>284</sup> Darwall, *Internal 'Ought'*, 282.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, 270 (my italics).

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

lay claim to a Butlerian theory of conscience is to express the belief that, through the activity of reflective reason, agents experience an active encounter with all that reason *is*, and all that it means to be, and all that we are responsible for as, rational agents. Consequently, I will argue that Butlerian, like Clarkeian, conscience, must always be understood, not only as resting upon, but as that which was intended to convey, each of its referents.

# Chapter 1

## Butlerian Conscience: Agency and Accountability

Butlerian conscience has often been interpreted in the context of a series of either/ors, reminiscent of Ameriks' and Hare's 'false trichotomy'. I will argue that Butlerian conscience's referents include: our own judgement, God's nature and will, self-love, benevolence, and the rational moral order. This approach to Butler's conscience contrasts with readings of Butler which reduce conscience to only one referent.

Perhaps the standard reduction of Butlerian conscience is to the faculty through which we intuit, and reflectively approve,<sup>288</sup> actions as possessing intrinsic rightness.<sup>289</sup> Such a reduction has the advantage of pointing to similarities between Butler and the Clarkeans. However, its proponents have often found that their definition of Butlerian conscience conflicts with other aspects of his thought: most notably, the 'cool hour passage' (see Chapter 4) where Butler appears to suggest that 'self-love is more influential than the dictates of conscience',<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> The perceptive and reflective aspects of conscience must be emphasised due to Sahar Akhtar, who, reversing Raphael (see below), goes further than those cited below in her reduction of Butlerian conscience to 'only the source of judgements of intrinsic rightness' ('Restoring Butler's Conscience', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 14:4 (2006), 595). Akhtar distinguishes 'the judgements of conscience' *qua* 'passive responses' to intrinsic rightness (*ibid*, 596) from another 'general capacity to make moral judgements' (*ibid*, 592), associated with our powers of 'reasoning and deliberation' (*ibid*, 598). The latter judgements are 'reason-guided and emanate from an inquiry into' the system of human nature and such 'internal principles' as self-love and benevolence (*ibid*, 582; 596-599). In making conscience the 'immediate and passive' (*ibid*, 586) judgement of whether 'an act...in itself is right' (*ibid*, 582), distinct from 'other' 'more active and deliberative' 'reason-guided' 'moral judgements' (*ibid*, 586), Akhtar ignores all the ways in which Butler described conscience, not least his repeated references to 'conscience or reflection', and his best-known understanding of conscience (*qua to hegemonikon*) as the organising principle of human nature (see below). Moreover, Akhtar appears unaware that the claim that Butlerian conscience is 'passive', and somehow different from 'reason', is also the claim that it breaks with the understanding of conscience in CER, as well as (as has been discussed) RR. For discussion of the latitudinarian understanding of conscience, as an active faculty, 'synonymous' with reason, amongst Butler's contemporaries, see: Müller, *op.cit.*, 174-175.

<sup>289</sup> See: Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (Indianapolis, Hackett, 1981), 200; C.D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1930), 76-77; A.E. Taylor, 'Some Features of Butler's Ethics', *Mind*, New Series, Vol.XXXV, No. 139 (July, 1926), 273-300; A.R. White, 'Conscience and Self-Love, in Butler's Sermons', *Philosophy*, Vol.27, No.103 (Oct., 1952), 329-344; William Frankena, *Ethics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1973), 102; Terence Penelhum, *Butler* (London, Routledge, 1985) 77-79.

<sup>290</sup> White, *op.cit.*, 337.

and his apparent ‘inconsistency’<sup>291</sup> when he maintains that ‘Reasonable self-love and conscience are the chief or superior principles in the nature of man’.<sup>292</sup> Sidgwick thus charged Butler (and Clarke: see Chapter 3) with a ‘dualism’ of practical reason, which separated ‘Universal Reason’ (or ‘Conscience’) from ‘Egoistic Reason’ (or ‘Self-love’), creating a ‘duality of the regulative principles in human nature’.<sup>293</sup>

By comparison, other significant reductions of Butlerian conscience, like KR, make use of Butler’s empirical method to resist the reduction of Butlerian conscience to our intuition, and approval, of intrinsic rightness. Butler’s method, as celebrated by Hume,<sup>294</sup> is thus looked upon as significant when comparing Butler and the Clarkeans, because Butler not only contrasted his approach and CER, but, in doing so, supposedly ‘rejected’<sup>295</sup> the latter:

There are two ways in which the subject of morals may be treated. One begins from inquiring into the abstract relations of things: the other from a matter of fact, namely, what the particular nature of man is...In the former method the conclusion is expressed thus, that vice is contrary to the nature and reason of things: in the latter, that it is a violation or breaking in upon our own nature...The first seems the most direct formal proof...the latter is in a peculiar manner adapted to satisfy a fair mind: and is more easily applicable to the several particular relations and circumstances in life.<sup>296</sup>

Butler’s empirical method is part of his Lockean claim<sup>297</sup> that, while ‘Probable evidence... affords...an imperfect kind of information’, for human beings, with our ‘limited capacities’, ‘probability is the very guide of life’.<sup>298</sup> Not only does Butler’s description of his method draw an explicit contrast with CER; he also appears to oppose what, for its critics, is CER’s

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<sup>291</sup> Broad, *op.cit.*, 80.

<sup>292</sup> Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons* (hereafter ‘S’), III.13 in W. Gladstone (ed.), *The Works of Joseph Butler*, 2 Vols. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1897), Vol.II.

<sup>293</sup> Henry Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (London, Macmillan, 1896), 197-198.

<sup>294</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000) (D.F. Norton and M.J. Norton, eds) (hereafter ‘*Treatise*’: referenced by part, section, paragraph), Introduction.7.

<sup>295</sup> Rachel Kydd, *Reason and Conduct in Hume’s Treatise* (New York, Russell & Russell, 1964), 36.

<sup>296</sup> S, Preface.7

<sup>297</sup> For Locke’s influence on Butler’s method, see: Terence Penelhum, ‘Butler and Human Ignorance’ in Cunliffe, *op.cit.*, 117-139.

<sup>298</sup> Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (hereafter ‘A’), Introduction.4 in Gladstone, *op. cit.*, Vol. I.

complacent certainty in the power of human reason. Ernest Mossner thus finds in Butler's works a 'carefully submerged' 'attack on reason',<sup>299</sup> which 'played no mean role in preparing the stage' for the time 'when abstract intuitional reason was superseded by empirical reason'.<sup>300</sup> Bob Tennant refers to Butler's 'nominalism... qualified by the supposition that the set of words about ethics comes from somewhere and resonates in our common humanity'.<sup>301</sup> Tennant finds what he calls Butler's 'nominalism' in his emphasis upon 'analogical', as opposed to Clarkean *a priori*, reasoning,<sup>302</sup> and his location of 'the ethical aspect of the human condition'<sup>303</sup> in 'The dynamics of the affections' within 'the human mind', whereby human 'psychology'<sup>304</sup> was created by God 'with affective faculties bearing a certain relationship to functions of the divine mind'.<sup>305</sup> Tennant's phrase, Butler's 'nominalism', hints back to the KR position on Butlerian conscience so far as it helps to point to how Butler's chosen method 'resembles'<sup>306</sup> Pufendorf's. Such echoes are significant as a boon to KR because KR and KC often draw an analogy between their understanding of Kant (and so approach to Butlerian conscience and CER) and Pufendorbian voluntarism.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> E.C. Mossner, *Bishop Butler and the Age of Reason* (Bristol, Thoemmes, 1990), 124.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>301</sup> Bob Tennant, *Conscience, Consciousness and Ethics in Joseph Butler's Philosophy and Ministry* (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2011), 15; 85.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, 37; 82-97

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>306</sup> Schneewind, *Autonomy*, 343. See: Samuel von Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991) (J. Tully, ed.) (M. Silverthorne, trans.), I.3.1.

<sup>307</sup> See: Darwall, *Internal 'Ought'*, 13, fn.32; Korsgaard, *Sources*, 104-105; 111-112; Schneewind, *op.cit.*, 511-513 and 'Kant and Stoic Ethics' in S. Engstrom and J. Whiting (eds), *Aristotle, Kant and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Duty* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), 294. For a discussion of 'proto-Kantian interpretations' of Pufendorf's distinction between 'physical' and 'moral entities', see: Kari Saastamoinen, 'Liberty and Natural Rights in Pufendorf's Natural Law Theory', 229, fn.17 in V. Makinen and P. Korkman (eds), *Transformations in Medieval and Early-Modern Rights Discourse* (Springer, Dordrecht, 2006), 225-256.

Although other reduced readings may agree that Butler's method means that Butlerian conscience should not be reduced to our intuition, and approval, of intrinsic rightness, that does not mean that they agree about which referent Butlerian conscience should be reduced to.

Anscombe, for example, agrees with the KR reduction of Butlerian conscience to individual judgement but is critical of Butler on this point. Just as, for Anscombe, Kantian 'legislating for oneself' was an absurdity because one's own judgement lacks 'superior power', she also contended that individual judgement *qua* individual judgement lacked any moral authority and reliability: 'Butler exalts conscience, but appears ignorant that a man's conscience may tell him to do the vilest things'.<sup>308</sup> Anscombe's reduction of Butlerian conscience is consistent with the fragmentation of conscience outlined in Chapter 4; it also highlights the fact that Butler's method has been read as suggesting a natural foundation for conscience and ethical distinctions.

Butler's method is taken as indicating that he 'does not have to base his argument directly on theological considerations',<sup>309</sup> indeed:

it is possible to extract from Butler's writings a moral philosophy conceived in purely natural terms...in which there is, or need be, no mention of the supernatural. This is what his own statement of his method implies...<sup>310</sup>

In agreeing that Butler's method means that 'there is nothing mysterious or other-worldly about conscience',<sup>311</sup> so that God's nature and will, and the rational moral order, need not be referents of conscience, McPherson reduces conscience to self-love and makes Butler a

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<sup>308</sup> G.E.M. Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy', *Philosophy*, Vol. 33:124 (Jan., 1958), 2.

<sup>309</sup> Anders Jeffner, *Butler and Hume on Religion: A Comparative Analysis* (Stockholm, Aktiebolaget Tryckmans, 1966) (K. Bradfield and J. Stewart, trans.), 220.

<sup>310</sup> Austin Duncan-Jones, *Butler's Moral Philosophy* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1952), 142.

<sup>311</sup> T.H. McPherson, 'The Development of Bishop Butler's Ethics (I)', *Philosophy*, Vol. XXIII:87 (Oct., 1948), 325.

‘rational egoist’.<sup>312</sup> The ‘cool hour passage’, and the apparent parity between ‘reasonable self-love’ and ‘conscience’, highlights ‘the practical identity of conscience and self-love’<sup>313</sup> in the *Sermons*, and the fact ‘that it is the happiness-producing character of acts that *makes* them right’.<sup>314</sup>

D.D. Raphael takes a different prompt from Butler’s method, which, unlike the reductions above, takes seriously the fact that under consideration within Butler’s empirical method is not simply the natural fact of our own judgement, or of the happy consequences of our actions for ourselves or others, but also God’s having told us that he will reward virtue and punish vice.<sup>315</sup> On Raphael’s reading, Butlerian conscience is not a faculty of Clarkean intuition through which we perceive ‘fittingness’, but that through which we perceive ‘only signs of morality proper’ *qua* ‘secondary qualities’.<sup>316</sup> While ‘The ultimate moral characteristic is [Clarkean] fitness’, which also determines God’s will (see below), ‘conscience is not...the perception of a moral attribute proper’, but of ‘secondary qualities’, ‘generated’ by the ‘primary quality’ of God’s will:

Conscience tells us, not that an act is fit to be done, but that it is suitable to our nature (a characteristic which is a sign that God wills it to be done); nor does it tell us that such an action, if done, is fit to be rewarded...but promises that if it is done God *will* reward us...If we go on to judge that God’s will is determined by what is fitting, we are using...speculative reason [not conscience].<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> T.H. McPherson, ‘The Development of Bishop Butler’s Ethics (II)’, *Philosophy*, Vol. XXIV:88 (Jan., 1949), 17.

<sup>313</sup> McPherson, *op.cit.*, (I), 328.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

<sup>315</sup> See also: Wendell O’Brien, ‘Butler and the Authority of Conscience’, *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 8:1 (Jan., 1991), 43-57.

<sup>316</sup> D.D. Raphael, ‘Bishop Butler’s View of Conscience’, *Philosophy*, Vol. XXIV:90 (July, 1949), 226.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

While Raphael comes to the surprising conclusion that ‘Butler’s conscience is not a moral faculty’<sup>318</sup> but ‘signs of, and legitimate evidence for, the will of God’,<sup>319</sup> Sturgeon maintains that his ‘doctrine of the supremacy or authority of conscience’<sup>320</sup> was ‘entirely superfluous’.<sup>321</sup> Sturgeon’s claim appears to stem mainly from approaching Butler in light of a Humean understanding of the system of principles of action within Butler’s psychology, rather than Butler’s own reference to Epictetus’ *to hegemonikon*, which, returning to RR, is in line with his repeated references to Roms.2:14-15.<sup>322</sup> Sturgeon thus maintains that the parity

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<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>320</sup> Nicholas Sturgeon, ‘Nature and Conscience in Butler’s Sermons’, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 85:3 (July, 1976), 318.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

<sup>322</sup> Hume, in a letter to Hutcheson, objected to what Filonowicz (*op.cit.*, 106) calls Hutcheson’s ‘Butlerized’ later conception of the ‘moral sense’: ‘You seem here to embrace Dr Butler’s Opinion in his Sermons on human Nature; that our moral Sense has an Authority distinct from its Force and Durableness, & that because we always think it *ought* to prevail. But this is nothing but an Instinct or Principle, which approves of itself upon reflection; and that is common to all of them’ (‘To Francis Hutcheson, Jan. 1743’, *Letter 19* in J.Y.T. Greig (ed.), *The Letters of David Hume*, 2 Vols. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), Vol.I, 47). However, Butler would not have agreed that approval ‘upon reflection’ is ‘common to all’ instincts or principles; instead he cites Epictetus on *to hegemonikon* (A, ‘Of the Nature of Virtue’, Dissertation II.1 fn. (hereafter ‘ONV, Diss. II’) in Gladstone, *op.cit.*, Vol.I) to illustrate his understanding of ‘conscience or reflection’ and its relation to other instincts or principles: ‘Among the arts and faculties in general you will find none that is self-contemplative, and therefore none that is either self-approving or self-disapproving. How far does the art of grammar [or ‘the art of music’] possess the power of contemplation? Only so far as to pass judgement upon what is written [or ‘upon...melody’]. Does either of them...contemplate itself? Not at all...That one which contemplates both itself and everything else...[is] The reasoning faculty [‘which dominates the rest’]; for this is the only one we have inherited [as a ‘certain portion of’ the gods] which will take knowledge both of itself – what it is, and of what it is capable, and how valuable a gift it is to us – and likewise all other faculties’ (Epictetus, *Discourses* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1998) (W.A. Oldfather, trans.), I.1.1-12. Returning to the associations between conscience and *to hegemonikon*, Hume’s letter concerned Hutcheson’s *Institutio* (Glasgow, 1742), where Hutcheson not only used ‘conscience or moral sense’ synonymously (*Philosophiae Moralis Institutio Compendiaria, with A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2007) (L. Turco, ed.), I.I.xi), but also spoke in Butlerian terms of ‘conscience or moral sense’ as that which is ‘destined to govern’, ‘to regulate the highest powers of our nature’ (*ibid.*, I.I.x) and ‘the whole of life’ (*ibid.*, I.II.iv; I.I.x; I.I.xviii). Hutcheson’s description of ‘our conscience, or moral sense’ (*ibid.*, II.IV.iii) as ‘the governing power in man’ (*ibid.*, I.I.xii) is consistent with his own description of conscience as *to hegemonikon* in *De naturali hominum socialitate oratio inauguralis* (Glasgow, 1730) (see: *Inaugural Lecture on the Social Nature of Man* in T. Mautner (ed.), *Francis Hutcheson: Two Texts on Human Nature* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 131-132); and recalls his translation of *to hegemonikon* in his edition of Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations* (London, 1742) (see: Francis Hutcheson and James Moor (trans.), *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* (Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2008) (J. Moor and M. Silverthorne, eds), II.2; IV.3; 29 fn.; V.11; VII.28; 55; VIII.48; IX.15). Scholars have not only agreed with Hume that Hutcheson’s later conception of the ‘moral sense’ was ‘Butlerized’, but that Butler’s influence can be discerned in Hutcheson’s use of *to hegemonikon* to describe ‘conscience or moral sense’; see: J.D. Bishop, ‘Moral Motivation and the Development of Francis Hutcheson’s Philosophy’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 57:2 (Apr., 1996), 277-295; Jensen, *op.cit.*, 85; 107-109; Brown, *op.cit.*, 57; K. Haakonssen, ‘Natural Rights or Political Prudence? Francis Hutcheson on Toleration’ in J. Parkin and T. Stanton (eds), *Natural Law and Toleration in the Early Enlightenment* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), 190-191; M.L. Frazer, *The Enlightenment of Sympathy: Justice and the Moral Sentiments in the Eighteenth Century and Today* (Oxford,

between conscience and ‘reasonable self-love’ means ‘that there are other superior principles of action, besides conscience, in human nature’, including “‘reasonable and cool self-love’”.<sup>323</sup> He insists that Butler’s method separates him from CER, because he was for ‘founding morality...not on the fitness...of actions to situations and to the nature of things, but...their fitness...to human nature’.<sup>324</sup> Butler’s conscience thus ‘always *bases* its approval...of actions...on their naturalness or unnaturalness’.<sup>325</sup> But, as ‘an action is rendered natural...only by the current favour...of a superior principle in the nature of the agent’, the supremacy of conscience is ‘superfluous’: it can only ‘favour or oppose’ actions that are already ‘favoured or opposed [and so rendered natural or unnatural] by some other superior principle’, such as ‘cool self-love’.<sup>326</sup>

## Resisting Reduction

Reduction of Butlerian conscience to the intuition, and approval, of intrinsic rightness appears to conflict with such aspects of Butler as his method and ‘cool hour passage’; and also with the view of Butlerian conscience as that in, and as, which we experience the being and will of God. However, reductions of conscience that prioritise such aspects of Butler as his method and ‘cool hour passage’ not only often conflict with each other, but also with conscience *qua* our encounter with God, and those places in Butler which emphasise agreement with the Clarkeans.

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Oxford University Press, 2010), 31-32; Daniel Carey, ‘Francis Hutcheson’s Philosophy and the Scottish Enlightenment: Reception, Reputation, and Legacy’ in A. Garrett and J.A. Harris (eds), *Scottish Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century, Vol.I* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015), 51-53.

<sup>323</sup> Sturgeon, *op. cit.*, 331.

<sup>324</sup> Sturgeon, *op. cit.*, 353.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

So, each of the reduced readings of Butlerian conscience often connects with a particular way in which he described conscience. However, while these reduced readings often relate to some specific aspect of Butlerian conscience, they find it difficult to allow all that Butler described conscience as to cohere. Reductions of Butlerian conscience highlight how, as the paradigm of conscience is the paradigm of right reason, a reduced understanding of what Butler understood by the ‘moral law’ impacts upon our interpretation of Butlerian conscience, and vice versa. I argue that an understanding of all that reason *is qua* RR helps us to understand all that conscience means, in turn allowing for a fuller appreciation of all that Butler (and the Clarkeans) meant by claiming that the truly virtuous agent does that which is right in itself because it is right in itself.

We shall see below, and in Chapter 4, in opposition to the likes of Raphael and KR, that Butler followed CER in maintaining that conscience is that through which we encounter the rational moral order and are conscious of intrinsic rightness. However, it is also in, and as, conscience that we experience that which is right in itself as right according to our own and God’s judgement. Moreover, in line with RR, in both Butler and the Clarkeans, that which is right in itself is that which is according to reason, where reason is the law according to which the world was made; the law of our nature and judgement; and the law of God’s being. Our encounter, in conscience, with the ‘moral law’ *qua* law of reason cannot be separated from our encounter with God, whose attribute the ‘moral law’ is;<sup>327</sup> nor from our encounter with ourselves, when the ‘moral law’ was ‘interwoven’<sup>328</sup> by God in our own rational nature; nor from our encounter with, and responsibilities for, others as our fellow-creatures within creation. Not only is our encounter, in conscience, with the ‘moral law’ always *live* with our encounter

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<sup>327</sup> S, XIV.17.

<sup>328</sup> A, ONV, Diss.II.14.

with ourselves, others, and God, but that which we perceive to be right in itself is that which we encounter, in conscience, as suitable to our relations with ourselves, others, and God, as they are defined by the law of reason itself. Consequently, in both Butler and the Clarkeans, the virtuous agent's conscientious commitment to moral acts *qua* right in themselves is not to be separated from his self-conscious commitment to himself, to others, and to God.

By the end of Chapter 4, it will be possible to agree with McPherson, in opposition to the likes of White, Sturgeon and Sidgwick, that 'cool self-love' takes place under conscience; but, in opposition to him, it will also be possible to maintain that, although 'cool self-love' depends upon the activity of conscience, that does not mean that conscience, or moral distinctions, are reducible to self-love. McPherson is right that, 'The test of whether an act is right or not, is whether or not it is productive of happiness for the agent'.<sup>329</sup> And Raphael is right that there are different 'ways' that 'a man may discover his duty'.<sup>330</sup> However, *contra* McPherson, every referent of conscience, not just 'cool self-love', is a 'test' of the rightness of an action; it is from the perspective of each referent that an individual agent is able to, and expected to, examine every action he is considering as moral. And, *contra* Raphael, there are more than 'two ways' in which 'a man may discover his duty', and each way available to an agent is under, and as a result of, conscience, because it is the perspective taken from the point of view of any individual referent of conscience that is a way of 'discovering' moral duty, and beginning the process of moral development.

The principal intention of this chapter is to establish that (i) our own judgement, (ii) God's nature and will, (iii) our own interest, (iv) the best interest of others, and (v) the rational

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<sup>329</sup> McPherson, *op.cit.*, 327.

<sup>330</sup> Raphael, *op.cit.*, 228.

moral order are, indeed, referents of conscience. (i)-(v) are referents of conscience because: conscience is authoritative for human beings due to (i)-(v); to obey conscience means that we have acted according to (i)-(v); and it is only because we possess conscience that we are able to, and expected to, act according to (i)-(v). We shall see that the moral law is the law of conscience, and that, as we experience conscience as our own judgement and the organising principle of our nature, it is in, and as, conscience that we experience the moral law as the law of our own nature and judgement. However, as conscience is not merely our own judgement, but also that in, and as, which we experience the judgement of God, conscience is also that in, and as, which we experience the moral law as the law of God's nature and will. Moreover, as conscience is that in, and as which, we are conscious of intrinsic rightness it is in, and as, conscience that we experience the moral law as the law of the rational moral order itself.

On the basis of this chapter, it will be possible to maintain, by the end of this study, that the fully-developed moral agent is able to consider moral actions from the perspective of any one of conscience's referents; and that he is able to appreciate that to look at an action from the perspective of any one of conscience's referents is actually to look at it from the perspective of each of them. Thus, we shall see, for both Butler and the Clarkeans, that an act of intrinsic rightness *qua* AAOC is, necessarily, one of both virtue and faith, and that the fully-developed moral agent, by fully integrating everything that he experiences in, and as, conscience, is able to perform an act of intrinsic rightness *qua* AAOC precisely because he self-consciously commits himself to satisfying all of conscience's referents whenever he chooses to obey conscience.

## Lawful Agents Under Conscience

According to Butler, human beings are both a law to ourselves through conscience and placed under a law which it is our obligation to obey. Conscience provides individuals with the capacity to review our motivations and come to a decision as to how we should act in a given situation. It is conscience which enables us to choose our actions.<sup>331</sup> However, conscience's final decision, after this deliberative process, is not optional for human beings; it is a verdict we must obey, if we are to act morally. Therefore, the question arises as to how human beings can be placed under a law, which we must obey, and, at the same time, be considered a law to ourselves?

For Butler, the ability to choose places us under an obligation to choose in accordance with what 'conscience or reflection' decides. Failure to choose the actions we perform is a failure to be fully human, because human nature (and our 'own character': see below) is defined by our ability to select appropriate actions and ends through 'conscience or reflection'. But, in choosing, we choose to act with conscience, because the failure to choose with conscience is to give up choice, and to contradict what it is in the nature of a human to be: (a) because conscience is that through which we have a system of human nature, so it must always have authority and be obeyed if there is to be a system of human nature;<sup>332</sup> (b) because conscience,

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<sup>331</sup> 'There is a principle of reflection in men, by which they distinguish between, approve and disapprove their own actions. We are plainly constituted such sort of creatures as to reflect upon our own nature' (S, I.7); 'there is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions: which passes judgement upon himself and them' (S, II.10).

<sup>332</sup> 'Man has several ['instincts and principles of action'] which brutes have not; particularly reflection or conscience, an approbation of some principles or actions, and a disapprobation of others' (S, Preface.15). The human possession of conscience means that human beings cannot be said to 'act suitably to their whole nature' (S, Preface.17), if we were to simply obey our passions as 'brutes' do, because, 'Somewhat further [than the passions] must be brought in to give us an adequate notion of it; namely, that one of those principles of action, conscience or reflection, compared with the rest...plainly bears upon it marks of authority...and claims the absolute direction of them all...' (S, Preface.18) Thus, while Butler maintained that it is possible to view 'the nature of man, as consisting partly of various appetites, passions, affections, and partly of the principle of reflection or conscience' (S, II.17), it is also the case that: 'that principle, by which we survey, and...approve or disapprove our own heart, temper, and actions, is not only to be considered as what is in its turn to have some influence; which may be said of every passion, of the lowest appetites: but likewise as being superior; as from

as a moral faculty, tells us what is, in itself, the right thing to do, so that, if we were to ignore it, we would be contradicting our own moral nature formed under conscience;<sup>333</sup> and (c) as conscience is that which allows us to control our passions, and a passion is an unthinking drive after an object for gratification,<sup>334</sup> if we were to ignore it in favour of indulging a passion, we

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its very nature manifestly claiming superiority over all others: insomuch that you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgement, direction, superintendency. This is a constituent part of the idea...of the faculty itself: and, to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength, as it has right; had it power, as it has manifest authority; it would absolutely govern the world' (S, II.19). Conscience might be a part of human nature, but it is a part which, unlike the passions, always implies, and is synonymous with, the whole, because its position in human nature is as that which forms and governs over the whole. The system of human nature is formed by 'the subjection which the appetites, passions, and particular affections have to the one supreme principle of reflection or conscience' (S, III.2 fn.), to the extent that, 'neither can any human creature be said to act conformably to his constitution of nature, unless he allows to that superior principle the absolute authority which is due it' (S, Preface.18).

<sup>333</sup> Butler maintained that we only have to consider the system of human nature, organised under 'the authority of reflection or conscience', to perceive, simply from the 'idea itself', that 'our nature' 'is adapted to virtue, as from the idea of a watch it appears, that its nature, i.e., constitution or system, is adapted to measure time' (S, Preface.12-13). Conscience 'is a principle of reflection in men by which they distinguish between, approve, and disapprove their own actions' (S, I.7), as such, it is conscience which 'pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust' (S, II.10). Conscience as 'the guide of life, the judge of right and wrong' in approving 'certain dispositions of mind, and certain actions...in themselves' (S, XII.22 fn.), further teaches us that 'virtue consists in a regard to what is right and reasonable as being so; in a regard to veracity, justice, charity, in themselves' (A, I.III.19). And so just as conscience, unlike the passions, always refers to the whole of human nature, because it is conscience which forms our nature with a particular moral purpose, it is the moral direction of conscience which defines what it is natural and unnatural for a human being to do and to be: 'It is by this faculty, natural to man, that he is a moral agent, that he is a law to himself' (S, II.11). Human beings cannot act other than according to the moral direction of conscience if we wish to be true to our own human nature: 'This *prerogative*, this *natural supremacy*, of the faculty which surveys, approves or disapproves the several affections of our mind and actions of our lives, being that by which men *are a law to themselves*, their conformity or disobedience to which law of our nature renders their actions, in the highest and most proper sense, natural or unnatural...' (S, II.12). As a result, for Butler, 'nothing can possibly be more contrary to nature than vice' (S, Preface.14), because the human possession of conscience means that we know 'by the nature of man...that virtue consists in following, and vice in deviating from it' (S, Preface.8), even to the extent that (consistent with conscience's 'presages': see below): 'tortures and death are not so contrary to human nature as injustice...the former is only contrary to our nature considered in a partial view, and which takes in only the lowest part of it, that which we have in common with the brutes; whereas the latter is contrary to our nature, considered in a higher sense, as a system and constitution contrary to the whole economy of man' (S, III.2).

<sup>334</sup> According to Butler (in line with Butler's and the Clarkeans' shared understanding of the Fall and 'state of trial'; see: Chapters 3 and 4), there are 'a variety of particular affections, passions, and appetites, to particular external objects', and there is 'a prior suitableness between the object and the passion'; it is because of this 'prior suitableness' that 'pleasure' arises from the satisfaction of a 'particular affection' in a particular 'object' (S, XI.3-4). However, because 'our several particular appetites, passions, and affections' are only interested in their object, in which 'Happiness or satisfaction consists' (S, XI.6), it follows that 'Every one of our passions and affections hath its natural stint and bound, which may easily be exceeded' (S, XI.7), as they crave always after their object and encourage human beings to 'unlawful' (A, I.V.24) behaviour, in opposition to the 'measure' 'set' (S, Preface.36) for the passions and affections by conscience: 'An action...by which any natural passion is gratified or fortune acquired, procures delight or advantage; abstracted from all consideration of the morality of such action' (A, I.III.13).

would not be acting or choosing, properly speaking, but merely acquiescing to an un-chosen ‘propension’ we could not or did not want to control.

The last point above is signified by Butler’s insistence that we must:

be sure to be as much afraid of subjection to mere arbitrary will and pleasure in ourselves, as to the arbitrary will of others. For the tyranny of our own lawless passions is the nearest and most dangerous of all tyrannies.<sup>335</sup>

Butler’s negative understanding of ‘lawless passions’ in the world as a ‘state of trial’ (see Chapters 3 and 4) helps to explain how it is that free human agency is formed through the possibility of being able to choose a law made known through conscience, and how human agency is dependent upon us continuing to affirm that law with our conscience. Through conscience human beings can reflect upon, and choose, particular types of actions. Without it human beings would be no different from ‘brute’ creatures who are led to act at random by their passions. The ability to perceive the moral law through conscience is the ability to act according to something other than our passions. But, because the only free action is that which is done according to the moral law, not the passions, we must always affirm the moral law in our choice and action if we wish to remain agents. So, knowledge of the law is tied up with awareness that one must satisfy the law if one is to satisfy one’s own capacity to act; and the capacity to act is provided by knowledge of the law and is only fully actualised when one acts consistently with that law, and so acts deliberately, rather than arbitrarily according to the whims of lawless passions. Conscience not only provides knowledge of the moral law, but places us under an obligation to the law, by making it the law of our nature. By accepting our

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<sup>335</sup> Joseph Butler, *Six Sermons, Preached Upon Public Occasions* (hereafter ‘SP’), V.15 in Gladstone, *op.cit.*, Vol.II.

obligation to the law, we become a law to ourselves, because we are able to choose with the law what we should do.

Thus, for Butler, it is through conscience, ‘that *every man is naturally a law to himself, that every one may find within himself the rule of right, and obligations to follow it*’.<sup>336</sup> Butler requires that all free and legitimate human activity proceeds from a consideration of, or reflection upon, what is the right thing to do in order that we may act according to a law: that is, with self-determined purpose according to a standard. Consequently, he maintains that conscience, and the actions proceeding from it, are distinguishable from humanity’s passive nature. Conscience is ‘not to be considered merely as a principle in...[an individual’s] heart’,<sup>337</sup> but as that ‘which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external action’;<sup>338</sup> ‘conscience’ is the ‘principle in man, by which he approves or disapproves his heart, temper, and actions’;<sup>339</sup> it is not a passion or affection, but a human ‘faculty’ by which: ‘The mind can take a view of what passes within itself, its propensions, aversions, passions, affections...and of the several actions consequent thereupon’.<sup>340</sup> ‘Conscience or reflection’ reviews our different passions and affections, and controls them by deciding which we should indulge and to what ‘degree’.<sup>341</sup> It is because our ability to reflect upon our actions presents us with the opportunity to choose, and not merely be guided by whatever passion ‘happens to be strongest’ in us,<sup>342</sup> that neither conscience, nor the actions that we perform as a result of conscious choice, are to be associated with our passive, as opposed to rational, nature

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<sup>336</sup> S, II.6.

<sup>337</sup> S, II.11

<sup>338</sup> S, II.10.

<sup>339</sup> S, I.8.

<sup>340</sup> S, I.7.

<sup>341</sup> ‘together with the general principle of moral understanding, we have in our inward frame various affections towards particular external objects. These affections are naturally, and of right, subject to the government of the moral principle [conscience]...as to the occasions upon which they may be gratified’ (A, I.V.23).

<sup>342</sup> S, II.13.

(see below). More than this, actions done as a result of an *active decision* through conscience, because they are performed with self-conscious commitment to a standard, are superior to those *performed passively* as a result of howsoever mere ‘passion’ or ‘humour’ ‘may happen to carry’ us.<sup>343</sup> Thus, Butler (as we shall see for the Clarkeans in Chapter 3) contended that ‘a parent has the affection of love to his children’, and that this ‘natural affection’ ‘leads him to take care of, to educate, to make due provision for them’, but:

the reflection that it is his proper business...that it is right and commendable...added to the affection becomes a much more settled principle, and carries him on through more labour...for...his children, than he would undergo from that affection alone...<sup>344</sup>

Butler’s distinction between the passive and the active (in terms of the fact that an action is improved, and made truly our own, when we reflect upon it in, and choose to perform it according to, conscience) connects with the idea that it is only by following conscience that human beings are agents. According to Butler, by accepting conscience’s directions, we are active beings, directing ourselves, rather than passive beings merely guided by various passions. Passions may affect us, and so move us, but we cannot properly be called active, and so beings who move ourselves, unless our actions are based, not on what affects us, but on what we think we should or should not do. Although Butler drew an analogy between the system of human nature and that of a watch, it is also the case that human beings differ from machines, because they are ‘inanimate and passive: but we are agents’.<sup>345</sup> In Butler, our agency consists in the fact that the ‘constitution’ of human nature, formed under the directions of conscience, ‘is put in our own power’.<sup>346</sup> It is on the basis of conscientious reflection that we are able to choose what we do or do not do, and, crucially (see below), are responsible for, and accountable to, ourselves for our decisions:

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<sup>343</sup> S, III.3.

<sup>344</sup> S, I.8.

<sup>345</sup> S, Preface.13.

<sup>346</sup> S, Preface.13.

in the present state, all which we enjoy, and a great part of what we suffer, *is put in our own power*...pleasure and pain are the consequences of our actions: and we are endued by the Author of our nature with capacities of foreseeing these consequences. We find by experience he does not so much as preserve our lives, exclusively of our own care and attention...I know not, that we have any one kind or degree of enjoyment, but by the means of our own actions...by prudence and care, we may...pass our days in tolerable ease...or...we may, by rashness, ungoverned passion, wilfulness, or even by negligence, make ourselves as miserable as ever we please.<sup>347</sup>

Thus, while human beings are *agents under the moral law*, over which we have no control ('He hath the rule of right within: what is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it'),<sup>348</sup> by accepting the law we gain control over ourselves, our passions and actions, and become self-directing and so self-accountable. Also, it would appear (consistent with Ameriks' and Hare's reading of Kant) that while, for Butler, human beings are not authors of the moral law, we are authors of our obligation to it as moral agents. On the one hand, therefore, we can have no other authentic choice than to choose with conscience. On the other hand, part of the reason why we are agents in following conscience is that it gives us the ability to choose with the moral law, and so it is in this act of choice that we are agents who freely choose to recognise, and assent to, our obligations to conscience. According to Butler:

The light of reason does not, any more than that of revelation, force men to submit to its authority; both admonish them of what they ought to do and avoid, together with the consequences of each; and after this, leave them at full liberty to act just as they please, till the appointed time of judgement. Every moment's experience shows, that this is God's general rule of government.<sup>349</sup>

Human beings are not compelled to follow conscience, and obey the moral law, so, when we do recognise our obligations to conscience, we make an active choice as agents, which Butler describes as human beings doing 'their part; that part which is justly put and left upon them'.<sup>350</sup>

It is in this sense that we are authors of our obligation to the law: in recognising the authority

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<sup>347</sup> A, I.II.2.

<sup>348</sup> S, III.3.

<sup>349</sup> A, II.I.14.

<sup>350</sup> A, II.I.14.

of conscience, and our obligations towards it, we take it upon ourselves to conform to it. In so doing, we appreciate that the obligations of conscience properly belong to us as human beings, such that they are also our obligations to ourselves as human beings. In accepting conscience, we have made ourselves active: authors of our own obligation to the moral law, in order to be true to ourselves.

Conscience is both separate from the passions, and separates us from them. It allows us to reflect on what we should do by presenting us with a law when the passions are lawless. By having a law, we can act purposefully according to a standard, rather than arbitrarily according to our passions. Thus, we are able to live an active life of our own on the basis of free decision, rather than a passive existence, within which we are given over to that which moves us, but which we cannot move.<sup>351</sup> Indeed, conscience allows us to be active even when we accept its authority. It is true that we *should* accept the directions of conscience, and that, effectively, we must do so if we wish to be true to ourselves. However, recognising our obligation to the moral law as human beings is always the *act* of accepting conscience, through which we are authors of our obligation to the law, and within which we appreciate our obligation to conscience as our obligation to ourselves. At any rate, in Butler, conscience supplies us with a law which makes us agents only when we accept it. In order to be a ‘law to ourselves’, we must first have a law, and, in having a law, obey it. It is only on the basis of law that we can be free, because it is only in having the ability to recognise a standard, and appropriate it for ourselves, that we are made active beings who are self-directing. In the end, we can only choose with conscience and be free agents, because to ‘choose’ to follow the passions is not to act, but to succumb.

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<sup>351</sup> ‘the principle of virtue can neither excite them [‘our...various affections’], nor prevent their being excited...they are naturally felt, when the objects of them are present to the mind, not only before all consideration, whether they can be obtained by lawful means, but after it is found they cannot’ (A, I.V.23).

## Accountability to Ourselves

In Butler, free human agency depends upon our accepting the moral law made known through our conscience. It is not that conscience makes us a law to ourselves, because, through conscience, we can create any law we wish for ourselves; but rather that, through conscience, we can legislate for ourselves according to a settled moral standard. Human agency thus consists in the ability to *hold ourselves accountable* to the moral law, and consciences enables us to do so. It supplies knowledge of the moral law and constitutes our ability to reflect upon, and appropriate, its tenets when we act. According to Butler, human beings are not merely agents through conscience, but agents accountable to conscience. Thus, for example, Butler can say that conscience presents individual human beings with ‘dictates’,<sup>352</sup> and that human beings are ‘hypocrites’ when we act in a way which demonstrates ‘insincerity’ towards ‘our consciences’.<sup>353</sup> Clearly, in providing us with knowledge of the moral law, and directing us according to it, conscience places us under an obligation to the moral law which makes us accountable to it for our behaviour. However, it is not simply that, as agents accountable to conscience, human beings can only be thought of as accountable to the moral law. Rather, as agents accountable to conscience, we are also accountable to ourselves.

Thus, Butler describes human agency in terms of the fact that, ‘Our constitution is put in our power’.<sup>354</sup> For Butler, this means that ‘We are charged with it; and therefore accountable for any disorder or violation of it’.<sup>355</sup> Accountability here would seem to have two senses. First, we are responsible, as agents, for our behaviour, and can hold no one other than ourselves *accountable for* our behaviour and its consequences. Butler stresses the natural authority of conscience: any deviation from conscience, and indulgence of the passions, is ‘known’

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<sup>352</sup> S, VII.14.

<sup>353</sup> SP, III.2 fn.

<sup>354</sup> S, Preface.13.

<sup>355</sup> S, Preface.13.

‘ruin’.<sup>356</sup> So, no one else is accountable for our failure to obey conscience, because we already know before we act that we should seek our direction from conscience. Also, we are *accountable for* our behaviour, because conscience provides us with the ability to choose what we do as agents. Human possession of conscience means that, ‘from our original constitution and that of the world we inhabit, we are naturally trusted with ourselves; with our own conduct and our own interest’.<sup>357</sup> As agents under conscience, what we do, and the consequences of it, are our responsibility.

However, it is not simply that we are *accountable for* our behaviour; we are also *accountable to* ourselves for our behaviour: because conscience is synonymous with the moral law *qua* rational moral order (see below) and with correctly ordered human nature under the moral law *qua* law of our nature, the obligations we owe conscience are the same as those we owe ourselves as rational beings.

Butler makes clear the connection between moral agency, self-accountability and conscience *qua* moral law of our nature, when answering the question: “‘What obligations are we under to attend and follow’” conscience, the ‘rule of right within’ ourselves? Butler maintained: this ‘question...carries its own answer along with it. Your obligation to obey this law, is its being the law of your nature’.<sup>358</sup> It is because, under conscience, the moral law is the law of our nature that, just as true happiness and satisfaction follow from obeying conscience, the negative consequences we feel, as a result of disobeying it, are not only something we have brought upon ourselves, but a condemnation under which we have placed ourselves from within. By disregarding conscience, we are *self*-condemned, because our

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<sup>356</sup> S, XI.18.

<sup>357</sup> A, I.VIII.7.

<sup>358</sup> S, III.6.

responsibility was to obey conscience, a responsibility which we had to ourselves as human beings under a moral law that defines our nature. Thus, for Butler:

moral discernment implies, in the notion of it, a rule of action, and a rule of a very peculiar kind: for it carries in it authority and a right of direction; authority in such a sense, as that we cannot depart from it without being self-condemned.<sup>359</sup>

For Butler, ‘self-condemnation’ included within it something which we have not yet taken into account and will explore in the next section: namely, the judgement of God. We will discuss below how human beings, as agents responsible to the moral law under conscience, are accountable to God. To disobey conscience is to condemn ourselves to divine punishment. However, Butler’s use of ‘self-condemned’ also highlights how we are accountable to ourselves through conscience, because he argued that we are self-condemned when we ignore conscience, *even if* we did not know that punishment would follow:

...moral obligations would remain certain, though it were not certain what would, upon the whole, be the consequences of observing or violating them. For these obligations arise immediately and necessarily from the judgement of our own mind, unless perverted, which we cannot violate without being self-condemned.<sup>360</sup>

Our responsibility to ourselves is our responsibility to obey our own conscience, our own judgement as to what we should do in a given situation. In ignoring conscience we are ‘self-condemned’ because we are ignoring ourselves, our own minds, and so acting perversely. Conscience thus makes us accountable to ourselves because, in making us accountable to the moral law, it provides us with agency, and as agents we are responsible for our actions and their consequences. According to Butler, not only is it our responsibility to follow conscience, but we are responsible for our responsibility: it is within our own power to follow conscience and, in doing so, assent to our obligation to conscience as the moral law of our nature. Our failure to fulfil our obligations to conscience is something for which we are accountable and

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<sup>359</sup> A, I.VI.14.

<sup>360</sup> A, I.VII.21.

accountable to ourselves. Our obligation to conscience is our obligation to ourselves to be true to our nature as human beings, both because we suffer the consequences of our failure, and because the judgement of conscience is not something separate from ourselves: the judgement of the moral law is the judgment of our own minds, and the moral law is the law of our nature. We are accountable to ourselves because, by disregarding conscience, we have failed ourselves, our nature and purpose as human beings; and we are responsible for this failure.

### **Accountability to God: Conscience as Witness**

Above, we have discussed how, for Butler, human beings are agents under the law of conscience; and how, as agents accountable to the moral law under conscience, we are also agents accountable to ourselves. However, it is not simply the case, for Butler, that, through conscience, human beings are agents accountable to conscience (which is to say that we are accountable to ourselves and to the rational moral order for what we do (see below)), but also that, through conscience, we are accountable to God. Indeed, while, as discussed above, human beings are not authors of the law, but of our obligation to it, it is further the case, following Hare's reading of Kant, that God is author of our obligation to the law in a greater sense than we are. Butler's position is not simply that we are accountable to ourselves through conscience but, more particularly, that it is because we are accountable to God through conscience that we are accountable to ourselves.

Butler maintained the reason why human beings have a conscience is because God created us with it, in order to define our nature and purpose. Crucially (and consistent with what has already been said about the status of conscience as, unlike the passions, providing a law, and so a basis for human autonomous activity), Butler contended that human possession of conscience meant that:

...exclusive of revelation, man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random...as passion, humour, wilfulness, happen to carry him; which is the condition [of] brute creatures...but that, *from his make, constitution, or nature, he is, in the strictest and most proper sense, a law to himself*. He hath the rule of right within: what is wanting is that he honestly attend to it.<sup>361</sup>

‘The moral principle’, therefore, was ‘wrought into’ our ‘natures by’<sup>362</sup> God, and so it is God who has given human beings ‘a moral faculty, by which we distinguish between actions, and approve some as virtuous and of good desert, and disapprove others as vicious and of ill desert’.<sup>363</sup> It is because God created human beings with conscience that we are (a) supplied with moral guidance, through which we can become a law to ourselves, and (b) that we are under an obligation to be moral in order to realise our true nature as human beings. In Butler, not only must human beings obey conscience in order to be true to our nature; but conscience comes with the authority to be obeyed, because God’s will and intention for human beings are consistent with its directives.

Thus, while, for Butler, conscience’s authority is simply contained in the very idea of it, and our obligation to obey conscience is that it is the law of our nature, we can further understand the activity and authority of conscience with reference to God’s design and intentions for human beings:

...this faculty [conscience] was placed within to be our proper governor; to direct and regulate all under principles, passions, and motives of action. This is its right and office: thus sacred is its authority...how often soever men violate and rebelliously refuse to submit to it, for supposed interest...or...passion, which they cannot otherwise gratify; this makes no alteration as to the *natural right and office* of conscience.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> S, III.3.

<sup>362</sup> A, I.V.29.

<sup>363</sup> A, I.VI.14.

<sup>364</sup> S, II.19.

The ‘sacred authority’ of conscience, therefore, means not only that human beings can assent to the directions of conscience while trusting to their (and its) rightfulness, but also that our obligation to follow conscience is simply because it is God-given:

Consciousness of a rule or guide of action, in creatures who are capable of considering it as given them by their Maker, not only raises immediately a sense of duty, but also a sense of security in following it, and...danger in deviating from it.<sup>365</sup>

Indeed, it is not simply the case that human beings are under an obligation to respect conscience because God gave it to us to be our ‘guide of action’, but that, in being our guide, it expresses the will of our creator; through conscience, human beings are aware of, and have the opportunity as agents of conforming to, the moral law that God commands. As Butler put it: ‘the dictates of this moral faculty, which are by nature a law to us, are moreover the laws of God’.<sup>366</sup>

What emerges in Butler is that conscience, as well as being the moral law, God’s law, the law of our nature, and the judgement of our own minds, is a witness to God:

The visible constitution and course of nature, the moral law written in our hearts, the positive institutions of religion... are all spoken of in scripture under this, or the like denomination: so are the prophets, apostles, and our Lord himself. They are all *witnesses*, for the most part unregarded witnesses, in behalf of God, to mankind.<sup>367</sup>

Conscience is a witness to God, because, in creating human beings with conscience, God made his law (the moral law) the law of our nature. Thus, just as Butler maintained that human nature is such that ‘virtue consists in following, and vice in deviating from it’,<sup>368</sup> it is also the case that ‘virtue is his [God’s] law’.<sup>369</sup> Butler can even go so far as to draw a parallel between human nature and the voice of God: it is ‘our nature, *i.e.*, the voice of God within us’, that

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<sup>365</sup> A, I.VI.14.

<sup>366</sup> A, I.VI.14.

<sup>367</sup> SP, I.7; see also: Joseph Butler, ‘A Charge Delivered to the Clergy’ in Gladstone, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, 339-340.

<sup>368</sup> S, Preface.8

<sup>369</sup> A, II.I.5; II.VII.41.

‘carries us to’ virtuous acts.<sup>370</sup> Conscience is synonymous with, and the expression of, God’s law, to the extent that it is God’s voice within us. But, more than this, because it is conscience that forms the whole of human nature, and is synonymous with it, it follows that human nature itself can also be spoken of as the voice of God. Human nature not only receives God’s law – his witness to himself, his expressed will and commands for human beings, received through conscience – but, as moral agents under conscience, human nature itself witnesses to God. For Butler, we are able to understand God’s character, and his ‘moral government’ of the world, from our knowledge of his moral law and our ability to reflect on our actions:

that God governs the world by general fixed laws...has endued us with capacities of reflecting upon this constitution of things, and foreseeing the good and bad consequences of our behaviour, plainly implies some sort of moral government...;<sup>371</sup>

as our whole nature, the nature which he has given us, leads us to conclude his will and character to be moral, just, and good: so we can scarce in imagination conceive, what it can be otherwise.<sup>372</sup>

### **Accountability to God: Agency and Submission**

In relation to agency and accountability, Butler’s position becomes multi-layered. Human beings are under an obligation to conscience because it is the law of our nature. However, the obligations we owe to conscience, in this sense, are also those we owe to God because God created us and made the moral law the law of our nature. Also, we are under an obligation to conscience because, as God created us with it in order to define our nature, it carries with it divine authority: to ignore conscience is to subvert our creator’s designs. Further, we are under an obligation to conscience, not only because it defines our nature, and does so according to God’s design, but because its directions are themselves the expressions of God’s commands, of his ‘laws’. Thus, to say, as we did earlier, that human beings, as agents under

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<sup>370</sup> S, VI.8.

<sup>371</sup> A, I.III.10.

<sup>372</sup> A, I.VIII.3.

the law, are accountable to the moral law and ourselves, is also to say that human beings are agents accountable to God; and in two senses: first, indirectly, in being accountable to and for our nature as human beings, we are accountable to God for living up to his intentions for human beings; and, second, we are directly accountable to his expressed command spoken into each of our lives in the form of the moral law of conscience.

For Butler, because conscience is a witness to God in the ways we have explored, our obligations to obey conscience are those that a creature owes to his creator:

...our obligations to obey all God's commands...are absolute and indispensable...commands merely positive, admitted to be from him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them: an obligation moral in the strictest and most proper sense.<sup>373</sup>

Conscience expresses God's commands in both the direct and indirect ways we have mentioned. It is the voice of God within, which directs us according to his law; and it is that which forms human nature as a moral nature, and so bears witness to that which God expects of his human creations. Thus, the authority of conscience, and our obligations to it, cannot be avoided:

Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in...it...carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide; the guide assigned us by the Author of our nature: it therefore belongs to our condition of being, it is our duty to walk in that path, and follow this guide...<sup>374</sup>

According to Butler, our obligations to conscience are undeniable and unavoidable, just as it is undeniable and unavoidable that conscience was given to us by God and expresses his commands and intentions for human beings created with a moral nature. Clearly, we are accountable to God for our behaviour. God created us with a particular nature and so a particular purpose: therefore, our failure to act morally and follow the dictates of conscience is

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<sup>373</sup> A, II.I.34.

<sup>374</sup> S, III.6.

to disregard his will: whenever we disobey conscience, we contradict God's expressed commands, received through conscience, and his manifest intentions for human beings, revealed by his creating us with conscience and so moral discernment. Indeed, for Butler, as conscience is an unavoidable witness to God and his intentions for human beings, we know, as an aspect of our moral agency, that we are accountable to God and what the consequences of disappointing his designs for human beings will be.

Thus, our moral nature causes us to bear witness to the fact that there is a God and that he is the moral governor of the world. But, in understanding through conscience what the moral law is, we further know what 'moral government' consists in, namely, 'that everyone, upon the whole, shall receive according to his deserts'.<sup>375</sup> For Butler, we are creatures with a moral nature because God created us with moral discernment. Included within this moral discernment is an understanding that some actions deserve praise and others deserve censure. The fact that God will 'reward' some actions and punish 'others' corresponds with the judgement of the 'moral faculty' which God has 'given' to us, 'the object of which is actions, and which naturally approves some actions as right and of good desert, and condemns others as wrong, and of ill desert'.<sup>376</sup>

the government of God...will be found to correspond to the nature which he has given us...in the upshot and issue of things, happiness and misery shall...be made to follow virtue and vice respectively; as he has already, in so peculiar a manner, associated the ideas of them in our minds.<sup>377</sup>

The human possession of conscience means that our conclusions concerning God's 'moral government' are not merely inferred from a Clarkean 'fitness and unfitness of things'. Rather:

the conclusion, that God will finally reward the righteous and punish the wicked, is not here drawn, from its appearing to us fit that *he should*; but from its appearing, that he has told us, *he will*...this he hath certainly told us, in the promise and threatening, which...the notion of a

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<sup>375</sup> A, I.VII.20.

<sup>376</sup> A, II.VIII.26.

<sup>377</sup> A, I.VI.15.

command implies, and the sense of good and ill desert which he has given us, more distinctly expresses.<sup>378</sup>

Of course, returning to the controversy surrounding Butler's method, one intention of the present study is to show that the Clarkeans agreed with Butler's statement above. In line with such a contention, both Butler and the Clarkeans used conscience in a Calvinistic sense (see Chapter 3),<sup>379</sup> as that which makes us accountable to God, even if we should pay insufficient attention to what our own possession of conscience entails:

The observation that man is...by his very nature a law to himself...is of...utmost importance...from it will follow, that though men should, through stupidity, or speculative scepticism, be ignorant of, or disbelieve, any authority in the universe to punish the violation of this law; yet, if there should be such authority, they would be as...liable to punishment, as though they had been beforehand convinced, that such punishment would follow...<sup>380</sup>

Our accountability to God is always foremost for Butler, and McPherson has underestimated Butler's theological conception of conscience when asserting that 'Butler does not develop this point [our accountability to God] in the *Sermons*'.<sup>381</sup> Conscience presents us with a 'known obligation'<sup>382</sup> to the moral law as the law of our nature. It is our responsibility to choose that which we discern to be right through conscience in order to act consistently with our own judgement and moral nature. However, the moral law, which is the law of our nature, does not originate with us; the moral law is instead the law of God, which God instituted in us. It is not just that, in acting consistently with our conscience, we are acting consistently with ourselves, but that we are acting consistently with God's will. In the end, it is our accountability

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<sup>378</sup> A, I.VI.16.

<sup>379</sup> 'if the hearts of men are imbued with a sense of justice and injustice, in order that they may have no pretext to allege ignorance, it is by no means necessary...they should discern the truth in particular cases. It is...sufficient if they understand so far as to be unable to practice evasion without being convicted by their own conscience, and beginning even now to tremble at the judgement seat of God' (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Peabody, Hendrickson, 2008) (H. Beveridge, trans.), II.ii.24).

<sup>380</sup> S, Preface.24.

<sup>381</sup> McPherson, *op.cit.*, (I), 320.

<sup>382</sup> S, Preface.24.

to God that is the source of our agency. Human beings are agents because we have been given a law by God which we can appropriate as our own: by creating us with conscience, God enabled us to reflect on our actions according to a moral standard which makes us active, rather than passive, beings. Therefore, it is only in being accountable to God that we are accountable to ourselves because God made our agency, and so self-accountability, possible.

Indeed, Butler maintained that the ‘moral government’ of God further underlines our agency and self-accountability before God. ‘Moral government’ requires that God punish the wicked and reward the virtuous, which highlights our own freedom and responsibility as agents under the law to act consistently with the moral law: ‘the method of government by...rewarding and punishing good and ill desert...respectively, must go upon supposition, that we are free and not necessary agents’.<sup>383</sup> Butler, like the Clarkeans, objected to a Hutchesonian emphasis upon benevolence (see Chapter 2) when it means that, ‘Some men seem to think the only character of the Author of nature to be that of simple absolute benevolence’.<sup>384</sup>

This, considered as a principle of action and infinite in degree, is a disposition to produce the greatest possible happiness, without regard to persons’ behaviour, otherwise than as such regard would produce higher degrees of it...supposing this to be the only character of God, veracity and justice in him would be nothing but benevolence conducted by wisdom.<sup>385</sup>

For Butler, however, ‘the Author of our nature is not indifferent to virtue and vice’.<sup>386</sup> As we have seen, God ‘manifests himself to us’, not as ‘simple absolute benevolence’, but ‘under the character of a righteous governor’.<sup>387</sup>

We find God exercises the same kind of government over us, with that, which a father [‘and...civil magistrate’] exercises...it evidently appears...veracity and justice must be the natural rule and measure of exercising this authority or government, to a Being who can have no competitions or interfering of interests, with his creatures and subjects.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> A, I.VI.20.

<sup>384</sup> A, I.III.3.

<sup>385</sup> A, I.III.3.

<sup>386</sup> A, I.III.34.

<sup>387</sup> A, I.III.3.

<sup>388</sup> A, I.VI.13.

God's 'infinite absolute benevolence' is always 'compatible' with justice: 'divine goodness...may not be a bare single disposition to produce happiness; but a disposition to make the good, the faithful, the honest man happy'.<sup>389</sup> God does not reward everyone, just as he does not punish everyone: 'he rewards and punishes us for our actions'.<sup>390</sup>

Moral government consists, not barely in rewarding and punishing men for their actions, which the most tyrannical person may do: but in rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked; in rendering to men according to their actions, considered as good or evil.<sup>391</sup>

Once again, this highlights how, in Butler, human beings are self-accountable agents because we are accountable to God. We are responsible for our actions before God because 'an infinitely perfect Mind may be pleased with this moral piety of moral agents, in and for itself; as well as on account of its being essentially conducive to the happiness of his creation'.<sup>392</sup> We are 'moral agents under the government of God',<sup>393</sup> therefore, because, in creating us with conscience, God gave us moral discernment as well as 'scope to operate'<sup>394</sup> according to his 'conditional', as opposed to 'absolute', will.<sup>395</sup> God, for Butler, is not a 'prince' who gives 'his directions' in a 'plain manner' because,

he absolutely desires such an external action should be done, without concerning himself with the motive or principle...he regards only the...external event...not at all, properly speaking, the doing of it, or the action.<sup>396</sup>

Rather, God created us and the world in such a way that we were not:

made at once the creatures and the characters *which we were to be*. For we experience, that *what we were to be*, was the effect of *what we would do*...that the general conduct of nature is, not to save us trouble or danger, but to make us capable of going through them, and to put it upon us to do so.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> A, I.II.3.

<sup>390</sup> A, I.III.3.

<sup>391</sup> A, I.III.2.

<sup>392</sup> A, I.II.3.

<sup>393</sup> SP, III.5.

<sup>394</sup> A, I.III.17.

<sup>395</sup> A, II.VI.22.

<sup>396</sup> A, II.VI.21.

<sup>397</sup> A, I.V.40.

Our responsibility as human beings is to conform ourselves to God's will. It is made known to us actively, through our possession of conscience, our ability to tell right from wrong in conscience, and the voice and directions of our conscience, each of which leads us to knowledge of (as we bear witness to) God's character and government of the world. We are accountable to God for our actions because God will punish and reward us according to how we fail, or live up to, his moral law. However, we are accountable as agents because, in the world as a 'state of trial', God made the extent to which we would satisfy the moral law of our own nature 'depend...upon ourselves'.<sup>398</sup> It is because the moral law is God's law, as well as the law of our nature, that God is author of our obligation to the law in a greater sense than we are. Through the act of creating human beings, God was author of our obligation to the law because he made it such that we could only be true to ourselves by following the moral law of our conscience. Indeed, to return to Hare's reading of Kant, we can see that, for Butler, like Kant:

We ordinary moral agents have to see our role as recapitulating in our own wills the declaration in God's will of our duties...Autonomy on this reading is more nearly a kind of submission than a kind of creation.

Butler insisted 'we owe our being, and all our faculties, and the very opportunities of exerting them, to Almighty God, and are plainly his and not our own'.<sup>399</sup> In assenting to conscience's authority, the expression of God's law in us, we recognise what we owe God and actively accept that which God intends us to be. And, it is in this active acceptance or obedience that we make God's law our own law. In so doing, we are autonomous agents who actualise our moral nature in conformity with the moral law, to which God created us with an obligation as the law of our nature. We can perhaps see more clearly now why, for Butler, 'an entire coincidence of our wills with the will of God, must be a state of the most absolute freedom, in

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<sup>398</sup> *A*, I.IV.2.

<sup>399</sup> *SP*, VI.1.

the most literal and proper sense'.<sup>400</sup> It is only in such a coincidence that human beings have the freedom to act at all. To subvert God's will is to subvert the moral law; and to subvert the moral law, by disregarding conscience, is to contradict what it is in the nature of a human being to be. If we do so, we cannot be free, self-directing agents, operating under, and according to, the moral law of our nature.

### **Accountability to the Rational Moral Order**

Above, we have seen that conscience, as well as being synonymous with the system of human nature, and the possibility of human moral agency, is also synonymous with the moral law. And, as the moral law is also synonymous with God's law, conscience is synonymous with the will of God. Indeed, conscience, as a witness, is not only the expression of God's moral commands, but forms human nature under the moral law according to God's intentions, such that moral human nature is itself a witness to God. Below, we shall see that conscience is also synonymous with something further: the rational moral order. Thus, again following Hare's reading of Kant, although God and human beings are authors of our obligation to the law, neither are authors of the moral law itself.

Butler makes the above points clear when he asserts his agreement with anti-voluntarism in general, and Clarke in particular:

I do believe, the moral fitness and unfitness of actions, prior to all will whatever; which I apprehend as certainly to determine the divine conduct, as speculative truth and falsehood necessarily determine the divine judgement...there is, in the nature of things, an original standard of right and wrong in actions, independent upon all will, but which unalterably determines the will of God, to exercise that moral government over the world, which religion teaches, i.e. finally and upon the whole to reward and punish men respectively as they act right or wrong; this assertion contains an abstract truth, as well as matter of fact.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> *SP*, III.3.

<sup>401</sup> *A*, II.VIII.25.

That which determines right and wrong is not God's will or judgement, nor is it our own judgement. That which is right and wrong is so according to an 'original standard' 'in the nature of things', which determines God's will as much as it should determine ours. Thus, in the above passage, where the moral law is also referred to as God's law, this is so because God legislates in accordance with the moral law, not because his will determines it. God's will does not create the moral law; however, as seen above, he wills the moral law as his law, and has willed, through his creative act, that human beings should have the same moral law as the law of our nature. And just as God's will is determined by the independent moral order, such 'that nothing can render us accepted of God, without moral virtue',<sup>402</sup> he created us under an obligation to the law which he has left us free to fulfil.

Now, Butler's commitment to an independent moral order is also his commitment, in line with the Clarkeans, to a *rational* moral order: 'the will of God is determined by what is fit, by the right and reason of the case'.<sup>403</sup> For Butler, just as 'humour may change, but goodness is a fixed, steady, immovable principle of action',<sup>404</sup> 'God governs the world by general fixed laws' and 'settled rules'.<sup>405</sup> The moral law, the standard of right and wrong, is arbitrated by reason, not the passions or affections. According to Butler, good behaviour follows the 'inducements of reason',<sup>406</sup> and 'the future punishment of wickedness is not a matter of arbitrary appointment, but of reason, equity, and justice'.<sup>407</sup> Indeed, Butler can even go so far as to say that to go 'against reason' is to go 'against the law of God [i.e., the moral law]';<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> A, II.I.31.

<sup>403</sup> A, I.VI.16 fn.

<sup>404</sup> S, Preface.25.

<sup>405</sup> A, I.III.10; 8.

<sup>406</sup> A, I.IV.1.

<sup>407</sup> A, II.V.3.

<sup>408</sup> S, VII.13

and that it is, ‘When reason assumes her place’ that humankind is ‘convinced of’ our ‘duty’ and ‘owns and feels, and is actually under, the influence of the divine authority’.<sup>409</sup>

### Conscience and Rational Reflection

The last point signifies Butler’s rational discourse of conscience by highlighting the connections between the moral law, God’s commands, human obedience, reason and conscience. We have seen that, for Butler, to obey conscience is to act in conformity with our nature, with God’s will, and the rational moral order. Crucially, to obey conscience, and realise the moral law of our nature, is to act *rationally* because reason denotes our ability to reflect on our actions, as well as the objective and universal standard of the moral law: in acting rationally (which is obeying ‘conscience or reflection’) we fulfil our obligations to the rational moral order, God’s will, and to ourselves as moral agents.

According to Butler, ‘one would think it impossible that creatures endued with reason could avoid reflecting’,<sup>410</sup> on their life, its purpose and direction, not least because ‘reason and reflection comes into our notion of a moral agent’.<sup>411</sup> ‘Conscience or reflection’ (and so our ability to know the moral law and to become agents under it) is associated with our status as rational creatures:

as the form of the body is a composition of various parts...our inward structure is not simple or uniform, but a composition of various passions, appetites, affections, together with rationality; including in this last both the discernment of what is right, and a disposition to regulate ourselves by it.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> S, VII.8.

<sup>410</sup> A, I.VIII.3.

<sup>411</sup> S, XII.19.

<sup>412</sup> S, XII.6.

Human ‘rationality’ can be used to explain the abilities we have through conscience, which explicitly connects our ability to reflect with our reason, and thus associates reason and conscience. Indeed, Butler employs the metaphor which Whichcote popularised as a metaphor for reason and conscience. For Butler, ‘the faculty of reason...is *the candle of the Lord within us*.’<sup>413</sup> In the *Sermons*, Butler draws together the relationship between reason and conscience through the same metaphor: to think and act immorally, and to doubt the distinction between ‘right and wrong’, ‘darkens that light, that *candle of the Lord within*, which is to direct our steps; and corrupts conscience, which is the guide of life’.<sup>414</sup>

It follows that, just as actions according to conscience are consistent with reason and the moral law, behaviour which disregards conscience and the moral law, by following the passions, is *irrational*. Thus, in Butler and the Clarkeans’ use of the world as a ‘state of trial’ (see Chapters 3 and 4), one of the problems in disregarding conscience, and indulging the passions, is that we become attached to this world, contrary to our true nature and purpose as creatures of God. For Butler:

there is no account to be given in the way of reason, of men’s so strong attachment to the present world: our hopes...fears and pursuits are in degrees beyond all proportion to the known value of the things they respect.<sup>415</sup>

Thus, the problem with the passions, in attracting us to this world, and preventing us from paying due attention to the consequences of our actions, is that they prevail ‘over the principle of rationality’.<sup>416</sup> It is under the influence of the passions, that, in ceasing to act rationally, human beings are ‘avoiding reflection’, and ‘by these means conscience may be laid asleep, and they may go on in a course of wickedness with less disturbance’.<sup>417</sup> Indeed, as we shall

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<sup>413</sup> A, II.IX.7.

<sup>414</sup> S, X.19.

<sup>415</sup> S, VII.10.

<sup>416</sup> S, VII.10.

<sup>417</sup> S, VII.10.

see, the purpose of the world as a ‘state of trial’ is to help human beings bring our passions under control, and, in so doing, reach an equitable state in which we reflect on our actions as agents, and give ourselves over to God’s will and direction. It is only once the passions are quieted, and we have surrendered the ‘life of pleasure’, that we have attained ‘a compliant state of mind [in which] reason and conscience will have a fair hearing’.<sup>418</sup> It follows from this that, for Butler, a ‘moral agent’ can also be referred to as ‘a reasonable creature’.<sup>419</sup> It is only in being reasonable, in reflecting on our actions and not following the passions wherever they may lead us, that we are agents who act consistently with the rational moral order by appropriating the moral law as our own principle of action:

this moral principle is capable of improvement, by proper discipline and exercise: by recollecting the practical impressions which example and experience have made upon us: and, instead of following humour and mere inclination, by continually attending to the equity and right of the case, in whatever we are engaged...<sup>420</sup>

### **The Universal Fact of Morality**

For Butler, our ability to reflect rationally makes us accountable to the rational moral order. That which is moral is so according to an independent standard, and so in no sense arbitrary: that which is moral is determined by the rational order of things, which in turn determines God’s will and the judgements of conscience. Butler’s understanding of conscience is consistent with the rational discourse of conscience we have encountered in RR, and will subsequently explore in CER. Butler emphasises the fact that human beings have the ability to know right from wrong because God created us with conscience. Conscience, through its ‘presages’,<sup>421</sup> not only makes us feel shame and guilt when we act wrongly but places us under an obligation to the moral law under God’s authority. Because God created us with knowledge

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<sup>418</sup> S, VI.12-13.

<sup>419</sup> S, XII.22.

<sup>420</sup> A, I.V.24.

<sup>421</sup> A, I.III.17.

of the moral law there is no excuse, under the law, for not conforming to it, and so God will justly punish or reward us for our actions. Conscience is also the witness to God. It can refer to God's actual directions to human beings (his voice), or, at the very least, it is testimony to God's 'moral government' and his intentions for human beings as creatures with a moral nature. Conscience makes it clear that our obligations to behave morally are our obligations to God as our creator, such that to accept conscience is to become actively obedient to God's will as moral agents.

However, conscience in Butler not only makes the moral law God's law, it also, through its association with reason and the rational moral order, highlights the unchanging nature of morality. Within the rational discourse of conscience, there can only be right and wrong if that which is right and that which is wrong never change and are determined by the nature of things, rather than by divine or human preference. Human beings, who are agents because we can tell right from wrong, can only be agents if conscience is rational and its judgements are consistent with an objective and immutable moral standard. In Butler, conscience provides knowledge of a moral law, under which human beings are accountable as agents, precisely because it is unchanging and concerns the nature of things. Butler maintained, therefore, that that which is right is right because it *is*, because it is a matter of fact:

moral right is [not] any more relative to perception, than abstract truth...it is [not] any more improper, to speak of the fitness and rightness of actions and ends, as founded in the nature of things, than to speak of abstract truth, as thus founded.<sup>422</sup>

According to Butler, it is the worst sort of 'delusion' to doubt 'that either there is a difference between right and wrong, or there is not'.<sup>423</sup> Rather:

Everything is what it is, and not another thing. The goodness or badness of actions does not arise from hence, that the epithet, interested or disinterested, may be applied to them, any more than...from their being attended with present or future pleasure or pain; but from their being

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<sup>422</sup> A, I.VI. 16 fn.

<sup>423</sup> S, X.19.

what they are; namely, what becomes such creatures as we are, what the state of the case requires, or the contrary.<sup>424</sup>

The above quotation (made an epigraph by G.E. Moore) serves to highlight the way in which, Butler (consistent with the rational discourse of conscience) maintained that the judgements of conscience, which are according to the moral law, are intuitively certain and universal. Butler insisted:

as much as it has been disputed wherein virtue consists...there is in reality an universally acknowledged standard of it. It is that, which...every man you meet puts on a show of...and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions over the face of the earth make it their business...to enforce...namely, justice, veracity, and regard to common good.<sup>425</sup>

For Butler, just as the moral law is universal, in the sense of objective and unchanging, the judgement of each individual conscience will also accord, to the extent that:

let any plain honest man, before he engages in any course of action, ask himself, Is this I am going about right, or is it wrong? Is it good, or is it evil? I do not in the least doubt, but that this...would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almost any fair man in almost any circumstances.<sup>426</sup>

### **Self-Love as a Referent of Conscience**

Exploring Butler's conscience in terms of accountability and agency highlights his rational discourse of conscience, and how, within this discourse, God and the rational moral order, as well as our own judgement, are conveyed as essential referents of conscience. Due to limitations of space, it is not possible to discuss below how (rational) benevolence is also, in Butler, a referent of conscience; it is possible, however, to explore the grounds for understanding 'cool self-love' as a referent of conscience. In Chapters 3 and 4, the status of both (rational) benevolence and (rational) self-love as referents of conscience in Butler's thought will be returned to.

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<sup>424</sup> S, Preface.33.

<sup>425</sup> A, ONV, Diss.II.3.

<sup>426</sup> S, III.4.

Butler signals the fact that self-love is a referent of conscience, when he makes his well-known distinction between ‘cool or settled’ self-love and ‘sensual or passionate’ self-love.<sup>427</sup> Within this distinction, Butler calls ‘reasonable and cool self-love’<sup>428</sup> the ‘only’<sup>429</sup> real self-love, and ‘passionate’ self-love ‘false self-love’.<sup>430</sup> Consequently, in referring to ‘cool self-love’ as ‘reasonable self-love’, Butler signals the fact that the possibility for genuine self-love, a ‘cool and reasonable concern’ for ourselves,<sup>431</sup> is dependent upon the human ability to reflect, to the extent that there is a self-love which belongs to human beings as rational agents under conscience (and which could only belong to us as rational agents), and an opposing tendency which we improperly call self-love. As we shall see below, ‘false’ or ‘passionate’ self-love runs contrary to human nature, as defined by our possession of conscience and ability to rationally reflect; but real or ‘cool self-love’ is constitutive of human nature, precisely because it is a feature of our ability to reflect. Thus, failure to take due account of real or ‘cool self-love’ is a failure to fulfil our obligations to ‘conscience or reflection’ and to satisfy the features and demands of our specifically human nature that is formed under its authority.

### **Rational Self-Regard**

In line with the relationship between reason and ‘conscience or reflection’, referred to above, Butler further draws together our status as ‘reasonable creatures’ with a consequent ‘regard to ourselves’.<sup>432</sup>

Every man hath a general desire of his own happiness; and likewise a variety of particular affections, passions, and appetites to particular external objects. The former proceeds from, or is self-love; and seems inseparable from all sensible creatures, *who can reflect upon themselves and their own interest or happiness*, so as to have that interest *an object to their minds...*<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> S, Preface.29.

<sup>428</sup> S, II.15.

<sup>429</sup> S, Preface.29.

<sup>430</sup> S, IX.14.

<sup>431</sup> S, I.15.

<sup>432</sup> S, VII.16.

<sup>433</sup> S, XI.3 (my italics)

Real or ‘cool self-love’ emerges as a species of rationality, a feature of conscience, rather than the passions, which always remain separate from reason:

The principle we call self-love never seeks anything external for the sake of the thing, but only as a means of happiness or good: particular affections rest in the external things themselves. *One belongs to man as a reasonable creature reflecting upon his own interest or happiness.* The other, though quite distinct from reason, are as much a part of human nature.<sup>434</sup>

It follows from the fact that ‘cool self-love’ belongs to us as ‘reasonable creatures’ that we do not simply possess the capacity for ‘cool self-love’ as a result of our ability to reflect, but that ‘cool self-love’ is a responsibility for rational agents under conscience:

Suppose a brute creature...allured into a snare...He plainly followed the bent of his nature, leading him to gratify his appetite: there is an entire correspondence between his whole nature and such an action: such an action therefore is natural...suppose a man, foreseeing the same danger of certain ruin, should rush into it for...present gratification; he...would follow his strongest desire, as did the brute creature: but there would be...a disproportion, between the nature of a man and such an action...Which...arises, not from considering the action singly in itself, or in its consequences; but from the comparison of it with the nature of the agent.<sup>435</sup>

For human beings to be human beings we must reflect on our actions, and, in doing so, we must take account of what is in our own best interest. If we are unable to take account of our own interests we are not reflective creatures with rational agency; and if we fail to act consistently with what we know, on reflection, to be in our own interests then we have acted irrationally (more like ‘brutes’ than human beings), undermining our status as rational creatures possessed of conscience. ‘Cool self-love’ is thus presented by Butler as an aspect of the accountability to, and responsibility for, ourselves that we have as agents under conscience. It is because we are ‘intrusted with ourselves’ that ‘care of our own interests, as well as of our conduct, particularly belongs to us’.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> S, XI.3 (my italics).

<sup>435</sup> S, II.13-14.

<sup>436</sup> S, XII.11.

Butler can describe ‘cool self-love’ as having a similar status to conscience, not because it functions separately from conscience, but because real self-love is a feature of conscience: an unavoidable capacity and obligation that we have as a result of the ability to reflect, which defines what it is to be human. For Butler, the obligation to take account of our own interests follows from the fact that we cannot be said to be rational agents if we do what is contrary to our own interest: to act in such a way demonstrates a lack of awareness of consequences, and/or an unreasonable lack of concern for consequences, both of which run contrary to beings possessed of ‘conscience or reflection’. Butler’s discussion of ‘cool self-love’ is a reiteration of his central tenet that ‘conscience or reflection’ signifies what it is to be human. ‘Cool self-love’, like conscience, ‘is in human nature a superior principle to passion’,<sup>437</sup> and, just as the passions seek to overthrow conscience, in doing so, they also shout out the ‘loudest calls of self-love’,<sup>438</sup> so that whenever the ‘reasonable concern for themselves, or cool self-love is prevailed over by passion and appetite’,<sup>439</sup> we no longer act as we are required by our nature: with a due, reflective, consideration of our conduct. ‘Immoderate [or ‘passionate’] self-love [unlike ‘cool self-love’] does very ill consult its own interest’.<sup>440</sup> ‘Cool self-love’ thus helps to define the capacity and responsibility human beings have as agents to be self-directing as a result of conscience: ‘if we will act conformably to the economy of man’s nature [formed under, and synonymous with, conscience], reasonable self-love must govern’.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> S, II.16.

<sup>438</sup> S, XI.18.

<sup>439</sup> S, I.15

<sup>440</sup> S, XI.7.

<sup>441</sup> S, II.16.

## ‘Speculative’ and ‘Practical’ Self-Love

Butler not only makes it clear that self-love is a referent of conscience within his well-known distinction between ‘cool’ and ‘passionate’ self-love, but within his lesser-known distinction between ‘speculative’ and ‘practical’ self-love.

We saw above that, in Butler, the human ability to choose places us under an obligation to choose, and to do so in accordance with conscience. Likewise, ‘cool self-love’ could not direct us to act other than with conscience: it is always in our best interest to choose with conscience, and the ability to choose to act consistently with our own interests is only the opportunity to choose with, and as a result of, conscience:

if by a *sense of interest* is meant a practical regard to what is upon the whole our happiness: this is not only coincident with the principle of virtue or moral rectitude, but is a part of the idea itself;<sup>442</sup>

self-love, considered merely as an active principle leading us to pursue our chief interest, cannot but be uniformly coincident with the principle of obedience to God’s commands, our interest being rightly understood; because this obedience, and the pursuit of our own chief interest, must be in every case one and the same thing...<sup>443</sup>

For Butler, real self-love is a rational principle – a ‘cool consideration’ of our ‘own advantage’<sup>444</sup> – and it is an aspect of the human ability to choose, and so to be active agents, rather than passive ‘brute’ creatures. ‘Cool self-love’ is not only to be distinguished from ‘passionate’ self-love, but also from ‘speculative’ self-love:

if by a *sense of interest* is meant a speculative conviction or belief, that such and such indulgence would occasion them greater uneasiness, upon the whole, than satisfaction; it is contrary to present experience to say, that this sense of interest is sufficient to restrain them from indulging themselves.<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> A, I.V.24 fn.

<sup>443</sup> A, I.V.38.

<sup>444</sup> S, XI.4.

<sup>445</sup> A, I.V.24 fn.

When self-love is not guided by conscience we either do not pay it sufficient attention, and so fail to make it an active principle ('speculative' self-love), or allow it to lead us to acts contrary to our real interest by indulging the passions ('passionate' self-love), in which case we cannot be said to have acted at all, but only to have acquiesced or succumbed to our passions. Thus, what distinguishes 'cool self-love' from both 'speculative' and 'passionate' self-love is that it is self-love consistent with, and under the direction of, conscience, and so actually functions as a principle of action.

Self-love is only self-love when it is 'cool self-love', which is self-love under the direction of conscience, when self-love is both real and active. In distinguishing between 'speculative' and 'practical' self-love, Butler contends that:

reasonable self-love wants to be improved, as really as any principle in our nature...we daily see it overmatched, not only by the more boisterous passions, but by curiosity, shame, love of imitation, by anything, even indolence...<sup>446</sup>

Awareness of our own interests follows from 'conscience or reflection', and that which is in our own interest is determined by conscience. In line with the discussion of the 'cool hour passage' in Chapter 4, Butler's distinction between 'speculative' and 'practical' self-love emphasises the fact that self-love is something for which we are responsible for actively attending to under, and as a result of, conscience. Likewise, Butler's distinction between 'cool' and 'passionate' self-love emphasises the fact that 'cool self-love' is not itself our ability to reflect, but a possibility and responsibility we have as a result of our ability to reflect. Only actions according to 'cool self-love' are an authentic acting for ourselves, because it is only actions from 'cool self-love' that stem from a reflective understanding of ourselves, our nature and responsibilities *qua* rational agents.

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<sup>446</sup> A, I.V.24 fn.

Thus, according to Butler, ‘passionate’ self-love underpins a ‘surprising and unaccountable’ ‘partiality to’ ourselves, which follows from the fact ‘that many men seem perfect strangers to their own characters’:<sup>447</sup>

This likewise was the reason why that precept, *Know thyself*, was so frequently inculcated by the philosophers of old...if it were not for that...fond regard to ourselves, it would...be no great difficulty to know our own character, what passes within, the bent and bias of our mind; much less would there be any difficulty in judging rightly of our own actions.<sup>448</sup>

For Butler:

There is one easy and almost sure way to avoid being led by this self-partiality, and to get acquainted with our real character: to have regard to the suspicious part of it, and keep a steady eye over ourselves in that respect.<sup>449</sup>

Conscience is the remedy for ‘passionate’ self-love, and the source of ‘cool self-love’, because it is through conscience that we are able to carry out the necessary ‘strict survey and review of our own character and behaviour’.<sup>450</sup> It is only by being able to ‘examine our own character’<sup>451</sup> through conscience that we can approve of actions that are consistent with our nature and responsibilities as rational agents. However, more than this, as we are only rational agents because we possess conscience, it is not only that through which we review our ‘real character’, but it is under conscience that our ‘real character’ is formed.<sup>452</sup> To contain ‘passionate’ self-love through ‘cool self-love’ is to repress the ‘lower’ parts of our nature (the passions) under the ‘higher and better’ aspect of our nature (conscience).<sup>453</sup> Butler thus invokes the Stoic

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<sup>447</sup> S, X.2.

<sup>448</sup> S, X.3.

<sup>449</sup> S, X.17.

<sup>450</sup> S, X.8 fn.

<sup>451</sup> S, X.8 fn.

<sup>452</sup> ‘the object of this faculty [conscience] is actions, comprehending under that name active or practical principles: those principles from which men would act, if occasions and circumstances gave them power; and which, when fixed and habitual in any person, we call his character’ (A, ONV, Diss.II.4).

<sup>453</sup> S, Preface.14; S, III.1-2. Butler’s distinction between the ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ aspects of human nature recalls Plato’s ‘tripartite’ division of the soul as well as *to hegemonikon*. Butler not only invoked the analogy of the watch (and of a tree (S, III.2 fn.)) to explain the constitution of human nature formed under the authority and ‘superintendency’ of conscience, but Plato’s analogy of civil government from Book IV of *The Republic* (S III.1).

The ‘tripartite’ soul was, like *to hegemonikon*, a key touchstone in interpretations of conscience, not least as a result of Jerome’s exegesis of Ezekiel’s vision in 1:4-14 of four figures with four faces: ‘Most people interpret

language surrounding *to hegemonikon* to highlight how, as conscience determines the very system of human nature, and is that through which we are able to understand ourselves, real self-love is only a principle of action under conscience. While to ‘*Know thyself*’ is to appreciate what is in one’s own interest according to a ‘cool self-love’ that is consistent with our ‘real character’, we only come to ‘*Know thyself*’ through conscience, and to ‘*Reverence thyself*’ is always to act according to conscience:

the very constitution of our nature requires, that we bring our whole conduct before this superior faculty; wait its determination; enforce upon ourselves its authority, and make it the business of our lives, as it is absolutely the whole business of a moral agent, to conform ourselves to it. This is the true meaning of that ancient precept, *Reverence thyself*.<sup>454</sup>

## Conclusion

In opposition to reduced readings of Butlerian conscience, it has been shown above that reflective consciousness in Butler consisted of the experience, in conscience, of a series of responsibilities we are accountable for, and to, as rational agents under conscience.

The present chapter has made it clear that Butlerian conscience cannot be reduced (as for Anscombe and KR) to individual judgement; or (as for Sidgwick and Broad) to our intuition, and approval, of intrinsic rightness; or (as for McPherson and Raphael) to our reflective consideration of what we need to do to act in our own interests or according to God’s judgement.

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the man, the lion and the ox as the rational, emotional and appetitive parts of the soul, following Plato’s division...And they posit a fourth part [‘the eagle’] which is above and beyond these three...which the Greeks call *synteresis*: that spark of conscience...not even extinguished...in Cain’ (Jerome’s *Commentary on Ezekiel*, I.7 in Potts, *op.cit.*, 79). Scholastic interpretations of Jerome’s *Commentary* led to the distinction, within conscience, between *synderesis* and *conscientia* (see Chapter 3). For the influence of, and difficulties surrounding, Jerome’s exegesis, and the association between conscience and the ‘tripartite’ soul, see: Potts, *op.cit.*, 1-11; Crowe, *Changing Profile*, 123-126; Michael Baylor, *Action and Person: Conscience in Late Scholasticism and the Young Luther* (Leiden, Brill, 1977), 24-27; Douglas Kries, ‘Origen, Plato, and Conscience (*synderesis*) in Jerome’s *Ezekiel Commentary*, *Traditio*, 57 (2002), 67-83; Greene, ‘Whichcote and *Synderesis*’, 618-620, ‘*Synderesis in the English Renaissance*’, 195-219 and ‘*Synderesis and the Moral Sense*’, 173-198.

<sup>454</sup> S, Preface.19.

Even though Butler's method professed to start from human nature, in Butler human nature is formed under the authority of conscience, and conscience is instituted in human nature by God: neither a naturalistic reading of Butlerian conscience, nor one which reduces conscience to the Clarkeian intuition of intrinsic rightness, can extract God from conscience or human nature. However, at the same time, while no reduced reading of Butlerian conscience can legitimately extract the experience of God's judgement from conscience, a naturalistic reading of conscience is unable to extract the rational moral order from Butlerian conscience, just as the reduction of Butlerian conscience to Clarkeian intuition is unable to extract individual judgement, or our awareness of our responsibility to ourselves and others, from conscience: Butlerian conscience is that in, and as, which an individual agent experiences the moral law as according to: his own judgement and nature; his own best interest and the best interests of others; the nature and judgement of God; and the rational moral order.

While the above has gone some way to resist any reduced reading of Butlerian conscience, it has not attempted to show how each of the individual referents of Butlerian conscience cohere within the reflective considerations of an agent with a mature moral character. That stage of the present study of Butlerian conscience will follow the discussion of conscience in CER in the next two chapters.

In turning to Clarkeian conscience, it will be argued that Butlerian and Clarkeian conscience shared the same referents. Moreover, it is as a result of discussing Clarkeian conscience in Chapters 2 and 3 that it will be possible to turn back to Butlerian conscience in Chapter 4. In Chapter 4, on the basis of the discussion of Butlerian conscience above, and the discussion of Clarkeian conscience in Chapters 2 and 3, it will be argued that Butler and the

Clarkeans held the same understanding of moral development and practical moral reasoning as a result of their shared understanding of conscience.

Thus, we have seen in this chapter that reduced readings of Butlerian conscience criticise Butler for internal inconsistency in his various descriptions of conscience, and also identify Butler's method and 'cool hour passage' as areas of both internal inconsistency and inconsistency with the Clarkeans. The present chapter has shown that it is illegitimate to reduce the meaning of Butlerian conscience to only one of its referents because to do so is to ignore all of the ways in which Butler described conscience. In Chapter 4, it will be argued that such aspects of Butler as his method and the 'cool hour passage' are not only consistent with all of the ways in which Butler described conscience, but, as such, consistent with CER, because Butler and the Clarkeans shared the same understanding of conscience.

## Chapter 2

### Clarkean Conscience

Clarkean ethical rationalism (CER) is perhaps best known for its use of the analogies of sight and mathematics. Not only do we self-evidently ‘see’ that which is the right thing to do with the immediacy and certainty with which we know  $2+2=4$ , but to mistake the rightness of actions or principles is the same as mistaking a basic sum in mathematics.<sup>455</sup> Further, within their use of the analogies of sight and mathematics, the Clarkeans maintained that perception of rightness is a sufficient motivation for the performance of an act of rightness, and that the only moral motivation for an act of intrinsic rightness is that it is right in itself. Within their use of the analogies of sight and mathematics, the Clarkeans distinguished between our ‘original obligation’ and ‘additional motives’ or ‘obligations’<sup>456</sup> for moral action:

however...absolutely necessary to the Government of frail and fallible Creatures...[is ‘The Dread of superior Power and Authority, and the Sanction of Rewards and Punishments’, it] is yet really...only a *secondary* and *additional* Obligation, or *Inforcement* [sic] of the first. The original *Obligation* of all...is the eternal *Reason* of Things...So far...as Men are conscious of what is right and wrong, so far they *Are* under an *Obligation* to act accordingly; And consequently That eternal Rule of Right...’tis evident *Ought* as indispensably to govern Mens [sic] Actions, as it *Cannot but* necessarily determine their Assent.<sup>457</sup>

*these eternal and necessary Differences of Things make it fit and reasonable for Creatures so to act; they cause it to be their Duty, or lay an Obligation upon them...separate from the Consideration of these Rules being the...Command of God; and...antecedent to any...personal Advantage...Reward or Punishment...annexed...by natural Consequence, or...positive Appointment, to the Practising or Neglecting of those Rules.*<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>455</sup> See: *Discourse*, 31-32; 42; 50; 57-58; *TFMG*, 70; 75 and *The Second Part of the Foundation of Moral Goodness*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (hereafter ‘*TFMG.II*’) in *Collection*, 110; 116; 155; *Review*, 44-45; 50; 53; 66-67; 168-169; 208; 233-234.

<sup>456</sup> See, as well as Clarke below: *TFMG*, 91 and *A Second Letter to a Deist, Concerning a late Book Entitled, Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (hereafter ‘*Second Letter*’) in *Collection*, 339; *Review*, 118; 145; 196 and *A Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London, 1769) (hereafter ‘*Review*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn’), 178.

<sup>457</sup> *Discourse*, 43-44.

<sup>458</sup> *Discourse*, 29.

Our ‘original obligation’ is to do that which is right because it is right in itself; however, we have ‘additional motives’ or ‘obligations’ for moral action, including individual happiness and divine command, which must not be our primary motivation when performing a moral action. For Price, therefore, we cannot be ‘conscious that an action is *fit*’ and ‘want a *motive* to action’,<sup>459</sup> but the ‘impressions of pleasure and pain...[which] generally attend our perceptions of virtue and vice...are merely their effects and concomitants, and not the perceptions themselves’.<sup>460</sup> Any ‘additional motives’, such as ‘rewards and punishments’, ‘do not *make*...[moral obligation], but *enforce* it. They are the *sanctions* of virtue, and not its *efficients*’.<sup>461</sup> While ‘We have an unavoidable consciousness of *rectitude* in relieving misery, in promoting happiness, and in every office of love and good-will to others’, it is the ‘consciousness of *rectitude*’ that ‘*consecrates* kindness and humanity, and exalts them into virtues’,<sup>462</sup> because it is only when an ‘agent’ ‘acts from...consciousness of rectitude’ that he can ‘be justly denominated *virtuous*’.<sup>463</sup>

Likewise, Balguy, discussing our ‘original obligation’ and ‘additional motives’, refers to the former as our ‘*internal*’ ‘Reason’ (or ‘reasons’), ‘Motive’ (or ‘Motives’) and ‘Obligation’ (or ‘Obligations’), and to the latter as our ‘*external*’ ‘Reason’ (or ‘reasons’), ‘Motive’ (or ‘Motives’) and ‘Obligation’ (or ‘Obligations’):<sup>464</sup>

Our Approbation of *Virtue* is not an arbitrary Deference...but...the necessary Effect of its essential Worth. As we are compelled to *assent* to whatever appears *true*, so we are forced to *approve* whatever appears *right*. But this necessity is not external. It flows directly from the intrinsic Excellence, and Self-amiableness of the Thing approved.<sup>465</sup>

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<sup>459</sup> *Review*, 186.

<sup>460</sup> *Review*, 44.

<sup>461</sup> *Review*, 108.

<sup>462</sup> *Review*, 192.

<sup>463</sup> *Review*, 184.

<sup>464</sup> See: *TFMG*, 57; 68; 84; 96; *TFMG.II*, 120; 147; 187-188; John Balguy, *The Law of Truth. Or, the Obligations of Reason Essential to all Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (hereafter ‘*LT*’) in *Collection*, 374-375; 389; 394; 396.

<sup>465</sup> *TFMG.II*, 178.

Balguy thus agreed with Clarke that:<sup>466</sup>

The intrinsick Goodness of such Actions is an irresistible Recommendation to our Minds and Judgements, and by Consequence, is a perpetual Reason for the Concurrence of our Wills.<sup>467</sup>

And in explicit response to Hutcheson's discussion of 'justifying' and 'exciting reasons' (see below), Balguy and Price contended, "that the perception of right and wrong does *excite* to action, and is alone a sufficient *principle* of action":<sup>468</sup>

The End of the Speculatist is *Truth*, whether it redound to his Advantage...The End of the Moralist is *Rectitude*, whether it conduce to his Interest...*moral Good* is an *End*, an *ultimate End* of one kind, as *natural Good* is of another... However *Pleasure* may be the Consequence or Appendage of *Virtue*...it is not the *End* of a moral Agent, nor the *Object* of a moral Affection, but *Virtue* alone, antecedent to all Considerations, and abstracted from every natural Good.<sup>469</sup>

The first part of this chapter explores criticisms of CER related to their use of the analogies of sight and mathematics and distinction between 'original obligation' and 'additional motives'. Part II responds to those criticisms and aims to refine our approach to central aspects of CER; a process that will be continued in Chapter 3.

## Part I

### Criticisms of Clarkean Ethical Rationalism

The most significant criticisms of CER are Hutcheson's and Hume's criticisms (HC). As can be seen in the neo-Kantian criticisms (KC), and other modern criticisms of CER

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<sup>466</sup> 'originally and in Reality, 'tis as *natural* and (morally speaking) *necessary*, that the *Will* should be determined in every Action by the *Reason of the Thing*, and the *Right of the Case*; as 'tis *natural* and (absolutely speaking) *necessary*, that the *Understanding* should submit to a *demonstrated Truth*' (*Discourse*, 40).

<sup>467</sup> *TFMG.II*, 117.

<sup>468</sup> *Review*, 185.

<sup>469</sup> *TFMG*, 84.

discussed below, HC have informed critical responses to CER, and rational intuitionism more generally. Due to space limitations, it is not possible to provide a thorough account of HC. However, such a discussion is not essential as Hume's 'is/ought gap', and contention that 'Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions',<sup>470</sup> are well-known, even if not non-controversial.<sup>471</sup> Moreover, the points of disagreement between Hutcheson's and Hume's sentimentalism and CER have been, and continue to be, frequently reviewed.<sup>472</sup> In discussing Hutcheson and Hume briefly below, the intention is to touch upon their central criticisms of CER, while illustrating how they felt that the sentimentalist 'moral sense' supplied the *live intuitional bedrock* for moral action in a way that CER's reason did not.

### Hutcheson's Moral Sense

Hutcheson maintained, following Locke, that 'simple Ideas' are perceived, and received, through the senses, and that 'Many of our sensitive Perceptions are pleasant, and

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<sup>470</sup> Hume, *Treatise* 3.1.2.27; 2.3.3.4.

<sup>471</sup> In connection with such well-known aspects of Hume, it has been debated if (and if so in what sense) Hume and/or Hutcheson can be considered moral realists: William Frankena, 'Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 16:3 (June, 1955), 356-375; Kenneth Wrinkler, 'Hutcheson's Alleged Realism', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 23:2 (April, 1985), 179-194; David Fate Norton, 'Hutcheson's Moral Realism', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 23:3 (July, 1985), 397-418; Pauline Westerman, 'Hume and the Natural Lawyers: A Change of Landscape', in M.A. Stewart and J.P. Wright (eds), *Hume and Hume's Connexions* (University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 83-104; Knud Haakonssen, 'Natural Law and Moral Realism: The Scottish Synthesis', in M.A. Stewart (ed.), *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990), 61-85, and *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996) (hereafter '*Natural Law*'), 63-75; W.D. Hudson (ed.), *The Is/Ought Question* (London, Macmillan, 1969), *passim*; James Moore, 'Hume and Hutcheson', in Stewart and Wright (eds), *op.cit.*, 23-57; J.L. Mackie, *Hume's Moral Theory* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 51-75; Carey, *Contesting Diversity*, 150-172; Filonowicz, *op.cit.*, 124-160.

<sup>472</sup> As well as the works cited in the chapter below and footnote above, see: D.D. Raphael, *The Moral Sense* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1947), *passim*; Kydd, *op.cit.*, 1-98; Stanley Tveyman, *Reason and Conduct in Hume and His Predecessors* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), *passim*; Gill, *op.cit.*, 156-180; 194-197; 201-213; 235-269; Sophie Botros, *Hume, Reason and Morality: A Legacy of Contradiction* (London, Routledge, 2006), 61-94; Rivers, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, 153-237; Frederick Beiser, *The Sovereignty of Reason: The Defense of Rationality in the Early English Enlightenment* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996), 266-322; William Blackstone, *Francis Hutcheson and Contemporary Ethical Theory* (Athens, GA, University of Georgia Press, 1965), 41-65.

many painful'.<sup>473</sup> For him, the 'Different Senses' are 'the Powers of receiving...different Perceptions'; 'Those Ideas which are rais'd in the Mind upon the presence of external Objects...are call'd Sensations';<sup>474</sup> and 'we may call *every determination of our Minds to receive Ideas independently on our Will, and to have Perceptions of Pleasure and Pain, A SENSE*'.<sup>475</sup>

Consequently, Hutcheson reasoned that, as we perceive other qualities besides those of colour and sound, we must have 'internal' senses, additional to the 'External Senses of Seeing and Hearing', which are 'suited to every sort of Objects which occurs to us, by which we receive either *Pleasure or Pain*'.<sup>476</sup> Hutcheson admitted, 'it is not easy to assign accurate Divisions on such Subjects', such that it may not be possible to give a definitive list of those senses additional to the '*External Senses*' and the 'Class of Perceptions' to which they correspond.<sup>477</sup> However, Hutcheson suggested there was a 'Sense of Beauty and Harmony';<sup>478</sup> a '*Publick Sense*'; a '*Sense of Honour*'; and also a '*Moral Sense*':<sup>479</sup> 'that Determination [of our Mind'<sup>480</sup>] to be pleas'd with the Contemplation of those Affections, Actions, or Characters of rational agents, which we call virtuous'.<sup>481</sup> And, because for Hutcheson, that which we call virtue 'consists in Benevolence',<sup>482</sup> 'the universal Foundation of this moral Sense' is 'Benevolence',<sup>483</sup> so the moral sense can be more particularly defined as the, 'Determination

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<sup>473</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, rvsd edn (Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2008) (W. Leidhold, ed.) (hereafter '*Inquiry*': referenced by treatise, section, paragraph), I.I.iv; vi.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.*, I.I.i-ii.

<sup>475</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2002) (A. Garrett, ed.) (hereafter '*Essay*'), I.I.i (*Essay* is referenced by treatise, section, article; except treatise II: by page).

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, I.I.i.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*, I.I.i.

<sup>478</sup> *Inquiry*, I.I.xv.

<sup>479</sup> *Essay*, I.I.i.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface, 9.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, I.IV.v.

<sup>483</sup> *Inquiry*, II.IV.i.

of our Mind, to *approve every kind affection*...and all publicly useful Actions which we imagined...flow from such Affections, without...a view to...*private Happiness*'.<sup>484</sup>

### Justifying and Exciting Reasons

Through his theory of a moral sense, Hutcheson hoped to give a better account of normativity than CER. He distinguished between 'justifying' and 'exciting' reasons, and in so doing emphasised the *live intuitional bedrock* of the natural human instinct of benevolence and the moral sense. He suggested there were other 'Classes of Affections', along with benevolence, under which 'All Affections are included; [such that] no *end* can be previous to them',<sup>485</sup> not least '*Self-Love*': 'an *Instinct* or *Desire* fixed in his Nature, determining him to pursue his Happiness'.<sup>486</sup> The question is, why do we approve as moral the actions we are excited to perform from benevolence, rather than those we are excited to perform from self-love?

Hutcheson's answer was that we were created with a moral sense by 'the Deity',<sup>487</sup> which determines us to perceive moral qualities in certain 'Objects and 'Events', and to approve acts of disinterested benevolence as *moral*. We could not perceive moral qualities if God had not created us with a moral sense,<sup>488</sup> and it is through having such a sense that we can and do perceive moral qualities as being distinct from self-love.<sup>489</sup> Consequently, the moral sense supplies the 'justifying reason' for our pursuit of the happiness of others by approving of that ultimate end, to which we are excited by natural affection, as moral. And as the moral sense is a 'Determination of our Mind' to approve benevolence, and 'the very Name

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<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, II.Introduction.

<sup>485</sup> *Essay*, 139.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*, 140

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>488</sup> *Ibid.*, 153-155.

<sup>489</sup> *Inquiry*, II.I.i; v.

[‘Love of Benevolence’] excludes Self-Interest’,<sup>490</sup> it follows that: ‘since all Virtue is...Affections [for others], or Actions consequent upon them...Virtue is not pursued from the Interest or Self-love of the Pursuer’.<sup>491</sup>

For Hutcheson, the claim that we possess a ‘Sense of Good distinct from Advantage or Interest’<sup>492</sup> can be demonstrated by the fact that, ‘We never call that Man benevolent, who is in fact useful to others, but at the same time only intends his own Interest’.<sup>493</sup> Indeed, if ‘the Perceptions of moral Good and Evil’ were not ‘perfectly different from those of natural Good, or Advantage’, ‘our Admiration toward a fruitful Field...would be much the same with what we have toward a generous Friend...for both are, or may be advantageous to us’.<sup>494</sup> He maintained that we do not approve of actions as moral because they are actions accompanied by the pleasurable sensation of approval,<sup>495</sup> just as the ‘Intention to obtain... [the] sensible sensation’<sup>496</sup> of moral ‘*Self-Approbation*’<sup>497</sup> is not ‘what excites us to these [disinterested moral] Actions’.<sup>498</sup> Rather, it is our moral sense’s approval of moral acts *qua* acts of disinterested benevolence that makes ‘publicly useful Actions and kind Affections *grateful* to the Agent’,<sup>499</sup> and ‘represents *Virtue* as the greatest Happiness to the Person possessed of it’.<sup>500</sup> Thus, just as the Clarkeans used rational conscience to explain ‘self-approbation’ and ‘self-condemnation’, Hutcheson thought that the moral sense better explained why ‘*Moral*

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<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*, II.II.iii.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*, II.II.ii.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, II.I.i.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*, II.II.iii.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*, II.I.i.

<sup>495</sup> ‘When we are contemplating Actions, we do not chuse to approve, because Approbation is pleasant: otherwise we would always approve, and never condemn any Action; because this is some way uneasy. Approbation is plainly a Perception arising without previous Volition, or Choice of it, because of any concomitant Pleasure’ (*Essay*, 155).

<sup>496</sup> *Inquiry*, II.Introduction.

<sup>497</sup> *Essay*, I.IV.v.

<sup>498</sup> *Inquiry*, II.Introduction.

<sup>499</sup> *Essay*, 148.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*, I.III.iv.

*Perceptions* arise in us as necessarily as any other Sensations’,<sup>501</sup> and thus why, ‘upon the Apprehension of Good or Evil in Objects, Actions, or Events’, we experience ‘*agreeable Sensation*, when the Object or Event is good’ and ‘*uneasy Sensation*, when it is evil’,<sup>502</sup> and so why ‘Our own *Temper*, as well as that of others, will appear [‘to our moral sense’]...either lovely or deformed, and will be the Occasion either of Pleasure or Uneasiness’:<sup>503</sup>

this internal Sense, and Instinct toward Benevolence, will...influence our Actions, or...make us very uneasy...and we shall be conscious that we are in a base unhappy State, even without considering any Law whatsoever, or any external Advantages lost, or Disadvantages impending from its Sanctions.<sup>504</sup>

With respect to CER, it was unclear to Hutcheson whether the ‘very common Expression’, ‘Reasonableness in an Action’, denoted ‘the Motive to *Election* [exciting reason], or the Quality determining *Approbation* [justifying reason]’.<sup>505</sup> If it denoted the former, the difficulty for CER was that “‘no *Reason* can excite to Action previously to some *End*, and...no *End* can be proposed without some *Instinct* or Affection”’:<sup>506</sup>

As if...*Reason*, or the Knowledge of the Relations of things, could excite to Action when we proposed no *End*, or as if *Ends* could be intended without *Desire* or Affection.<sup>507</sup>

Prefiguring criticisms of ethical rationalism made famous by Hume, Hutcheson maintained that, ‘Since Reason is understood to denote our *Power of finding out true Propositions*, Reasonableness must denote the same thing, with *Conformity to true Propositions, or to Truth*’, but as:

Whatever *attribute* can be ascribed to a *generous kind Action*, the *contrary Attribute* may...be ascribed to a *selfish cruel Action*...*Conformity* [to truth] cannot make a Difference among Actions, or recommend one more than another either to *Election* or *Approbation*, since any Man may make as many Truths about Villany [sic], as about Heroism..<sup>508</sup>

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<sup>501</sup> *Ibid.*, I.I.i.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.*, I.I.ii.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*, I.IV.iv.

<sup>504</sup> *Inquiry*, II.VII.i.

<sup>505</sup> *Essay*, 137.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

To ‘say’ that ‘*Merit...attends Actions to which we are excited by Reason alone*’<sup>509</sup> must mean that the ‘*Conformity of Actions to Reason*’ ‘*shews a Quality in the Action exciting the Agent to do it*’.<sup>510</sup> Hutcheson objected to the idea that Clarkean ‘fittingness’ referred to this ‘exciting quality’ in an action, not least because it relied upon an unsatisfactory circularity: also, as we have seen, objected to in KC. According to Hutcheson, if we were to investigate the basis on which particular actions are said to be ‘fitting’, we would appreciate that it is not the action’s ‘fittingness’ that explains its exciting quality. If we were to ask, for example, ‘what *Reason* excites Men to concur with the Deity’, and the answer was that it is ‘fit’ to do what God commands because he ‘is our *Benefactor*’, then we may ask, ‘what *Reason* excites to concur with Benefactors?’.<sup>511</sup> If the answer came again as ‘fittingness’, we may ask why we are excited to perform as moral this particular act of ‘fittingness’ as opposed to others:

A Sword...bear[s] the *same Relation* to the Body of an *Hero...[as]* to a *Robber*. The killing of either is equally agreeable to these *Relations*, but not equally *good* in a *moral Sense*;

Without presupposing *Affections...[the]* Knowledge [‘of *these Relations*’] will not excite to one Action rather than another; nor without a *moral Sense* will it make us approve any Action more than its contrary.<sup>512</sup>

For Hutcheson, we can only ‘understand the *exciting Reasons* for Actions’ when we suppose ‘*Affections Instincts* or *Desires* previously implanted in our Nature’,<sup>513</sup> because ‘the *Reasons* moving to Election are such as shew the *Tendency of an Action to gratify some Affection* in the Agent’.<sup>514</sup> With actions which we approve as moral, therefore, ‘*Benevolence* towards others’ lies at the *live intuitional bedrock*: ‘no *end* can be previous to’ it, it is rather this natural

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<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

affection of benevolence that makes ‘The Happiness of Mankind in general’ an ‘*ultimate End*’,<sup>515</sup> causing us to prefer particular actions over others:

Without...[publick Affections] this Truth, “that an hundred Felicities is a greater Sum than one Felicity,” will no more excite to study the Happiness of the *Hundred*, than this Truth, “an hundred Stones are greater than one,” will excite a Man, who has no *desire of Heaps*, to cast them together.<sup>516</sup>

### Hume’s Moral Sentiment

Hume followed Hutcheson in reasoning that, as (a) ‘An active principle can never be founded on an inactive’,<sup>517</sup> and (b) reason is simply ‘the discovery of truth or falsehood’,<sup>518</sup> and can ‘never immediately prevent or produce any action by contradicting or approving of it’,<sup>519</sup> but (c) morality has ‘an influence on the actions and affections’,<sup>520</sup> and is, as such, ‘*practical*’, not ‘*speculative*’,<sup>521</sup> it follows that (d) ‘The approbation of moral qualities most certainly is not derived from reason, or any comparison of ideas, but proceeds entirely from a moral taste’.<sup>522</sup>

For Hume, not only is it the case ‘that the ultimate ends of human actions’ ‘recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind’, and ‘can never, in any case, be accounted for by *reason*’, but that when confronted with such ‘ultimate ends’ as the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure, ‘it is an absurdity to ask for a reason’ why an individual ‘*hates pain*’ or pursues ‘*pleasure*’:

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<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>517</sup> Hume, *Treatise*, 3.11.7.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.1.1.9.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.1.1.10.

<sup>520</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.1.1.6.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.1.1.5.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.3.1.15.

It is impossible there can be a progress *in infinitum*; and that one thing can always be a reason why another is desired. Something must be desirable on its own account, and because of its immediate accord or agreement with human sentiment or affection.<sup>523</sup>

Thus, in moral questions there is no need to try and go beyond the simple fact ‘that everything which contributes to the happiness of society recommends itself directly to our approbation and good-will’.<sup>524</sup>

It is needless to push our researches so far as to ask, why we have...fellow-feeling with others....We must stop somewhere in our examination of causes; and there are, in every science, some general principles, beyond which we cannot hope to find any principle more general.<sup>525</sup>

At the *live intuitional bedrock* lies the ‘one great source of moral distinctions’,<sup>526</sup> which is ‘some sentiment common to all mankind’ that ‘The notion of morals implies’, and ‘which recommends the same object to general approbation, and makes every man, or most men, agree in the same opinion or decision concerning it’,<sup>527</sup> such that: ‘Whatever conduct gains my approbation, by touching my humanity, procures also the applause of all mankind, by affecting the same principle in them’.<sup>528</sup> We approve as moral that which ‘contributes’ to the happiness of others because: ‘the end, which they have a tendency to promote, must be some way agreeable to us, and take hold of some natural affection’.<sup>529</sup> In our ‘preference’ for what is useful to public good, a sentiment ‘display[s] itself’, and ‘This sentiment can be no other than a feeling for the happiness of mankind, and a resentment of their misery’.<sup>530</sup> This sentiment of ‘warm concern for the interests of our species’ is ‘attended with a delicate feeling of all moral distinctions’, so that anyone ‘unaffected with the images of human happiness and

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<sup>523</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (hereafter ‘*Enquiry*’: referenced by section, part, paragraph) in L.A. Selby-Bigge, with P.H. Nidditch (eds), *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975), Appendix I.v.244.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, V.II.178.

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*, V.II.178 fn.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, V.I.177.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*, IX.I.221.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, IX.I.223.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, V.I.173.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix.I.235.

misery...must be equally indifferent to the images of vice and virtue'.<sup>531</sup> And, for Hume, anyone thus unaffected has sentiments which are 'directly opposite to those, which prevail in the human species',<sup>532</sup> because, 'While the human heart is compounded of the same elements as at present, it will never be indifferent to public good'.<sup>533</sup>

Appreciating the fact that 'Morality...is more properly felt than judg'd of'<sup>534</sup> is the only way of safeguarding the fact that moral actions and feelings of moral praise concern something constitutive of human nature which is original and universal, personal and overriding, that affects 'anyone, who wears a human heart'.<sup>535</sup> The *is* of reason makes the moral something speculative and placed at a distance, just as the Clarkeian talk of relations is dry, 'abstract',<sup>536</sup> 'metaphysics'.<sup>537</sup> Through the *live intuitional bedrock* of moral sentiment, Hume can maintain, instead, that moral approval is always the intimate *ought* of our own nature:

Thus the distinct boundaries and offices of *reason* and of *taste* are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood: the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue...one discovers objects as they really stand in nature...the other has a productive faculty...gilding...natural objects with the colours, borrowed from internal sentiment, raises...a new creation. Reason being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action...Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain...becomes a motive to action, and is the first spring or impulse to desire and volition.<sup>538</sup>

## Moral Fetishism?

As we have seen with KC, and will with the 'laicisation of natural law' criticisms (LNLC) in the next chapter, criticisms of the Clarkeans have followed HC in arguing that, by

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<sup>531</sup> *Ibid.*, V.II.183.

<sup>532</sup> *Ibid.*, V.II.184.

<sup>533</sup> *Ibid.*, IX.I.222.

<sup>534</sup> *Treatise*, 3.1.2.1.

<sup>535</sup> *Enquiry*, V.II.183.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix.I.iii.242.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix.I.i.239.

<sup>538</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix.Iv.246.

making ethics a study of perceptible moral facts somehow analogous with mathematical facts, the Clarkeans made morality dry and theoretical. According to Albert Schweitzer, such rationalists as the Clarkeans occupied ‘themselves with logical distinctions instead of investigating in a practical fashion the nature of man’, which meant that ‘Intellectualists and Intuitionists’ could not capture ‘the great enthusiastic driving force’ of an ethic like utilitarianism, being ‘still too much involved in a lifeless and semi-scholastic philosophising’.<sup>539</sup> The Clarkeans are caught within the is/ought gap, because ‘it is...very far from clear what such pieces of information [as moral facts], even if recognised to be true, have to do with our conduct’,<sup>540</sup> not least because, ‘from statements to the effect that these [moral facts] exist no conclusions follow about what I *ought to do*’.<sup>541</sup>

Darwall suggested that a way around HC for rational intuitionism is ‘judgement externalism’.<sup>542</sup> While Hutcheson and Hume emphasised the *live intuitional bedrock* of the moral sense, for Darwall, ‘judgement externalists’ rely upon an antecedent desire to do what is right because it is right. While ‘judgement externalism’ may help a rational intuitionist over the is/ought gap it has been called a form of ‘moral’ ‘fetish’, because it means that ‘Good people’ no longer ‘care non-derivatively’ about what they think is the right thing to do.<sup>543</sup> By referring back to a ‘basic non-derivative concern *de dicto* to do the right thing’, ‘judgement externalism’ means that good people do not act honestly or help another person from a ‘direct concern’ for honesty or for the good of another, but from, in both cases, the same generic desire to do what they judge to be the right thing to do, whatever it is.<sup>544</sup>

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<sup>539</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *Civilization and Ethics* (London, Unwin Books, 1961) (C.T. Campion, and C.E.B. Russell, trans.), 85-87.

<sup>540</sup> G.J. Warnock, *Contemporary Moral Philosophy* (London, Macmillan, 1967) (hereafter ‘CMP’), 15.

<sup>541</sup> P.H. Nowell-Smith, *Ethics* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1954), 41.

<sup>542</sup> Darwall, ‘Motivation Problem’, 248-270.

<sup>543</sup> Michael Smith, *The Moral Problem* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1994), 75.

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

The Clarkeans were not ‘judgement externalists’, not least because, as Balguy makes clear,<sup>545</sup> they would have rejected it as Hutchesonian. For them, there is not an antecedent desire to do what is right because it is right; rather our desire to do what is right follows from our ‘seeing’, and so our direct encounter with, intrinsic rightness. Nonetheless, there are still difficulties for the Clarkeans related to the accusation of ‘moral fetishism’, where the fetishism is one about ‘fittingness’: CER gives the impression that we are concerned not with *what* it is that is right in itself, but simply the fact *that* it is right in itself. ‘The objectivist’ talk of moral facts ends up ‘condemning’ ‘a man for making an intellectual error’,<sup>546</sup> so that ‘the objective approach’ ‘misrepresent[s] our concept of “goodness”’,<sup>547</sup> because, within such a system, we would have to say of ‘a man noted for his high moral character, his kindness, incorruptibility, thoughtfulness [and so on]’, who nonetheless ‘says that he isn’t’ ‘conscious of observing any “non-natural property”...[or] “fittingness”’ when he acts morally, that ‘he cannot know *what goodness is*’.<sup>548</sup> Hutcheson (anticipating LNLC: see next chapter) was concerned that the CER distinction between ‘original obligation’ and ‘additional motivation’<sup>549</sup> meant that, “Merit is found only in Actions done without *Motive* or *Affection*, by *mere Election*, without prepollent

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<sup>545</sup> ‘moral Agents...must have, an *Affection* for Virtue. But why must this *Affection* be an *Instinct*? Whatever Reasons there may be for an *instinctive Benevolence*, I can see none for an *instinctive Love of Virtue*...We find our Minds necessarily *determined* in favour of Virtue. But I presume such a *Determination* is not antecedent, but consequent to our Perceptions of this amiable Object’ (TFMG, 92).

<sup>546</sup> D.H. Monro, *Empiricism and Ethics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967), 120; see also: *Essay*, 164.

<sup>547</sup> Stephen Toulmin, *Reason in Ethics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1964), 25.

<sup>548</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>549</sup> Underpinning both HC and LNLC (see next chapter) here is that, in opposition to Hutchesonian sentimentalism, Balguy and Price often spoke, as part of the distinction between ‘original obligation’ and ‘additional motives’, in proto-Kantian terms about actions performed on the basis of affective aspects of our nature: ‘we characterise as virtuous no actions flowing merely from instinctive desires, or from any principle except a regard to virtue itself’ (Review, 198-199), so “‘the virtue of an agent is always *less* in proportion to the degree in which natural temper and propensities fall in with his actions...and rational reflexion on what is right to be done, is wanting”’ (Review, 195); ‘Notwithstanding all that our author [Hutcheson] has alleged in behalf of instincts, I think it appears...that they are so far from constituting virtue...that...we always account those actions most virtuous which have the least dependence upon instincts’ (TFMG, 59). However, as we shall see below, and in the next chapter, in response to both HC and LNLC, the reaction against Hutcheson did not mean that the Clarkeans maintained that the rational perception of intrinsic rightness was, as Hutcheson contended, an ‘unaffectionate’ experience: ‘The End of the Moralist is Rectitude...Considered as Moral, this is precisely the Mark that he aims at; his Judgement directing, and his Affection prompting to this Object, as in a peculiar Sense, self-worthy’ (TFMG, 84).

[sic] *Desire of one Action or End*'.<sup>550</sup> Consequently, CER jumps to a Stoical extreme which makes '*Merit in Morals*' distasteful to 'every Honest Heart', by suggesting 'there should be no *Merit* in a *tender compassionate Heart*, which shrinks at every *Pain* of its *Fellow-Creatures*', because actions of real moral merit are performed from 'such an *unaffectionate Determination*, as that by which one moves his *first Finger* rather than the *Second*'.<sup>551</sup>

### The Objection from Supervenience

HC have helped to expose what J.L. Mackie, responding to both Clarke and modern rational intuitionism, called the 'queerness' of non-naturalism which has made rational intuitionism appear 'implausible',<sup>552</sup> or even 'foolish',<sup>553</sup> to its critics. CER and modern rational intuitionism relied upon 'the wilder products of philosophical fancy':<sup>554</sup> a 'suspicious'<sup>555</sup> or 'mysterious intuitive faculty',<sup>556</sup> such as conscience, and the 'queerness' of the objective moral qualities that 'by a mysterious "intellectual intuition"'<sup>557</sup> we are supposed to 'intuit' or 'perceive' with that faculty. Thus, Michael Smith refers the 'epistemological debt' of 'non-naturalism' and their inability to pay it:

Non-naturalists want to enrich our ontology with an extra property...They owe us an account of how we come by knowledge of the relations the extra properties they posit stand in to natural properties. And this is just what non-naturalists fail to do in any plausible way.<sup>558</sup>

The 'debt' of non-naturalism is consistent with the objection from supervenience as an aspect of non-naturalism's 'queerness'; as Mackie put it:

What is the connection between the natural fact that an action is a piece of deliberate cruelty...and the moral fact that it is wrong?...The wrongness must somehow be 'consequential'

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<sup>550</sup> *Essay*, 179.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.*, 180; for Hume's parallel remark, see: *Treatise*, 2.3.3.6: 'Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger'.

<sup>552</sup> Frankena, *Ethics*, *op.cit.*, 105.

<sup>553</sup> John Hartland-Swann, *An Analysis of Morals* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1960), 151.

<sup>554</sup> J.L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (Harmondsworth, London, 1990), 41.

<sup>555</sup> Nowell-Smith, *op.cit.*, 40.

<sup>556</sup> R.M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1964), 64.

<sup>557</sup> A.J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1990), 108.

<sup>558</sup> Smith, *op.cit.*, 25.

or ‘supervenient’; it is wrong because it is a piece of deliberate cruelty. But just what *in the world* is signified by this ‘because’? It is not even sufficient to postulate a faculty which ‘sees’ the wrongness: something must be postulated which can see at once the natural features that constitute the cruelty, and the wrongness, and the mysterious consequential link between the two.<sup>559</sup>

The question for the rational intuitionist is: if moral properties are irreducible, and so, to paraphrase Moore’s epigraphic use of Butler, ‘their own thing’, then how exactly do these non-natural properties relate to their natural features? According to Warnock:

The picture presented [by such intuitionists as Moore and Prichard] is that of a realm of moral qualities, *sui generis* and indefinable, floating, as it were, quite free from anything else...cropping up here and there...for no reason, in bare conjunction with more ordinary features of the everyday world.<sup>560</sup>

The suggestion that we simply ‘see’ rightness makes morality “‘empty’”<sup>561</sup> or contentless (if not also fetishistic) by making it something we merely ‘see’ or ‘detect’ ‘as attaching to anything whatever’,<sup>562</sup> such that we cannot suggest any ‘reason’ ‘why what is right is right’.<sup>563</sup>

Warnock here points back to key elements of HC and KC and the connections between them.

Korsgaard, in KC, is, as we have seen, concerned, like Warnock and HC, by how Clarkean and modern rational intuitionism were unable to convey all that we mean by moral conduct and moral judgement. She objects to how ‘substantive realists’ make morality a ‘theoretical’, as opposed to ‘practical’ subject, and how, in ‘substantive realism’, ‘We have normative concepts because we’ve spotted some normative entities, as it were wafting by’.<sup>564</sup> In Korsgaard and Warnock, the objection from supervenience betrays both the ‘theoretical poverty’<sup>565</sup> of non-naturalism and the complacency of rational intuitionists, where their

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<sup>559</sup> Mackie, *op.cit.*, 41.

<sup>560</sup> Warnock, *op.cit.*, 14.

<sup>561</sup> G.J. Warnock. *The Object of Morality* (London, Methuen & Co., 1971), viii.

<sup>562</sup> Warnock, *CMP*, 14.

<sup>563</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>564</sup> Korsgaard, *Sources.*, 44.

<sup>565</sup> Warnock, *op.cit.*, 17.

argument that ‘Some things *appear* normative, and there is no reason to doubt that they are what they seem’<sup>566</sup> stems from an ‘absence of curiosity’ ‘as men [not] much beset by moral uncertainties’.<sup>567</sup> Nowell-Smith agreed with HC and KC that CER rested upon on an unsatisfactory circularity (‘We know what we ought to do by knowing what we ought to do. Opium sends us to sleep because it has a *virtus dormitiva*’),<sup>568</sup> and also criticised its complacency as dangerous. In line with Anscombe’s criticism of Butlerian conscience, the rational intuitionist, ‘to whom conscience is an infallible guide’,<sup>569</sup> has mistaken ‘conscience’ for a faculty which intuits objective moral truth when it is actually the ‘product of the principles’<sup>570</sup> of our society and upbringing; in so doing, the rational intuitionist aggravates moral conflict: ‘If...intuitions are infallible...I will claim...this status for the values that I intuit, and you will claim it for yours’.<sup>571</sup> Consequently, ‘The objective theory, so far from minimising the use of force to settle moral conflicts...constantly has been used to justify it’:<sup>572</sup> it is in Clarke’s statement that right actions ‘are so notoriously plain and self-evident’ that only ‘the extremest stupidity of mind’ can make us ‘doubt’ them, that, ‘The theory underlying persecution is admirably explained’.<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> Korsgaard, *Sources*, 44.

<sup>567</sup> Warnock, *op.cit.*, 16.

<sup>568</sup> Nowell-Smith, *op.cit.*, 43.

<sup>569</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>570</sup> Hare, *op.cit.*, 77.

<sup>571</sup> Nowell-Smith, *op.cit.*, 46.

<sup>572</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>573</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

## Part II

### The *That* and the *What* of Intrinsic Rightness

Below, and in the next chapter, different aspects of this study's response to criticisms of CER will be considered. To frame the overall response to them it is helpful to begin here with the suggestion that criticisms of CER artificially, and unnecessarily, separate the *that* and the *what* of intrinsic rightness. The Clarkeans do not simply maintain *that* we perceive intrinsic rightness *with* reason, but that *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself *with* reason is *what* it is *that* is *according to* reason, where reason is RR: our law, God's law, and the law of the created universe itself.

The significance of the shift in emphasis between the criticisms of CER and the understanding of CER in this study is best illustrated by two lengthy quotations from Clarke:

Sin, in its own nature, even separate from the consideration of its being an obstinate disobeying the revealed will of God, is in itself utterly unreasonable and inexcusable: 'Tis acting in opposition to the known reason and proportion of things; contrary to that eternal Order and Equity, which God has established in the original constitution of Nature; opposite to the Light of Reason, the dictates of Conscience, the unprejudiced judgement of our own Minds, the Opinion of all wise and good men...contrary to all our natural Notions and Apprehensions, of the Attributes and Will of God; destructive to the public Welfare and Happiness of Mankind, the Health of our own Bodies, and the Peace of our Minds, and the Support of our good Name and Reputation.<sup>574</sup>

When he looks back upon his past life, and finds that in the general course thereof he has with simplicity and sincerity obeyed the dictates of his own conscience; that his actions have not been biased by passion or appetite, by any mean, unlawful, or private interest; but that he has done all things in obedience to the law of God; with a sincere design of promoting only the Glory of God, the Welfare of his Neighbour, and his own true and eternal Interest...<sup>575</sup>

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<sup>574</sup> Samuel Clarke, *Sermons by Samuel Clarke, D.D., in Eleven Volumes*, 7th edn (London, 1749) (hereafter '*Sermons*'), V.XI, 153.

<sup>575</sup> *Sermons*, VIII.XIII, 181.

It is possible to interpret such quotations within a reduced reading of the Clarkean understanding of conscience and intuition, previously associated with both HC and KC (see Introduction). We might say that, in order to be consistent with their distinction between ‘original obligation’ and ‘additional motives’, Clarke is referring above to (i) a moral motivation to do that which we perceive to be right in itself because it is according to the ‘reason and proportion of things’ that is surrounded by (or ‘complicated with’ (see below)) (ii) additional motivations and considerations that include our concern for our own judgement and happiness, the happiness and opinion of others, what our creator commands, and so on. Consequently, from a limited perspective, such quotations as those from Clarke might look consistent with an attempt to use conscience as a ‘bridging concept’<sup>576</sup> over the is/ought gap, within which additional considerations are *internal* to conscience even as they are *external* to the foundation of morals.

### Conscience *qua* ‘Bridging Concept’

John Maxwell, Richard Cumberland’s translator, suggests something like conscience *qua* ‘bridging concept’. In defending Cumberland’s theory of natural law, he explained that, while a ‘Proof of the Law of Nature’ is that it is ‘*discern’d by our natural Reason and Understanding*’, one ‘Objection’ to that ‘Proof’ is ‘*That it supposes, without Proof, the Legislative Power of Reason...For Reason can demonstrate...persuade...invite, but not compel*’.<sup>577</sup> On Cumberland’s behalf, Maxwell responded:

’Tis true, that mere Reason is not Law, but reason, complicated with what is Law, is necessarily Law. For as right Reason noticeth what is the *Well-doing* and the *Evil-doing*, it is complicated with what is, in its own Nature, matter of Law. And as it noticeth, that the *Well-doing*...is according to the Mind of God...it is complicated with what is Law, by a superior Authority.

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<sup>576</sup> The phrase is adapted from A.C. MacIntyre, ‘Hume on “is” and “ought”’ in W.D. Hudson (ed.), *op.cit.*, 35-50.

<sup>577</sup> John Maxwell, ‘A Treatise concerning the Obligation, Promulgation, and Observance of the Natural Law’, in Richard Cumberland, *A Treatise of the Laws of Nature* (Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2005) (J. Parkin, ed.), 914.

The Laws of Nature must be consider'd, not as the Dictates of mere right Reason, but as the Dictates of *conscientious Right Reason*.<sup>578</sup>

With respect to the Clarkeans, conscience *qua* 'bridging concept' means that it is no wonder that when 'Men know in their own conscience that such or such an action *ought not* to be done',<sup>579</sup> we cannot 'want a *motive* to action',<sup>580</sup> because what goes into conscience as the *is* of perceived intrinsic rightness is complicated with, and comes out as, the *oughts* of self-love, benevolence and divine command.

Of course, conscience *qua* 'bridging concept' means that, so far as such quotations as Clarke's (above) attempt to use 'the dictates of conscience' to carry moral agents to the *that* of perceived intrinsic rightness via the *what* of self-love, benevolence and/or obedience, the Clarkeans end up falling into what is, even on their own terms, externalism. Conscience *qua* bridging concept thus only artificially conceals the criticisms of 'contentlessness' in the Clarkean representations of what is moral and our motivation to act morally.

However, what if self-love, benevolence and obedience are themselves the *what* of intrinsic rightness? If so, it is legitimate for the Clarkeans, as in the quotations from Clarke, to give content to what is moral and our motivation to act morally with reference to our concern for acting self-interestedly *and* benevolently *and* obediently *qua* doing that which is right in itself.

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<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, 914-915.

<sup>579</sup> Clarke, *Sermons*, X.IX, 130.

<sup>580</sup> Price, *Review*, 186.

## The Single Law of Reason

In an important quotation, which I will return to in Chapter 3, Price describes what it means to believe in reason *qua* a single law which is experienced as our law, God's law, and the law of the created universe; and, as such, is a law which enjoins 'tripartite'<sup>581</sup> duties to ourselves, to others, and to God:

however different from one another the heads [of virtue]...they all run up into one general idea, and should be considered as only different modifications and views of one original, all-governing law. It is the same authority that enjoins, the same truth and right that oblige, the same eternal reason that commands in them all. Virtue thus considered, is necessarily *one* thing. No part of it can be separated from the other...The same law that requires piety, requires also benevolence, veracity, temperance, justice, gratitude, &c. All these rest on the same foundation, and are alike our indispensable duty. He, therefore, who *lives* in neglect of any of them, is as really a rebel against reason, and an apostate from righteousness and order, as if he neglected all of them...There is another coincidence between the...heads of virtue...their agreeing very often in requiring the same actions. An act of *justice* may be also an act of *gratitude* and *beneficence*; and whatever any of these oblige us to, that also *piety* to God requires...in the final issue of things...Whatever exceptions may now happen, if we will look forwards to the whole of our existence, the three great principles of the love of God, the love of man, and true self-love, will always draw us the same way...<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>581</sup> The 'tripartite' division of our moral duties, in the period under discussion, has been associated with the influence of Pufendorf, as well as the use of Titus 2:11-12, exhibited by Whichcote (see: Knud Haakonssen (ed.), *Thomas Reid on Practical Ethics* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2007), xlvii-xlviii; 181, fn.1, 'Natural Jurisprudence and the Identity of the Scottish Enlightenment', in Ruth Savage (ed.), *Philosophy and Religion in Enlightenment Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 270-272, 'From Natural Law to the Rights of Man: a European Perspective on American Debates', in M.J. Lacey and K. Haakonssen (eds), *A Culture of Rights: The Bill of Rights in Philosophy, Politics and Law* (Cambridge, Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1992), 29, fn.16, and *Natural Law*, 94, fn.79; Rivers, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, 18-24; 70-73; Harrison, *op.cit.*, 30-32; G.R. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1950), 37-40; Bedford, *op.cit.*, 175-177; Gill, *op.cit.*, 50-53. The following discussion introduces the Clarkean understanding of our 'tripartite' duties through Whichcote, not least because Clarke anonymously produced an edition of Whichcote's sermons in 1707 (see: S. Salter, 'Preface' to *Aphorisms*, xvii-xix; John Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*, Vol.I, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Edinburgh, Blackwood and Sons, 1874), 97; J.A. Passmore, *Ralph Cudworth: An Interpretation* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1951), 102-103; Rivers, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, 43). With respect to Butler and the 'tripartite' duties, Schneewind has pointed out that, following the first three sermons as a 'philosophical prolegomenon', the remaining *Fifteen Sermons* correspond to the 'traditional [tripartite] categories of duty': 'The next seven concern our duty to ourselves; they are followed by two on our duty to our neighbour, and three on our duty to God' (*Autonomy*, 343, fn.24; 343). According to Butler: 'an infinitely perfect Mind may be pleased, with seeing his creatures behave suitably to the nature which he has given them; to the relations which he has placed them in to each other; and to that, which they stand in to himself: that relation to himself, which, during their existence, is even necessary, and which is the most important one of all' (A, I.II.3), so that we must, 'Consider then what is the latitude and compass of the actions of man with regard to himself, his fellow-creatures, and the Supreme Being?' (S, II.21). Kenneth Kirk criticised Jeremy Taylor for losing 'himself in verbosity' in the following remark (*Conscience and Its Problems* (London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1927), 380); however, Taylor does exhibit the connections, examined below, between conscience *qua* our mind and conscience *qua* our knowledge of *what* it is *that* is right and wrong, when we encounter right and wrong as that which is satisfactory to our 'tripartite' duties: 'Conscience is the mind of a man governed by a rule, and measured by the proportions of good or evil, in order to practice, viz., to conduct all our relations and all our intercourse between God, our neighbour, and ourselves; that is, in all moral actions' (*Ductor*, I.I.i.1).

<sup>582</sup> *Review*, 165-166.

For the Clarkeans' critics, the phrase 'original obligation' supports the suggestion that any references within CER to the motivational force of self-love or benevolence makes the Clarkeans, even on their own terms, externalists. Such a phrase also seems consistent with the view that, within CER, moral motivation is always in danger of becoming somewhat 'contentless': not specifically related to a specific act of moral worth, but a characterless regard for an undefined, and, indeed, indefinable, rightness in general.

However, following Price, it is possible to appreciate why Clarke does not simply refer to our 'original obligation', but to our 'original obligations': our 'tripartite' moral duties to ourselves, to others, and to God. Our 'original obligation' is our 'original obligations', and vice versa, because when referring to the latter we are always referring to the former: to the same 'eternal Law of Righteousness' from which we 'deduce' the 'several [and '*particular*'] Duties of Morality or Natural Religion'.<sup>583</sup> It is not that moral distinctions are founded on self-love or benevolence or divine will, but that our responsibility to act for ourselves, others and God is the result of eternal moral distinctions. Acts are not right in themselves because they satisfy self-love, benevolence, or God's will, but acting self-concernedly *and* benevolently *and* obediently is right in itself: these are the duties that the law of rectitude enjoins and so are what Price called the 'subject matter of virtue'.

The Clarkeans are not only able to explain our normative concern for 'rectitude' in terms of our rational concern, and affection, for ourselves, for our fellow creatures, and for our creator, but also why intrinsic rightness supervenes upon that which is fitting to our relations with ourselves, others, and God: it is because God created the world under, and according to,

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<sup>583</sup> *Discourse*, 51.

the law of reason that we encounter our responsibility to the law of reason always as our responsibility to ourselves, to others, and to God:

Rectitude...or virtue, is a LAW...it is the *first* and *supreme* law, to which all other laws owe their force...The whole creation is ruled by it: under it men and all rational creatures subsist. It is the source and guide of all actions of the Deity himself, and on it his throne and government are founded....The...*relaxation* of it, once for a moment, in any part of the universe, cannot be conceived without a contradiction.<sup>584</sup>

Contrary to criticisms of the Clarkeans, reason in CER is *live* with the demands of God and others and ourselves, with our part in creation itself; it is only possible for us to make demands of ourselves, and for demands to be made upon us by others and God, through, and because of, reason; and the demands we make upon ourselves are the same as those made upon us by God and others. Despite criticisms related to ‘moral fetishism’, it is clear that within CER *what* the act of intrinsic rightness is *de re* does not disappear behind a commitment or motivation to do *what* it is *that* is right in itself *de dicto*. As W.D. Hudson puts it with respect to Price:

the sharp and complete distinction which is now commonly drawn, no doubt under the influence of Kant...between actions from a sense of duty and actions from such motives as benevolence and cruelty, would not have been drawn by Price...Rectitude, he believed, has a content. It is benevolence, among other things. Benevolent action for the sake of duty is not something different from benevolent action for the sake of benevolence, to Price.<sup>585</sup>

### ‘Enlarged’ ‘Conscientious Right Reason’

When interpreting the Clarkeans, and RR more generally, therefore, we need an ‘enlarged’ sense of Maxwell’s ‘*conscientious Right Reason*’, consistent with Hooker’s ‘enlarged’ Thomistic sense of law.<sup>586</sup> ‘*Conscientious Right Reason*’, in its ‘enlarged’ sense, is not simply conscience *qua* ‘bridging concept’. Within conscience *qua* ‘bridging concept’ a

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<sup>584</sup> Review, 109.

<sup>585</sup> W.D. Hudson, *Reason and Right: A Critical Examination of Richard Price’s Moral Philosophy* (London, Macmillan, 1970), 172.

<sup>586</sup> Hooker, *Laws*, I.iii.1.

moral act is performed by a moral agent with the consciousness that the perception of moral rightness is ‘complicated with’ the *oughts* of self-love, benevolence, our own judgement, and divine will. Instead, within an ‘enlarged’ sense of ‘*conscientious Right Reason*’, a moral agent appreciates that those *oughts* are themselves the *oughts* of reason. Thus, within an ‘enlarged’ sense of ‘*conscientious Right Reason*’, a moral agent acts conscientiously, and morally, when he performs his action on the basis of his reflective certainty in conscience that the act he perceives to be right in itself satisfies each of those *oughts qua* the *oughts* of reason.

### Duties to Reason and to Creation

In the earlier discussion of RR, we saw how conscience and intuition help to emphasise the fact that the perceptive and reflective exercise of reason is always *live* with all that reason is. However, because, ‘Goodness is seen with the eye of the understanding. And the light of that eye, is reason’,<sup>587</sup> conscience and intuition, in both RR and CER, are not only part of emphasising the fact that the rational perception of goodness (*qua* an operation of reason) is *live* with all that reason is, but, further, part of emphasising the fact that *what* it is *that* we perceive with reason to be *according to* reason is satisfying all that reason is *qua* our law, God’s law, and the law of the created universe itself:

The knowledge of that which man is in reference unto himself, and other things in relation unto man, I may justly term the mother of all those principles, which are as it were edicts...in that Law of Nature, whereby human actions are framed.<sup>588</sup>

Knowledge of such relations is not only inseparable from the exercise of human reason; those relations are determined by reason *qua* the divine ‘eternal law’ according to which human beings, and the world, were made (see Introduction). ‘The sentence of Reason, determining

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<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.*, I.vii.2.

<sup>588</sup> *Ibid.*, I.viii.6.

and setting down what is good to be done',<sup>589</sup> is that that which is 'fit and good to be done',<sup>590</sup> is that which is according to relations which are themselves determined by reason. It is the 'sentence of reason', with respect to our relation with ourselves, that (returning to the language of conscience and to *hegemonikon*: see Introduction) we appreciate that 'command' belongs to 'the diviner part in relation unto the baser of our souls';<sup>591</sup> it is the 'sentence of reason', with respect to our relation to God, that we appreciate all that belongs to God according to 'that known relation which God hath unto us as unto children';<sup>592</sup> and, with respect to our relation with others, it is the 'sentence of reason' that we appreciate the 'relation of equality between ourselves and them that are as ourselves' which breeds the 'desire to be loved [by]', and to love, them.<sup>593</sup>

Clarkean emphasis upon self-evidence through the mathematical analogy is the same as that within RR, where immediate intuitive assent stresses both that 'The greatest moral duties we owe towards God or man, may without any difficulty be concluded',<sup>594</sup> and that (unlike for Hutcheson and Hume) there is no real distinction between saying it is reason or human nature that functions as the *live intuitional bedrock* for moral action. The 'Law of Reason' and 'human Nature' are synonymous,<sup>595</sup> because 'the law whereunto by the light of reason men find themselves bound in that they are men'<sup>596</sup> is the law that we act with 'rectitude',<sup>597</sup> by fulfilling the duties that we owe to ourselves, to others, and to God. By acting fittingly towards

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<sup>589</sup> *Ibid.*, I.viii.8.

<sup>590</sup> *Ibid.*, I.Preface.iii.1

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*, I.viii.6.

<sup>592</sup> *Ibid.*, I.viii.7.

<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.*, I.viii.7.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*, I.viii.10.

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*, I.viii.8.

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xvi.1.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, I.viii.1.

ourselves, others, and God, we obey reason *qua* RR and are ‘the stay of the whole world’,<sup>598</sup>  
created by God according to the law of reason:

For we see the whole world and each part thereof so compacted...as long as each thing performeth only that work which is natural unto it, it...preserveth...other things, and...itself...is it possible, that Man being not only the noblest creature in the world, but even a very world in himself, his transgressing the Law of his Nature should draw no manner of harm after it?<sup>599</sup>

### Whichcote and the ‘Tripartite’ Duties

Whichcote’s treatment of ‘tripartite’ duties is closely related to Hooker above and the discussion of the Clarkeans below.

In RR, we have seen that there are ‘connatural’ self-evident practical ‘first principles’, which are:

principles of moral action...planted in the intellectual nature, in the moment of his creation...great truths...inherent in human nature...so that we cannot use reason but we must declare them, and make use of them, yea we are regulated by them.<sup>600</sup>

According to the interconnectedness of (1)-(4), as previously discussed,<sup>601</sup> when we contradict these principles, we not only contradict the ‘nature of things’, and the will and nature of God, but also our own nature and judgement, such that we suffer ‘self-condemnation’ in conscience. Whichcote makes it clear that the ‘truths’ and ‘principles’ to which we immediately assent consist of those which concern our acting for ourselves, for others, and for God. The exercise of reason is always *live* with ourselves, others, and God *qua* all that reason *is* and all that it is

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<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*, I.iii.2.

<sup>599</sup> *Ibid.*, I.ix.1.

<sup>600</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, IV.LXXVI, 109.

<sup>601</sup> As stated in the Introduction: “‘True law is right reason in agreement with nature [(1)]; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting [(2)]...and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it [(3)]...one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times [(1); (2)], and there will be one master and ruler...God...for he is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge [(4)]. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst penalties [(3)]...’” Consistent with the numbered parentheses inserted into the quotation above, Cicero’s definition effectively summarises both how the law of reason can be understood as our own law (3), God’s law (4), and the immutable law of the (Christian-created and/or Stoic-‘noetic’) universe itself (1); (2); and how those claims about reason are interconnected’.

our duty to do according to reason as rational agents. Moreover, while, through the exercise of reason, we gain knowledge of (and of what is ‘fitting’ to) the relations between, ourselves, others, and God, it is further the case that we have a ‘rational desire’ to fulfil our ‘tripartite’ duties to ourselves, others, and God, as part of our ‘subjective motivational set’ as creatures possessed of reason.

Thus, in the earlier discussion of RR, our twin subjection to the ‘eternal law’ was associated with the language of conscience and intuition. According to our twin subjection, we possess in, and as, ‘natural conscience’ both knowledge of the ‘eternal law’ and ‘rational instincts’ after the ends of reason, such that reason is a law to human beings as sense is to animals:

It is the same thing in moral agents, to observe and comply with the order and dictates of reason, as it is in inferior creatures, to act according to the sense and *impetus* of their natures.<sup>602</sup>

But to possess a drive for the ends of reason, *qua* the impetus of our rational nature, is to possess a drive for something, namely, *what* it is *that* is according to reason: acting for ourselves, for others, and for God.

It is as *Natural* for a *Man*, in respect to the Principles of God’s creation in Him; to do that towards *God*, his *Neighbour*, and *Himself*, which Right Reason doth demand; as it is for a *Beast*, to be guided by his Senses and Instinct; or as it is for the *Sun*, to give Light.<sup>603</sup>

For Whichcote, our ‘great and bright’, ‘connate’ ‘truths’ concern ‘piety, devotion towards God’, ‘to live in love’, ‘justice, righteousness amongst men’, and ‘the rule of sobriety and temperance of prudence and moderation’ with respect to ourselves:<sup>604</sup>

These are the instances of *morality founded in the creation of God*, and that arise from the *relation* that is between God and man...these are rooted in the intellectual nature; so that ’tis as

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<sup>602</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, III.LI, 52.

<sup>603</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.211.

<sup>604</sup> Whichcote, *Works*, IV.LXXVI, 111-112; III.LI, 53.

impossible for the intellectual nature to be without the principles and grounds of these, as it is impossible for...the sun [to be] without light or fire without heat...<sup>605</sup>

‘Nothing is more knowable’ than ‘*to do justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with God*’; Mic. vi. 8. *To live godly, righteously and soberly in this present world*, Tit. ii. 12’, because this is, ‘The truth of first inscription...connatural to man, it is the light of God's creation, and it flows from the principles of which man doth consist, in his very first make’.<sup>606</sup>

Returning to the language of conscience in RR, Whichcote maintains that, ‘There are three things in which every man that is born into the world and hath the use of reason is a law unto himself’:<sup>607</sup> ‘piety to God’; ‘righteousness to men’; and ‘righteousness to ourselves’.<sup>608</sup> ‘God did *make* man first to these things’ as ‘a law written in the heart of man’, ‘for the very dictates of natural conscience, God did interweave...into the very principles of our frame and constitution’.<sup>609</sup> By being ‘ungodly or unrighteous in these *three* great instances’,<sup>610</sup> an individual has ‘departed from himself’,<sup>611</sup> acted ‘contrary to’ God and ‘the order of reason’,<sup>612</sup> precisely because our ‘tripartite’ duties are:

the three great instances of virtue, the three fundamentals of religion, the three great *materials of conscience*, which are immutable, unalterable, and indispensable, that are settled in the very foundation of God’s creation [and ‘founded originally in the main foundation of God’]...<sup>613</sup>

### ‘Enlarged’ ‘Original Obligation’

Below, we shall pursue a further point in respect of the Clarkeans: that, in perceiving a particular instance of intrinsic rightness which is, for example, fitting to our duties to others,

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<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, II.XXVIII, 59.

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.*, III.L, 20.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*, I.III, 40.

<sup>608</sup> *Ibid.*, II.XXVIII, 57.

<sup>609</sup> *Ibid.*, III.LIV, 122.

<sup>610</sup> *Ibid.*, III.LVI, 148.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*, III.LIV, 122.

<sup>612</sup> *Ibid.*, I.VIII, 141.

<sup>613</sup> *Ibid.*, III.LVI, 148; IV.LXXVI, 112 (my italics).

we also perceive that to do that which is fitting to our relation to others is also always to do that which is fitting with respect to our relations with ourselves and with God. As Whichcote put it, ‘It is *God-like*, to take pleasure in the Good of Others’,<sup>614</sup> not least because ‘Nothing is more Reasonable; than that We should be that to *One another*, which God is to us *All*’.<sup>615</sup> Again, this further point adds greater emphasis to the fact that rational perception of moral truth in CER, as in RR, is not only always *live* with all that reason *is*, but also always *live* with *what* it is *that* we perceive *with* reason to be *according to* reason, so that rational perception is always normatively *thick* with all that it means to act according to reason.

As we shall see, the Clarkeans are able to avoid the claim of HC, and KC, that within CER we perceive with a *thin is* of reason moral truths that are potentially uninteresting, because external from us in a posited realm of normative fact. In CER, *what* it is *that* we perceive *with* reason to be *according to* reason directly concerns our ‘subjective motivational set’ as rational agents. Consequently, it is possible to appreciate why the Clarkeans are not, on their own terms, externalists when they refer to our normative concern to do *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself *qua* acting in imitation of God’s will, or *qua* acting with ‘self-approbation’. Such motivations are ‘internal’ to the perception of intrinsic rightness, and are, as such, part of our ‘original obligation’ to do that which is right in itself *qua* acting for ourselves, for others, and for God. When the Clarkeans distinguish between ‘additional motives’ and our ‘original obligation’, we must be careful not to mistake the normative concern for ‘self-approbation’, ‘self-condemnation’ and God’s will *qua* exemplar for what the Clarkeans meant by ‘additional motives’. In CER, acting from an ‘immediate relish’ for all that reason *is qua* our law, God’s law, and the law of the created universe is not the same as doing that which is right in itself

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<sup>614</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.549.

<sup>615</sup> *Ibid.*, No.710.

simply because God commands it; or because we derive sensual pleasure from it; or because God rewards us for it.

Chapter 3 will develop the above point slightly. In line with the two quotations from Clarke (above), the moral agent does not simply know, in conscience, that to do that which is right in itself is also to act according to his own interests, the interests of others, and God's will, but that this is what it *means* to do that which is right in itself. While seeking 'natural' happiness and heavenly reward is 'additional' to our desire to do that which is right in itself because it is right in itself, in the world as a 'state of trial' they form a necessary part of our practical moral reasoning as we develop our moral character and move from AATC to AAOC. Consistent with the single law of reason, it is only so far as we are confident that we have acted for ourselves, for others, and for God that we can be confident that we have done that which is right in itself. 'Natural' happiness and 'eternal reward' can be pursued from, and with the intention of, 'rectitude', not simply because such concerns are consistent with our responsibilities for, and duties to, ourselves as rational agents, but because such considerations are a necessary and legitimate part of our *faithful* confidence and commitment, in a world of trial and uncertainties, to every action we perform as moral agents as acting for ourselves *and* for others *and* for God.

### **God's Being**

Part I referred to the *live intuitional bedrock* of benevolence and the moral sense in Hutcheson and Hume. The criticism of the Clarkeans is that what is missing from their thought is such a *live intuitional bedrock* because they focus upon the static *is* of truth or reason. For John Finnis, voicing LNLC (see next chapter), Clarke could not bridge the *is/ought* gap,

because he had surrendered a necessary feature of the ‘standard’ natural law tradition in the seventeenth-century:

What is right and wrong depends on the nature of things...not on a decree of God; but the normative or motivating significance of moral rightness and wrongness...depends fundamentally upon there being a decree expressing God’s will that the right be done... Clarke’s difficulties arose from the fact that, while rejecting one part of this twofold thesis, he accepted the other part...he rejected the assumption that obligation is essentially the effect of a superior’s act of will. But he remained so firmly within the grip of the thesis that practical reasoning is a matter of discerning relations of fittingness to or consistency with nature that he tried to treat obligation as just one more of the set of relations of consistency.<sup>616</sup>

However, the ethical rationalists did not remove the ‘normative or motivating’ force of God’s will, but rather, in moral acts, the ‘normative or motivating’ force of doing what God wills simply because a superior being has commanded it, and of obeying God’s commands (and so the moral law) in order to receive divine reward. Consistent with RR, the Clarkeans maintained that, as human reason participates in divine reason, an awareness and appreciation of God’s being and attributes cannot be isolated from the ability to, and the act of, perceiving intrinsic rightness, such that God’s will is a moral motivating force *qua* exemplar.

For the Clarkeans, voluntarism ‘overthrows the Divine attributes and existence’.<sup>617</sup> God’s existence is undermined because, as Price put it, ‘Infinite, eternal truth implies an infinite, eternal MIND’<sup>618</sup> and ‘An eternal, necessary *mind* supposes eternal, necessary *truth*’.<sup>619</sup> If all truth, including moral truth, is dependent upon God’s will then there is no necessary ‘difference between power and impotence, wisdom and folly, truth and falsehood, existence and non-existence’.<sup>620</sup> And if there is no longer ‘Infinite, eternal truth’, there is no

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<sup>616</sup> John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 44-45.

<sup>617</sup> *Review*, 86.

<sup>618</sup> *Review*, 88.

<sup>619</sup> *Review*, 86.

<sup>620</sup> *Review*, 85.

longer an ‘infinite, eternal MIND’, nor any possibility of conceiving of a being who has the divine perfections of infinite wisdom, power and perfect goodness:

Mind supposes truth; and intelligence, something intelligible...If...there were...no eternal, necessary, independent truths; there could be no infinite, independent, necessary *mind* or *intelligence*....Just as, if there were nothing *possible*, there could be no *power*; or, if there were no necessary *infinity* of possible, there could be no necessary, *infinite* power...<sup>621</sup>

Consequently, nominalism and atheism are both self-contradictions:

When we are endeavouring to suppose, that there is *no Being* in the Universe that Exists Necessarily; we always find in our Minds...some Ideas of *Infinity* and *Eternity*; which to remove...is, to suppose that there is no Being...to which these Attributes or Modes of Existence are necessarily inherent, [and] is a Contradiction in the very Terms.<sup>622</sup>

Nominalism and atheism contradict both the ‘natural notions’ we have of such ideas as ‘wisdom’, ‘justice’ and ‘power’, which must depend on an eternal mind, and so also our ‘natural notion’ of God as the origin, and possessor, of wisdom, justice and power. Thus, for the Clarkeans, the idea of God as an infinite and necessarily existing eternal being:

’Tis the First and Simplest Idea we can possibly frame; an Idea *necessarily and essentially* included or presupposed, as a *sine qua non*, in every other idea whatsoever; an Idea, which (unless we forbear thinking at all!) we cannot possibly extirpate or remove out of our Minds....<sup>623</sup>

While we have seen that the Clarkeans’ critics often refer to Clarke’s statement that only ‘stupidity of mind’ and ‘corruption of manners’ prevent people from seeing what is self-evidently right, Clarke is just as forthright about the being and attributes of God. Any man, ‘*who makes Use of his Reason...may easily become...certain of the Being of a Supreme Independent Cause*’; it is only ‘possible’ for ‘a Man’ to be ‘in some Sense...*ignorant* of this first and plain Truth’ ‘that there *Is* somewhat Eternal, Infinite, and Self-existing, which must

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<sup>621</sup> Review, 86.

<sup>622</sup> Samuel Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* (hereafter ‘*Demonstration*’) in Clarke, *A Discourse Concerning the Being and Attributes of God, the Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion*, 10<sup>th</sup> edn (London, 1767), 15.

<sup>623</sup> *Demonstration*, 17.

be the Cause and Original of all other Things’, ‘by being utterly stupid, and not thinking at all’.<sup>624</sup> As Price put it:

Every thought and every idea of every mind...imply its necessary and unchangeable existence...Can this be anything besides the divine, uncreated, infinite *reason and power*, from whence all other reason and power are derived, offering themselves to our minds, and forcing us to see and acknowledge them...What is the true conclusion from such considerations, but that there is an incomprehensible *first* wisdom, knowledge and, power *necessarily existing*, which contain in themselves all things, from which all things sprung, and upon which all things depend...There is nothing so intimate with us, and one with our natures as God. He is included...in all our conceptions, and necessary to all the operations of our minds...<sup>625</sup>

### God’s Attributes and Will

As we cannot separate from our ideas of infinity or power the fact that these ideas originate in God, we have to admit that they are attributes of God. It ‘evidently follows’<sup>626</sup> from our own ‘natural notion’ of God as eternal and necessarily existent, and the fact that we have our own ‘natural notions’ of infinity, power, and so on, that God possesses the ‘*natural Attributes*’ of ‘infinite Knowledge, Wisdom, and Power’.<sup>627</sup> It also follows from our own ‘natural notions’ of justice and goodness that God, as their ‘origin’, must possess all ‘*Moral Perfections*’, and so we cannot experience our own moral ideas without knowing that ‘Justice, Goodness, and all other Moral Attributes of God, are as *Essential* to the Divine Nature as the Natural Attributes of Eternity, Infinity, and the like’.<sup>628</sup>

Indeed, in line with RR, Clarke stressed that to deny God’s moral attributes is to deny his natural attributes and vice versa.<sup>629</sup> It is possible to deduce God’s moral attributes from his natural attributes, because there is a ‘necessary Connexion of *Goodness, Justice*, or any

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<sup>624</sup> *Demonstration*, 19.

<sup>625</sup> *Review*, 88.

<sup>626</sup> *Demonstration*, 44.

<sup>627</sup> *Demonstration*, 38.

<sup>628</sup> *Demonstration*, 111.

<sup>629</sup> *Discourse*, 27-28.

other *Moral* Attribute, with these Natural Perfections'.<sup>630</sup> Clarke's 'Argumentation *a priori*' maintained that God 'must of Necessity be a *Being of Infinite Goodness, Justice, and Truth, and all other Moral Perfections*',<sup>631</sup> because, as '*Infinite Knowledge, and the Perfection of Wisdom*',<sup>632</sup> 'He...*knows perfectly*'<sup>633</sup> 'the Natural and Necessary Relations of Things...the true Ground and Foundation of all Morality',<sup>634</sup> and, as '*complete Power*', he has '*No possible Temptation* to deviate in the least therefrom':<sup>635</sup>

from the *Attributes* of God natural Reason leads Men to the Knowledge of his *Will*...the same Reasons and Arguments, which discover to Men the *natural Fitnesses or Unfitnesses of Things*, and the *necessary Perfections or Attributes of God*...[prove] that That which is truly the *Law of Nature*, of the *Reason of Things*, is in like Manner the *Will of God*.<sup>636</sup>

## God's Nature

From our *a priori* knowledge of God's being and attributes we know that, 'tis...*truly and absolutely impossible for God not to do*...what his Moral Attributes require him to do',<sup>637</sup> but also that:

we ought to distinguish between the *will* of God and his *nature*. It by no means follows, because...[truth is] independent of his *will*, that...[it is] independent of his *nature*.<sup>638</sup>

The '*Law of Nature*', which '*is of the same Original with the eternal Reasons or Proportions of Things*', is '*of the same Original with...the Perfections or attributes of God himself*'.<sup>639</sup> And so, while the '*eternal Rule of Justice and Goodness*'<sup>640</sup> itself determines the will of God, this is simply the same as saying that God '*directs*' himself, and that his will follows from his nature:

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<sup>630</sup> *Demonstration*, 111-112.

<sup>631</sup> *Demonstration*, 109.

<sup>632</sup> *Demonstration*, 107.

<sup>633</sup> *Demonstration*, 108.

<sup>634</sup> *Demonstration*, 106.

<sup>635</sup> *Demonstration*, 108.

<sup>636</sup> *Discourse*, 93-94.

<sup>637</sup> *Demonstration*, 110.

<sup>638</sup> *Review*, 87.

<sup>639</sup> *Discourse*, 65.

<sup>640</sup> *Discourse*, 70.

the obligations ascribed to the Deity arise entirely from and exist in his own nature...that eternal, unchangeable LAW, by which...he is directed in all his actions, is no other than HIMSELF; *his own infinite, eternal, all perfect understanding*.<sup>641</sup>

And so:

when *morality* is represented as eternal and immutable...it is only saying that God himself is eternal and immutable...making his nature the high and sacred original of virtue...the sole fountain of all that is true and good and perfect.<sup>642</sup>

All truth, including moral truth, is prior to God's will, but this does not mean that it is prior to God; indeed, to say that the law of reason determines God's will is only to say that God's nature is prior to his will and that God directs himself in accordance with his nature. Even though God's positive will is not the ground of moral distinctions we cannot but be aware of what God wills on the basis of his nature, our *a priori* knowledge of which is inseparable from '*the use of reason*'. God's will, even without the prospect of reward, retains its normative force in CER, therefore, because rational perception is *live* with God as inseparable from the truth perceived.

### Conscience, Imitation and God's Will *qua* Exemplar

In this context, the Clarkeans make use, familiar from RR, of conscience to express our 'natural notions and apprehensions of God', and so the fact that, as 'God has made us intelligent and free, capable of knowing and seeing our Creator, we are bound in all respects, to behave accordingly'.<sup>643</sup> 'Conscience is God's deputy'<sup>644</sup> and 'Vicegerent',<sup>645</sup> our 'domestic governor',<sup>646</sup> a 'continual Witness'<sup>647</sup> to God, which is God's 'voice',<sup>648</sup> such that, for the

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<sup>641</sup> Review, 111.

<sup>642</sup> Review, 89.

<sup>643</sup> John Balguy, *Sermons on the Following Subjects*, 2 Vols., 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (London, 1790) (hereafter 'SFS'), I.XVIII, 338.

<sup>644</sup> SFS, I.III, 48.

<sup>645</sup> Richard Price, *Sermons on Various Subjects* (London, 1816) (W. Morgan, ed.) (hereafter 'SVS'), 149.

<sup>646</sup> SFS, II.III, 51.

<sup>647</sup> *Sermons*, V.VI, 81.

<sup>648</sup> SFS, I.XIX, 359.

‘fool’ ‘To say in his heart there is no God, is to give the lie to his own conscience’.<sup>649</sup> In the Pauline language of inscription, conscience symbolises the fact that, by being created with the ‘divine gift of *reason*...we are exalt[ed]...into our Maker’s Likeness’,<sup>650</sup> and so ‘constituted moral agents’ who ‘bear the signature of God’s image’,<sup>651</sup> and who are made ‘to the Imitation and Likeness of God’.<sup>652</sup> Conscience in CER, as in RR, emphasises how God is active in the very ‘operations of our minds’, and how, upon the exercise of reason, and our immediate assent to truth, we experience God as the ‘fount’ or ‘origin’ of truth. To perceive truth has an unavoidable normative richness to it, which need not be reducible to God’s will *qua* positive command, but can be appreciated as God’s will *qua* exemplar:

the same intrinsic Excellency of *Right* and *Good*, which always determines the Will of *God* Himself, *ought* also in Proportion to govern the Actions of all *other* rational Beings...All *rational and intelligent* Beings are, by the Law of their Nature, obliged to endeavour to become in their several degrees and properties like unto *Him*, who alone is *Perfect* Reason and Understanding. This is an *original* Obligation, founded in *Nature* itself, *requiring* us to *imitate* what it *necessitates* us to *admire*.<sup>653</sup>

For the Clarkeans, as the contemplation of God’s being and attributes is inseparable from the perception of moral truth, so is the excitement to imitate God. And this excitement is not based on reward or mere command, but arises from knowing what God is (his being and attributes) and what God does (what he wills). Our *a priori* knowledge of ‘The necessary perfections of the Deity; the infinite excellences of his nature as the fountain of reason and wisdom’ means that we know, ‘from hence, and not merely from his almighty power, arises his SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY’.<sup>654</sup> Consequently, while the Clarkeans are known for maintaining that ‘Moral Truth and Rectitude are Self-good, and Self-eligible’, included in the self-eligibility of ‘the Rule of Truth’ is our experience of, and desire to imitate, God as part of

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<sup>649</sup> *SFS*, I.XVI, 298.

<sup>650</sup> *SFS*, I.XVIII, 329.

<sup>651</sup> *SFS*, I.XVIII, 338.

<sup>652</sup> *Discourse*, 173.

<sup>653</sup> *Sermons*, II.VIII, 104-105.

<sup>654</sup> *Review*, 113.

rational perception, not least because, ‘Every Ray of Truth and Reason seems to participate of the Majesty of that Being; to whom it all belongs, and whose Attribute it is’:

To refuse subjection to right Reason, when clearly seen and known; may be looked upon as the very Essence of Rebellion. It is violating the great and fundamental Law of Heaven and Earth...*Reason...is Divine*, in the strictest Sense: All necessary Truth being an essential Efflux or Emanation from the infinite and all perfect Mind. Hence it appears not only possessed of the highest Worth, Beauty and Excellence, but invested with a supreme and absolute Authority, not only attractive, but really awful.<sup>655</sup>

### The *What* of Imitation

Of course, it must be the case that we not only admiringly perceive *that* something is right in itself, and *that* to do that which we perceive to be right in itself is to imitate God; we also perceive *what* it is that is intrinsically right, and so *what* acts would be, and are to be, performed in imitation of God. For the Clarkeans, *what* we perceive to be intrinsically right is that which is fitting to our ‘tripartite’ duties to ourselves, to others, and to God.<sup>656</sup> Consistent with the single law of reason, our experience of all that reason *is*, and our knowledge of our relations to, and responsibilities for, ourselves, others, and God, are inseparable from the perception of moral truth. To perceive it is not only to perceive *what* it is *that* we desire to perform in imitation of God, but *what* it is *that* is fitting to our relation with ourselves, others, and God. Indeed, because to perceive moral truth is to perceive *what* it is *that* is according to reason itself, when we perceive *what* it is *that* is fitting to any one of our relations, we also perceive *what* it is *that* is fitting to each of our relations, and so *what* it is *that* is satisfactory to each of our ‘tripartite’ duties to ourselves, to others, and to God.

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<sup>655</sup> *LT*, 379-380.

<sup>656</sup> See: *Discourse*, 50-68; *TFMG*, 88; John Balguy, *A Letter to a Deist*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (hereafter ‘*First Letter*’) in *Collection*, 23 and *Divine Rectitude: Or, a Brief Inquiry Concerning the Moral Perfections of the Deity; Particularly in respect of Creation and Providence*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (hereafter ‘*DR*’), in *Collection*, 259 and *An Essay on Redemption*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Winchester, 1785) (hereafter ‘*EOR*’), 145; *Review*, 131-176.

## Clarkean Equity and Benevolence

Clarke maintained, ‘Tis evidently more *Fit*...that Men should deal with one another according to the known Rules of *Justice and Equity*:<sup>657</sup>

The Reason which *obliges* Every Man in *Practice*...to [do ‘as we would be done by’]...is the...same as ...That which *forces* him in *Speculation* to affirm...if one Line or Number be equal to another, That other is reciprocally equal to It. *Iniquity* is the very same in *Action*, as *Falsity* or *Contradiction* in *Theory*; and the same Cause which makes the one *Absurd*, makes the other *Unreasonable*.<sup>658</sup>

We perceive that ‘*doing as we would be done by*’ is a moral truth: it should be ‘impossible for Men not to be as much ashamed of *Doing Iniquity*, as they are of *Believing Contradictions*’, because it is according to ‘the clearest plainest Reason in the World’ that ‘Whatever Relation or Proportion one Man in any Case bears to another; the same That Other, when put in like Circumstances, bears to Him’.<sup>659</sup> However, for Clarke, it is not only that equity is ‘fit’ to be done, but that, ‘tis undeniably more *Fit*, absolutely and in the Nature of the Thing itself, that all Men should endeavour to promote the *universal Good and Welfare of All*’.<sup>660</sup> Human beings are under an ‘Obligation’ to the ‘Duty’ of ‘*universal Love or Benevolence*’:

not only doing barely what is Just and Right...but...a constant Endeavouring to promote in general...the Welfare and Happiness of all Men...For if...there be a natural and necessary Difference between Good and Evil, and that which is Good is Fit and Reasonable, and that which is Evil is Unreasonable to be done; and that which is the greatest Good, is always the *most* Fit and Reasonable to be chosen...so every rational Creature *ought*...to do all the Good it can to all its Fellow-creatures.<sup>661</sup>

As ‘from the different *Relations of different Persons one to another*, there necessarily arises a Fitness or Unfitness of certain *Manners of Behaviour*’,<sup>662</sup> the duty of benevolence can be

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<sup>657</sup> *Discourse*, 31.

<sup>658</sup> *Discourse*, 53-54.

<sup>659</sup> *Discourse*, 54-55.

<sup>660</sup> *Discourse*, 31.

<sup>661</sup> *Discourse*, 57.

<sup>662</sup> *Discourse*, 30.

‘deduced’:<sup>663</sup> it is fit for the moral agent to ‘do as he would be done by’, but most fit to promote the good of others; and it must always be most fit to do the most fit thing.

The duties of equity and benevolence are ‘plain and self-evident’ moral truths. But we have seen above that the perception of a moral truth is inseparable from, and so *thick with*, ‘intimate’ ‘natural notions and apprehensions’ of God, and a desire to imitate God *qua* exemplar. We cannot separate out from our ‘natural notions’ of God’s being and attributes, and the perceived intrinsic rightness of acting in imitation of him, *what* it is *that* God wills, and so *what* it is *that* we must do to imitate God. To perceive the moral truth of equity and benevolence is not only to perceive *what* it is *that* is ‘fitting’ to do when acting in relation to other human beings, but also that acting according to such moral truths is to act fittingly to our relation with God. Consequently, *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself according to God’s will *qua* exemplar is, at the same time, *what* it is *that* we perceive to be fitting to our relations with others and God.

Clarke suggested that the ‘Method of deducing the *Will* of God, from his *Attributes*, is of all others the best and clearest, the certainest and most universal, that the Light of Nature affords’.<sup>664</sup> And so it follows from ‘natural notions’ of God’s attributes that acting for others is acting to ‘imitate’ God, because ‘in his government of the World, [God] does always what in the whole is best...what tends most to the Good of the whole Creation’:<sup>665</sup>

[God] being infinitely Self-sufficient to his own Happiness, could have no other Motive to create...but only that he might communicate to them his Goodness and Happiness, and who, consequently, cannot but expect and require, that all Creatures should, according to their several Powers and Faculties, endeavour to promote the same End.<sup>666</sup>

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<sup>663</sup> *Discourse*, 55; 57.

<sup>664</sup> *Discourse*, 94.

<sup>665</sup> *Sermons*, VII.VII, 101.

<sup>666</sup> *Discourse*, 96.

However, as the above quotation indicates, to perceive the moral truth of benevolence, for example, is not only to perceive *what* it is *that* is fitting to our relations with others, and *what* it is *that* we must do to imitate God *qua* exemplar, but also *what* it is *that* is fitting to our relation with God as the ‘*Relation of a Creature to his Creator*’.<sup>667</sup> For Clarke, as ‘the eternal and unchangeable Nature and Reason of the *Things* themselves’ ‘are the Law of *God himself*, not only to his *Creatures*, but also to *Himself*, as being the Rule of all his own Actions in the Government of the World’, not only is it the case that ‘*these eternal moral Obligations are really in perpetual Force, merely from their own Nature, and the abstract Reason of Things*’, but:

*so also they are moreover the express and unalterable Will, Command, and Law of God to his creatures, which he cannot but expect should, in Obedience to his Supreme Authority, as well as in Compliance with the natural Reason of Things, be regularly and constantly observed thro’ the whole Creation.*<sup>668</sup>

So, while the ‘obligation [to imitate God] is confirmed by...Light of Reason’, it is ‘the same Light of Reason teaching us further, that *Imitation of God*, as ’tis most *fit* in itself... cannot but be likewise acceptable unto *Him*, and agreeable to his *Will*’.<sup>669</sup> Thus, the fact that God:

is always pleased to make those Rules [‘of everlasting Righteousness’] the Measure of all his *Own* Actions, necessarily prove, that it must likewise be his *Will*, that all rational *Creatures* should proportionably [sic] make them the Measure of *Theirs*;<sup>670</sup>

And consequently, that the wilful Transgression or Neglect of them is as truly an insolent Contempt of the Authority of God, as ’tis an absurd Confounding of the natural Reasons and Proportions of Things.<sup>671</sup>

To perceive moral truth is not only to appreciate what God wills as consistent with his nature, but also to recognise that we ought to act for others (which we, at any rate, perceive to be right in itself), not only to imitate God (which we also perceive to be right in itself), but also because

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<sup>667</sup> *Discourse*, 53.

<sup>668</sup> *Discourse*, 90-91.

<sup>669</sup> *Sermons*, II.VIII, 105.

<sup>670</sup> *Sermons*, II.VIII, 105.

<sup>671</sup> *Discourse*, 91.

such behaviour is commanded by God and we perceive it to be right in itself to obey God. For Clarke, ‘Piety...towards God is as necessarily good in itself, and of as unchangeable Obligation in Nature and Reason; as the Creator is of necessity infinitely superior to his Creatures’,<sup>672</sup> and ‘The Sense of our having *received our Being and all our powers from him*, makes it infinitely reasonable that we should *employ our whole Beings, and all our Faculties, in his Service*’.<sup>673</sup>

It follows from the above that, ‘The Sense of our having *received our Being and all our powers from*’ God is inseparable from the perception of moral truth and so, as was referenced earlier, our ‘natural notions and apprehensions’ of God as the source of all truth. It further follows that the reason why we stand in such a relation to God, which makes it fitting for us to do what he commands, is because God:

has created [us] after his own Image...[and] has endued [us] with excellent Powers and Faculties to enable...[us] to distinguish between Good and Evil...[and] imitate him in the Exercise of those divine Perfections.<sup>674</sup>

*What* it is *that* we perceive to be fit to our relation with God returns us, not just to our capacity to perceive *that* particular actions are right in themselves, but *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself with that capacity; namely, in the context of benevolence, acting for others, which we perceive to be an action in imitation of God fitting to our relation with God and with others:

The Order and Harmony of God’s Creation, depends upon every Creature acting according to the Law of its Nature...this Law of Nature to *Men*, is, our Obligation to govern ourselves by that Particular Understanding and Knowledge, whereby we are distinguished from the inferior part of the Creation; whereby we are enabled to discern between Good and Evil...God has indued [sic] us with Faculties, by which we are able to see and distinguish what will promote the Welfare and Happiness of the world; and he has given us those Faculties for that very End and that by distinguishing things right, we might direct our Choice to such actions always as are most universally useful and beneficial to Mankind.<sup>675</sup>

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<sup>672</sup> *Sermons*, VII.VII, 94.

<sup>673</sup> *Discourse*, 52.

<sup>674</sup> *Sermons*, II.VIII, 106.

<sup>675</sup> *Sermons*, VII.VII, 100.

Of course, the above quotations, as they refer to doing *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself as acting according to the law of our own nature, also demonstrate how *what* it is *that* we perceive to be fitting to our relation with others and God is also *what* it is *that* we perceive to be fitting to our relation with ourselves.

## Conscience and Assent

The Clarkeans, as in RR, use conscience and immediate assent to emphasise the fact that the intuition of self-evident moral truth is not only *live* with God but *live* with ourselves.

That there is an essential Difference between Good and Evil, between Virtue and Vice; is what every man as clearly discerns by the natural and necessary Perception of his own Mind and Conscience, as his Eyes see the Difference between Light and Darkness.<sup>676</sup>

‘Conscience’ *qua* ‘the law of...[our] own understanding’<sup>677</sup> cannot ‘forbear giving its Assent’ to *what* it is *that* it perceives to be ‘Just and Right’.<sup>678</sup> Consequently, conscience *qua* our ‘own mind’<sup>679</sup> emphasises the fact that ‘the Necessity of the Mind’s giving its Assent to the eternal Law of Righteousness’<sup>680</sup> means that ‘the unalterable Rule of Right and Equity’, as it ‘force[s] the Assent of all Men’, ‘necessarily and unavoidably determine[s] the Judgement’.<sup>681</sup> In, and through, conscience we experience the law of reason to which we cannot avoid giving our assent as the law of our own judgement and nature. Such an experience is consistent with the fact that ‘*right Reason*’ (and Clarke here makes explicit reference, as in RR, to St. Paul, Cicero and Plato’s *Meno*)<sup>682</sup> was ‘written’ on our hearts by God as our ‘*Law of Nature*’,<sup>683</sup> ‘which makes the principal Distinction between *Men* and *Beasts*’.<sup>684</sup> In, and as, conscience, we

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<sup>676</sup> *Sermons*, II.VI, 77.

<sup>677</sup> *SFS*, I.VI, 104.

<sup>678</sup> *Discourse*, 44.

<sup>679</sup> *SFS*, I.I, 3.

<sup>680</sup> *Discourse*, 50.

<sup>681</sup> *Discourse*, 44.

<sup>682</sup> *Discourse*, 44-45; 65.

<sup>683</sup> *Discourse*, 44.

<sup>684</sup> *Discourse*, 65.

experience reason as ‘our governing Principle, our supreme Guide’.<sup>685</sup> And it is in, and as, conscience that we experience the law of reason, ‘to which’ we are ‘subject’, as ‘no other than the law of...[our] own mind’, so that whoever acts contrary to reason acts ‘contrary to the convictions of his conscience’,<sup>686</sup> while ‘he who follows his conscience...follows his nature’.<sup>687</sup>

Although CER has been viewed as suggesting that moral truths are ‘mysterious’ entities, which we happen to see ‘wafting by’ at a distance, their description of moral perception is actually one of a dynamic encounter in conscience with all that reason *is*, whereby rational creatures are enabled to act for themselves, their fellow creatures, and their creator. The Clarkeans are able to use conscience to maintain that, just as the normative force of God’s will *qua* exemplar cannot be separated from our experience of the perception of intrinsic rightness, and our desire to do that which is right in itself because it is right in itself, neither can the normative force of ‘self-approbation’ and ‘self-condemnation’ be separated from our experience of the perception of intrinsic rightness, and our desire to do that which is right in itself because it is right in itself:

*Moral Obligation* has been considered as *intellectual Attraction*, of the noblest Kind. But it is not, like *corporeal Attraction*, effected at a Distance. *Reason*, or the Appearance of Reason, must be perceived, before it can move the Mind at all.<sup>688</sup>

Upon the perception *with* reason of *what* it is *that* is *according to* reason, ‘The same Necessity which compels Men to *assent* to what is *true*, forces them to approve what is *right* and fit’.<sup>689</sup> However, ‘*Approbation* does not constitute *Merit*, but is produced by it’.<sup>690</sup> Our

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<sup>685</sup> *TFMG.II*, 194.

<sup>686</sup> *SVS*, 217.

<sup>687</sup> *SVS*, 149.

<sup>688</sup> *LT*, 413.

<sup>689</sup> *TFMG*, 81.

<sup>690</sup> *TFMG*, 59.

approval of *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself is a result of our encounter with *what* it is *that* possesses intrinsic worth:

Truth, probity, integrity, fidelity, benevolence, mercy, charity towards men; with humble reverence, gratitude and piety towards God; as they are in themselves most lovely, and most excellent; so they must needs make a delightful appearance in the eye of the possessor. The noblest views, and finest prospects upon the face of the earth, cannot equal the charms of this moral landskip [sic].<sup>691</sup>

Our ‘forced’ approval of ‘whatever appears *right*’ is not an ‘external’ ‘Necessity’, but one that ‘flows directly from the intrinsic Excellence, and Self-amiableness of the Thing approved’.<sup>692</sup> However, as the ‘affection or inclination to rectitude [which] cannot be separated from the view of it’,<sup>693</sup> is ‘that Affection, of which *Reason* itself is the *Object*’,<sup>694</sup> ‘that excitement [which] belongs to the very ideas of moral right and wrong, and is essentially inseparable from the apprehension of them’, is that which we experience as our natural ‘disposition’ to act according to reason as rational agents.<sup>695</sup> When we perceive ‘Fitness’ and ‘Reasonableness’ ‘in an Act of Succour’, we are ‘induced’, ‘merely from the *Reason* of the Thing, and the *Rectitude* of the Action’, to relieve ‘Distress’; and it is in this inducement that we experience the ‘prompt’ of ‘our Understandings’,<sup>696</sup> which means that to do *what* it is *that* we perceive to be intrinsically right is ‘to *follow Nature*’,<sup>697</sup> just as it is ‘as *natural* for a *reasonable* Creature to act *reasonably*, as for an *affectionate* one to act *affectionately*’.<sup>698</sup> Our natural ‘inclination’, as rational agents, to do *what* it is *that* we perceive *with* reason to be *according to* reason means that we experience ‘The intellectual nature’ as having ‘its own law’, precisely because ‘It has, within itself, a spring and guide of action which it cannot suppress or reject’.<sup>699</sup>

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<sup>691</sup> *SFS*, I.III, 47.

<sup>692</sup> *TFMG.II*, 178.

<sup>693</sup> *Review*, 187.

<sup>694</sup> *TFMG*, 78.

<sup>695</sup> *Review*, 186-187.

<sup>696</sup> *TFMG*, 50.

<sup>697</sup> *TFMG.II*, 194.

<sup>698</sup> *TFMG*, 51.

<sup>699</sup> *Review*, 87.

## ‘Self-approbation’

To perceive *what* it is *that* is fitting to our relations with others and with God is also to perceive what is fitting to our relation with ourselves, not least because he who acts according to his own judgement and nature by doing *what* it is *that* he ‘approves’ as right in itself, has:

the pleasing approbation of...[his] own mind, and the comfortable congratulations of his conscience; on having answered in a good measure, the end of his creation, maintained the dignity of his nature, and revered the image of God imprinted on his soul...<sup>700</sup>

It follows from the intrinsic worth of *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself, and so fitting to our relations with ourselves, others, and God, that our ‘self-approbation’ in conscience is not ‘additional’ or ‘external’ to being ‘directed merely by the rules of right reason, and influenced by the charms of virtue alone’.<sup>701</sup>

*Reason* both *shews us what to pursue*, and *how to pursue it*. It not only *shews us what we are*, but, in a great measure, *makes us what we are*, and distinguishes us from inferior Creatures. *Reason* recommends to us *Honesty, Benignity, Submissiveness to Reason*, and every other Virtue. It applauds us whenever we act conformably thereto, and condemns every Violation of them.<sup>702</sup>

‘Self-approbation and Consciousness of Well-doing...inseparably attend the Love and Practice of Virtue’, and ‘The purest, the noblest, the sublimest Pleasures which rational Beings are capable of, spring from Virtue; and are the genuine Fruits, and peculiar Effects of it’.<sup>703</sup> The motivational force of ‘the attractions of moral beauty, and virtuous excellence’,<sup>704</sup> that we experience in rational perception as our rational ‘affection’<sup>705</sup> for the ends of reason *qua* rational agents need not be confused with our ‘additional’ and ‘external’ motivational concerns for mere sensual pleasure and the ‘sanctions of reward and punishment’.<sup>706</sup> ‘Self-approbation’,

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<sup>700</sup> *SFS*, II.VI, 111-112.

<sup>701</sup> *SFS*, I.XVI, 289.

<sup>702</sup> *TFMG.II*, 185-186.

<sup>703</sup> *DR*, 237-238.

<sup>704</sup> *SFS*, I.XVI, 289.

<sup>705</sup> *TFMG*, 78; 82.

<sup>706</sup> *SFS*, I.XVI, 289.

and ‘self-condemnation’ (see below), are ‘Obligations of *Conscience*’, and are, as such, ‘*internal Reasons*’ for doing that which we perceive to be intrinsically right.<sup>707</sup>

### ‘Self-condemnation’

‘Self-condemnation’, like ‘self-approbation’, is an essential part of both our experience of what it means to do *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself, and of how our perception of *what* it is *that* is fitting to our relations with others and God is also our perception of *what* it is *that* is fitting to our relation with ourselves. Just as ‘self-approbation’ is inseparable from the fact that ‘virtue’ is ‘amiable and excellent’,<sup>708</sup> ‘lovely, and beautiful, and beneficial...in itself’,<sup>709</sup> ‘self-condemnation’ is inseparable from the fact that ‘vice’ is ‘vile and odious in its own nature’.<sup>710</sup> Any individual who fails to do *what* it is *that* he perceives to be right in itself ‘lives in opposition to the light of his own mind’,<sup>711</sup> and ‘whoever acts contrary to this Sense and Conscience of his own Mind, is necessarily self-condemned’.<sup>712</sup> It is in ‘self-condemnation’ and ‘self-approbation’ that ‘*rectitude*’ is experienced as ‘a *law*, as well as a *rule* to us; that it not only *directs*, but *binds* all, as far as it is perceived’.<sup>713</sup> *What* it is *that* is according to reason ‘forces’ our assent and determines our approval, but rectitude ‘not only makes itself *approved*, but *admired*; not only *admired*, but *loved*’.<sup>714</sup> Failure to do *what* it is *that* is right in itself is not only to be ‘self-condemned’ for going against our own mind and judgement, but to be ‘self-condemned’ for going against the essential, and most personal, affections of our own nature. For the Clarkeans, it is impossible to betray what we love, and

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<sup>707</sup> TFMG, 84; LT, 375-376; 390.

<sup>708</sup> SFS, I.I, 4.

<sup>709</sup> SFS, I.XVI, 289.

<sup>710</sup> SFS, I.I,4.

<sup>711</sup> SFS, I.I.7.

<sup>712</sup> Discourse, 43.

<sup>713</sup> Review, 108.

<sup>714</sup> TFMG, 82.

‘go on self-condemned, and be sentenced a criminal by...[our] own heart’ and ‘conscience’,<sup>715</sup>

without laying ‘waste’ to ‘ourselves’:

vice pierces and wounds...It hurts not the *body*, the *reputation*, or *fortune*, but the *man*...plants anguish, uproar, and *death* in the soul itself...There is no object in nature so monstrous as a reasonable being defiled with guilt, living in contradiction to the remonstrances of his understanding, trampling on the authority of God, and opposing himself to the obligations of truth and righteousness.<sup>716</sup>

## The Richness of Clarkean Reason and Perception

On the basis of the above, we begin to see why it is unhelpful to read the Clarkeans in the context of Hume’s limited definition of reason, rather than from the perspective of RR.<sup>717</sup>

the rationalists’ overriding view seems to have been the inadmissible one that reason, conceived simply as a faculty which perceives necessary truth, carries us from the perception of the necessary truths of morality to the affection for virtue.<sup>718</sup>

However, in line with RR, there is much more to what the Clarkeans meant by both ‘reason’ and ‘necessary truth’.

For Clarke, ‘there is a *Fitness or Suitableness* of certain *Circumstances* to certain *Persons*, and an *Unsuitableness* of *Others*, founded in the *Nature of Things*’ and ‘What these *Relations of Things* absolutely and necessarily *Are* in Themselves, That also they *Appear to be*, to the Understanding of all Intelligent Beings’.<sup>719</sup> To perceive what is fit to be done is to perceive not only each relation, and what is fitting to each relation, but what is fitting to the ‘Rule of Right or Equity’<sup>720</sup> itself, ‘Because, the *Rule of Equity*...[is] nothing else but the *Very Nature of Things* and their *necessary Relations* one to Another’.<sup>721</sup> The rational perception of

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<sup>715</sup> *SFS*, I.I, 7.

<sup>716</sup> *Review*, 267.

<sup>717</sup> Of course, one response here is that it is the Clarkeans’ own mathematical analogy that reduces the meaning of reason: see next chapter.

<sup>718</sup> W.D. Hudson, *Ethical Intuitionism* (London, Macmillan, 1967), 10.

<sup>719</sup> *Demonstration*, 106.

<sup>720</sup> *Discourse*, 50-51.

<sup>721</sup> *Demonstration*, 108.

moral truth is *live* with God's being and attributes, and so *live* with both God's purposes in creating, and our purpose, as 'the rational Part of God's creation',<sup>722</sup> within creation to 'permit and assist each other to enjoy in particular the several Effects and Blessings of the Divine universal Goodness'.<sup>723</sup> For Clarke, it is in the very operation of reason that we experience our responsibilities to reason *qua* our law, God's law, and the law of the created universe itself, such that we 'cannot but acknowledge the Reasonableness and Fitness of...governing all...[our] Actions by the Rule of Right or Equity',<sup>724</sup> while appreciating that contravening the 'eternal Law of Righteousness'<sup>725</sup> is:

acting contrary to...[our] own Reason and Knowledge: 'Tis an attempting to destroy that Order by which the Universe subsists: And 'tis also, by Consequence, offering the highest Affront imaginable to the Creator of All Things...<sup>726</sup>

In HC and KC (as well as LNLC: see next chapter) the Clarkeans have been criticised for maintaining that '*Approving* an action is the same with discerning it to be *right*; as *assenting* to a proposition is the same with discerning it to be *true*'.<sup>727</sup> However, as we have seen, because the rational perception of truth, including moral truth, is always *live* with all that reason is, the Clarkeans themselves were keen to answer the objection that the rational assent to truth was merely the 'cool judgement of reason'.<sup>728</sup> Inseparable from the operation of reason, and the truths we perceive with reason, is the fact 'that whenever we transgress truth and right, we immediately affront that God who is truth and right',<sup>729</sup> just as our concern for each of our responsibilities to ourselves, to others, and to God as rational agents is inseparable from the operation of reason: 'unavoidable to all human beings who perceive *truth*' is 'that *preference*

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<sup>722</sup> *Discourse*, 173.

<sup>723</sup> *Discourse*, 93.

<sup>724</sup> *Discourse*, 50-51.

<sup>725</sup> *Discourse*, 50.

<sup>726</sup> *Demonstration*, 116.

<sup>727</sup> *Review*, 104-105.

<sup>728</sup> *Review*, 57.

<sup>729</sup> *Review*, 89.

of happiness; that *repugnance* to pain; that discernment of moral obligation, and *approbation* of beneficence<sup>730</sup> (for more on Price's point in the latter quotation, see next chapter).

Hudson (above) not only reduces reason in CER, but again, in common with HC and KC, separates the *that* and the *what* of intrinsic rightness. *What* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself *with* reason is *what* it is *that* is *according to* reason, and we experience all that reason *is*, and all that it means to act according to reason, in the very operation of reason itself. It is not that reason somehow 'carries' us from the 'perception' of moral 'truths' to 'the affection for virtue', as though our 'rational affection' as rational agents for the truths we perceive *with* reason to be *according to* reason can each be separated.

With respect to benevolence, for example, Price maintained that, 'We have an unavoidable consciousness of *rectitude* in relieving misery, in promoting happiness, and in every office of love and good-will to others',<sup>731</sup> and that we have 'an immediate relish...for truth ...candour, sincerity, piety...and many other modes and principles of conduct'.<sup>732</sup> Our reaction to sincerity, piety, benevolence, and so on, is as it is because this is *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself, and: 'To *behold* virtue, is to *admire* it. To behold it in its intrinsic and complete importance, dignity, and excellence, is to possess supreme affection for it'.<sup>733</sup> For Price, our 'immediate relish' for *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself follows from the fact that: 'I cannot perceive an action to be right, without *approving* it; or *approve* it, without being conscious of some degree of *satisfaction* and complacency'.<sup>734</sup>

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<sup>730</sup> Review, 295.

<sup>731</sup> Review, 192.

<sup>732</sup> Review, 137.

<sup>733</sup> Review, 59.

<sup>734</sup> Review, 59.

Just as Price maintained that, as a result of our perception of rightness, and our consciousness of its ‘dignity and excellence’,<sup>735</sup> we have ‘mental feelings’<sup>736</sup> that ‘excite to action’;<sup>737</sup> similarly Balguy maintained that we have a ‘moral Affection’<sup>738</sup> ‘for Virtue, or Moral Goodness’.<sup>739</sup> And it is this ‘moral affection’, because it follows from the perception of virtue, which, *contra* Hutcheson, explains ‘*Excitements to Election, or Grounds of Approbation*’,<sup>740</sup> without appealing to an antecedent ‘moral sense’. When we perceive benevolence as fitting to our relations with ourselves, others, and God, we experience the ‘Affection’ of ‘that *Esteem, Admiration, Complacency* which Virtue produces’,<sup>741</sup> simply because, ‘Whatever is good, absolutely good, will produce the Affection either of Complacency or Desire, in such Beings as are capable and willing to attend to its Excellence’.<sup>742</sup> Our affection for virtue is our affection for all that reason *is*; and our affection for virtue is our affection for *what* it is *that* is according to reason which we possess, returning to the tradition of RR, as part of our ‘subjective motivational set’ as rational agents:

*to all moral Agents...Reason is both End and Rule; both Direction, and Excitation: That Rectitude, or Conformity to Truth, is as properly the ultimate End of an intelligent Agent, as Pleasure is of a sensible one.*<sup>743</sup>

## Conclusion

The present chapter has examined some key criticisms of CER, not least the problem of supervenience, ‘queerness’ and ‘judgement externalism’. The Clarkeian conception of conscience has been used to highlight the Clarkeans’ normatively *thick* conception of reason *qua* RR. Consequently, it has been possible to maintain that those criticisms of CER

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<sup>735</sup> *TFMG*, 82.

<sup>736</sup> *Review*, 62.

<sup>737</sup> *Review*, 185.

<sup>738</sup> *TFMG*, 85.

<sup>739</sup> *TFMG*, 82.

<sup>740</sup> *TFMG*, 82.

<sup>741</sup> *TFMG*, 83.

<sup>742</sup> *TFMG*, 78.

<sup>743</sup> *LT*, 366.

unnecessarily separate the *that* and the *what* of intrinsic rightness; a separation which is not warranted, as those criticisms presuppose, by the Clarkean distinction between our ‘original obligation’ to do that which is right in itself because it is right in itself, and our ‘additional motives’ to do that which is right in itself because it is according to our own interests, the interests of others, and God’s will.

The Clarkeans are able to answer the problem of supervenience and ‘queerness’, because their understanding of the law of reason as that which governs God’s nature, human nature, and the created universe itself, explains why we should encounter intrinsic rightness as ‘fittingness’ to relations established by reason. Further, their understanding of reason *qua* RR explains why we should encounter intrinsic rightness as such a ‘fittingness’ through the operation of our own reason.

On the same basis, they are not ‘judgement externalists’: our desire to do that which is right in itself follows from our encounter with intrinsic rightness through reason, and our encounter with intrinsic rightness through reason is not just an encounter with the fact *that* something is right in itself, but with *what* it is *that* is right in itself. Again consistent with RR, for the Clarkeans, *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself is *what* it is that we perceive *with* reason to be *according to* reason; namely, acting ‘fittingly’ to the relations we stand in to ourselves, to others, and to God, so that we might satisfy the ‘tripartite’ duties we have to ourselves, to others, and to God as rational agents under the law of reason.

Following Hutcheson and Hume, a central criticism of CER has been that the Clarkean account of reason and rational perception cannot establish the *live intuitional bedrock* for moral action, which explains both our excitement to moral action and our sense of the overridingness

of moral norms. The Clarkeian mathematical analogy has appeared particularly unhelpful here, because it suggests a reduction of reason and morality to the perception of potentially uninteresting facts.

However, we have seen that the Clarkeian use of the mathematical analogy is intended to be understood within the context of the tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law. For the Clarkeans, as well as the other Anglican figures previously examined in RR, the immediate assent to all truth, both practical and theoretical, emphasised how the very operation of human reason is always *live* with all that reason *is qua* our law, God's law, and the law of the created universe.

Further, we have seen how the Clarkeans, again consistent with RR, used conscience to emphasise the fact that we cannot separate out from our encounter with moral truth our desire to 'imitate' God as the 'fount' and 'origin' of all truth; our 'immediate relish' for the ends of reason as the ends of our own rational nature; or our 'self-approbation' of the essential beauty (and 'self-condemnation' of the essential vileness) of what it means to satisfy (or to fail to satisfy) all that reason *is qua* RR.

Although the Clarkeans distinguished our 'original obligation' and 'additional motives' for moral action, this does not mean that they argued that moral knowledge was simply a matter of perceiving an 'abstract' truth with 'dry' theoretical reason, and that moral action consisted in accepting the motivation that (somehow) followed from that perception. The Clarkeans, like Hooker, maintained that there is no distinction between finding the *live intuitional bedrock* for moral action in reason or in human nature, because reason is the law of human nature, according to which the 'natural law' of human nature is a participation in the 'eternal law' of God.

Consequently, we experience the rational perception of intrinsic rightness, and our desire to satisfy *what* it is *that* is according to reason, as *live* with God and *live* with ourselves as a ‘necessity’ of our whole nature as rational agents. When the Clarkeans argued, according to our ‘original obligation’, that we must do that which is right in itself because it is right in itself, and that the perception of intrinsic rightness is itself a sufficient motivation for moral action, that sufficient motivation includes within it such experiences as our desire to imitate God, ‘self-approbation’ and ‘self-condemnation’. Thus, although the Clarkeans distinguished our ‘original obligation’ for moral action from such ‘additional’ motivations as a regard to divine command, critics of the Clarkeans must not conflate the normative drive to imitate God in an act of intrinsic rightness with the fearful desire to obey divine power. Likewise, the motivational force of self-love must not be confused with our normative drive to act with ‘moral beauty’ and ‘self-approbation’. ‘Self-approbation’, ‘self-condemnation’ and the desire to imitate God are part of the very operation of reason itself; they are internal to both the experience of intrinsic rightness and to what it means to do *what* it is *that* is right in itself because it is right in itself.

The next chapter will continue to discuss our desire to imitate God, ‘self-approbation’ and ‘self-condemnation’ as obligations ‘internal’ to conscience, consistent with our ‘original obligation’ to do *what* it is *that* is right in itself because it is right in itself. However, the next chapter will also argue that such ‘additional’ motivations as divine command, promises of heavenly reward, and our natural affections for ourselves and others, are (returning to Whichcote) legitimate ‘materials of conscience’ within our practical moral reasoning. Discussion of practical moral reasoning in Chapter 3 will continue the response to leading criticisms of the Clarkeans, not least KC, which maintains that ‘intuitionists do not believe in

practical reason, properly speaking'.<sup>744</sup> It will be argued that, in CER, practical moral reasoning is not only necessary in the world as a 'state of trial' where human reason is limited and 'fallen', but that practical moral reasoning is an essential feature of the process of moral development, where such moral development is the divine purpose behind the world as a 'state of trial' in the first place. On the basis of the next chapter, it will be possible to turn back to Butler in Chapter 4 and argue that he and the Clarkeans, consistent with their shared theory of conscience, had the same understanding of practical moral reasoning and moral development in the world as a 'state of trial'.

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<sup>744</sup> Christine Korsgaard, 'Skepticism about Practical Reason' in K. Setiya and H. Paakkunainen (eds), *Internal Reasons* (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2012), 55.

## Chapter 3

### Conscientious Moral Reasoning

#### The ‘Laicisation of Natural Law’ Criticisms

In turning to the ‘laicisation of natural law’<sup>745</sup> criticisms (LNLC), the criticism of the Clarkeans is not so much (as in Hutcheson’s and Hume’s criticisms (HC)) that the Clarkeans mistakenly employed the *thin* is of reason to convey what we mean by morality, but rather that their particular use of the analogies of sight and mathematics *thinned out* reason *qua* RR. Nonetheless, despite the difference of emphasis, LNLC reiterate central themes from HC and the neo-Kantian Criticisms (KC).

According to Beiser, the Clarkeans occupied an awkward position within ‘post-restoration natural law theory’, in comparison with the ethical rationalism of the Cambridge

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<sup>745</sup> The phrase ‘the laicisation of natural law’ is borrowed from Michael Crowe (‘The “Impious Hypothesis”: A Paradox in Hugo Grotius?’ in K. Haakonssen (ed.), *Grotius, Pufendorf and Modern Natural Law* (Farnham, Dartmouth Publishing Co., 1999), 34). Crowe voices the wider grounds for LNLC: the Clarkeans were making use of an analogy that had itself contributed to ‘the laicisation of natural law’ because ‘Mathematics does not...depend upon the will of God’ (*ibid.*, 32), so that ‘mathematical models’ became a means of asserting human ‘independence’ and self-sufficiency (*ibid.*, 30-34; see also: Crowe, *Changing Profile*, 229-234). For Hutcheson’s and Hume’s use of the mathematical analogy, and related use of the epithet ‘Newtonian’, and how this competed with Clarke’s Newtonianism and use of the mathematical analogy, see: Jane McIntyre, ‘Hume: Second Newton of the Moral Sciences’, *Hume Studies*, XX:1 (April, 1994), 1-18. For an example of how Hutcheson thought it possible (consistent with his Newtonian subtitle to the first edition of the *Inquiry* (1725)) to ‘introduce a Mathematical calculation in Subjects of Morality’, see: *Inquiry*, II.III.xi-xv. Like Hutcheson, the subtitle to Hume’s *Treatise* reads: ‘Being An Attempt to introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning Into Moral Subjects’. For the status of the mathematical analogy in the likes of Grotius, Pufendorf, Hobbes, Locke, Hutcheson and Hume, see also: G.H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (London, George G. Harrap & Co., 1963), 425-429; N.E. Simmonds, ‘Grotius and Pufendorf’ in Steven Nadler (ed.), *A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2002), 210-224; Richard Tuck, ‘Grotius and Seldon’ in J.H. Burns with Mark Goldie (eds), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), 499-529; Perez Zagorin, *Hobbes and the Law of Nature* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009), 16-20; Kydd, *op.cit.*, 4-40; Bedford, *op.cit.*, 78-80; David Sepkoski, *Nominalism and Constructivism in Seventeenth Century Mathematical Philosophy* (New York, Routledge, 2007), 8-10; Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy*, 37-43; 51-58; Emily Carson, ‘Locke and Kant on Mathematical Knowledge’ in Emily Carson and Renate Huber (eds), *Intuition and the Axiomatic Method* (Dordrecht, Springer, 2010), 2-20; Blackstone, *op.cit.*, 3-4; Murray Forsyth, ‘The Place of Richard Cumberland in the History of Natural Law Doctrine’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 20:1 (Jan., 1982), 23-42; Marshall Missner, ‘Hobbes’ Method in *Leviathan*’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 38:4 (Oct-Dec., 1977), 607-621.

Platonists (see next chapter), but also highlighted wider tensions within the ethical rationalism that underpinned ‘post-restoration natural law theory’. A particular difficulty for CER, in contrast with the ethical rationalism of the Cambridge Platonists, stemmed from the fact that, with the Clarkeans, ‘reason is a strictly theoretical or speculative faculty, whose essential business is to determine the truth or falsity of propositions’.<sup>746</sup> On the one hand, the Clarkeans representation of reason is open to, if not suggestive of, the understanding of reason within the ‘nominalist tradition’ as ‘a purely *discursive, formal, and natural* power’, where ‘reason is essentially a calculating machine’ that ‘does nothing more than conceive, judge, and infer’ and ‘determines the relationships between propositions’.<sup>747</sup> On the other hand, Clarkean reason is not only open to, but in need of, such naturalisation if it is to gather practical impetus, because (returning to the accusation of complacency) the problem with the Clarkeans was that they seemed to ‘regard self-evidence as something we already possess rather than something we must struggle to achieve’.<sup>748</sup> The Clarkeans stressed ‘the *complete, accurate, and neutral* description of the relationship between people’<sup>749</sup> as a summary of what reason seeks, and perceives, in moral enquiry, as well as a necessary and sufficient motivation for moral action. Consequently, ‘None of the rationalists conceived of reason as a practical faculty whose main task is to direct action, or to determine the ends of conduct, through imperatives rather than propositions’,<sup>750</sup> so that ‘The problem with rationalism is that it detaches moral values from the will; it assumes that there could be good or evil even if there were no human desires or sentiments’.<sup>751</sup>

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<sup>746</sup> Beiser, *op.cit.*, 321.

<sup>747</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>748</sup> *Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>749</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>750</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

<sup>751</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

Finnis agrees with Beiser concerning the Clarkeans' 'stubborn insistence upon seeing reason in a theoretical rather than a practical role'.<sup>752</sup> According to Finnis, Clarke is caught in the is/ought gap, because CER 'fails to advert to any desire or interest of the agent's that might be satisfied by acting rightly':<sup>753</sup>

The problem Clarke set himself was to show that moral truths provide a (conclusive) reason for action. He failed to solve the problem because he ignored the logic of practical reasoning, in which the fundamental category is the good (not necessarily moral) that is to be pursued and realised. Instead he looked exclusively to the logic of speculative or theoretical reasoning, in which the fundamental category is 'what is the case' and the fundamental principle is contradictions are excluded.<sup>754</sup>

Included in why, for someone like Finnis,<sup>755</sup> Aquinas, and not Clarke in LNLC, was able to 'bridge' the is/ought gap is Aquinas' syllogistic understanding of the operation of conscience, which consisted of both *synderesis* and *conscientia*. *Synderesis* provides the major premise in the moral syllogism, while *conscientia* is its conclusion.<sup>756</sup> *Conscientia* is an 'act', 'the actual application of knowledge to what we do', that 'is made in three ways': it is a 'witness' to what we have done; it 'incite[s] or bind[s]', because 'through' *conscientia* 'we judge that something should be done or not'; and it 'excuses[s], accuse[s], or torment[s]', because 'by *conscientia* we judge that something done is well done or ill done'.<sup>757</sup> The syllogistic understanding of conscience helps preserve the belief that human beings were created with a divine 'spark' of

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<sup>752</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

<sup>753</sup> Finnis, *op.cit.*, 41.

<sup>754</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>755</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-48; Eric D'Arcy, *Conscience and Its Right to Freedom* (London, Sheed & Ward, 1961), 57-60; A.P. d'Entrevies, *Natural Law: An Introduction to Legal Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London, Hutchinson & Co., 1970) 151-152.

<sup>756</sup> For the syllogistic understanding of conscience, see: Baylor, *op.cit.*, 47-52; D'Arcy, *op.cit.*, 49-71; Randall Zachman, *The Assurance of Faith: Conscience in the Theology of Martin Luther and John Calvin* (Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 24-28; Ceri Sullivan, *The Rhetoric of the Conscience in Donne, Herbert, and Vaughan* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 11-29; H.-D. Kittsteiner, 'Kant and Casuistry' in Edmund Leites (ed.), *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), 198-202; H.R. McAdoo, *The Structure of Caroline Moral Theology* (London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), 66-85; Thomas Wood, *English Casuistical Divinity During the Seventeenth Century* (London, SPCK, 1952), 67-84; Albert Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988), 129-136.

<sup>757</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I, Q.79, A.13.

moral knowledge, despite human fallibility, by allowing for human error in reasoning from general first principles:

*Synderesis* is never cast down in its generalisations...it can admit of error in the application of a general principle to something particular, as a result of incomplete or invalid deduction, or of some false assumption.<sup>758</sup>

While *conscientia* is ‘rule-governed’, and capable of ‘error’, *synderesis* ‘is the first rule of human deeds’.<sup>759</sup> *Synderesis* is ‘a habit’ of the ‘practical reason’, ‘containing the precepts of the natural law, which are the first principles of human actions’.<sup>760</sup> It is as a ‘habit’ of practical reason ‘that *synderesis* is constitutive of rationality’.<sup>761</sup> For Aquinas, ‘the precepts of the natural law are to the practical reason what the first principles of demonstrations are to the speculative reason, because both are self-evident principles’.<sup>762</sup> As ‘the first practical principles, bestowed on us by nature’, ‘belong’ to *synderesis*, it is *synderesis* that makes practical ‘reasoning’ possible,<sup>763</sup> such that *synderesis* ‘belongs to the very nature of the soul, since it is in virtue of it that it is rational’.<sup>764</sup> *Synderesis* supplies humankind with ‘immovable’ ‘first principles’, ‘known naturally without any investigation on the part of reason’, ‘through’ which ‘we proceed to discover, and judge of what we have discovered’.<sup>765</sup> While ‘being [and so the principle of non-contradiction, ‘which is based on the notion of being and not-being’] is the first thing that falls under apprehension simply’, ‘good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason’.<sup>766</sup> ‘Consequently, the first principle in the practical reason is one founded on the nature of good, viz., *that good is that which all things seek after*’, and the ‘first precept of law’, ‘upon’ which ‘All other precepts of the natural law are based’, is

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<sup>758</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Debated Questions on Truth* (hereafter ‘*On Truth*’), 16.2 in Potts (trans.), *op.cit.*, 122-136.

<sup>759</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.2.

<sup>760</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q.94, A.1.

<sup>761</sup> Potts, *op.cit.*, 49.

<sup>762</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q.94, A.2.

<sup>763</sup> *Ibid.*, I, Q.79, A.12.

<sup>764</sup> Aquinas, *On Truth*, 16.3.

<sup>765</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I, Q.79, A.12.

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, Q.94, A.2.

‘that *good is to be done and promoted, and evil is to be avoided*’.<sup>767</sup> *Synderesis* not only supplies us with ‘first practical principles’, but is a ‘dispositional light’<sup>768</sup> that ‘murmur[s] at evil’ and ‘incline[s] to good’.<sup>769</sup>

So far as avoiding the is/ought gap is concerned, Aquinas, unlike the Clarkeans in LNLC, is able to distinguish between (without separating)<sup>770</sup> practical reason and theoretical reason, while being explicit that conscience is ‘an act of the reason functioning in a practical way rather than speculatively’.<sup>771</sup> Thomistic conscience thus emphasises, and is an aspect of, the fact that, for Aquinas, ‘It is reason reflecting on human nature that is the guide to conduct, not reason working in pure abstraction’.<sup>772</sup> The conclusions of *conscientia*, as ‘knowledge applied to an individual case’,<sup>773</sup> are ‘completed by some reasoning about particulars’,<sup>774</sup> and the premises of *synderesis* are themselves the natural human ‘inclinations’ to self-preservation; to ‘sexual intercourse’ and ‘the education of offspring’; and, as creatures possessed of ‘reason’, ‘to know the truth about God, and to live in society’.<sup>775</sup> The primary precepts of natural law are always *live with our own* ‘natural inclinations’, as well as God as their creator and true end. The primary precepts may also be self-evident, but as even analytic propositions are not self-evident to the ‘unlearned’, who do not know the meaning of all the terms used, the self-evidence of primary precepts only becomes so ‘in relation to us’ as we become ‘wise’ about ourselves.<sup>776</sup> Aquinas emphasises the situatedness of moral reflection, as that which is governed by, and concerns the individual’s engagement with, specific acts and the particulars of their own nature.

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<sup>767</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, Q.94, A.2.

<sup>768</sup> Aquinas, *On Truth*, 16.3.

<sup>769</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I, Q.79, A.12.

<sup>770</sup> F.C. Copleston, *Aquinas* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1955), 217, fn.1.

<sup>771</sup> Baylor, *op.cit.*, 39.

<sup>772</sup> Copleston, *op.cit.*, 216.

<sup>773</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I, Q.79, A.13.

<sup>774</sup> Aquinas, *On Truth*, 17.2.

<sup>775</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q.94, A.2.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, Q.94, A.2.

He carried this emphasis even further when he allowed, not only for a liability to error within the practical syllogism when reasoning from the general principles of *synderesis* to specific cases, but also for the fact that any ‘secondary principles’ (such as, ‘goods entrusted to another should be restored to their owner’), drawn from the ‘primary principles’ of the natural law, may not apply in all ‘particular’ cases, because, in ‘the proper conclusions of the practical reason, neither is the truth or rectitude the same for all, nor, where it is the same, is it equally known by all’.<sup>777</sup>

It is not possible, or necessary, to respond here to the wider grounds for LNLC: namely, that the Clarkeans were part of the *thinning out* of reason, which consisted in ‘a definite shift in the period away from right reason towards reasoning as the primary meaning [of reason]’:<sup>778</sup> a ‘shift’ often associated with movements in latitudinarian thought, epitomised by Locke, concerning the nature of scientific enquiry and the scope of human knowledge.<sup>779</sup> William Whewell may have been right that the Clarkean choice of the mathematical analogy, given its naturalised use within both Lockean and Hobbesian nominalism,<sup>780</sup> and ready appropriation

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<sup>777</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, Q.94, A.4.

<sup>778</sup> Rivers, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, 63.

<sup>779</sup> Henry van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought, 1630-1690* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), 121-125; Barbara Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact, 1550-1720* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2000), 132-133 and *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1983), 103-104; Martin Griffin, *Latitudinarianism in the Seventeenth-Century Church of England* (Leiden, Brill, 1992) (R.H. Popkin and L. Freedman, eds), 108; Jason Vickers, *Invocation and Assent: The Making and Re-Making of Trinitarian Theology* (Cambridge, Eerdmans, 2008), 162; Thomas Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy* (Leiden, Brill, 1997), 19-20; G.R. Cragg, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1964), 1-28; John Marshall, ‘John Locke and Latitudinarianism’ in R. Kroll, R. Ashcroft and P. Zagorin (eds), *Philosophy, Science, and Religion in England, 1640-1700* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), 263-264; G.A.J. Rogers, ‘Locke’s Essay and Newton’s Principia’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 39:2 (Apr.-Jun., 1978), 217-232; Margaret Osler, ‘John Locke and the Changing Ideal of Scientific Knowledge’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 31:1 (Jan.-Mar., 1970), 3-16.

<sup>780</sup> See: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2010) (I. Shapiro, ed.), I.IV, 22-33; I.XI, 64-65; I.XV, 97-98; II.XXI, 126-127; II.XXXI, 213-221; *De Homine* in *Man and Citizen* (Anchor, 1972) (B. Gert, ed.) (C.T. Wood, T.S.K. Scott-Craig and B. Gert, trans.), X.4-5 and *De Cive* in Gert, *op.cit.*, I.7-9; II.1-3; I.1 fn.; John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979) (P.H. Nidditch, ed.), I.II.10-11; I.III.6; I.IV.17-18; II.I.2; II.XXIII.1-2; II.XXIII.29; III.VI.4-9; IV.II.9; IV.II.15; IV.IV.1-10; IV.VII; IV.XII.7-11; IV.XVII.1-2. It is, of course, significant, given the current suggestion that the paradigm of right reason is the paradigm of conscience, that it is when Hobbes and Locke reduce reason to mere ‘reckoning’ – a reduction which is in line with their particular use of the mathematical analogy, as highlighted in

by deism (as in Tindal's use of Clarke: see below), was not the happiest of choices.<sup>781</sup>

However, even if it is conceded that the Clarkean mathematical analogy was not tension-free, we have already seen, in responding to HC, ways in which it is possible to respond to LNL.

The Clarkeans intended, by their use of the analogies of sight and mathematics, to invoke the tradition of RR, as represented by figures previously discussed. For the Clarkeans, as in RR, the sight and mathematical analogies emphasised how our assent to *all* truth, and so the very activity of our minds, was always *live* with God, and that we held our 'natural notions' in common with God, such that it was not only possible, through them, to speak meaningfully of God and ourselves, but to speak of God and ourselves in the same terms:

if Justice and Goodness be not the same in God, as in our Ideas...we mean nothing, when we say that God is necessarily Just and Good...And there will be no Foundation...left, on which we can fix any Thing.<sup>782</sup>

Further, the sight and mathematical analogies, by emphasising our immediate assent to truth, expressed how it is in our immediate assent to moral truth that we experience 'the grand lines and primary principles of morality...so deeply wrought into our hearts and one with our minds, that they will be forever legible'.<sup>783</sup> The Clarkean use of conscience and immediate assent conveys something of Thomistic *synderesis*, where the latter suggested that the human

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the citations given – that they also reduce conscience to an individual's own judgement (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.VII, 41-43; II.XXIX, 194-195 and *De Cive*, XII.2; Locke, *Essay*, I.III.7-8). Nonetheless, while Locke's understanding of reason *qua* ratiocination, consistent with his rejection of innate ideas, meant that he threw 'doubt upon the *a priori* and authoritarian reason of the Platonic tradition' (R.W. Harris, *Reason and Nature in Eighteenth Century Thought* (London, Blandford Press, 1968), 88-89), it should be noted that there are familiar vestiges in Locke of the language used in RR to describe reason and conscience, not least Whichcote's 'candle of the Lord' motif; see: John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1958), para.231 and *Essay*, IV.II.1; IV.III.20; IV.VII.11; IV.X.1; IV.XIII.3; IV.XVII.14-15; IV.XIX.4; 11-14; IV.XVII.23-24; see also: Robert Greene, 'Whichcote and Synderesis', 642-644 and 'Synderesis in the English Renaissance', 218-219. In a similar vein, Hobbes self-consciously appropriated the language of 'natural law' and 'right reason' in the citations given, and therefore shifts their meaning, see: Samuel Mintz, *The Hunting of the Leviathan* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1962), 23-38.

<sup>781</sup> William Whewell, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge, Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1862), 96-99; 115-118.

<sup>782</sup> *Discourse*, 21.

<sup>783</sup> *Review*, 173.

possession of reason included a ‘natural instinct’ (*instinctus naturae*) for the good *qua* human end which ‘operates in mankind as a stimulus, source, or ground of the natural law’.<sup>784</sup> According to the Clarkeans, it is in our immediate assent to moral truth that we experience an ‘immediate relish’ for *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself. It is in our immediate assent that we experience doing *what* it is *that* is right in itself as a ‘necessity’ of our own ‘nature’, and recognise ‘Reason’ as ‘the first and most essential *Law* of our Nature’.<sup>785</sup> Within the ‘self-approbation’ and ‘self-condemnation’ that we experience in, and as, conscience, ‘Reason’ ‘not only’,

presents itself to our Minds...as a *Law*, but as a kind of *Legislator*, rewarding our good Actions with pleasing Reflections, and punishing our bad ones with painful After-Thoughts, and the Stings of Remorse.<sup>786</sup>

Below, the beginnings of such a response to LNLC will be taken further, and also made in response to KC and HC. It will be shown that the accusation of complacency in CER has been overstated, and that the meaning and place of conscience helps to show that moral knowledge and action are not straightforward, or passive, experiences in CER. Human beings are not only required to engage actively with *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself, but choosing and doing *what* it is *that* is right in itself requires a form of practical moral reasoning, which includes reflecting upon such ‘material’ as natural affections, utility and divine command. The active nature of, and normative concern for such ‘material’ within, moral consciousness helps to explain why the Clarkeans maintained that the rational perception of *what* it is *that* is right in itself inclines an individual person’s will.

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<sup>784</sup> Robert Greene, ‘Synderesis and the Moral Sense’, 183.

<sup>785</sup> *TFMG.II*, 120.

<sup>786</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

## Conscience and Active Reflective Engagement

As we have seen, conscience is used by the Clarkeans, consistent with its referents, as that through which we perceive moral truth, and as that in, and as, which we experience moral truth to be according to our own judgement, and the judgement of God's 'voice' in us. However, conscience is also, for the Clarkeans (consistent with Butlerian conscience, and conscience *qua* a 'knowing together' with God and ourselves (see Introduction)), our 'witness-bearing power'<sup>787</sup> of 'forming a judgement of...[our] own actions'.<sup>788</sup> According to Clarke, 'Men know in their own conscience, that such or such an action *ought not* to be done',<sup>789</sup> so that it is through, and in, conscience that human beings, unlike 'the inferior Creation', have:

a *still higher* Principle or Power of *directing*...Actions, with some *determinate Views*, and to some certain and constant End. He has a Power of judging *beforehand*, concerning the *Consequences* of his Actions, concerning the Reasonableness or Unreasonableness of the End he aims at; and he has a Power of recollecting...whether he acted with a good or...evil view.<sup>790</sup>

The meaning and place of conscience in CER demonstrates that moral consciousness in CER is always an active engagement with all that reason *is*, and so an active engagement with ourselves, and our responsibilities, as rational agents. Thus, Price explicitly and repeatedly draws on Butler for his understanding of conscience or 'the power of reflexion',<sup>791</sup> and takes us back to both Butler and the relationship between conscience and *to hegemonikon* in his understanding of 'the supremacy of conscience':

The nature of man should certainly take its denomination, not from its instinctive and brutal part, but from its intellectual and higher part...from that part which is immortal and divine, from that moral faculty to which it belongs to superintend and control all the inferior powers, and which has justly been called the Vicegerent of the Deity within us.<sup>792</sup>

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<sup>787</sup> *EOR*, 145.

<sup>788</sup> *SFS*, I.I, 4.

<sup>789</sup> *Sermons*, X.IX, 130.

<sup>790</sup> *Ibid.*, III.V, 70.

<sup>791</sup> *Review*, 217.

<sup>792</sup> *SVS*, 147-149.

Indeed, as Price makes clear, in a quotation to which we shall return again, it is not simply the case that a human being is only ‘truly a rational being, and capable of enjoying blessings suited to his nature...under the dominion of conscience’,<sup>793</sup> but:

*The conscience of a man is the man; the reflecting principle is our supreme principle. It is what gives our distinction as intelligent creatures...whenever we act contrary to it, we violate our natures, and are at variance with ourselves.*<sup>794</sup>

Balguy’s previously referenced metaphor of a ‘moral landskip’ is likewise relevant here. Balguy’s metaphor expresses the fact that, for the Clarkeans, perceiving moral truth is analogous with coming across an attractive natural landscape. In both cases, we are attracted to the landscape only as a result of having seen it, and because it possesses, in itself, certain features. However, Balguy’s moral landscape is not outside us, but inside. ‘Whenever the virtuous man looks inward’, it is ‘His conscience’ that ‘presents him with’ a ‘moral landskip’, and so ‘more agreeable sights, and delightful objects, than he can anywhere find without him through all the works of art and nature’.<sup>795</sup> Balguy’s analogy suggests that what we find attractive in a natural landscape is determined by that which we find attractive ourselves, as well as the features that belong to that landscape itself, and that the experience of attractiveness is only possible through a dynamic of engagement between, and with, ourselves and *what* it is *that* we find attractive. Balguy’s metaphor is thus indicative of how, within CER, moral knowledge, and moral action, are not ‘contentless’ passive experiences, but active engagements in conscience with all that we are and all that reason *is qua* our law, God’s law, and the law of the created universe itself. Below, it will be argued that, as appreciating the meaning and place of conscience within CER highlights how moral consciousness is itself active engagement with

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<sup>793</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>794</sup> *Ibid.*, 208 (my italics).

<sup>795</sup> *SFS*, I.III, 46-47.

all that reason *is*, and all that we are as rational agents, appreciating the meaning and place of conscience in CER helps to respond to KC, HC and LNLC.

### Passive Perception and Active Consciousness

In CER, there is something ‘passive’ at the heart of moral agency itself: namely, ‘the perception of moral good and evil’, ‘without’ which ‘there can be no moral agency’.<sup>796</sup> Clarke is clear that ‘Assent to Truth’ is not ‘an Action or a Choice’,<sup>797</sup> just as the ‘Perception of Ideas is No Action at all’;<sup>798</sup> they are ‘something over which the Person has No Power’<sup>799</sup> and are that ‘wherein the Mind is entirely *passive*’.<sup>800</sup>

However, Clarke is also clear that ‘Consciousness...[is] the *reflex act by which I know that I think*’,<sup>801</sup> and that ‘Attention...or a Man’s *chusing to fix his Thoughts* on one Subject rather than another, is an Action’,<sup>802</sup> and so, it is in ‘the direct act of thinking’,<sup>803</sup> that the mind is no longer ‘merely *passive*’.<sup>804</sup>

It is in the context of consciousness and thinking as activities of the mind that we must understand the much-maligned Clarkeian claims (see previous chapter) that, ‘So far therefore

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<sup>796</sup> Review, 183.

<sup>797</sup> Samuel Clarke, *Remarks Upon A Book, Entitled, A Philosophical Enquiry Concerning Human Liberty* (London, 1717) (hereafter ‘Remarks’), 30. For the controversy between Clarke and Collins, see: Wayne Hudson, *The English Deists* (London, Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 98-102 and *Enlightenment and Modernity* (London, Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 27-34; 111-116; H.M. Ducharme, ‘Personal Identity in Samuel Clarke’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 24:3 (Jul., 1986), 359-383; J.P. Ferguson, *Dr. Samuel Clarke: An Eighteenth Century Heretic* (Kington, The Roundwood Press, 1976), 112-118; W.L. Uzgalis, ‘Introduction’ in *The Correspondence of Samuel Clarke and Anthony Collins, 1707-1708* (London, Broadview, 2011) (W.L. Uzgalis, ed.) (hereafter ‘Clarke-Collins’), 9-36; James Harris, *Of Liberty and Necessity: The Free Will Debate in Eighteenth-Century British Philosophy* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2005), 46-63.

<sup>798</sup> Remarks, 7.

<sup>799</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>800</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>801</sup> Clarke-Collins, 90.

<sup>802</sup> Remarks, 21.

<sup>803</sup> Clarke-Collins, 108.

<sup>804</sup> Remarks, 21.

as men are *conscious* [my italics] of what is right and wrong, so far they *are* under an *obligation* to act accordingly’,<sup>805</sup> and that ‘an agent’ can only ‘be justly denominated *virtuous*’ when ‘he acts from a *consciousness* [my italics] of rectitude, and with a regard to it as his *rule* and *end*’.<sup>806</sup>

It is not just that we perceive the ‘queer’ quality of intrinsic rightness which gives us ‘*Reason or Motive*’<sup>807</sup> for action, but that we have reasons or motives for acting as a result of actively engaging with *what* it is *that* we perceive to be intrinsically right, whereby we experience all that reason *is*, and appreciate all that it means to do *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself.

While ‘assent’ is ‘forced’ and ‘approval’ ‘determined’, our perception of virtue, our ‘rational affection’ for, and ‘self-approbation’ of, virtue as a result of perceiving it are not purely passive experiences. Balguy maintained, ‘That Virtue being intrinsically worthy and excellent, fails not to produce a real *Affection* for itself, in all Minds that *attentively consider* it’,<sup>808</sup> and Clarke insisted, ‘that the eternal Differences of Good and Evil, the unalterable Rule of Right and Equity, do necessarily and unavoidably determine the Judgment, and force the Assent of all Men that *use any Consideration*’.<sup>809</sup> Likewise, Price described the ‘power of intuition’ to which ‘we owe our belief of all self-evident truths’, including ‘our moral ideas’, as:

the mind’s *survey* of its *own ideas*, and the relations between them, and *the notice it takes, by its own innate light and intellective power*, of what absolutely and necessarily is or is not true and false, consistent and inconsistent, possible and impossible in the natures of things.<sup>810</sup>

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<sup>805</sup> *Discourse*, 43.

<sup>806</sup> *Review*, 184.

<sup>807</sup> *Clarke-Collins*, 11.

<sup>808</sup> *TFMG*, 82 (my italics).

<sup>809</sup> *Discourse*, 44 (my italics).

<sup>810</sup> *Review*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 97-98 (my italics).

Within CER, our ‘forced’ assent to, and ‘determined’ approval of, *what it is that* we perceive to be right in itself lies at the heart of, but is only the starting-point for, moral agency. The fact that human beings do not simply perceive intrinsic rightness, but, upon its perception, are conscious *that* they have perceived intrinsic rightness, and actively engaged with *what it is that* they have perceived to be intrinsically right, continues to highlight how reason and rational perception in CER need not be read as merely *thin*, ‘neutral’, or passive. It also points to how practical moral reasoning is possible within CER. Clarkean freewill (see below) means that it is always our responsibility to choose and to act; however, choosing and acting takes place in a world where human reason is limited; consequently, practical reasoning is a necessary part of choosing and acting if we are to, so far as possible, overcome our own limitations and be confident that we are choosing and acting appropriately.

### Clarkean Freewill

Our active engagement, in conscience, with *what it is that* we perceive to be right in itself is an essential part of ‘*Doing as we will*’.<sup>811</sup> For the Clarkeans, ‘doing as we will’ is our choice to do *what it is that* we perceive to be right in itself, and it is one for which we are responsible as free agents, who, returning to the Pauline language of conscience and to *hegemonikon*, are a ‘*law to*’ ourselves, as a result of ‘being endowed with reason, and *conscious of right and wrong*’.<sup>812</sup> According to the Clarkeans, to will is ‘*essentially Active*’ because ‘*Will signifies the actual exertion of the Self-moving power*’,<sup>813</sup> which is ‘a *Principle or Power of beginning Motion*’<sup>814</sup> that we possess as rational agents, who, unlike ‘the Motion of a *Balance*’ under weights,<sup>815</sup> are capable of ‘*acting*’ rather than ‘barely...*being acted upon*’.<sup>816</sup> While

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<sup>811</sup> *Remarks*, 21.

<sup>812</sup> *Review*, 119 (my italics).

<sup>813</sup> *Remarks*, 9.

<sup>814</sup> *Remarks*, 42.

<sup>815</sup> *Remarks*, 12.

<sup>816</sup> *Remarks*, 6.

‘motives’, including the ‘motive’ of ‘obligation’, ‘may be the *occasions* of our putting *ourselves* into motion’,<sup>817</sup> ‘any *Reasons* or Considerations whatever...may induce, incline or persuade; but...they have no natural Efficiency’:<sup>818</sup>

the impression made upon the mind by that motive, is the perceptive quality, in which the mind is passive: the doing of anything, upon and after, or in consequence, of that perception; this is the power of self-motion or action: which...in moral agents...we call liberty.<sup>819</sup>

What is most significant for the present discussion is that Clarkean freewill *qua* our freedom, and responsibility, to choose with reason, is a freedom and responsibility we possess in the world as a ‘state of trial’,<sup>820</sup> where our own reason is weak and, along with our resolution to follow it, subject to confusion and temptation.

### Limits of Human Reason

In the previous chapter, Price was quoted on the single law of reason. From the fact that ‘Virtue...is necessarily *one* thing’, it follows that ‘the heads of virtue before-mentioned agree...in requiring the same course of action’, so that ‘No one of the several virtues can be annihilated without the most pernicious consequences to all the rest’.<sup>821</sup> Consequently, the problem for human beings in the ‘state of trial’ is twofold:

It is not alone sufficient to satisfy us that an action is to be done, that we know it will be the means of good to others: we are also to consider how it affects ourselves, what it is in regard to justice, and all the other circumstances the case may involve need to be taken in, and weighed...In reality, before we can be capable of deducing demonstrably, accurately and particularly, the whole rule of *right* in every instance, we must possess universal and unerring knowledge. It must be above the power of any finite understanding to do this.<sup>822</sup>

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<sup>817</sup> Review, 183 fn.

<sup>818</sup> *LT*, 373.

<sup>819</sup> Samuel Clarke, *The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1956) (H.G. Alexander, ed.), 97.

<sup>820</sup> Butler’s and the Clarkeans’ shared understanding of the ‘state of trial’, as explored in this chapter, and the next, was consistent with the prevailing latitudinarian understanding of ‘fallenness’; see: Müller, *op.cit.*, 54-59; 176-180; Pfizenmaier, *op.cit.*, 44-46; Alan Brinton, ‘The Passions as Subject Matter in Early Eighteenth-Century British Sermons’, *Rhetorica*, 10:1 (Winter 1992), 51-69; W.M. Spellman, *John Locke and the Problem of Depravity* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988), 74-103.

<sup>821</sup> Review, 166.

<sup>822</sup> Review, 170.

In line with our active engagement with *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself as a part of ‘doing as we will’, moral agents ‘judge what *is* or *is not to be* done’ by examining ‘into the whole truth of every case’.<sup>823</sup> In doing so, moral agents want to be certain that they are acting for themselves *and* for others *and* for God in each act they perform as moral, because, according to the single law of reason, every act that is according to reason will satisfy each of the ‘tripartite’ duties enjoined by reason. However, human beings, in the world as a ‘state of trial’, are confronted by ‘defective knowledge’,<sup>824</sup> which leaves us ‘frequently in the dark’<sup>825</sup> and means that, ‘in the state of mankind and the world...we cannot but be in some uncertainty’<sup>826</sup> about what we should do.

Price’s claim that there is ‘difficulty in morals of determining what is right or wrong, in many particular cases’,<sup>827</sup> helps to limit KC, HC and LNLC accusations of complacency within CER, whereby we simply ‘see’ with a mathematical certainty what we should do. Moreover, Price highlights, in opposition to LNLC, how the Clarkeans were within RR when they accounted for the lack of certainty in moral matters.

Price, following Aquinas and other figures previously discussed in RR,<sup>828</sup> maintained that our lack of certainty does not include moral first principles, because those ‘principles themselves...are self-evident’.<sup>829</sup> The following principles, ‘to gain assent, need only to be understood’, and so can be ‘used as axioms, the truth of which appears as irresistibly as the truth of those which are the foundation of Geometry’:

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<sup>823</sup> *Review*, 165.

<sup>824</sup> *Review*, 172.

<sup>825</sup> *Review*, 167.

<sup>826</sup> *Review*, 121.

<sup>827</sup> *Review*, 166.

<sup>828</sup> See footnote 842.

<sup>829</sup> *Review*, 168.

“gratitude is due to benefactors; reverence is due to our Creator; it is right to study our own happiness; an innocent being ought not to be absolutely miserable; it is wrong to take from another the fruit of his labour,” and others of the like kind...<sup>830</sup>

Uncertainty does not lie in ‘primary principles’, but ‘when we come to consider *particular* effects’.<sup>831</sup> It is ‘in examining *single acts* and *particular cases*’<sup>832</sup> that we are ‘liable to frequent and unavoidable errors in our moral judgement’.<sup>833</sup> Our ‘imperfect...discerning faculties’<sup>834</sup> mean that we are ‘liable to believe cases and facts and the tendencies of actions, to be otherwise than they are; and, consequently, to form false judgements concerning right and wrong’.<sup>835</sup> ‘The weakness of our discerning faculties’<sup>836</sup> is unable to cope with the ‘endless variety of cases’ and ‘ever changing’ ‘situations of agents and objects’, which mean that the single ‘universal law of rectitude...must be continually varying in its *particular* demands and obligations’.<sup>837</sup> Our limited reason, in this complex and ever-changing situation, means that we have difficulty in knowing what we should do, not least because our moral duties often appear to conflict. ‘The pursuit of the happiness of others is a duty, and so is the pursuit of private happiness’, but securing ‘private and publick good’ not only often seem to ‘interfere’ with each other, but also to interfere with, and to be interfered with by, ‘obligations to veracity, fidelity, gratitude, or justice’.<sup>838</sup> Likewise, if we cannot ‘in every particular know’ ‘what is good or bad for ourselves and others’, ‘what our duty to God is, where property is lodged, or who our benefactors are’,<sup>839</sup> ‘doubt’ frequently ‘arises’ and ‘we may thus be rendered entirely incapable of determining what we ought to chuse’.<sup>840</sup>

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<sup>830</sup> Review, 169.

<sup>831</sup> Review, 169.

<sup>832</sup> Review, 166.

<sup>833</sup> Review, 169.

<sup>834</sup> Review, 167.

<sup>835</sup> Review, 172.

<sup>836</sup> Review, 168.

<sup>837</sup> Review, 165.

<sup>838</sup> Review, 167.

<sup>839</sup> Review, 169.

<sup>840</sup> Review, 167.

Limited human reason means that, ‘our Ideas of moral *Fitness* are not always to be depended upon; as being sometimes obscure, and very often inadequate’.<sup>841</sup> Consequently, and again in line with latitudinarian thought in general,<sup>842</sup> Clarke insisted that, in the world

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<sup>841</sup> *Second Letter*, 336.

<sup>842</sup> For the distinction between ‘moral’ and ‘mathematical’ certainty, see: Shapiro, *op.cit.*, *passim*; Leeuwen, *op.cit.*, *passim*; Griffin, *op.cit.*, 62-64; Müller, *op.cit.*, 46-52; R.H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle*, revsd ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003), 65-66; 208-218; G.A.J. Rogers, ‘Locke and the Latitude-Men: Ignorance as a Ground of Tolerance’ in Kroll, Ashcraft and Zagorin (eds), *op.cit.*, 230-252; as well as the other works cited in footnote 779. Despite criticisms of complacency, therefore, the Clarkeans are in line with a number of latitudinarians, and other figures previously discussed in RR. Such figures, following Aquinas and Grotius, accepted Aristotle’s maxim ‘that we cannot expect the same Degrees of Evidence, in Moral, as in Mathematical Sciences’ (Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, 3 Vols. (Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2005) (Jean Barbeyrac and Richard Tuck, eds), II.XXIII.I.1; Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1954) (W.D. Ross, trans.), I.3)) and invoked the mathematical analogy but conceded that only a ‘moral certainty’ was possible in moral matters due to the limitations of human reason and the complexity of particular moral problems (see: Hooker, *Laws*, I.II.5; I.VI.1-5; I.VII.7; I.XII.1-3; Sanderson, *op.cit.*, 133-134; Burnet, *Second Remarks upon an Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in *Remarks on Locke*, 52-53; Cudworth, *Freewill*, 178; Tillotson, *Works*, I.I.32-34 and *The Rule of Faith*, II.IV.1-2 in *Works*, Vol.III; Wilkins, *op.cit.*, 4-25). Shapiro suggests that the distinction between ‘moral’ and ‘mathematical’ certainty, and so the latitudinarian emphasis upon rational enquiry and ‘decision making’, were a ‘revitalisation’ of the ‘moral probabilism’ of Anglican casuists like Sanderson, Perkins and Taylor (*op.cit.*, 105-106). Discussions of Anglican casuistry have, like Shapiro, argued that it emphasised individual responsibility through moral probabilism (see: Dennis Klink, *Conscience, Equity and the Court of Chancery in Early Modern England* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2010), 184-188; Meg Lota Brown, *Donne and the Politics of Conscience in Early Modern England* (Leiden, Brill, 1995), 45-61; A.J. Joyce, *Richard Hooker and Anglican Moral Theology* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 200-213; and works cited in footnote 756). On the one hand, Anglican casuistry emphasised individual responsibility for ‘marshalling complete evidence in an unbiased manner before reaching a decision’ (Shapiro, *op.cit.*, 106), so that it finds parallels in Locke’s rejection of syllogism (see below), and the latitudinarian contention that a ‘mathematical’ certainty need not be sought, so long as, in ‘Moral decision making, like religious belief and scientific evaluation’ the individual pursued ‘a reasoned calculation of probabilities...based on the best...evidence available’ (*ibid.*, 105). On the other hand, Locke’s rejection of syllogism highlighted one problem for Anglican casuistry: the syllogistic understanding of conscience within Anglian casuistry stood in the way of the individual responsibility emphasised by Anglican casuists. For Locke’s rejection of the syllogism as a rejection of casuistry, which was yet a greater means to the emphasis upon self-responsibility found within Anglican casuistry, see: Locke, *Essay*, I.IV.22; IV.XVII.1-8; James Tully, ‘Governing Conduct’ in Leites (ed.), *op.cit.*, 12-71; Edmund Leites, ‘Casuistry and Character’ in Leites (ed.), *op.cit.*, 119-133; for a wider discussion of the rejection of syllogism, see: David Owen, *Hume’s Reason* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), 3-8; 12-17). The relationship between Anglican casuistry and Locke’s rejection of syllogism suggests how, in response to LNLC, KC and HC, it is possible to position the Clarkeian understanding of conscience and intuition, and distinction between ‘moral’ and ‘mathematical’ certainty, within the tradition of Thomistic conscience. Positioning the Clarkeans within that tradition is consistent with Shapiro’s claim that the latitudinarian distinction between ‘mathematical’ and ‘moral’ certainty had affinities with Anglican casuistry, where, when it comes to Anglican casuistry, ‘Everywhere, the Thomist tradition predominates’ (McAdoo, *op.cit.*, 66; Wood, *op.cit.*, 68). It is, moreover, consistent with discussions of Butlerian conscience. Kirk maintained that Butler stood, with the likes of Sanderson and Taylor, in ‘the consistent English tradition’ of Thomistic conscience (Kirk, *op.cit.*, 380), even as Leites suggests that Butler’s (Clarkean) claim that ‘we see intuitively at first what is our duty’ (S, VII.14) demonstrates ‘Butler’s easy dismissal of the need for casuistry’ (*op.cit.*, 128). The Clarkeans, as we have seen, agreed with the description of conscience by Butler that, for Kirk, demonstrated Butler’s place within the Thomistic tradition: ‘There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart as well as his external actions...pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust’ (Kirk, *op.cit.*, 381). Likewise, both Butler’s and the Clarkeans’ ‘easy dismissal’ of casuistry in terms of intuition did not underpin complacency, or the idea that moral knowledge was the entirely passive perception of potentially uninteresting facts. Rather, their emphasis on intuition was intended to emphasise, as with Locke’s rejection of syllogism, and in-keeping with

as a ‘state of trial’, when it comes to ‘*Moral and Religious matters*’,<sup>843</sup> we must not look for a ‘*demonstrative Force of reasoning, and even Mathematical Certainty*’, but rather:

such *moral Evidence*, or mixt Proofs from Circumstances and Testimony, as most Matters of Fact are only capable of, and wise and honest Men are always satisfied with, [and] ought to be accounted sufficient...<sup>844</sup>

To build our ‘moral certainty’ will require practical moral reasoning, as we consider ‘fair Appearance and *Probability*’,<sup>845</sup> and:

in order to discover what is right in a case, we...extend our views to all the different *heads of virtue*, to examine how far each is concerned and compare their respective influence and demands...<sup>846</sup>

### **Practical Moral Reasoning Upwards and Downwards**

It is helpful to think of the practical moral reasoning available in CER as that which concerns ‘material’ or ‘data’ from ‘outside’, and ‘material’ or ‘data’ from ‘inside’, conscience. Practical reasoning can happen in CER, as a result of the passive perception of intrinsic rightness, or as a means to experiencing that perception.

‘Outside’ practical moral reasoning<sup>847</sup> would include using the faculties God gave us to judge of ‘Consequences’ as a means of deciding, so far as we are able, whether the action we have perceived to be, and actively engaged with as, right in itself can satisfy each of our ‘tripartite’ duties and so is, indeed, right in itself. It would also include discovering the natural

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Anglican casuistry, that all ‘Reasoning’ in the present state of ‘Mediocrity and Probationership’ (*Essay*, IV.XIV.2) is a self-responsibility that ‘requires Pains and Application’, (*Essay*, I.II.10) as well as liability for error. Indeed, the present discussion of the active nature of moral consciousness within CER highlights the extent to which the Clarkeans agreed with Locke that, ‘Our *Knowledge*...has a great Conformity with our Sight, that it is *neither wholly necessary, nor wholly voluntary*’ (*Essay*, IV.XIII.1).

<sup>843</sup> *Discourse*, 290.

<sup>844</sup> *Demonstration*, 11.

<sup>845</sup> *Discourse*, 290.

<sup>846</sup> *Review*, 170.

<sup>847</sup> As Ducharme put it, consistent with what is meant here by ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ practical moral reasoning, and the active engagement in conscience with *what it is that* we perceive to be right in itself: ‘fitness implies not only a relation that obtains, but an evaluation of that relation’ (Howard Ducharme, ‘The Moral Self, Moral Knowledge, and God: An Analysis of the Theory of Samuel Clarke’, D.Phil Thesis (Hilary Term, 1984), 112).

relations upon which rightness supervenes, again to confirm whether we had adequate understanding of the relations that obtained in the situation to justify our passive experience of perceiving intrinsic rightness.

Although, the Clarkeans maintain that it is with an ‘immediate assent’, analogous to the slave boy in the *Meno*, that we perceive ‘Evil’ in ‘Barbarity, Injustice and Treachery’,<sup>848</sup> limited agents, with liability to error, must check their moral judgements by confirming the relations that make the acts or principles in question ones of ‘Barbarity, Injustice and Treachery’. To use an example from Butler,<sup>849</sup> while ‘it is counteracting the *Truth* of Things. To give causeless Pain to an innocent Person’, such that ‘there is a visible and odious Disagreement between *Action*, *Agent*, and *Object*’,<sup>850</sup> it is upon learning that a person ‘suffering’ on account of another is not an innocent party, but a ‘villain’,<sup>851</sup> that our perception of, and reaction to, the situation can change.

The ‘material’ of ‘outside’ practical reasoning is not only gathered subsequent to the experience of intrinsic rightness; ‘outside’ practical reasoning can happen before intrinsic rightness is perceived. We may be confronted with the question of whether, to borrow an example from Hume,<sup>852</sup> it is fitting to give money to a beggar when it turns out that the money given to him for aid supports his alcoholism; or, of whether (returning to Price above, and the difficult questions of property and ownership that we can encounter) it is fitting to help an individual to gain entry to a car they are standing by, which they claim is theirs, but have been locked out from. In such cases, we might not perceive what is fitting, and even whether the

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<sup>848</sup> *Discourse*, 49.

<sup>849</sup> ONV, Diss.II.5.

<sup>850</sup> *TFMG.II*, 125.

<sup>851</sup> ONV, Diss.II.5.

<sup>852</sup> *Enquiry*, II.I.143.

fittingness in question is one that concerns a moral problem, until we have examined, and settled, as far as possible, the consequences, and natural features, of the instance at hand.

‘Inside’ practical moral reasoning means reflecting upon what we can be certain of, in conscience, about our experience of perceiving intrinsic rightness, whether that experience has happened as a result of ‘outside’ practical reasoning or prior to it. When we perceive intrinsic rightness, we are ‘conscious’, not only of *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself, but of all that acting according to reason *is*. ‘Inside’ practical moral reasoning is that in which we, through reflection, continue to be conscious of, and to review, our various ‘pro-attitudes’ to *what* it is *that* is according to reason *qua* our law, God’s law and the law of the created universe: such as, our desire to imitate God, our awareness of ‘moral beauty’, ‘self-approbation’ and ‘self-condemnation’.

Clearly ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ practical moral reasoning impact upon each other. What we experience as intrinsic rightness, upon the perception of it ‘inside’, determines what we expect to find ‘outside’ in the situation; and when we find that we are unable to understand everything about often complex situations, or to know all of the consequences of our actions, and so whether the action is fitting to the relations we stand in to ourselves *and* to others *and* to God, we doubt our experience of intrinsic rightness. Whether we experience intrinsic rightness prior, or subsequent, to ‘outside’ practical reasoning, we are constantly forced round in a circle of *practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards*.<sup>853</sup> Within it, we repeatedly

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<sup>853</sup> The process of practical moral reasoning in CER has been called *upwards and downwards* to illustrate (i) how, without faith, rational agents can be caught in a loop of practical moral reasoning on the basis of self-doubt, and (ii) how a range of ‘material’, including scripture and the promise of heavenly reward, is essential ‘material’ of, and for, practical moral reasoning in conscience (see chapter below).

The end point of practical moral reasoning in CER is both the confidence that an action we have perceived to be right in itself is right in itself, and the decision to perform that action on the basis of that confidence. The moral agent who seeks to confirm his intuition of intrinsic rightness, so that he might choose to perform that action as an act of intrinsic rightness, thus reasons *upwards* to that endpoint. However, before reasoning *upwards* to that

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endpoint, the rational agent reasons *downwards* away from the action he has backed away from performing on the basis of self-doubt.

In reasoning *downwards* the rational agent questions what he knows about the action: as an act of, for example, charity he is satisfied it helps others. He is also aware of such experiences as God's voice, his own judgement, and the action's 'moral beauty', which he has in, and as, conscience.

In reasoning back *upwards* the moral agent seeks resolve to perform the action as an act of intrinsic rightness. He looks for the connections between what he considered in reasoning *downwards* and looks for further 'material' to support, where appropriate, his resolve. He thus considers, for example, that as the action is according to his own judgement, it is according to God's will, because God gave him conscience. His creation by God with conscience is not only confirmed by the 'voice' he experiences in conscience but also by scripture. The fact that the action under consideration is according to God's will is further confirmed by the fact that: an act of charity is consistent with the natural affections God created us with for others; God wills in scripture, not only what is best for his creation, but our loving charity for others towards that end; he experienced the desire to perform this act of charity in imitation of God when he first perceived it to be according to the law of reason. In reasoning *upwards*, the moral agent is not only satisfied that the act of charity is according to God's will and in the interests of others, he also recognises that that which is according to his own judgement and God's will is that which fulfils his responsibilities to himself: in performing the action under consideration the agent acts according to his own judgement, 'self-approbation', and what he experiences as a 'necessity' of his own rational nature; he is also aware that he avoids 'self-condemnation' and, in line with conscience's 'presages', the future punishment of God.

On the basis of reasoning back *upwards*, therefore, the moral agent can be confident that the act of charity under consideration is not just for others, but an act which fulfils his responsibilities to others *and* to himself *and* to God. The moral agent is thus able to perform the act under consideration with intention of 'rectitude' as an act of intrinsic rightness according to each of his 'tripartite' duties under reason. However, it is still the case that the moral agent may lack the resolve to act due to his awareness of his own capacity for error. Consequently, the process of practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards repeats itself until the moral agent is able to cross the rational 'gap' into decision and into action (see below).

The process of practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards, as described above, does invite the criticism that it allows Locke's enthusiast, on the basis of a supposed 'internal light' (*Essay*, IV.XIX.10), to justify the performance of any action as moral on the basis that, whatever is according to individual experience 'inside' conscience, is according to God's will, and, therefore, also according to the best interests of others and himself.

On the one hand, it is certainly the case in CER that, due to our limitations in the 'state of trial', human beings are not expected to be able to go further than the *procedure* of practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards. An individual moral agent cannot be certain that any action is one of 'absolute virtue', rather than mere 'relative virtue', because 'mathematical certainty' is beyond human beings in moral matters (see below). In the 'state of trial', when an agent intends, on the basis of practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards, that which is 'materially' virtuous in the performance of any act he chooses as moral, he has done all that can be reasonably expected of him.

On the other hand, unlike Locke's enthusiast, the Clarkeian moral agent must always act with caution due to self-awareness of the capacity for error, and, in CER, 'material' considered 'inside' conscience does not take precedence over what the agent knows 'outside' about an action. Price argued that approval of 'persecution', 'euthanasia' and 'self-murder' indicated how 'the *practical* errors of men...plainly [arise] from...*speculative* errors; from...mistaking facts, or not seeing the whole of a case; whence it cannot but often happen, that they will think those practices right, which, if they had juster opinions of facts and cases, they would unavoidably condemn' (*Review*, 171).

Thus, let's say the act of charity I had been considering as right in itself was based on receiving stolen money. In CER my reasoning would now be faulty if I continued only to consider the action as an act of charity.

In reasoning upwards and downwards concerning an act of charity which is reliant upon theft, I might consider that an act of charity founded on an act of injustice that also deprives others of happiness could not be performed in imitation of God. God acts as the perfection of the law of reason, so he always acts with justice *and* benevolence: 'Divine benevolence is a disposition, not to make all indiscriminately happy in any way possible, but to make the *faithful*, the *pious*, and *upright* happy' (*Review*, 251). As God, according to his nature, is governed by the law of reason, and to be governed by the law of reason is to act with justice, I could not be acting according to the law of reason in imitation of God if I prized this particular instance of utility over justice. If, then, I cannot be confident that I am acting in imitation of God, I cannot be confident that I am acting according to God's will. As God wills what is best for his whole creation, I cannot be confident that performing this particular act of charity is acting for the best long-term interests of others. My lack of confidence that I am able to imitate God by performing this act of charity is supported by the fact that, when I consider the act of theft, I do not perceive it to be 'fitting' to deprive someone else of their own property, so that the thought that

seek to confirm the accuracy of our perception of intrinsic rightness by reflecting on all that we experience – ‘inside’ conscience – upon the perception of intrinsic rightness; alongside going over all that we know (or think we know) – ‘outside’ – about the situation.

Subsequently, I shall argue that a reasoned faith is essential to breaking the circle of *practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards*. Moral agents who seek to perform each moral action as acting for themselves *and* for others *and* for God, on the basis of a ‘moral certainty’, are only able to do so through faith, such that relevant ‘material’ for our ‘moral certainty’, attained through practical moral reasoning in, and under, conscience, includes such considerations as divine command, heavenly reward, our own God-given instincts, and self-interest. In the meantime, I shall explore the ‘material’ that has already been discussed as ‘internal’ to conscience: namely, our own judgement and nature, the attractiveness of intrinsic rightness, ‘self-approbation’ and ‘self-condemnation’.

### **‘Light of Nature’ and ‘Law of Nature’**

In the Introduction, we saw that KC suggests a tension within CER, which is also a tension between Price, on the one side, and Balguy and Clarke, on the other. While Balguy and Clarke argued that our own judgement of rightness is a ‘formal’ obligation upon us, which we experience upon perceiving intrinsic rightness, Price was clear that ‘the attraction or excitement which the mind feels upon perceiving right and wrong...is the *effect* of obligation perceived’ not ‘*obligation itself*’.<sup>854</sup> However, if Darwall and Korsgaard in KC continued to quote Price, following the passage they highlight as marking a tension between Price, Clarke and Balguy, then the tension they identify would already start to lessen:

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utility can compensate for injustice does not appear to be confirmed by my own judgement, or the judgement of God, or ‘self-approbation’, or any of the experiences I would normally associate, in conscience, with intrinsic rightness.

<sup>854</sup> Review, 114.

It is not exactly the same to say, it is our *duty* to do a thing; and to say, we *approve* of doing it. The one is the quality of the action, the other the *discernment* of that quality. Yet, such is the connexion between these, that it is not very necessary to distinguish them; and, in common language, the term *obligation* often stands for the sense and judgement of the mind concerning what is fit or unfit to be done.<sup>855</sup>

Price agreed with Clarke and Balguy that, ‘That is properly a *law* to us, which we always and unavoidably feel and own ourselves *obliged* to obey’,<sup>856</sup> and so quotes with approval the very passages from Clarke which, in KC, are at issue.<sup>857</sup> Likewise, Clarke and Balguy agreed with Price, that although we may, in Hooker’s words, ‘seem makers’ of our law, we must always be careful to remember that, while we experience the law of reason as that which is according to our own judgement and nature, it is the law of reason itself that defines *what* it is *that* is according to reason, not our own limited faculty of reason.

In response to Tindal’s deist appropriation of Clarke,<sup>858</sup> Balguy (in line with Price’s distinction between ‘absolute’ and ‘practical’ virtue (see below)) distinguished between ‘The

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<sup>855</sup> *Review*, 117.

<sup>856</sup> *Review*, 109.

<sup>857</sup> *Review*, 118.

<sup>858</sup> Tindal’s deism preserved vestiges of RR, while pushing together Lockean and Clarkean intuition. Tindal’s ‘self-evident notions, which are the foundation of all knowledge, & certainty’ and all our ‘reasoning’ (*ibid.*, 170), correspond to Lockean simple ideas which are intuited as present in the mind, and as in agreement or disagreement with each other (Locke, *Essay*, IV.II.1). However, Tindal’s ‘self-evident Notions’ are the basis of ‘intellectual communication between God and Man’ (*Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London, 1731), 164). ‘*Intuitive knowledge*’ is ‘the knowledge of God himself, who sees all things by Intuition’ (163), so while we ‘can as easily distinguish *fit* from *unfit*, as the eye can beauty from deformity’ (*ibid.*, 26), ‘the eternal Reason, & unalterable Relations of Things’ (*ibid.*, 266) ‘are the permanent voice of God’ (*ibid.*, 27) and ‘our Reason for kind, tho’ not for degree, is of the same nature with that of God’ (*ibid.*, 20).

However, while appropriating Clarke, Tindal maintained: ‘the only innate Principle in Man is the Desire of his own happiness; and the Goodness of God requires no more than a right cultivating of this Principle’ (*ibid.*, 333). Although, in Tindal, like Clarke, we ‘judge of the fitness and unfitness of actions’ (*ibid.*, 22) according to our ‘relations’ to ourselves, others and God and ‘the duties resulting from these relations’ (*ibid.*, 168), Tindal made the measure of ‘fittingness’ acting to ‘introduce into...[God’s] creation as much happiness as...[we] can’ (*ibid.*, 255). Tindal saw his emphasis upon utility as consistent with Clarke’s Cumberland-inspired claim that God could have ‘no motive to create’ other than to ‘communicate...his goodness and happiness’ (*ibid.*, 353). And it was with respect to the fact that the relations, satisfied by acting for happiness, were built into creation that Tindal made his most influential claim concerning Clarke. Tindal maintained that Clarke’s ‘original obligation’, and Butlerian conception of conscience, made his position ‘true Deism’ (*ibid.*, 337).

According to Tindal, Clarke ‘favours *Deism*’ (*ibid.*, 336): ‘Because if the eternal Reason of things is the *supreme Obligation*...if there’s any difference between it and external Revelation...[the former must be] the *supreme...Rule*’ (*ibid.*, 336). If ‘external Revelation’ (*ibid.*, 282) were not simply a ‘Republication’ of the ‘unchangeable’ law of reason, it would mean that the ‘Light’ (*ibid.*, 178) God gave us to ‘judge soundly...in matters’ of religion and morality was insufficient for ‘The end for which God’ gave it (*ibid.*, 22), and that it was

*Light of Nature*, and the *Law of Nature*'.<sup>859</sup> The latter is '*Right Reason*',<sup>860</sup> 'That Law which results from the Eternal Reasons and Relations of Things' that is 'a compleat [sic] Rule of Action for all *intelligent Creatures*', including 'the *Creator* Himself'.<sup>861</sup> The former 'signifies that Share, that Portion of Moral Truth, which Men are naturally capable of discovering'.<sup>862</sup> While '*Right Reason*' has '*Sufficiency*' and '*full Perfection*', '*Reason as a Faculty in Man*'<sup>863</sup> is insufficient and 'fallible', due to 'the poor Opinions, and precarious Perceptions, of weak Men'.<sup>864</sup> While, according to '*Right Reason*', there is 'a *compleat Rule of Life*' 'called *Human Duty*' that 'comprehend[s] all the several Relations in which Men stand toward their Creator, their Fellow-Creatures, and Themselves',<sup>865</sup> 'a clear Perception of that entire *System of Relations*, or *Moral Truths*, which constitute human Duty',<sup>866</sup> is beyond '*imperfect*'<sup>867</sup> human reason. 'In some Cases, what is really *fit*, appears to us *unfit*; and *vice versa*',<sup>868</sup> and 'By *imperfect Understandings*, the *Relations of Things* may be sometimes misperceived, sometimes not perceived at all.'<sup>869</sup>

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reasonable for God to somehow 'mend the eternal, universal Law of Nature' (*ibid.*, 175-176) by giving only a 'small part of Mankind' (*ibid.*, 361) the positive institutions necessary for instruction and salvation. For Tindal, whenever Clarke denied the sufficiency of reason he contradicted his own representation of the law of reason as 'irresistible' and 'so absolutely perfect, as to take in everything that God requires of Mankind' (*ibid.*, 324). Tindal found in Clarke, and in 'the judicious Mr. *Butler*' (*ibid.*, 253), support for the view that all human beings had to do to 'discern their duty both to God & Man' (*ibid.*, 253) was 'attend to the dictates of their Reason' (*ibid.*, 134) or 'Conscience' (*ibid.*, 314), 'the only Tribunal God has erected here on Earth' (*ibid.*, 93), so that even 'An ignorant Peasant may know what is sufficient for him, without knowing as much as the learned Rector of St. *James's* [i.e., Clarke]' (*ibid.*, 348). And the reason why knowledge of our duties should be available, even to one of the 'meanest capacity' (*ibid.*, 253), without aid of revelation, is because the 'relations' that determine those duties are natural relations readily visible to human reason: 'I can't help thinking, but that...God's Will is so clearly, & fully manifested in the Book of Nature, that...if the Book of Nature shews us in Characters legible by the whole world, the relation we stand in to God and our fellow-creatures, and the duties resulting from thence: for then it must teach us the whole of our duty' (*ibid.*, 24). For further discussion of Tindal's appropriation of Clarke, see the works cited in footnote 1057 and 1243.

<sup>859</sup> *Second Letter*, 282.

<sup>860</sup> *Second Letter*, 286.

<sup>861</sup> *Second Letter*, 282.

<sup>862</sup> *Second Letter*, 283-284.

<sup>863</sup> *Second Letter*, 286.

<sup>864</sup> *Second Letter*, 301.

<sup>865</sup> *Second Letter*, 285.

<sup>866</sup> *Second Letter*, 292.

<sup>867</sup> *Second Letter*, 286.

<sup>868</sup> *Second Letter*, 336.

<sup>869</sup> *Second Letter*, 301.

For Balguy, Tindal's misappropriation of Clarke leads to the view that 'the *Law of Nature* is, whatever any Man's Reason or *Faculty of Understanding*, suggests to him'.<sup>870</sup> Such a view is not warranted by Clarke, who emphasised the weakness of human reason (and human resolve (see below)) in the 'state of trial'.<sup>871</sup> Price, in stressing that duty and obligation are not the same as perception and approval, is only agreeing with Balguy that, 'Our Faculty of Reason does not constitute the one a Good; but perceives it to be such',<sup>872</sup> because 'the true *Foundation of Virtue* is not our *Faculty of Reason*, but the intrinsick *Reasons and Relations of Things*'.<sup>873</sup> If this were not the case, it would mean that human agents 'can, in *no sense*, ever do wrong', that 'while we follow our own judgement we cannot *err* in our conduct',<sup>874</sup> so that there is no such thing as '*objective rectitude*', 'separate from, and independent of, the mind and its perceptions, to be enquired after and perceived'.<sup>875</sup>

### **The 'Formal Obligation' of Individual Judgement**

Of course, removing the tension between the Clarkeans themselves does not answer the wider KC claim that there is a tension within CER itself; it is rather to include Price, along with Balguy and Clarke, within that tension. However, it is possible to respond here to that wider tension.

The Clarkeans claimed that our '*Assent is a formal Obligation upon every Man*'.<sup>876</sup> It follows from the above that our own judgement of rightness is bound to be a 'formal' obligation in CER, due the weakness of human reason.

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<sup>870</sup> *Second Letter*, 300.

<sup>871</sup> *Second Letter*, 296-298.

<sup>872</sup> *TFMG.II*, 173.

<sup>873</sup> *TFMG.II*, 184.

<sup>874</sup> *Review*, 178.

<sup>875</sup> *Review*, 179.

<sup>876</sup> *Discourse*, 51.

Not only is it the case that the perception of human reason requires active engagement with *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself as part of ‘doing as we will’, but, as I have tried to illustrate with both ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ practical reasoning, our perception of intrinsic rightness itself involves finding out about the world around us as well as what is happening inside us. Price echoes (without citing) Tillotson:<sup>877</sup> ‘Our rule is to follow our consciences steadily and faithfully, *after we have taken care to inform them in the best manner we can*’.<sup>878</sup>

And Balguy makes it clear that:

Whoever has a real Perception of any Truth, must unavoidably assent to it as such: but if he had never examined it, never taken it into his Thoughts; however clear and evident it might be in itself, it would be to him as nothing.<sup>879</sup>

Again, for the Clarkeans, the weakness of human reason in the ‘state of trial’ means that we do not merely wander through the world passively perceiving intrinsic rightness, as Korsgaard asserted, ‘wafting by’. While assent to moral truth is like ‘Assent to every Geometrical Demonstration’, in the sense that it is immediate, the former is also like the latter in that it requires one’s ‘own Study’.<sup>880</sup> Assent to moral (and mathematical) truth is unavoidable, but only for any ‘Man, who...has Patience or Opportunities to examine and consider Things himself, or...[who is] taught and instructed...by Others, concerning the necessary Relations and Dependencies of Things’.<sup>881</sup>

The weakness of human reason, and the effort required to, so far as possible, overcome it, allows for practical moral reasoning in CER, and also some sense of ‘self-imposition’, but it is a ‘self-imposition’ that must be understood outside the ‘false trichotomy’ (see

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<sup>877</sup> ‘We should be very careful to inform our consciences aright, that we may not mistake concerning our duty; or if we do, that our error and mistake may not be grossly wilful and faulty’ (Tillotson, *Works*, II.XXXVIII, 335).

<sup>878</sup> *Review*, 179 (my italics).

<sup>879</sup> *Second Letter*, 300.

<sup>880</sup> *Discourse*, 42.

<sup>881</sup> *Discourse*, 42.

Introduction). KC maintains that what is, properly speaking, ‘formal’ is solely self-constructed and self-imposed. CER is able to maintain that our own judgement is ‘formal’, because what we consider to be the right thing to do may not be the right thing ‘materially’ or ‘substantively’ speaking. Human beings in the ‘state of trial’ are aware of their limitations and potential for error, and so, when they choose to will, in the Clarkeian sense, they are imposing upon themselves the responsibility of, and standard for, acting, and they are doing so on the basis of a ‘moral certainty’ they have constructed through the ‘material’ of ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ practical moral reasoning. However, when Clarkeian moral agents impose upon themselves the responsibility for acting, and choose with their own judgement and nature, they do not mistake their own potentially erroneous judgement for the standard, or creator, of moral truth.

Returning to reasoning upwards and downwards, a moral agent, reviewing an instance of perceived intrinsic rightness, is always left in a quandary, even when the case seems clear, due to self-knowledge of the possibility for error. However, no human being, when he perceives intrinsic rightness, can escape the fact that he has judged something to be right in itself. For Balguy, an agent, under Tindal’s scheme, is worryingly unconcerned about self-doubt or the complexity of the situation that confronts him; Tindal’s moral agent can just choose to follow his own judgement, because it is his own judgement. By contrast, a Clarkeian agent may resolve to act because, even though moral reasoning upwards and downwards does not deliver him an absolute mathematical certainty, he can at least be confident, through that process, that he has judged something to be right in itself, and that he has done his best to confirm his own judgement and test the legitimacy of his experience. Further, even as the Clarkeian moral agent resolves to do what he perceives to be right in itself because it is according to his own judgement, he does not obey his own judgement simply because it is his own judgement, and

he *intends* more when he chooses to obey his own judgement than merely following his own judgement.

For the Clarkeans, ‘The *Rectitude* of Actions must not only be *perceived*, but *intended*’.<sup>882</sup> To ‘intend rectitude’ is to perform an action because it is right in itself, and to perform that action with the intention of satisfying each of our relations, according to the ‘nature of things’. Doing *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself because it is according to our own judgement can be an act in which rectitude is intended so far as: (a) we perform that action with, and from, the appreciation that it is right in itself for a rational agent to follow their own judgement; and (b) we intend, by choosing to act according to our own judgement, to satisfy, not only our duty to ourselves, but also our duty to others and to God.

For the Clarkeans, ‘It is truly and absolutely right, that a being should do what the reason of his mind, though perhaps unhappily misinformed, requires of him’,<sup>883</sup> because ‘that the *Will* be governed by the *Understanding*, whatever its Powers and Perceptions may be; is an eternal Dictate of Reason and Truth’.<sup>884</sup> Thus, although our own judgement is not the ground of moral distinctions, and it is our responsibility as moral agents to act, so far as is possible, consistent with what Price calls ‘abstract or absolute virtue’, we must also make allowances for ‘practical or relative virtue’.<sup>885</sup> The latter is the leeway afforded to the ‘erroneous conscience’,<sup>886</sup> and it is because our conscience is always potentially erroneous that our own judgement of rightness is always a ‘formal’ obligation in the world as a ‘state of trial’:

What is it then that acquits and justifies an erroneous Agent? The *Reasonableness* of his Actions. For tho’ they are not conformable to the true *Reasons of Things* [Price’s ‘absolute virtue’; Balguy’s ‘Law of Nature’]...they are conformable to his own *Reason* and Judgement

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<sup>882</sup> *TFMG.II*, 183.

<sup>883</sup> *Review*, 180.

<sup>884</sup> *LT*, 414.

<sup>885</sup> *Review*, 177.

<sup>886</sup> *LT*, 414; *Review*, 178.

[Price's 'practical virtue'; Balguy's 'Light of Nature']. And...by all the Reason in the World he is to be acquitted, and even commended, for following the best Light...he was able to get.<sup>887</sup>

Price thus maintained a hallmark of Thomistic theories of 'erroneous conscience':<sup>888</sup>

A man may, through involuntary error, approve of doing what he *ought* not to do, or think that to be his duty, which is really contrary to it...yet it is too, in this case, really his duty to act agreeably to his judgement.<sup>889</sup>

An act of 'practical virtue' is still '*real* virtue', because (a) it is right in itself to follow our own reason: to do so is to act according to (a principle of) reason; and (b) when choosing what we should do to act with rectitude, and so satisfy each of our 'tripartite' duties, a moral agent can hardly disregard the fact that he perceives something to be right in itself, and still expect to act reasonably, and so morally. Thus, according to Price:

It is happy for us, that our title to the character of virtuous beings depends not upon the justness of our opinions, or the constant *objective* rectitude of all we do; but upon the conformity of our actions to the sincere conviction of our minds. A suspicion of the contrary, were it to prevail, would prove of very bad consequence, by causing us to distrust our only guide, and throwing us into a state of endless and inextricable perplexity.<sup>890</sup>

In the end, the individual who does that which he perceives to be right in itself because it is according to the reason of his own mind, does so morally, so long as his commitment to the fact of his own moral judgement is driven by a commitment to the law of reason itself. Thus, Clarke distinguished our 'truest and formallest *Obligation*' to follow our own judgement from such '*secondary* and *additional* Obligation' as 'superior Power and Authority, and the Sanction of Rewards';<sup>891</sup> Clarke instead made our 'formal' obligation part of our '*original Obligation*'

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<sup>887</sup> *TFMG.II*, 182.

<sup>888</sup> For erroneous conscience, see: Baylor, *op.cit.*, 52-62; Potts, *op.cit.*, 54-60; D'Arcy, *op.cit.*, 100-112; McAdoo, *op.cit.*, 85-97; A.N. Prior, 'The Virtue of the Act and the Virtue of the Agent', *Philosophy*, XXVI:97 (Apr., 1951), 121-130. Consistent with the present response to KR and KC, Prior appreciates that Price's discussion of erroneous conscience, and related distinction between 'absolute' and 'relative' virtue, exhibits the influence of Butler and Balguy.

<sup>889</sup> *Review*, 166.

<sup>890</sup> *Review*, 179-180.

<sup>891</sup> *Discourse*, 43.

to ‘the eternal *Reason* of Things’ *qua* our own law, God’s law, and the law of the created universe.

### Intending Rectitude

In CER, the likes of Tindal and Hutcheson highlight how it is possible to act according to the ‘internal’ ‘obligations of conscience’, which are part of our experience of rectitude, and of what it means to act according to rectitude, without *intending* rectitude.

Tindal’s moral agent does not ‘intend rectitude’, when he acts out of fidelity to his own mind, because Tindal’s appropriation of Clarke suggests that *all* a moral agent has to be concerned about when he performs a moral action is whether he has followed his own judgement. Tindal ignored the limitedness of human reason, and the fact that we are not just responsible for acting according to our own judgement, but for ensuring that that which we choose to do, according to our own judgement, is always acting for ourselves *and* for others *and* for God.

Tindal thus disorders the process of practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards in the same way as Hutcheson. In opposition to the exaggerations of ‘*the Sufficiency of Human Reason*’ in ‘*Deism*’, Balguy maintained that it is not only ‘*Reason*’, but ‘the Appearance of Reason, that can *justify* the *Choice* of a moral Agent’.<sup>892</sup>

*Error* in itself can oblige nothing, and is nothing, but a mere imaginary Relation...yet so sacred is *Truth*, that it binds and attaches Men to its very *Semblance*. Even a false Copy shall be regarded and revered, where the Original is not to be had.<sup>893</sup>

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<sup>892</sup> TFMG, 94.

<sup>893</sup> LT, 414.

Our own judgement of rightness is part of our experience of both ‘reason’ or ‘semblance’ of reason; so, also, is our perception, and approval, of the ‘moral beauty’ of intrinsic value. As part of ‘inside’ practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards, to check whether we are perceiving ‘reason’ or its ‘semblance’, we may return to the fact that, whichever way we look at the situation, we continue to judge rightness and to experience the beauty of rightness. Although, we may still be acting only according to a ‘semblance’ of reason, it was on the basis of ‘material’ ‘inside’ conscience that we were able to will the action as according to, and with intention of, rectitude.

While Tindal distorts the process, by suggesting that acting with rectitude does not simply concern, but is defined by, acting according to individual judgement *qua* individual judgement, Hutcheson distorts the process because his emphasis upon ‘moral beauty’ and ‘self-approbation’, in the form of a ‘moral sense’, suggests that ‘*Moral good*...signifies nothing distinct from a *feeling of the heart*, or nothing absolute and immutable and independent of the mind’.<sup>894</sup> The Clarkeans maintained, as we have seen, ‘that the perception of *right* influences our choice’, not least because we experience in, and through, conscience ‘a superior affection within’ for ‘those affections and actions themselves to which we give the denomination of’ ‘*Moral excellence*’.<sup>895</sup> It is here that the Clarkeans themselves accused Hutcheson of something like the ‘moral fetishism’ that was connected to ‘judgement externalism’ by critics of rational intuitionism (see previous chapter). Hutcheson’s theory that we possess a ‘desire of Moral excellence’, prior to the perception of it, makes ‘self-approbation’ and the attractiveness of virtue something ‘distinct from...the objects themselves’, and so makes self-approbation,

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<sup>894</sup> Review, 216 fn.

<sup>895</sup> Review, 216 fn.

and our affection for virtue, a matter of self-gratification external to our experience of the intrinsic value of *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself:

Can the desire of the *relish* we have for particular objects, as distinct from the desire of the objects themselves, mean anything, besides the desire of enjoying the pleasures attending it...can it therefore influence our actions any otherwise than by means of self-love?<sup>896</sup>

Hutcheson and Tindal distort the process of practical moral reasoning, because they make a part of our experience of rectitude the primary reason for acting, rather than rectitude itself. From the Clarkean perspective, the mistake made by the likes of Hutcheson and Tindal can be explained with reference to the distinction between AATC and AAOC, and Price's distinction between the 'virtue of the act' and the 'virtue of the agent'.

### **'Virtuous Act'/'Virtuous Agent'**

For the Clarkeans, reflection in conscience upon its various 'material' comes into every act an individual agent chooses to perform:

a man *cannot...but* have *some* View and Design in everything he does. Even when he abandons himself *most implicitly* to the *Brutal* Guidance of *mere Appetite and Passion*...he does it with *some View*; and with a Consciousness, which *Beasts* have not, that he knowingly and deliberately *chuses* to aim at some mean and unworthy End.<sup>897</sup>

Despite all the various 'material' at the agent's disposal, it is possible for him to choose (or will) contrary to virtue, and so contrary to himself and all that reason *is*; he can also choose to perform a 'virtuous act' *qua* AATC.

Hutcheson's and Tindal's moral agents are AATC, because they are performing an action approved by conscience, on the basis of what they know, in conscience, that action to be *qua* according to their own judgement or 'self-approbation'. However, in choosing to

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<sup>896</sup> *Review*, 216 fn.

<sup>897</sup> *Sermons*, III.V, 70.

perform the action they are only AATC, because they intend nothing further than those particular referents of conscience themselves. A virtuous act *qua* AATC is to be distinguished from a virtuous act *qua* AAOC, because the latter is performed by a virtuous agent. Here the agent wills the same action, on the basis of the same ‘material’, but his intention in acting is different: his intention is not the satisfaction of only one of conscience’s referents, but each of them, because he intends rectitude itself.

Thus, Price maintained that, from the perspective of ‘the *virtue of the action*’, ‘no particular intention is requisite; for what is *objectively* right, may be done from any motive bad or good’.<sup>898</sup> With respect to ‘the *virtue of the agent*’, however, ‘the particular intention’, ‘whatever is true of the *matter* of the action’, ‘is what is most essential’, so that, in line with ‘practical virtue’ and human limitedness, ‘what is *objectively wrong*’ can be performed with ‘virtue’, so long as the ‘intention’ ‘is rectitude’.<sup>899</sup>

I argue below that, just as reasons for acting ‘internal’ to rectitude can be performed without intending rectitude, reasons for acting described by the Clarkeans as ‘additional’ to our ‘original obligation’ can be performed with, or without, intention of rectitude. Thus, the Clarkeans are clear that an agent is not virtuous if he performs a ‘virtuous act’ *qua* AATC simply because he is aware, in conscience, that the act he performs is commanded by a superior being, or is in his self-interest, or is in line with whichever of his ‘instinctive determinations’ is strongest. However, such considerations are relevant ‘material’ for conscientious reflection, so that they can, and will, figure within practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards in the world as a ‘state of trial’. Consequently, such considerations as ‘instinctive determinations’

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<sup>898</sup> Review, 184.

<sup>899</sup> Review, 184.

and divine command become part of the basis upon which a fallible moral agent is able confidently (with a moral, as opposed to mathematical, certainty) to choose actions as according to, and in the performance of which he is able to intend, rectitude.

### Fallenness and the ‘State of Trial’

In the world as a ‘state of trial’, limited human reason means that, ‘our Ideas of moral *Fitness* are not always to be depended upon; as being sometimes obscure, and very often inadequate’,<sup>900</sup> and also that human beings are often unprepared to overcome shortcomings and uncertainties through the efforts of practical moral reasoning and faith. The Clarkeans explain our lack of resolve with reference to the fact that human beings are ‘fallen’.<sup>901</sup> The Clarkeans are not interested in ‘the absurd Doctrine of *Hereditary Guilt*’,<sup>902</sup> or even of explaining ‘*by what Means soever*’ the present State of the World’ ‘*came originally to be so corrupted*’.<sup>903</sup> Their use of the Fall is closer to J.N.D. Kelly’s interpretation of Clement of Alexandria, where Clement used the Fall to express the fact that human beings had inherited, if not original sin, then ‘a disordered sensuality which entails the dominance of the irrational element in our nature’,<sup>904</sup> so that ‘creatures once made rational’<sup>905</sup> are, instead, moved by ‘love of pleasure’:<sup>906</sup>

...the Principles of our Nature were originally balanced...But if that Balance was destroyed...in our first Parents...If their Passions were, by the Fall, raised and strengthened beyond their original Pitch, a correspondent Effect might be produced, at least in their immediate Descendants; and, by Consequence, in the whole sinful Race.<sup>907</sup>

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<sup>900</sup> *Second Letter*, 336.

<sup>901</sup> *Second Letter*, 307.

<sup>902</sup> *Second Letter*, 287.

<sup>903</sup> *Discourse*, 122; see also: 7; 105.

<sup>904</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, 5th edn (London, Adam & Charles Black, 1977), 180.

<sup>905</sup> Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* in A. Robertson (trans.), P. Schaff and H. Wace (eds), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd Series, 14 Vols. (Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 1994), Vol.IV, 39.

<sup>906</sup> Clement, *Stromateis* in A. Roberts, J. Donaldson and A.C. Coxe (eds), *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 Vols. (Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 1994), Vol.II, 544.

<sup>907</sup> *Second Letter*, 288.

As a result of ‘this derivative Corruption’,<sup>908</sup> we stand in the world as a ‘state of trial’, ‘Charge[d]’ with ‘Ignorance, Negligence, Perverseness, Stupidity’.<sup>909</sup> The ‘Generality of Men’ ‘are very backward and unapt to employ their Reason’, even to ‘fix their *Attention* upon moral Matters’, never mind ‘to apply themselves to the *Practice* of them’, through being consumed by ‘the *Business and the Pleasures* of the world’.<sup>910</sup> ‘Violent and importunate’ ‘*Appetites and Desires of Sense*’ make it ‘very difficult for Men to withdraw their Thoughts from Sensual Objects’, and the ‘Strength of *Passions and Appetites*’ means that even as they ‘do attend a little, and begin to see the Reasonableness of governing themselves by a higher Principle’, a ‘*Variety of Temptations*’ leads them back into ‘*The Love of Pleasure*’.<sup>911</sup>

The Fall not only explains disorders ‘in the Mind, and in the Body’,<sup>912</sup> but in creation itself. From the world having been created according to the law of reason, it follows that, just as rightness supervenes upon particular natural features, ‘the respective Fruits or Effects’ ‘of the eternal Rules of Piety, Justice, Equity, Goodness, and Temperance’, were originally built into ‘the Nature of Things, and the Constitution and Order of God’s Creation’.<sup>913</sup> However, following the Fall, or ‘some great and general Corruption and Depravation’, ‘the natural Order of Things in the World is manifestly perverted’, so that, ‘though originally the Constitution and Order of God’s Creation was...such, that’ ‘natural Rewards and Punishments’ ‘followed’ ‘Virtue and Vice’, now:

Virtue and Goodness are visibly prevented in great Measure, from obtaining their proper and due Effect, in establishing Mens Happiness proportionable [sic] to their Behaviour and Practice...<sup>914</sup>

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<sup>908</sup> *Second Letter*, 289.

<sup>909</sup> *Second Letter*, 297.

<sup>910</sup> *Discourse*, 125.

<sup>911</sup> *Discourse*, 125-126.

<sup>912</sup> *Second Letter*, 288.

<sup>913</sup> *Discourse*, 103.

<sup>914</sup> *Discourse*, 105.

The limits, and corruptions, of the world as a ‘state of trial’ mean that human beings require assistance. The two types examined below are: God’s implanting in human nature ‘instinctive determinations’; and the ‘*supernatural Helps*’<sup>915</sup> of divine command and the promise of heavenly reward, as they are experienced in conscience’s ‘presages’ and found, as ‘Gospel-Motives’,<sup>916</sup> in scripture.

### **Rational Self-Love and Rational Benevolence**

Before turning to the ‘additional’ support of ‘instinctive determinations’ in the world as a ‘state of trial’, it is important to appreciate that, for the Clarkeans, rational agents do not need ‘instinctive determinations’ in order to have a regard, and even ‘affections’, for the ends of self-love and benevolence *qua* principles of reason.

In line with the single law of reason and Clarke’s ‘original obligations’, Price (and Balguy)<sup>917</sup> insisted that self-love and benevolence are principles of action *following* the exercise of reason and belong only to human beings as agents possessing conscience or ‘the power of reflexion’.<sup>918</sup> For them, such an insistence is part of their objection to Hutcheson’s moral sense, although it is also consistent with the Clarkean view that there is an essential difference between happiness and virtue, on the one hand, and vice and misery, on the other (see below).

For the Clarkeans, Hutchesonian moral sense undermined RR by making subjective human feelings, and the divine will which decided to create human beings with those feelings,

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<sup>915</sup> *Second Letter*, 305.

<sup>916</sup> *First Letter*, 15.

<sup>917</sup> See: *TFMG*, 77; 85; 88; 93; *TFMG.II*, 199-203.

<sup>918</sup> *Review*, 217.

the foundation of morals. Likewise, if ‘The desire of happiness for *ourselves*’,<sup>919</sup> and the ‘inward sentiments’ by which ‘we are determined to make a distinction between publick happiness and misery; and to apprehend a preferableness of the one to the other’, ‘arises from senses and instincts *given us*’, this would mean that we only have affections for others and ourselves because of ‘our [created] frame’<sup>920</sup> and ‘arbitrary constitution’.<sup>921</sup>

Instead, Price maintained that the desire for happiness is part of the *intuitively live bedrock* of human beings *qua* rational agents, just as ‘The desire of *knowledge*...and the preference of TRUTH arise in every intelligent mind’.<sup>922</sup> ‘It is not conceivable, that the understanding can be indifferent to’ truth, just as ‘the eye’ cannot be indifferent to ‘light’ or the ‘ear’ to ‘harmony’.<sup>923</sup> Similarly, ‘No being, who knows what happiness and misery are, can be supposed indifferent to them, without a plain contradiction’.<sup>924</sup> ‘Happiness and misery are [not] objects in themselves indifferent’:<sup>925</sup> we do not need an implanted sense to know ‘the *nature* of happiness and misery’,<sup>926</sup> nor to drive us to prefer the former to the latter. It is knowing what is ‘in’ happiness, according to ‘the nature of things and of beings’,<sup>927</sup> that ‘determine[s]’ a rational agent ‘to seek it for *himself*’; and it is the same ‘nature of *happiness*’, as it ‘engage[s]’ a rational agent ‘to chuse and desire it for *himself*’, that ‘engage[s] him to approve it for *others*’.<sup>928</sup>

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<sup>919</sup> Review, 70.

<sup>920</sup> Review, 72.

<sup>921</sup> Review, 74.

<sup>922</sup> Review, 73.

<sup>923</sup> Review, 73.

<sup>924</sup> Review, 70.

<sup>925</sup> Review, 71.

<sup>926</sup> Review, 72.

<sup>927</sup> Review, 70.

<sup>928</sup> Review, 71; see also: 149.

Price highlights how benevolence and self-love may be viewed as referents of conscience, because they are part of reason and rational reflection itself. Price maintained that ‘benevolence is essential to intelligence, and not merely an implanted principle or instinct’,<sup>929</sup> and that ‘the most important of our desires and affections [including self-love] have a higher and less precarious original’<sup>930</sup> than a Hutchesonian ‘implanted and factitious’<sup>931</sup> sense. Indeed, Price insisted that, while ‘self-love, benevolence, and the love of truth’ are ‘*affections*’, this term is ‘most properly’ used to ‘signify desires founded in the reasonable nature itself, and essential to it’.<sup>932</sup>

### **‘Instinctive Determinations’**

Despite this emphasis upon self-love and benevolence *qua* rational affections and duties, the Clarkeans did concede the ‘ministerial and supplemental’<sup>933</sup> role of ‘*instinctive determinations*’ in the world as a ‘state of trial’, as a ‘support’ for ‘the *intellectual discernment of right and wrong*’.<sup>934</sup>

in men, the sentiments and tendencies of our intelligent nature are, in a great degree, mingled with the effects of arbitrary constitution...Rational and dispassionate benevolence would, in us, be [without ‘instinctive determinations’] a principle much too weak...utterly insufficient for the purposes of our present state...the same is true of our other rational principles and desires.<sup>935</sup>

‘Our Maker’ ‘wisely provided remedies’ for our ‘imperfections’ in the ‘state of trial’, ‘by annexing to our intellectual perceptions sensations and instincts, which give them greater weight and force’, and without which ‘The dictates of mere reason, being slow, and deliberate, would be otherwise much too weak’.<sup>936</sup> ‘Instincts were planted in us as Auxiliaries to our

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<sup>929</sup> *Review*, 192.

<sup>930</sup> *Review*, 78.

<sup>931</sup> *Review*, 72.

<sup>932</sup> *Review*, 74.

<sup>933</sup> *Review*, 77.

<sup>934</sup> *Review*, 61.

<sup>935</sup> *Review*, 74.

<sup>936</sup> *Review*, 61.

Reason’;<sup>937</sup> they ‘were given us in order to engage, assist and quicken us in a Course of virtuous Actions’, and ‘point out the Road to Virtue, and urge us unto it’.<sup>938</sup> ‘Our natural desires’ for private and public good will often carry us to acts of self-love and benevolence ‘without any rational reflexion’,<sup>939</sup> but, in doing so, they become the opportunity for, and ‘material’ of, practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards.

‘We may’, for example, ‘infer from our having such an Instinct [as benevolence], that it is the Will of the Creator we should observe its Motions’.<sup>940</sup> A Clarkeian moral agent appreciates that, ‘It is truly and absolutely right, that a being should do...what, according to his best judgement, he is persuaded to be the will of God’,<sup>941</sup> because God’s moral attributes mean that ‘God’s *Will*...obliges in virtue of Truth’.<sup>942</sup> ‘Instinctive determinations’, looked at from the perspective of rectitude, can provide relevant material for rational reflection and choice, so that a Clarkeian moral agent is able, as a result of reasoning upwards and downwards, to choose or will rationally, with the intention of rectitude, an action to which he may have been at first prompted by ‘instinctive determinations’:

A benevolent Instinct is a very proper Introduction to Virtue; it may lead us...by the Hand, till we arrive at a Conduct truly virtuous...that is founded on rational Principles; and even afterwards it may continue to quicken us in our Pursuits.<sup>943</sup>

Thus, in the process of practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards, our ‘Obligation’ to the ‘Duty’ of, for example, benevolence can be ‘deduced’ from ‘the Rule of Right or Equity’:<sup>944</sup>

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<sup>937</sup> *TFMG*, 191.

<sup>938</sup> *TFMG*, 45.

<sup>939</sup> *Review*, 193.

<sup>940</sup> *TFMG*, 192.

<sup>941</sup> *Review*, 180.

<sup>942</sup> *LT*, 410.

<sup>943</sup> *TFMG*, 76.

<sup>944</sup> *Discourse*, 50-51.

...Man, as he is a Man, is bound by the Law of his Nature, by common *Humanity*, to look upon himself as...Part...of that one Universal Body...which is made up of all Mankind: to think himself born and sent into the World on purpose, to promote the publick Good and Welfare of all his Fellow-Creatures; and consequently obliged, as the necessary and only Effectual Means to that End, to embrace them all with Universal Love, Charity, and Benevolence.<sup>945</sup>

The Clarkeian moral agent, consistent with the single law of reason, will appreciate that just as to fulfil the duty of benevolence answers ‘the Ends of his Creation’, and complies ‘with the highest and principal Obligations of his Nature’,<sup>946</sup> this duty is also his duty to himself *and* to God: a human agent ‘cannot, without acting contrary to the Reason of his own Mind, and transgressing the plain Law of his Being, do willingly Hurt and Mischief to any Man’;<sup>947</sup> and to contradict our own reason is to contradict God who ‘sent’ us’ into the World’ to act for others by creating us ‘with Reason and Understanding for that very End’.<sup>948</sup>

However, our duty to benevolence can also, in the process of reasoning upwards and downwards, be ‘deduced from the *Nature of Man*’:<sup>949</sup> our natural ‘desire to increase... Dependencies’ and ‘enlarge’ ‘friendships’; the fact that we ‘stand in Need of each other’s Assistance’ and ‘have the same Wants and Desires’.<sup>950</sup> Clarkeian moral agents are able to reason upwards from the fact that it was God who has ‘placed’ us in the ‘present State’,<sup>951</sup> and who has ‘implanted in our Minds such Affections and Dispositions’ for others, and appreciate their duty to benevolence from the perspective of what it means to act according to all that reason *is*, rather than simply their ‘instinctive determinations’ themselves:

As all Men are obliged...by the necessary *Circumstances and Condition* of their Being, and also by the *original and natural Inclinations* of their...Minds, to love and to do Good to each other...So they are still further and more strictly obliged to the Practice of the same Duty, in *Imitation of the Nature*, and in *Obedience to the Will and Law of God*.<sup>952</sup>

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<sup>945</sup> *Sermons*, XI.I.4.

<sup>946</sup> *Discourse*, 58.

<sup>947</sup> *Discourse*, 60.

<sup>948</sup> *Sermons*, XI.I.9.

<sup>949</sup> *Discourse*, 58.

<sup>950</sup> *Discourse*, 59.

<sup>951</sup> *Sermons*, XI.I.4.

<sup>952</sup> *Sermons*, XI.I.8

## Acting for Others and for Ourselves Without Intending Rectitude

For the Clarkeans, it is possible to choose to act in our own best interest and the best interest of others with intention of rectitude, not least because acting for ourselves and for others is *what* it is *that* we perceive *with* reason to be *according to* reason. ‘Reasonable and calm self-love, as well as the *love of mankind*, is entirely a virtuous principle. Both are parts of the idea of virtue’;<sup>953</sup> ‘Happiness being desirable in itself’;<sup>954</sup> ‘The pursuit of the happiness of others is a duty, and so is the pursuit of private happiness’.<sup>955</sup> It is further the case that ‘instinctive determinations’ for ourselves and others are relevant ‘material’ when it comes to choosing what we should do *qua* right in itself. In opposition to HC and LNLC, therefore, *what* it is *that* is right in itself is not only directly related to our ‘subjective motivational set’, but our ‘subjective motivational set’, even when considered simply from the perspective of contingent God-given affective principles, features, for the Clarkeans, within practical moral reasoning. Moreover, the fact that we have an affectionate regard for our own and others’ interests due to the operation of reason itself, points to why the Clarkeans do not, like Hutcheson and Hume, mine for the *intuitively live bedrock* of moral action in human nature rather than reason; for them, as for Hooker, ‘human nature’ and the ‘law of reason’ are synonymous.

Of course, just as it is possible to pursue self-love and benevolence with intention of rectitude as a ‘virtuous agent’, it is possible, in CER, to pursue them without it. We might intend, by doing that which we perceive to be right in itself, only the fulfilment of our own interests, or the interests of others, when intending rectitude means that we intend the fulfilment of our duties to ourselves *and* others *and* God. To choose to act solely because *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself is fitting to our relations with ourselves or with others, is merely

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<sup>953</sup> *Review*, 193.

<sup>954</sup> *First Letter*, 35.

<sup>955</sup> *Review*, 167.

to perform a ‘virtuous act’ *qua* AATC. Here, the process of practical moral reasoning is distorted in the same way as it is within Tindal and Hutcheson, where the primary reason for acting is something that concerns rectitude, rather than rectitude itself.

As part of the fact that, ‘*The Good of others, or the Publick Good*’ ‘may be pursued for the sake of *Pleasure*, and ought to be pursued for the sake of *Virtue*’,<sup>956</sup> we might even intend by an action simply gratification of our ‘instinctive desires’<sup>957</sup> for self-love or benevolence. In the latter case, the Clarkeans, in line with their understanding of freewill, maintained that whenever an agent follows ‘mere *Impulse*’,<sup>958</sup> even if it is ‘a happy instinct and bent of nature born with him’,<sup>959</sup> they cannot, properly speaking, be thought of as performing an action. An agent must always choose or will what is, properly speaking, an action on the basis of rational reflection, and not passively succumb, like ‘Movements of a Clock, or the Vibrations of a Pendulum’.<sup>960</sup> Thus, Balguy (and Price), echoing Butler,<sup>961</sup> contend that, although ‘*natural*

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<sup>956</sup> *TFMG.II*, 201.

<sup>957</sup> *Review*, 198.

<sup>958</sup> *TFMG.II*, 169.

<sup>959</sup> *Review*, 191.

<sup>960</sup> *TFMG.II*, 169.

<sup>961</sup> Balguy’s and Price’s distinction between ‘rational benevolence’ and ‘instinctive benevolence’ (*TFMG*, 77-78; *Review*, 190-192), not only follows Butler, but illustrates how benevolence, like self-love, is a referent of conscience in Butler’s moral thought and CER. Benevolence *qua* a referent of conscience helps to resolve tensions between different interpretations of Butler on benevolence, while explaining why the likes of McPherson (*op.cit.*, (II), 3-22) and Robert Louden (‘Butler’s Divine Utilitarianism’, *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 12:3 (Jul., 1995), 265-280) have found it possible to interpret Butler as a utilitarian, while R.G. Frey (‘Butler on Self-Love and Benevolence’ in Cunliffe, *op.cit.*, 243-267) and David McNaughton (‘Butler on Benevolence’ in Cunliffe, *op.cit.*, 269-291) have argued that benevolence has a lower status in Butler than ‘conscience’ and ‘self-love’.

In Chapter 1, Butler’s distinction between ‘cool’ and ‘active, and ‘passionate’ and ‘speculative’, self-love was explored. With respect to benevolence, Butler likewise distinguished between ‘a settled endeavour to promote, according to the best of our judgement...[the] real lasting good’ of others (*SPS*, VI.3) and ‘the natural disposition to kindness and compassion...which with very little reflection...leads...[us] to society’ (*S*, II.9). The difference between a ‘settled endeavour’ and a ‘natural disposition’ for others is the difference between benevolence under the direction of ‘conscience or reflection’, and benevolence without the direction of conscience: while ‘God’ has ‘implanted in our nature’ ‘the seeds of’ ‘*real* good-will in man towards man’, ‘There is...much left for us to do upon our own heart and temper; to cultivate, to improve, to call it forth, to exercise it in a steady, uniform manner. This is our work: this is Virtue and Religion’ (*S*, I.4 fn.). ‘*Real* good-will’ can only happen under conscience because it is only when we choose, on the basis of reflection, actions as acts for others that we can be said to possess, and to express, a ‘hearty love to our fellow-creatures, as produceth [under conscience] a settled endeavour to promote...their lasting good...and not that easiness of temper, which with peculiar propriety is expressed by the word *good-humour*, and is a sort of benevolent instinct left to itself, without the direction of our judgement’ (*SPS*, VI.3). As with self-love, the point about a ‘natural disposition to

*Benevolence be a great Help to Virtue...of itself it is not Virtue*'.<sup>962</sup> It becomes virtue, 'As far as...[a moral agent] cherishes and strengthens it by Reason and Reflection', but until then 'The

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kindness', or benevolence without the direction of conscience, is that it is actually not benevolence at all; genuine benevolence, the 'settled endeavour to promote' the good of others, like genuine self-love, requires reflection: 'Nor is it to be supposed, that we can any more promote the lasting good of our fellow-creatures, by acting from mere kind inclinations, without *considering* what are the proper means of promoting it, than that we can attain our own personal good, by a thoughtless pursuit of everything that pleases us. For the love of our neighbour, as much as self-love, the social affections, as much as the private ones, from their very nature, require to be under the direction of our judgement (SPS, VI.3). Butler, like the Clarkeans, emphasised the fact that in the world as a 'state of trial' reflection is essential to overcome, so far as possible, human limitations: 'as there are numberless cases, in which, notwithstanding appearances, we are not competent judges, whether a particular action will upon the whole do good or harm; reason in the same way will teach us to be cautious how we act in these cases of uncertainty'; consequently, 'when benevolence is said to be the sum of virtue, it is not spoken of as a blind propension, but as a principle in reasonable creatures, and so to be directed by their reason...[so even] upon supposition...benevolence includes in it all virtues; yet reason must come in as its guide and director in order to attain its own end, the end of benevolence' (S, XII.19).

Butler is not inconsistent with the Clarkeans, just as neither Butler nor the Clarkeans are internally inconsistent, when they both maintain that 'benevolence seems in the strictest sense to include in it all that is good and worthy' (S, XII.22; *Discourse*, 58; *First Letter*, 7; SFS, I.XIII, 235-236; *Review*, 252), while also arguing that we must do that which is right in itself because it is right in itself. First, acting for others (*and* for ourselves *and* God) is right in itself according to the law of *qua* RR; second, we can only be said to act benevolently when we act as a result of considering each of our responsibilities under reason by reasoning upwards and downwards. Thus, as we shall see, for Butler and the Clarkeans, benevolence is a referent of conscience because we are only able to act benevolently when we act faithfully. The limits of human reason in the world as a 'state of trial' mean that 'Creation is...entirely out of our depth' (S, XV.3). Our 'short views' mean we must accept: 'The happiness of the world is the concern of him, who is the Lord and Proprietor of it: nor do we know what we are about, when we endeavour to promote the good of mankind in any ways, but those which he has directed; that is indeed in all ways not contrary to veracity and justice' (ONV, Diss.II.16). However, the acceptance that 'we are not competent judges what is, upon the whole, for the good of the world' (S, XII.22 fn.) does not mean that we give up acting for others in the actions we choose as moral under conscience. Rather the acceptance that 'the good of the creation be the only end of the Author of it', is also the acceptance that while 'there may be other immediate ends appointed us to pursue' (S, XII.22 fn.), whatever, in practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards, we can be convinced is according to conscience, and so, our own judgement, God's will and the rational moral order, is that which we are able to choose as not only 'veracity and justice' but also benevolence. As Price put it, 'benevolence is a part of the idea of Intelligence' and so 'the character of the Deity', because 'the rectitude of benevolence is one of the first truths' and so 'one of the first objects of intelligence' (SVS, 233-234). In faith, we recognise, 'There exists an eternal wisdom and benevolence, which, in union with almighty power...governs all things. No improper sufferings, therefore, can find admittance into nature, and all must end well' (*ibid.*, 127-128). Consequently, consistent with Butler's understanding of God's 'moral government' (see Chapters 1 and 4), Clarke maintained that, obeying the Sermon on the Mount, and 'imitating' God ('*being perfect even as our Father...is perfect*') in the practice of 'universal Equity and Benevolence' ('*Loving our Neighbour as ourselves, and Doing unto All men as we would they should do unto Us*') does not mean ignoring 'veracity and justice': the 'Meaning' of the Psalmist's God '*does Good to All*' 'is, not that in *all* things God deals alike with all men; but that in *Many* degrees and instances, (which is the Glory of a Just and Righteous Administration,) his Goodness, Mercy and Compassion, extends itself even to *All*...And in the same extensive Sense of the word Justice or Equity, as including every reasonable degree of Benevolence, Mercy and Compaction; is *our Saviour* likewise...*That Just One*' (*Sermons*, IX.VI, 82-83). Thus, in the world as a 'state of trial', 'Our province is virtue and religion, life and manners; the science of improving the temper, and making the heart better' (S, XV.15), so that we are not to second guess divine providence, or our own conscience, by only performing acts we recognise 'outside' as benevolent. However, the mature moral agent performs, in imitation of God, every act of justice as, likewise, an act of benevolence, and vice versa, because, within the 'virtue and religion' practised by the mature moral agent, every moral act is an act of faith performed as an aspect of loving himself *and* loving others *and* loving God to the fulfilment of each of his 'tripartite' duties under reason (for Butler on this point, see Chapter 4).

<sup>962</sup> LT, 351.

*natural Influence and Operation of it is, in him* ‘the Creator’s Goodness, and not the Creature’s’.<sup>963</sup>

‘Instinctive determinations’ cannot remove the requirements a rational agent is under to choose with reason from the perspective of, and with the intention of, rectitude. Moreover, the ‘instinctive determinations’ we have solely as an aid to ‘fallen’ reason cannot themselves be merely indulged as though infallible, and so must always be reflected upon with reason from the perspective of rectitude.

It was (to use an already discussed example from Butler), by ‘the Wisdom and Goodness of the Creator’,<sup>964</sup> that human beings were ‘implanted’ with ‘*parental affection*’, because, although a ‘higher degree’ of ‘Reason’<sup>965</sup> would always carry us to ‘the Performance of so necessary a Duty’, ‘the Reflection of frail Man’ could not be depended upon so to do.<sup>966</sup> However, our ‘*natural affections*’ may ‘rise too high’ and need to be ‘check[ed]’ by ‘Reason’, as with ‘a too affectionate and indulgent Parent’.<sup>967</sup> Likewise (and here Price acknowledges Butler’s influence), our natural desires, in seeking their own satisfaction, ‘are continually drawing us different ways’,<sup>968</sup> and often guide us to actions that are not actually in the long-term best interests of others and ourselves, but are only actions which immediately gratify those desires themselves.<sup>969</sup> For the Clarkeans (and Butler), ‘Instinctive determinations’ are not more than ‘prompts’<sup>970</sup> for reasoning and action, because agents in the ‘state of trial’ must

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<sup>963</sup> *LT*, 350.

<sup>964</sup> *TFMG*, 56.

<sup>965</sup> *Review*, 76.

<sup>966</sup> *TFMG*, 56.

<sup>967</sup> *TFMG.II*, 195.

<sup>968</sup> *Review*, 215 fn.

<sup>969</sup> *Review*, 193-194 fn.

<sup>970</sup> *TFMG.II*, 113.

always be on the guard against affections that are potentially ‘corrupt’, and, if not actually ‘corrupt’, then ‘*partial*’<sup>971</sup> and ‘*variable*’<sup>972</sup> and so corruptible.

### Conscience’s ‘Presages’

Below, we shall see how our experience, in conscience, of God’s will, and the prospect of future reward and punishment, are, like our ‘instinctive determinations’, ‘material’ for practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards. Again, like our ‘instinctive determinations’, such ‘inducements’ for moral action as divine command and reward do not remove human responsibility for reflection and choice in the world as a ‘state of trial’. They are also ‘inducements’ that may be used appropriately, as a basis for acting with intention of rectitude, or, inappropriately, as a basis for acting without that intention.

Familiar from Butler and the earlier discussion of conscience in RR, the Clarkeans maintain that it is in the ‘clamours of conscience’ concerning our conduct that we experience ‘dark fears and presages’, which are ‘anticipations of...doom’.<sup>973</sup> Whenever we do wrong, we suffer ‘grievous stings’, which are ‘The pangs of remorse and self-reproach, the lashes of an awakened conscience’,<sup>974</sup> whereby conscience is ‘spreading before...[our] eyes the terrors of futurity’.<sup>975</sup> It is from our ‘Consciousness, which *Beasts* have not’, that we ‘knowingly and deliberately’ choose to do right or wrong:

Hence arises that *Judgement of Reflection*, which we call *Conscience*; by which a man either *approves* or *condemns* his own *past* Actions, and apprehends that he shall accordingly be *approved* or *condemned* by *Him* also to whom he must finally *give account* of himself.<sup>976</sup>

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<sup>971</sup> *Discourse*, 39.

<sup>972</sup> *TFMG.II*, 167.

<sup>973</sup> *SFS*, II.III, 50-51.

<sup>974</sup> *Review*, 259.

<sup>975</sup> *SFS*, I.XIX, 357.

<sup>976</sup> *Sermons*, III.V, 70.

Conscience helps to supply ‘material’ for *faithful* practical moral reasoning, because it is in, and as, conscience that we experience God’s judgement and our prospects for reward or punishment. The ‘presages’ of conscience, our ‘domestic governor’,<sup>977</sup> are to be ‘considered as the voice of’<sup>978</sup> God, because it is ‘conscience, which is continually foreboding a future state, and urging it powerfully on the minds of men’;<sup>979</sup> and it is in conscience that we are aware that ‘whatever sentence it really passes, is ratified in heaven’:<sup>980</sup>

Whatever our conscience dictate to us, and we know to be *right* to be done, *that...*[God] commands more evidently and undeniably, than if by a voice from heaven we had been called upon to do it.<sup>981</sup>

Despite criticisms of the Clarkeans on the basis of complacency and normative *thinness*, conscience’s ‘presages’ are part of the Clarkean response to the extremes of Stoicism. The Clarkeans maintained that, while the ‘*Stoicks*’ were right ‘that *Virtue* is good *in itself*’,<sup>982</sup> they were wrong to reason from that, ‘that it is therefore intirely [sic] *self-sufficient*’.<sup>983</sup> In the world as a ‘state of trial’, we are ‘*imperfect*’ and ‘*depraved*’.<sup>984</sup> It is ‘Men corrupt; Faculties neglected; Understandings depraved’,<sup>985</sup> that make the ‘motives’<sup>986</sup> of ‘future and supernatural reward’ ‘necessary’<sup>987</sup> to the ‘support and encouragement of virtue and religion among mankind’,<sup>988</sup> ‘as they are a counter-bias to the propensities of corrupt nature, and greatly contribute to fix the mind, and to balance the temptations of sin and sense’.<sup>989</sup>

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<sup>977</sup> *SFS*, II.III, 51.

<sup>978</sup> *SFS*, I.XIX, 359.

<sup>979</sup> *SFS*, I.XIX, 356-357.

<sup>980</sup> *SFS*, I.III, 48.

<sup>981</sup> *Review*, 147.

<sup>982</sup> *TFMG.II*, 204.

<sup>983</sup> *Discourse*, 74.

<sup>984</sup> *Second Letter*, 304.

<sup>985</sup> *Second Letter*, 298.

<sup>986</sup> *SFS*, II.VII, 130.

<sup>987</sup> *SFS*, II.VII, 124.

<sup>988</sup> *SFS*, II.VII, 125.

<sup>989</sup> *SFS*, II.VII, 130.

Again, while the Clarkeans maintained that human beings ‘cannot possibly avoid giving their Assent’ to moral truths in the same way as mathematical truths, our assent to any ‘certain and undeniable Truths’ requires that we ‘apply’ our ‘Minds to apprehend and study the Truth and Certainty of these Things’.<sup>990</sup> The ‘two great Rules’ which God has given us in the ‘state of trial’, ‘*Scripture*’, and ‘*Reason and Conscience*’, which is ‘the *Candle of the Lord*’,<sup>991</sup> help to reveal ‘the great Motives of Religion’<sup>992</sup> for moral conduct: divine ‘*Authority*’<sup>993</sup> and heavenly reward. The ‘Motives of Religion’ give the ‘Practice of Virtue...a sure Foundation’<sup>994</sup> and help ‘To raise and stir up’ our ‘*Attention*’ to our duty.<sup>995</sup> Divine command, and the prospect of reward or punishment, allow our moral duties to be ‘strongly impressed and inculcated upon’<sup>996</sup> us, despite ‘*dark and cloudy*’ ‘*Understandings*’ and ‘*Passions...rebellling against Reason*’.<sup>997</sup> The ‘Motives of Religion’ ‘persuade’ us to make Use of’ our ‘natural Reason and Understanding’ to uncover moral truths which are ‘certainly discoverable and demonstrable by right Reason’, and to ‘press’ us ‘effectually to the Practice of the plainest and most necessary Duties’.<sup>998</sup>

### A ‘Duality’ of Practical Reason?

I shall argue that the ‘presages’ of conscience are legitimate ‘material’ for practical moral reasoning. However, it is worth first considering a notable objection to such a viewpoint. In the previous chapter, it was argued that ‘self-condemnation’ and ‘self-approration’ are ‘internal’ obligations that need not be confused with divine command or mere self-love. As the ‘presages’ of conscience directly concern both divine command and self-love, it might be

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<sup>990</sup> *Discourse*, 128-129.

<sup>991</sup> *Sermons*, II.XVI, 231.

<sup>992</sup> *Discourse*, 154.

<sup>993</sup> *Discourse*, 128.

<sup>994</sup> *Discourse*, 180.

<sup>995</sup> *Discourse*, 128.

<sup>996</sup> *Discourse*, 130.

<sup>997</sup> *Discourse* 152.

<sup>998</sup> *Discourse*, 128-129.

argued that the ‘presages’ of conscience in CER return us to an understanding of conscience *qua* ‘bridging concept’. The ‘presages’ of conscience are ‘internal’ to conscience, but ‘external’ to rectitude, so the Clarkeans are ‘externalists’ insofar as they rely upon them as suitable motives for doing that which is right in itself.

William Frankena, agreeing with Sidgwick’s ‘duality of practical reason’, maintained that Clarke believed ‘in two kinds of obligation and reasonableness’, because, although Clarke stated that we do not have a ‘*duty*’ to ‘seek’ ‘happiness’, he also stated that it is not ‘*rational* for us to be virtuous’, if it is ‘ultimately contrary to our own interest’.<sup>999</sup> Frankena based his view on Clarke’s reaction to the Stoics:

Virtue is truly *worthy* to be chosen...without any Respect to...Reward...[but it is] neither possible, nor truly reasonable, that Men, by adhering to Virtue, should Part with their Lives, if thereby they eternally deprived themselves of all Possibility of...Advantage from that Adherence.<sup>1000</sup>

However, it is noteworthy that, in this quotation, Clarke is not talking about what it is reasonable for human beings to do, but what is reasonable in the ‘nature of things’. Frankena has read what Clarke meant by ‘reasonable’ in too thin a sense, and not in the context of what it means for something to be according to reason *qua* RR.

For Clarke, the fact ‘that there must be a’ ‘*Future State of Rewards and Punishments*’<sup>1001</sup> can be given as ‘a complete Demonstration’ from ‘the Consideration of the *Moral Attributes of God*’.<sup>1002</sup> On the basis of God’s moral attributes, it is ‘reasonable’ to

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<sup>999</sup> William Frankena, ‘Sidgwick and the History of Ethical Dualism’ in B. Schutz (ed.), *Essays on Henry Sidgwick* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), 180.

<sup>1000</sup> *Discourse*, 108-109.

<sup>1001</sup> *Discourse*, 113.

<sup>1002</sup> *Discourse*, 111.

expect a ‘future state’ in which virtue is rewarded and vice punished, because it is according to the law of reason itself:

’Tis absolutely impossible...that the whole Design of an infinitely Wise...Just, and Good God...should be nothing more than to keep up eternally a Succession of new Generations of Men, and those in such a corrupt, confused...State... without any clear and remarkable Effect of the great and most necessary Differences of Things, without any sufficient Discrimination of Virtue and Vice by their proper and respective Fruits...without any final Vindication of the Honour and Laws of God, in the proportionable [sic] Reward of the Best, or Punishment of the Worst of Men.<sup>1003</sup>

When Balguy and Price maintained that private and public happiness are part of our duties to ourselves and others, consistent with the essential difference between happiness and misery, they were agreeing with Clarke:

Death and Life, Pain and Pleasure, Happiness and Misery, men cannot but distinguish; and must of necessity always pursue the one, and endeavour to avoid the other. Yet in these very things is originally founded the Difference of *Moral* Good and Evil...<sup>1004</sup>

Above, we saw that, for Clarke, the natural effects of virtue and vice were originally built into creation, but that the natural order was disturbed by human beings in the Fall. When God promises reward, he acts, in the context of human freewill in the world as a ‘state of trial’, to restore that original order. His promise of reward for virtue and punishment for vice is consistent with the law of reason (which is also to say the plan of divine providence), according to which the world was made, and according to which virtue and happiness, vice and misery, are essentially divided. As Balguy put it:

*Virtue* and *Vice* are essentially opposite...it is not possible that the same Treatment should suit the Votaries of each. Between *Virtue* and *Happiness*, *Vice* and *Happiness*, there is...a Natural and Moral Connexion. A *vicious* Man cannot, in the Nature of Things, be *happy*; and if he could, the righteous Governor of the World would not finally suffer it...It would appear to Him a direct Misapplication and Prostitution of Happiness...To bless the Impenitent and Incurable, must be essentially repugnant to the Rectitude and Purity of his Nature. The eternal Reasons of Things, which constitute the sacred Rule of Righteousness, will not admit of it.<sup>1005</sup>

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<sup>1003</sup> *Discourse*, 110.

<sup>1004</sup> *Sermons*, VII.VII, 93.

<sup>1005</sup> *DR*, 246.

While ‘Vice must be the Object of...[God’s] extreme Abhorrence. The Perfection of his Understanding heightens its Deformity, and renders it infinitely offensive’;<sup>1006</sup> as possessors of divine reason ourselves, that which we perceive in virtue and vice is comparable:

We are plainly conscious of more than the bare discernment of right and wrong, or the cool judgement of reason concerning the nature of actions. We often say of some actions, not only that they are *right*, but that they are *amiable*; and of others, not only that they are *wrong*, but *odious* and *shocking*.<sup>1007</sup>

For Price these ‘*effects in us*’,<sup>1008</sup> as a result of the perception of rightness, do not arise from a Hutchesonian sense, but are consistent with the ‘ESSENTIAL DEMERIT’ of ‘Vice’ and the fact that ‘virtue is *in itself rewardable* [sic]’.<sup>1009</sup>

### Inseparable Experiences in Conscience

While we have seen that, for the Clarkeans, we experience ‘self-approbation’ and ‘self-condemnation’ as ‘internal’ ‘Obligations of *Conscience*’, it is further the case that, in conscience, ‘self-condemnation’ and ‘self-approbation’ are inseparable from conscience’s ‘presages’. ‘*Conscience*’ is ‘That inward *Judgement*’ ‘all Men’ ‘necessarily pass’ on ‘their own Actions’, so that:

There is no Man, who at any Time does good...but the Reason of his own Mind applauds him...and no Man...[who] does Things base and vile...but at the same Time...condemns himself...The one is necessarily accompanied with good Hope and Expectation of Reward; the other, with continual Torment and Fear of Punishment.<sup>1010</sup>

Due to the inseparability of ‘self-condemnation’ and ‘self-approbation’ and conscience’s ‘presages’, each is always part of (returning to Butler) how we experience ourselves as agents who are ‘capable of *Accounting* for what...[we] do; being worthy of *Blame*

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<sup>1006</sup> DR, 247.

<sup>1007</sup> Review, 57.

<sup>1008</sup> Review, 57.

<sup>1009</sup> Review, 81.

<sup>1010</sup> Discourse, 120

or *Commendation*, either of *Punishment* or *Reward*'.<sup>1011</sup> Clarke puts it in Pauline terms. Conscience's 'presages', 'self-condemnation' and 'self-approbation', are each part of '*Conscience bearing Witness*', and so of what it means for us to have, and to experience, 'Right Reason' as a 'Rule' we have 'to walk by' *qua* a '*Law unto*' ourselves.<sup>1012</sup> Consequently, conscience's 'presages', 'self-condemnation' and 'self-approbation' are each part of what we experience as moral judgement:

That is properly a *law* to us, which we always and unavoidably feel and own ourselves *obliged* to obey; and which, as we obey or disobey it, is attended with the immediate sanctions of...self-applause, or...self-reproach, together with the secret apprehensions of the favour or displeasure of a superior righteous power, and the anticipations of *future* rewards, and punishments...That has proper *authority* over us...which, if we refuse submission, we transgress our duty, incur guilt, and expose ourselves to just vengeance. *All this is certainly true of our moral judgement, and contained in the idea of it* [my italics].<sup>1013</sup>

It is because conscience's 'presages' are inseparable from 'self-condemnation' and 'self-approbation', that it is possible to reason from our experience of 'the promises and prospects of futurity',<sup>1014</sup> to our 'original obligation':

The [internal] Obligations of *Conscience* ought not to be confounded with those which arise from the *Punishments* denounced against Disobedience. The former, however distinct, are indeed implied in the latter. For, as Punishment necessarily implies Guilt; so Guilt necessarily implies a Breach of some antecedent Obligation.<sup>1015</sup>

However, it is also possible to reason the other way:

Rewards and punishments suppose, in the very idea of them, moral obligation, and are founded upon it...A reward supposes...*obligation subsisting previously*...A person without any light besides that of nature, and supposed ignorant of a future state of rewards and punishments and the will of the Deity, might discover these by reasoning from his natural notions of morality and duty.<sup>1016</sup>

The fact that it is possible to reason from our 'natural notions' in conscience to 'futurity', which we also experience in conscience, is consistent with the essential difference between virtue and

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<sup>1011</sup> *Sermons*, VII.XV, 222.

<sup>1012</sup> *Sermons*, VII.XV, 222.

<sup>1013</sup> *Review*, 109.

<sup>1014</sup> *SFS*, II.VII, 130.

<sup>1015</sup> *LT*, 390.

<sup>1016</sup> *Review*, 108.

happiness, vice and misery, and points to the fact that it is possible to act with consideration of ‘futurity’ from the perspective of, and with the intention of, rectitude.

### A Starting Point for Moral Development

Thus, Balguy is in line with the Clarkean position<sup>1017</sup> when he maintained that ‘*Right Action*, and *profitable Action*, are very distinct Ideas’,<sup>1018</sup> while objecting to Shaftesbury’s claim that, ‘There is no more of rectitude, piety or sanctity in a creature...reformed’, ‘through hope merely of reward or fear of punishment’, than there is ‘meekness’ in a ‘chained’ ‘tiger’.<sup>1019</sup>

In the ‘state of trial’, ‘the Generality of Men’ are ‘in an Infant-State of Virtue’.<sup>1020</sup> The world is a ‘state of trial’, because our responsibility in it, in the face of ‘Difficulties and temptations’,<sup>1021</sup> is to develop ‘virtuous habits’ in place of our ‘vicious habits’, and thereby mature into a fully-developed moral ‘character’ with an ‘anxious, attentive, and constant exercise of virtue’,<sup>1022</sup> rather than ‘habitual Carelessness’.<sup>1023</sup> Divine authority and heavenly reward are ‘requisite’ for our moral development: they are a means for the ‘*Teaching*’ and ‘*Instruction*’ of ‘Men’ in the ‘infinite Importance of these great Truths’.<sup>1024</sup> The Clarkeans (like Butler: see next chapter) thus maintained that, while ‘the *reasons of things*’ is the only

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<sup>1017</sup> T.H. Irwin considers a “Kantian” conception of motivation’ to support ‘Balguy’s principle of subtraction’, where Balguy claimed ‘that the presence of the self-interested motive subtracts from the worth of the action to the extent that it influences the agent’ (‘Scotus and the Possibility of Moral Motivation’ in P. Bloomfield (ed.), *Morality and Self-Interest* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 170). However, Irwin argues that ‘Balguy’s principle of subtraction’ ‘also casts doubt on his objection to Shaftesbury’s view about the moral motive and self-interest. For, if we act both on the moral motive and on self-interest, the Kantian view tells us that the influence of self-interest has to be subtracted from the influence that the moral motive would have if it were acting alone’ (*ibid.*, 170). The following discussion helps to solve the ‘surprising’ (*ibid.*, 169) tension Irwin finds in Balguy.

<sup>1018</sup> *LT*, 377.

<sup>1019</sup> Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit* in *Characteristics*, 183.

<sup>1020</sup> *First Letter*, 37.

<sup>1021</sup> *Review*, 203.

<sup>1022</sup> *Review*, 204-205.

<sup>1023</sup> *Discourse*, 128.

<sup>1024</sup> *Discourse*, 128-129.

‘true foundation of virtue’, there are such ‘*motives and reasons*’ as ‘*the will of God*’ and ‘*self-interest*’, ‘which lead us to it, and support the practice of it in the world’.<sup>1025</sup> Such ‘Inducements...commit them into the Hands of Virtue, to be taught and instructed by her ever after’, so that:

He who removes out of the Ways of Vice into the Ways of Virtue, wholly from a Regard to his own Safety and Welfare, may, and probably will, if he continue therein, be influenced afterwards by higher Considerations...what wonder if a Man, who embraces Virtue upon any Principle, discover the Beauty and Excellency of it sooner than he who is wallowing in Sin and Sensuality?<sup>1026</sup>

However, just as divine command and heavenly reward help to emphasise the ‘infinite Importance’ of moral truths, they remain, for a fully-developed moral agent, part of the experience of moral judgement, and of the essential difference of right and wrong, even as he looks at them from the perspective of, and with the intention of, rectitude.

In CER, an agent performs merely a ‘virtuous act’ *qua* AATC when his primary reason for acting was only eternal reward promised in conscience, for ‘’tis mean and mercenary to pursue those Advantages alone’.<sup>1027</sup> Likewise, it is only AATC if an individual obeys his conscience simply because he experiences the command of a superior will in conscience. However: ‘Where the *Fitness* of Things is dark and dubious, and the *Divine Command* clear and certain; can it be any Question, whether the former is not to be measured by the latter?’<sup>1028</sup> Although divine command and heavenly reward are ‘requisite’ ‘material’ in the world as a ‘state of trial’ for moral reasoning and moral development, a fully-developed moral character will no longer be simply AATC when he acts with recognition of divine command and eternal happiness, but performing AAOC *qua* ‘virtuous agent’.

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<sup>1025</sup> *Review*, 235.

<sup>1026</sup> *First Letter*, 16.

<sup>1027</sup> *First Letter*, 20.

<sup>1028</sup> *Second Letter*, 336.

The agent with underdeveloped moral character may pursue virtue simply on the basis of reward; he may also be like Epictetus' fly on the chariot wheel axle, admiring the dust he is kicking up, thinking that it is his reaction to vice and virtue that constitutes the essential difference between right and wrong. However, the fully-developed moral agent will appreciate that it is because he has been 'constituted' a rational agent by God that he perceives virtue with reason, and that he experiences what, by the 'nature of things', belongs to virtue and vice:

[The 'perception of good and ill desert'] Considered merely, as principle of the natures which God has given us...implies a declaration from the author of our minds, informing us how he will deal with us, and upon what the exercise of his goodness is suspended...But, considered as a necessary perception of reason, it proves with the evidence of demonstration what the *supreme reason* will do; what laws and rules it observes in carrying on the happiness of the universe; and that its end is, not simply happiness, but happiness enjoyed with virtue.<sup>1029</sup>

The fully-developed moral agent thus overcomes the apparent divide between 'duty' and 'happiness', by fully integrating all his motives for virtue as constitutive of his mature moral character. As a result, he only seeks his own good, the good of others, and conformity to God's will from the perspective of the law of reason and divine scheme of providence itself. He does not give up his regard for happiness or God's eternal reward; rather, he understands that 'The Foundation of *Virtue* is *Truth*, and the Foundation of *Happiness, Virtue*'.<sup>1030</sup>

Of course, to appreciate, and to act as though, '*Truth, Virtue, and Happiness*' 'may...be looked upon as one and the same End',<sup>1031</sup> is itself, in the 'state of trial', an act of faith; even as it is an act of faith based upon what it is reasonable to expect 'moral Obligations' to be '*certainly and necessarily...attended with*,'<sup>1032</sup> according to the essential nature of virtue and vice. For this reason, the fully-developed moral agent does something 'sublime', whenever he chooses each of his moral acts as an acting for himself *and* others *and* God, according to the

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<sup>1029</sup> *Review*, 83.

<sup>1030</sup> *TFMG*, 103.

<sup>1031</sup> *TFMG*, 103.

<sup>1032</sup> *Discourse*, 99.

single law of reason and ‘*Christian Morality*.’<sup>1033</sup> ‘Thus, does religion elevate the mind; and such is the force and majesty it gives to virtue...[in] contemplation of the divine administration and goodness’,<sup>1034</sup> so that:

It is...surprising, that extending our care to the *whole* of our existence, acting with a view to the final welfare of our natures...elevating our minds above temporal objects out of a regard to blessed immortality...should have been ever in any degree depreciated [as ‘self-love’ ‘destitute of moral goodness’]. If anything gives dignity of character...this does. If anything is virtue, this is. Especially; as the very reward expected is itself virtue; the highest degree of moral improvement; a near resemblance to God; opportunities for the most extensive beneficence...admission into a state into which nothing that defileth can enter, and the love and hope of which imply the love of goodness.<sup>1035</sup>

## Faith and Virtue

Above, I have tried to respond to KC, HC and LNLC, by showing how the charge of complacency against the Clarkeans has been overstated; how some form of practical moral reasoning, and even ‘self-imposition’, is possible within CER; and that that form of practical moral reasoning involves reasoning about, and from, such considerations as human affections and divine will, without making the Clarkeans ‘externalists’, not least on their own terms.

The Clarkean use of the ‘state of trial’ has, following Tindal, been called ‘elitism’.<sup>1036</sup> However, while some of the Clarkean language concerning the ‘additional’ support needed by the ‘Bulk and common Sort of Mankind’<sup>1037</sup> can appear elitist, the Clarkeans were mainly discriminating between such rare individuals as ‘*Socrates, and Plato, and Cicero*’,<sup>1038</sup> and everybody else, when even Socrates, who was the wisest because he said he knew nothing,<sup>1039</sup>

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<sup>1033</sup> *Second Letter*, 293.

<sup>1034</sup> *Review*, 147.

<sup>1035</sup> *Review*, 195.

<sup>1036</sup> Müller, *op.cit.*, 57, fn.57.

<sup>1037</sup> *Discourse*, 147-148; *First Letter*, 36-37; *Review*, 172.

<sup>1038</sup> *Discourse*, 162.

<sup>1039</sup> SVS, 176.

was unable to learn the law of reason like learning the ‘alphabet’,<sup>1040</sup> due to the limits of finite faculties in a complex world.

However, whatever one makes of the charge of ‘elitism’, the Clarkean ‘state of trial’ does highlight the limitations in the charge of complacency, where the Clarkeans are supposed not to be ‘worried’<sup>1041</sup> about the ‘normative question’, ignoring the fact that ‘our confidence’ can be ‘shaken’ ‘by philosophy or the exigencies of life’.<sup>1042</sup>

Indeed, for Clarke, it is within the Christian religion that our moral and religious duties no longer appear to be separate, nor to be mere ‘Matters of *Speculation and Dispute*’, rather than ‘*Rules of Action*’.<sup>1043</sup> The revelation of Christianity is a revolution in our approach to morality, because it prevents ‘*Precepts...however evidently reasonable and fit*’ from being looked upon as simply ‘the Precepts of Men’<sup>1044</sup> and the subject of ‘speculative Reason’.<sup>1045</sup> Morality is no longer a matter of ‘nice and tedious disputes’,<sup>1046</sup> but something which concerns ourselves, others and God, consistent with all that reason *is*. In the end, it is as Christianity reveals the full ‘majesty’ of what it means to do our moral duty that human beings (as Korsgaard requires)<sup>1047</sup> are prepared to lay down their lives for it:

Nor does it appear in History that any *Number of Socrates’ or Plato’s Followers* were convinced of the Excellency of true Virtue, or the Certainty of its final Reward, in such a Manner as to be willing to lay down their Lives for its Sake, as Innumerable of the Disciples of Christ are known to have done.<sup>1048</sup>

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<sup>1040</sup> *Second Letter*, 337.

<sup>1041</sup> Korsgaard, *Sources*, 42.

<sup>1042</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>1043</sup> *Discourse*, 153. See also: S, XII.2; A, II.IX.2.

<sup>1044</sup> *Discourse*, 150.

<sup>1045</sup> *Discourse*, 130; 150.

<sup>1046</sup> *Sermons*, VII.VII, 104.

<sup>1047</sup> ‘...people do not regulate their actions, love, hate, live, kill, and die for mathematical truths. So Clarke’s account can leave us completely mystified as to why people are prepared to do these things for moral truths’ (*Sources*, 12).

<sup>1048</sup> *Discourse*, 151.

Of course, it is easy to allow the promise of reward (not least because of the Clarkeans' own language) to interfere with what it means, morally speaking, for the 'Disciples' to have laid down their lives for virtue with that belief. For the Clarkeans, the certainty in future reward, in the fully-developed moral agent, is a confidence which the agent has placed in the intrinsic worth of virtue itself. While the promise of eternal reward is confirmed by Christianity, it is not something arbitrarily added either to the essential difference between virtue and vice, or into human moral consciousness itself:

the Best and Wisest Men even in the Heathen World, did believe in general a Judgement to come...they who had not capacity, to prove this Truth to themselves by Arguments of strict Reasoning...were convinced in their minds by that natural Conscience of Right, which God had implanted in them, that God, who governed all things, would sooner or later, in this World or in another, reward every man according to his Works.<sup>1049</sup>

The mature Clarkeian moral character includes divine command, and prospects of reward and punishment, in his practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards; and values, and believes in, the prospect of eternal reward from the perspective of the value of virtue itself, rather than the other way around.<sup>1050</sup> The Clarkeian moral agent is one who acts both faithfully and morally on the basis of his own experience and reasoning.

However, it is not just the case that the Clarkeian moral agent acts both faithfully and morally, but that that reasoned faith is necessary for him to act as a moral agent without debilitating doubt about what he should do in the world as a 'state of trial'. And, it is because the Clarkeian moral agent is a *faithful* moral agent that there is a further sense in which, outside the 'false trichotomy', 'self-imposition' is possible within CER.

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<sup>1049</sup> *Sermons*, IX.IX, 120.

<sup>1050</sup> *Discourse*, 4-5.

### ***Faithful Practical Moral Reasoning***

Clarkean moral agents can use practical moral reasoning to confirm whether actions under consideration are acts which can be performed with the intention of rectitude. However, in practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards, they are not just using all the ‘material’ at their disposal to check whether an action to which, for example, benevolent affections leads them, is one of rectitude; in seeking to confirm that the action in question is one of rectitude, they are seeking to confirm that it is, indeed, one of benevolence. According to the single law of reason, every moral act will be acting for ourselves *and* for others *and* for God. Thus, in practical moral reasoning, a Clarkeian moral agent seeks to confirm whether an act is one of benevolence, by checking if it is one of justice; and we seek to confirm it is one of justice, by checking if it is one of self-interest, and so on.

In CER, the problem for any moral agent remains human limitedness in the ‘state of trial’. No matter what the ‘material’ of our practical moral reasoning is, and the efforts we go to in order to ensure that our actions are acting for ourselves *and* for others *and* for God, we are left with the fact that, ‘The highest point of knowledge to which we can attain is the knowledge of our ignorance’.<sup>1051</sup> ‘In order to discover what is right in a case, we ought to extend our views to all the different *heads* of virtue’, but this is a struggle without ‘universal and unerring knowledge’; moreover, ‘at the same time’, satisfying each of our ‘tripartite’ duties in every act we choose as moral does not seem possible, not least because, due to our limited knowledge, satisfying one appears to ‘interfere’ with satisfying the others.<sup>1052</sup>

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<sup>1051</sup> SVS, 176.

<sup>1052</sup> Review, 170.

A Clarkean moral agent is able to perform moral acts with the intention of rectitude, on the basis of a reasoned faith. When Sidgwick claimed that Butler exhibited a ‘duality of practical reason’, he also suggested that the same ‘duality’ ‘appears confusedly’ in Clarke.<sup>1053</sup> Its ‘confused’ appearance in Clarke stems from his ‘doubleness of aim’: to establish the ‘immutable obligations of morality’, as well as the need to enforce them with the ‘belief’ in ‘future rewards and punishments’.<sup>1054</sup> What Sidgwick views as something that ‘seriously’ ‘complicates Clarke’s task’,<sup>1055</sup> J.P. Ferguson calls a ‘surprising’ retraction, as Clarke, ‘having exalted the place of morality...now proceeds to retract what he has said...to show that after all, morality must be accorded a secondary position in relation to happiness’.<sup>1056</sup>

Sidgwick and Ferguson highlight why it has been possible for commentators to agree with Tindal that Clarke is ‘inconsistent’,<sup>1057</sup> when he maintained, on the one hand, that human reason is sufficient to establish demonstrative knowledge of God’s attributes, but, on the other hand, insufficient for anything other than a ‘moral certainty’ when it comes to our particular duties in the world as a ‘state of trial’.

However, as a result of the above, we can see that the room the Clarkeans allowed for practical moral reasoning towards a ‘moral certainty’, is actually the same room Tindal himself left for doubt:

If Men, according to the best of their understanding, act for their common good, they...govern themselves by the same rule [as] God...their will is the same with his...they concur in the same design with him; and should they, in some nice & difficult cases, mistake in applying the rule...in being intirely govern’d by it, they have done all that God requires; who, having made

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<sup>1053</sup> Sidgwick, *Outlines*, 198.

<sup>1054</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>1055</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>1056</sup> Ferguson, *op.cit.*, 29.

<sup>1057</sup> Rivers, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, 233, fn.129; Vol.II, 79-81; Stephen Lalor, *Matthew Tindal, Freethinker: An Eighteenth-Century Assault on Religion* (London, Continuum, 2006), 120; Rosalie Colie, ‘Spinoza and the Early English Deists’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 20:1 (Jan., 1959), 29; Stephen, *op.cit.*, 114-116; 119-122; John Redwood, *Reason, Ridicule and Religion: The Age of Enlightenment in England, 1660-1750* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1976), 145-146; 208-209.

Men fallible, will not impute to them want of infallibility: And the best way not to mistake, in applying this rule, is to consider duly all circumstances, & follow what upon the whole seems best.<sup>1058</sup>

It is consistent with the single law of reason, and the nature and will of God, that, ‘whatever is right and reasonable in itself; whatever is truly beneficial to ourselves and others, we are sure must be his will’,<sup>1059</sup> and that, ‘Whatever tends to the glory of God, the benefit of our fellow-creatures, or the welfare of ourselves, must be morally good, and therefore our duty’.<sup>1060</sup>

Thus, Clarkean moral agents may well task themselves with the ‘common Good’, as that which is fitting to their relations with themselves *and* others *and* God; but the Clarkeans took seriously the ‘nice and perplexed Cases’,<sup>1061</sup> where ‘the Bounds of *Right* and *Wrong* may...be somewhat difficult to determine’.<sup>1062</sup> A limited agent may be concerned that they have actually misunderstood what is in the common good, when they cannot fathom all of the consequences of their actions for themselves *and* for others *and* for God. A limited agent may be concerned that potentially corrupt affections have led him to an act which is not actually for the long-term common good, but which only guarantees short-term happiness. To act on the basis of what ‘seems best’ requires the efforts and struggles of practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards, and the efforts and struggles of faith. It is only on the basis of faith that moral agents are able to intend rectitude in every act they choose as moral: it is only on the basis of faith that moral agents are able to commit themselves to acts which they are confident are acts of justice, as acts to which they are likewise committed as acts of

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<sup>1058</sup> Tindal, *op.cit.*, 254.

<sup>1059</sup> *SFS*, II.XVIII, 316.

<sup>1060</sup> *SFS*, I.XIV, 252.

<sup>1061</sup> *Discourse*, 36.

<sup>1062</sup> *Discourse*, 66.

benevolence; it is only on the basis of faith that moral agents can commit themselves to acts which they are confident are acts of benevolence as likewise acts of self-love; and so on. It is in faith that moral agents can trust to God that, whenever they are doing what ‘seems best’, they are always acting for themselves *and* for others *and* for God, according to the single law of reason and the divine nature which wills what is best for his creation:

No one of the several virtues can be annihilated without the most pernicious consequences to the rest. This...appears from what happens in the present state of things; but, in the final issue of things, the harmony between them will be found much more strict. Whatever exceptions may now happen, if we will look forwards to the whole of our existence, the three great principles of the love of God, the love of man, and true self-love, will always draw us the same way...<sup>1063</sup>

When the Clarkeans, like Butler, claim that ‘self-love’ and ‘virtue’, if we take in ‘the final distribution of things’, ‘perfectly coincide’,<sup>1064</sup> they are not dividing practical reason, but allowing it to cohere. The sought-for coherence of practical reason is only possible in faith. It is in *faithful* practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards that an agent is able to supplement what he cannot know ‘outside’ about all the consequences of the action, with what he knows ‘inside’ about that action as that which is approved by, and so according to each of the referents of, conscience. The faithful moral agent accepts that, despite limitations, he has done his best to ensure that he is doing what ‘upon the whole seems best’. Consequently, he is able to trust to what he was able to foresee about the action, and all that he experiences in, and as, conscience about the action, and give his intention of rectitude into divine providence itself. As Price put it, ‘Ignorance’ has a ‘tendency to teach us the calmest acquiescence’ and ‘the profoundest subjection’ to ‘Providence’:

We know not how the world ought to be governed. It is enough to know that it is well governed. Let us rest in this...give up our affairs to the direction of higher wisdom...refer ourselves entirely to the care of that great and good Being who presides over all events, and whose ways are past finding out.<sup>1065</sup>

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<sup>1063</sup> *Review*, 166.

<sup>1064</sup> *S*, III.12; *Discourse*, 109; *First Letter*, 36; *Review*, 166.

<sup>1065</sup> *SVS*, 179.

Faithful moral agents appreciate that ‘*Willing and doing belong to us*’,<sup>1066</sup> but also that what they know, and do, concerns ‘*only one small Portion*’ of the ‘*whole Scheme of Providence*’, which is the ‘*Design worthy of infinite Wisdom, Justice and Goodness*’,<sup>1067</sup> ‘utterly incomprehensible to our narrow Minds’.<sup>1068</sup> In faith, moral agents are able to trust that, as long as they act with a ‘sincere...regard to Truth and Virtue’,<sup>1069</sup> they are acting according to the plan of divine providence, and able to intend rectitude *qua* acting for themselves *and* for others *and* for God in every act they choose as moral.

### Faith and Self-Imposition

However, faith is not itself a given or without ‘trial’ in the current world. Faithful moral agents teach themselves ‘patience’ and ‘humility’, through an acceptance of ‘ignorance’, which means that their faith is not easily won. In it, they must overcome the short-term, and worldly, attachments of their affections; what appear to be the ‘natural effects’ of virtue and vice in the world as a ‘state of trial’; and the fact that, ‘*we know nothing at present otherwise than in part, and can only see...through a glass darkly*’.<sup>1070</sup>

In the ‘state of trial’, there is not ‘A full and absolute certainty’, even regarding ‘the great truths of religion’.<sup>1071</sup> There is, of course, a variety of ‘evidence’ for the faithful moral agent to reflect upon:

God calls us to Repentance, by the continual Witness which he gives to himself in the Works of Creation, in the reason and nature of Things, in the essential Differences of Good and Evil, in the voice of Conscience, in the dispensations of Providence, in his Mercies and Judgements, in the completion of Prophecies, in the Works and Preaching of Christ and his Apostles, in the Promises and Threatenings [sic] of the Gospel.<sup>1072</sup>

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<sup>1066</sup> *SFS*, II.XX, 361.

<sup>1067</sup> *Discourse*, 103.

<sup>1068</sup> *Second Letter*, 320.

<sup>1069</sup> *Sermons*, III.XIII, 184.

<sup>1070</sup> *SFS*, II.VII, 120.

<sup>1071</sup> *SFS*, II.XV, 273.

<sup>1072</sup> *Sermons*, V.VI, 81.

However, such ‘evidence’ does not make us ‘infallibly sure’<sup>1073</sup> of what we believe, just as conscience’s ‘presages’ are not ‘irresistible motives’<sup>1074</sup> for faith and moral action. Conscience’s ‘presages’, and the other ‘evidence’ of religion, provide ‘grounds’ for creatures with a ‘rational nature’<sup>1075</sup> to develop, and to act upon the basis of, a reasoned faith. In no case does God ‘over-rule our wills, or act in our stead’.<sup>1076</sup> In the ‘presages’ of conscience ‘God operates in our minds, and influences our will’,<sup>1077</sup> by providing ‘rational inducements’<sup>1078</sup> for virtuous behaviour. But consistent with human freewill, God’s influence does not make an agent a ‘passive instrument’.<sup>1079</sup> By allowing us to be ‘determined by evidence alone’ in our own ‘religious enquiries’, God has made ‘a joint efficiency, a co-operation of God and man’,<sup>1080</sup> in which it is our responsibility to ‘work out our own Salvation’.<sup>1081</sup>

As faithful moral agents act without ‘infallible certainties’,<sup>1082</sup> but, in the ‘state of trial’, on the basis of ‘the liberty of our minds, and the freedom of our wills’,<sup>1083</sup> there continues to be a sense in which, outside the ‘false trichotomy’, ‘self-imposition’ is possible within CER. Clarkean moral agents are responsible, not only for working out what they ought to do, but, in the moment of faithful choice, for imposing upon themselves the standard for acting on the basis of what, in the final analysis, is right ‘conformably to the reason of their

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<sup>1073</sup> *SFS*, II.XV, 274.

<sup>1074</sup> *SFS*, II.XV, 276.

<sup>1075</sup> *SFS*, II.XV, 274.

<sup>1076</sup> *SFS*, II.XX, 358.

<sup>1077</sup> *SFS*, II.XX, 356.

<sup>1078</sup> *SFS*, II.XX, 356.

<sup>1079</sup> *SFS*, II.XX, 351.

<sup>1080</sup> *SFS*, II.XX, 353.

<sup>1081</sup> *SFS*, II.XX, 363.

<sup>1082</sup> *SFS*, II.XV, 276.

<sup>1083</sup> *SFS*, II.XX, 359.

own minds',<sup>1084</sup> even as they intend by their action more than simply acting according to their own judgement.

A useful illustration here is J.R. Searle's observation that, 'The operation of rationality presupposes' a 'gap between the set of intentional states on the basis of which I make my decision, and the actual making of the decision', and the 'gap between the decision and the action'.<sup>1085</sup>

Within KC, Darwall maintains:

The categorical imperative procedure brings the practical force of will inside moral reflection. In determining that it is wrong, for example, to refuse to participate in practices of mutual aid, I see that not participating is inconsistent with what I would will for all from a perspective I attempt actually to occupy in moral reflection...The problem for the intuitionist...is that the Kantian approach holds fundamental moral truths to be, in this way, truths of practical moral reasoning, not independent truths that reason apprehends. And this the intuitionist is bound to reject.<sup>1086</sup>

Although any sense of Clarkeian 'self-imposition' cannot look like neo-Kantian 'self-imposition' inside the 'false trichotomy', the Clarkeian moral agent does impose a standard for action upon himself, which he simultaneously appropriates. The Clarkeian moral agent does not create 'absolute' or 'objective virtue', but the fully-developed Clarkeian agent intends 'objective virtue' through acts of 'relative' or 'practical virtue'. He is satisfied that the actions he chooses as moral are at least 'practical virtue', through building a 'moral certainty' based on various 'materials' he reflects upon in conscience, and with the aid of which he attempts to take up a number of different perspectives on the action in question from the point of view of each of his 'tripartite' duties. Unable to be certain about the 'absolute virtue' of the action from the perspective of each of his duties, the fully-developed moral agent self-knowingly wills an

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<sup>1084</sup> SFS, II.XV, 274.

<sup>1085</sup> J.R. Searle, *Rationality in Action* (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2001), 14.

<sup>1086</sup> Darwall, 'Motivation Problem', 268.

act of ‘practical virtue’ with the intention of ‘absolute virtue’, on the basis of what ‘appear[s], *all things considered*, BEST’.<sup>1087</sup> In doing so, upon crossing the gap into decision and action, the Clarkeian moral agent has not only appropriated rectitude as a standard for acting; he has also imposed upon himself the particular conditions he finds in that action as those which meet that standard for acting:

Though there were no different degrees of [‘*objective*’] right and wrong...there would still be the same room left for an infinite variety of degrees of virtue...*in agents*; and...*in actions*...*relatively* to the intentions and views of reasonable beings, or as *signs* and *effects* of their regard to *absolute virtue*.<sup>1088</sup>

As a result:

the proper Objects about which the Virtue of *Charity* is to be employed, are Things *indifferent*, concerning which God has given no plain Commandment; or such Matters of *Opinion*, wherein sincere men may with equal regard to Truth and Virtue, follow their different judgements and conscience;<sup>1089</sup>

Beneficence, *in general*, is...a duty...it is only with respect to the *particular* acts and instances of it that we are at liberty...Relieving a miserable object is virtue, though there may be no reason that obliges a person to select this object in particular out of many others.<sup>1090</sup>

### Reasons for a Person to Choose

Given what has been discussed above, it does not seem quite right to say, in KC, that, for the Clarkeans, ‘the will simply says yes or no’,<sup>1091</sup> and that they lack the ‘resources’ to explain how ‘ethical thought and discourse is essentially action-guiding’, and so ‘how intuitive ethical judgement can move the will’.<sup>1092</sup> Just as it does not seem quite right to say, in LNLC, that CER ‘detaches’ the ‘yes or no’ from ‘human desires or sentiments’.<sup>1093</sup> In CER, it is not the will that is ‘moved’ to a ‘yes or no’, but the individual person, and the individual person

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<sup>1087</sup> *Review*, 122.

<sup>1088</sup> *Review*, 208.

<sup>1089</sup> *Sermons*, III.XIII, 184.

<sup>1090</sup> *Review*, 120; 123.

<sup>1091</sup> Schneewind, *Autonomy*, 517-518.

<sup>1092</sup> Darwall, ‘Motivation Problem’, 270.

<sup>1093</sup> Beiser, *op.cit.*, 311.

includes, within his ‘yes or no’, ‘material’ that relates to both ‘instinctive determinations’ and ‘affections’ aroused by the operation of reason itself.

Conscience in CER is that through which we monitor the maturity of our moral character: it is in conscience that we ‘examine’<sup>1094</sup> the extent to which we are merely AATC or performing AAOC, such that ‘God and conscience have...the throne’:<sup>1095</sup>

What we most love...engages most of our attention. If...we would know whether virtue and conscience *rule* within us, we must examine which way the main current of our thoughts runs...what, in settling all our schemes and resolutions, we dwell most upon and take most into consideration.<sup>1096</sup>

But conscience, in line with *to hegemonikon* and St. Paul’s ‘law to ourselves’, is not only that through, and in, which we ‘examine’, it is also that through, and as, which we ‘judge, decide, direct, command’ and ‘model and superintend our whole lives’,<sup>1097</sup> so that ‘The conscience of a man is the man’. The Clarkeans, in line with the likes of Aquinas, Cudworth, Shaftesbury and Butler,<sup>1098</sup> agreed that although, as Addison put it in celebration of the progress made by Lockean epistemology:

we divide the soul into several powers and faculties, there is no such division in the soul itself...it is the whole soul that remembers, understands, wills, or imagines.<sup>1099</sup>

As Clarke made clear, ‘Every imagination, every volition, and every thought is the imagination, will, and thought, of that whole thinking substance which I call *myself*’.<sup>1100</sup> And whatever

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<sup>1094</sup> *Review*, 214.

<sup>1095</sup> *Review*, 221.

<sup>1096</sup> *Review*, 219.

<sup>1097</sup> *Review*, 214.

<sup>1098</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q.17, A.5; Cudworth, *Freewill*, 166-171; Shaftesbury, *op.cit.*, 173; 230 and *Soliloquy*, 76-78; 131-135; Butler, A, I.VI.12; 12 fn.; ONV, Diss.II.4. Gordon Kendal appreciates the relevance of this point for understanding Butler: ‘If Butler intended a rigid twofold or threefold anthropology (say: reason/conscience; general principles of self-love and benevolence; particular appetites)...*pace* many of his expositors...his language disguises the fact...a moral person is not internally heterogeneous in that manner...The moral struggle, for Butler, is a struggle of the self with itself; not of one distinct part with other parts’ (‘A God Most Particular: Aspects of Incarnation in Butler’s Morality’ in Cunliffe, *op.cit.*, 152).

<sup>1099</sup> Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, No.600 in *The Works of Joseph Addison*, 6 Vols. (Philadelphia, J.A. Lippincott & Co., 1883) (G.W. Greene, ed.), Vol.VI.

<sup>1100</sup> *Clarke-Collins Correspondence*, 180.

‘*Motives or Reasons*’ we consider an individual agent to have to choose from, as a basis for crossing the ‘gap’ into decision, and into action, it is not those which ‘*determine an Action*’; ‘‘Tis the *Man*, that freely *determines himself* to act’.<sup>1101</sup>

It appears that the Clarkeans are able to explain why the perception of intrinsic rightness is unavoidably normative within our own active moral consciousness. Inseparable from the perception of rightness, is a ‘consciousness’ of, and ‘affection’ for,<sup>1102</sup> its intrinsic beauty; inseparable from our ‘affection or inclination to rectitude’<sup>1103</sup> is its *liveness* with God’s being, and our desire to imitate him, as the ‘origin’ of all truth; and also inseparable from our ‘affection or inclination to rectitude’ are ‘self-condemnation’ and ‘self-approbation’, in which we experience rightness as according to our own judgement and the ‘necessity’ of our own rational nature.

For the Clarkeans, when it is asked ‘what induces’ the ‘*Will*’ of an individual agent ‘to take Counsel of his *Understanding*?’,<sup>1104</sup> the question is really: what reason does the individual person have for choosing with their own judgement, as if it ‘were not the very Essence of a rational Action!’.<sup>1105</sup> Likewise, when it is asked why the will should be inclined by the rational perception of moral truth, the Clarkeans can ask: does an individual person have no reason to choose with their own judgement; ‘self-approbation’; their experience of superior command; self-interest; and so on.

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<sup>1101</sup> *Remarks*, 11.

<sup>1102</sup> *Review*, 186-187.

<sup>1103</sup> *Review*, 187.

<sup>1104</sup> *TFMG*, 83.

<sup>1105</sup> *TFMG*, 83.

Of course, the fully-developed moral agent will not make the primary reason for doing that which is right in itself the fact that it is according to his own judgement, or ‘self-approbation’, or superior command, and so on; a fact which, in itself, highlights why the Clarkeian will does more than give a straightforward ‘yes or no’ in the world as a ‘state of trial’. However, all such considerations are not only part of the Clarkeian moral agent’s practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards; the Clarkeian moral agent still experiences the normative force of all such considerations as part of what it means to have moral judgement, and of what it means to act according to all that reason *is*, even as he considers their normative force from the perspective of (and wills acts in accordance with them with the intention of) rectitude. In either case, the Clarkeans still seem able to wonder why, as ‘*I will; I act*’,<sup>1106</sup> there should be something ‘mysterious in a man’s chusing to follow his judgement and desires’,<sup>1107</sup> whether that individual person goes on to will that action as AAOC *qua* ‘virtuous agent’, or simply as a ‘virtuous act’ *qua* AATC.

## Conclusion

This chapter has responded to one of the most pervasive criticisms of the Clarkeans: that they were complacent. This charge has been founded on the view that the Clarkeans simply asserted that human beings self-evidently and passively perceive intrinsic rightness. In response to that charge, this chapter has established both the limits of human reason in CER, where the world is conceived as a ‘state of trial’, and the Clarkeian understanding of moral development. In doing so, in opposition to KC, it has been possible to find room for practical moral reasoning within CER, and, in opposition to HC and LNLC, to observe that the practical moral reasoning available to CER concerns, and is informed by, various ‘material’, including:

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<sup>1106</sup> *Review*, 181.

<sup>1107</sup> *Review*, 183.

scripture and divine command; experiences internal to the exercise of reason and conscience, such as our desire to imitate God, ‘self-approration’ and conscience’s ‘presages’; and ‘material’ internal to our ‘subjective motivational set’, as created rational agents, such as our implanted antecedent affections for ourselves and others.

In many ways, the present chapter on CER points to certain limits in the ‘internalist’ and ‘externalist’ distinction,<sup>1108</sup> when approaching the Clarkeans from within KC, HC and LNLC.

Gary Jaeger, for example, refers to Clarke as representing the view of ‘non-relative externalism’. In summarising ‘non-relative externalism’, Jaeger offers a quotation from John McDowell, which does speak to a central, and familiar, feature of the Clarkean position: ‘The idea is that the dictates of reason are there anyway, whether or not one’s eyes are opened to them’.<sup>1109</sup> Price, like Butler (as we have seen) maintained:

Nor would it be more extravagant to conclude that men have not speculative reason, because of the diversity in their speculative opinions, than it is to conclude, they have no powers of moral perception, or that there is no fixed standard of morality, because of the diversity in men’s opinions, concerning the fitness or unfitness, lawfulness or unlawfulness, of *particular practices*.<sup>1110</sup>

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<sup>1108</sup> For the classic discussions of the distinction between ‘internalism’ and ‘externalism’, see: W.D. Falk, ‘“Ought” and Motivation’, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, Vol.48 (1947-1948), 111-138; Williams, *op.cit.*, 101-113; William Frankena, ‘Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy’ in K.E. Goodpaster (ed.), *Perspective on Morality: Essays of William K. Frankena* (Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 49-73. For further refinements of ‘internalism’ and ‘externalism’, and for differences of opinion over in what sense particular philosophers, including, for example, Hobbes and Kant, can be described as ‘internalists’ or ‘externalists’, see, as well as the discussion of ‘judgement externalism’ in Chapter 2: Thomas Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978), 7-12; David Brink, *Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 37-80; Derek Parfit, ‘Reasons and Motivation’ in Setiya and Paakkunainen, *op.cit.*, 343-372; John McDowell, ‘Might There Be External Reasons?’ in Setiya and Paakkunainen, *op.cit.*, 73-88; Korsgaard, ‘Skepticism about Practical Reason’, 54-57; Stephen Darwall, *Philosophical Ethics* (Oxford, Westview Press, 1998), 106-108; Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, ‘Mackie’s Internalisms’ in R. Joyce and S. Kirchin (eds), *A World Without Values: Essays on John Mackie’s Moral Error Theory* (London, Springer, 2010), 55-69; John Robertson, ‘Internalism, Practical Reason, and Motivation’ in E. Millgram (ed.), *Varieties of Practical Reasoning* (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2001) 127-152.

<sup>1109</sup> John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1996), 91; Gary Jaeger, *Repression, Integrity and Practical Reasoning* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 59.

<sup>1110</sup> *Review*, 172.

It seems intelligible to refer to the Clarkeans as ‘non-relative externalists’, when this means that, in CER, ‘reasons are there anyway, [so] it does not matter whether an agent recognises them or not’, and ‘Insofar as an agent does recognise them, it is because he perceives or responds to something whose existence is prior to his reasoning about it’.<sup>1111</sup> However, on the basis of the above discussion of CER, it becomes more difficult to refer to the Clarkeans as ‘non-relative externalists’, when ‘For non-relative externalists, reasons are features of the world and not of an agent’s mind or motivational set’.<sup>1112</sup> It might be the case, in CER, that ‘no reason earns its status as a reason...from its relativity to desires or antecedent motivations’.<sup>1113</sup> However, this does not mean, as in HC and LNLC, that the operation of reason itself does not result in desires that are what the Clarkeans called ‘reasons or motives’ for moral action, and that our antecedent affections play no part in our practical moral reasoning. Moreover, while it seems non-controversial to link CER with ‘some version or other of Platonic realism that claims reasons are entities in the world’, it appears odd, given the Clarkean understanding of reason *qua* RR, to say, as in KC, that ‘reasons exist in a world distinct from agents’ minds’.<sup>1114</sup>

Jaeger appreciates that the latter view of Clarke and ‘non-instrumental externalism’ is part of Korsgaard’s reading of Kant, where ‘Kant developed his internalist position in contradistinction to non-relative externalists of his day, for example, Leibniz, Clarke and Price’.<sup>1115</sup> As we have seen, for Korsgaard, and KC in general, modern and early modern rational intuitionism ‘falls just short of the internalist position’, because, in rational intuitionism, ‘The reason why the act is right and the motive you have for doing it are separate items’.<sup>1116</sup> ‘The

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<sup>1111</sup> Jaeger, *op.cit.*, 58.

<sup>1112</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>1113</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>1114</sup> *Ibid.*, 58; 59.

<sup>1115</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>1116</sup> Korsgaard, ‘Skepticism about Practical Reason’, 55.

dogmatic rationalists of the eighteenth century...[and] many contemporary philosophers’, ‘give’ ‘moral requirements’ ‘some sort of ontological foundation, by positing the existence of certain normative facts or entities to which moral requirements somehow refer’.<sup>1117</sup> ‘Intuitionists do not believe in practical reason, properly speaking’; ‘They believe there is a branch of theoretical reason that is specifically concerned with morals’<sup>1118</sup> *qua* ‘rational truths or truths of reason, which exist independently of the will’ and ‘exist independently of the person’s mind’.<sup>1119</sup> As Darwall put it, ‘For them [‘rational intuitionists’], the faculty of ethical perception is no different from that of mathematical insight; both involve pure intellect’.<sup>1120</sup> As such, ‘dogmatic rationalism’ ‘seems to leave us in need of a reason to be rational’, because, so far as ‘The principles of practical reason’ ‘represent external *restrictions* on our actions’, their ‘power to motivate us is therefore inexplicable’.<sup>1121</sup> The ‘dogmatic rationalist’ cannot ‘explain why the person finds it *necessary* to act on those normative facts, or what it is about *her* that makes them normative *for her*’.<sup>1122</sup> Instead, the ‘dogmatic rationalist’ maintains ‘There is a set of normative facts, about which reasons there are, and a rational agent is *by definition* someone whose actions are motivated by these reasons’.<sup>1123</sup> The difficulty for the ‘dogmatic rationalist’, therefore, is that,

If all we mean is that the person is reliably caused to act in accordance with reasons, we fail to capture what is rational about the person. His actions may be rationally appropriate, but not because he sees that they are so: it seems to be a sort of accident that his motivational wiring follows the pathways of reason...if what we mean when we say that the person’s actions are motivated by reasons is that the person is caused to act by his *recognition* of certain considerations *as* reasons, then we must say *what it is* that he recognises.<sup>1124</sup>

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<sup>1117</sup> Christine Korsgaard, ‘The Normativity of Instrumental Reason’ (hereafter ‘Instrumental Reason’) in Setiya and Paakkunainen (eds), *op.cit.*, 203.

<sup>1118</sup> Korsgaard, ‘Skepticism about Practical Reason’, 55.

<sup>1119</sup> Korsgaard, ‘Instrumental Reason’, 204; 222.

<sup>1120</sup> Darwall, *op.cit.*, 54.

<sup>1121</sup> Korsgaard, ‘Instrumental Reason’, 222; 204.

<sup>1122</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>1123</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>1124</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

However, in response to Korsgaard and KC, we have seen how the Clarkeian understanding of reason *qua* RR, and moral development, explains ‘how reasons get a grip on the agent’ and ‘*why* a rational agent must care about doing what is right’,<sup>1125</sup> not least because the Clarkeans ‘say’ ‘*what*’ ‘considerations’ the mature moral agent ‘recognises’ ‘as reasons’, according to the law of reason *qua* RR. Of course, it is consistent with Ameriks’ and Hare’s ‘false trichotomy’ response to ‘secular neo-Kantianism’, that the Clarkeian explanation for why our ‘motivational wiring follows the pathways of reason’ may not be satisfactory to Korsgaard within KC, but that does not mean that the Clarkeans do not give one.

In CER, our response to reason is not an ‘accident’; it is a matter of our creation. However, our creation as agents possessed of reason does not mean that we are ‘reliably caused to act in accordance with reasons’. As seen above, the Clarkeian understanding of freewill would prohibit any language of ‘cause’ when it comes to human choice, due to its mechanistic associations. More than this, the limits of human reason in the ‘state of trial’ mean that we cannot simply trust our intuition of intrinsic rightness and our responses, in conscience, to what may, in the end, turn out to be only a ‘semblance’ of reason. Further, human beings are not able to perceive rightness as soon as we are born into the world as a ‘state of trial’. As we mature both mentally and morally, we must be ‘instructed’ in the relations that determine ‘fittingness’, and remain attentive to our schooling, and our own experiences in conscience, if we are to appreciate, and to continue to appreciate, *what* it is *that* is according to reason *qua* RR. Indeed, it is not the case, in CER, that human moral development has to begin with the recognition of, properly speaking, *moral* reasons for acting. Disordered passions and limited reason make the development of ‘virtuous habits’ essential to an individual’s understanding of his duty and his commitment to it. However, the development of such habits can begin from choosing to act

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<sup>1125</sup> *Ibid.*, 223; 224.

because to do so is to obey divine command, or to act according to natural affection, rather than because to do so is to act according to reason *qua* RR.

Thus, while the Clarkeans avoid what is, in their own terms, ‘externalism’, one reason why they often appear ‘externalist’ within KC, and the ‘false trichotomy’ more generally, is because CER, in a certain sense, allowed the process of moral development to begin with (while the process of moral development also consisted in the movement away from) the externalist perspective of an underdeveloped moral character.

The immature moral agent may begin to perform ‘virtuous acts’ *qua* AATC, in order to obey God’s will; such an agent may start on the path of virtue, and moral development, with the opinion that ‘moral command arises from a source outside the agent’, and, for the Clarkeans outside reason *qua* RR itself.

However, the mature moral agent does not (as Korsgaard describes the ‘dogmatic rationalist view’) ‘conform’ ‘to a principle independent of the mind’.<sup>1126</sup> Rather, he regards the opportunity to act with intention of rectitude as a reason for acting: acting with the intention of satisfying each of his ‘tripartite’ duties explains his choice of action, when considerations of what he should do to act for himself *and* for others *and* for God (and considerations of on what basis he can choose a particular action as an act for himself *and* for others *and* for God) explain what constitutes reasons for action under the law of reason *qua* RR.

As a result, we have seen (i) the fully-developed Clarkean moral agent ‘cares’ about what is right, and is ‘gripped’ by *what* it is *that* is according to reason *qua* RR, because he

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<sup>1126</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

appreciates that all of the ‘reasons or motives’ he has as a created rational agent are satisfied by choosing to do *what* it is *that* is right in itself according to reason. But also (ii) each of those ‘reasons or motives’ he has for action as a created rational agent become, for the mature moral agent in the ‘state of trial’, the ‘material’ with which, on the basis of practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards, he ensures that he is able to act with, and according to, reason when he chooses to do *what* it is *that* he perceives to be right in itself.

Unlike the ‘externalist’ minded immature moral agent, the mature moral agent, in crossing the rational ‘gap’ into decision and into action, does not ‘conform’ ‘to a principle independent of the mind’. The mature moral agent chooses, or, in Clarkean terms, wills, to act according to a law he recognises as the law of his own nature and judgement, as well as the law of God and of the created universe itself. Further, because even the mature moral agent lacks certainty in the world as a ‘state of trial’, the mature moral agent not only chooses to appropriate that law, he imposes it upon himself: as a ‘virtuous agent’, the mature moral agent wills a ‘virtuous act’ *qua* AAOC as ‘materially’ the right thing to do according to the law of reason *qua* RR, while accepting it may be only ‘procedurally’ the right thing to do, on the basis of his own *faithful* practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards.

Returning to the charge of complacency, therefore, it has been seen above that it was not just ‘Aristotle and Kant’, who were ‘concerned with the methods of moral education’ necessary to encourage human beings ‘to listen to reason’.<sup>1127</sup> Of course, ‘to listen to reason’ does not mean the same in CER as it does in neo-Kantianism: in the former, it includes, for example, the experience of, and reflective consideration of, intrinsic ‘moral beauty’, God’s nature and will, and the consequences of our actions for ourselves and others. In CER, to act

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<sup>1127</sup> Korsgaard, ‘Skepticism about Practical Reason’, 63.

with, and according to, reason means to choose to do *what* it is *that* one perceives to be right in itself, so far as one is satisfied, upon reflection, that by choosing to act according to one's potentially mistaken perception of intrinsic rightness one is able to satisfy each of one's 'tripartite' duties under reason *qua* RR. In CER, 'to listen to reason', and to be trained to do so, includes the reflective consideration, in conscience, of 'material' from 'inside' conscience (such as, 'self-approbation' and the desire to imitate God), and from 'outside' conscience (such as scripture and antecedent natural affection). To 'listen to reason' in CER is to engage actively in, and through, conscience with all that we experience in the rational perception of intrinsic rightness, and properly to incorporate 'outside' 'material' into one's practical reasoning to help to guard against the possibility for error. It is possible to be trained 'to listen to reason', on the basis of such (external) 'prompts' and 'inducements' as scriptural promises of reward and antecedent natural affection. Such 'prompts' and 'inducements', in the world as a 'state of trial', enable us to understand what it means 'to listen to', and to act according to, reason *qua* RR, by drawing us on to the path of virtue and so the process of developing moral character.

Thus, while 'to listen to reason' may not mean the same in neo-Kantianism and CER, it is nonetheless the case that the Clarkeans would have been able to concur with Kant when he 'says' we are 'imperfectly rational', so that 'Human beings must be taught, or habituated to listen to reason' in an effort to establish 'ideals of character', whereby 'A person with a good character will be...one who responds to the available reasons in an appropriate way'.<sup>1128</sup> Thus, in CER, the only 'necessity' concerning human action is 'moral necessity', which, 'in philosophical strictness...[is] no necessity at all', but only a 'figurative' way of expressing that,

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<sup>1128</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

at the point of moral maturity, ‘a good being, continuing to be good, cannot do evil; or a wise being, continuing to be wise, cannot act unwisely’.<sup>1129</sup>

Following this discussion of CER, the following chapter returns to Butlerian conscience. Just as it has been shown, in the last two chapters, that Clarkean conscience possessed the same referents as Butlerian conscience, it will be shown in Chapter 4 that Butler had the same understanding of moral development in the world as a ‘state of trial’. I will argue that Butler’s method and ‘cool hour passage’ do not mark internal inconsistencies in Butler, or any inconsistency with the Clarkeans, because both are consistent with Butler’s and the Clarkeans’ shared understanding of conscience and moral development.

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<sup>1129</sup> *Leibniz-Clarke*, 99.

## Chapter 4

### Resolving Opposition Between Butler and the Clarkeans

It is impossible to leave the present study without discussing two well-known, and contentious, passages in Butler: the ‘notorious’<sup>1130</sup> ‘cool hour passage’; and what will be referred to below as ‘Butler’s equivocation’: his synonymous use of ‘conscience’ and such expressions as ‘perception of the heart’ and ‘moral sense’. Such passages are significant for this study because both have been used to highlight internal tensions in Butler, as well as tensions between his moral thought and CER. We shall see that his equivocation and ‘cool hour passage’ have only been used to mark tensions in Butler, and between Butler and the Clarkeans, due to the tendency to reduce the meaning and place of Butlerian conscience, and to neglect those of Clarkean conscience.

Part I below discusses the ‘cool hour passage’, before turning to Butler’s equivocation in Part II.

#### Part I

#### ‘A Cool Hour’

It may be allowed, without any prejudice to the cause of virtue and religion, that our ideas of happiness and misery are of all our ideas the nearest and most important to us; that they will, nay, if you please, that they ought to prevail over those of order, and beauty, and harmony, and proportion, if there should ever be, as it is impossible that there ever should be, any inconsistency between them: though these last, too, as expressing the fitness of actions, are real as truth itself. Let it be allowed, though virtue or moral rectitude does indeed consist in affection

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<sup>1130</sup> Ralph Wedgwood, ‘Butler on Virtue, Self-Interest, and Human Nature’ in Bloomfield, *op.cit.*, 195.

to and pursuit of what is right and good, as such; yet, that when we sit down in a cool hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit, till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it.<sup>1131</sup>

This ‘cool hour passage’ has been used to distinguish Butler and the Clarkeans, because Butler places considerations of self-love above those of Clarkean ‘fitness’ (‘order’ and ‘proportion’) and Shaftesburian ‘harmony’. The ‘cool hour passage’ appears to support McPherson’s hedonistic reading of Butler, and Raphael’s related understanding of Butlerian conscience as the ‘perception’ of such ‘secondary qualities’ as ‘self-love’, because in it: ‘There seems no doubt...but that Butler considered that no act can possibly be really a duty unless it will be for our happiness’.<sup>1132</sup> So far as the ‘cool hour passage’ seems to justify the reduction of Butlerian conscience to considerations of ‘self-love’, where, as in Sidgwick, Butlerian conscience is reduced to our perception, and approval, of intrinsic rightness, it reveals Butler’s ‘duality of practical reason’.<sup>1133</sup> By contending ‘That the ultimate appeal must be’, not to ‘conscience’, but ‘to the individual’s happiness’, the ‘cool hour passage’ suggests that ‘conscience’ must ‘give way’ to self-love.<sup>1134</sup> Thus, it is an instance of internal inconsistency, because elsewhere in the *Sermons* Butler ‘distinguishes sharply between *conscience* and *self-love*’.<sup>1135</sup>

Within the present study, a different approach to the ‘cool hour passage’ is possible, on the basis of the current non-reduced understanding of Butlerian conscience. This approach draws attention to the neglected context for the ‘cool hour passage’, and to the fact that it has been separated out from other ‘cool hours’ in Butler. Further, approaching it from the perspective of conscience’s referents, and the distinction between AAOC and AATC, helps to

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<sup>1131</sup> S, XI.21.

<sup>1132</sup> H.A. Prichard, *Moral Obligation* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1949), 97.

<sup>1133</sup> See, for example: L.T. Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, 6th edn (London, Chapman and Hall, 1929), 571.

<sup>1134</sup> Sidgwick, *Outlines*, 196.

<sup>1135</sup> Wedgwood, *op.cit.*, 191.

show how Butler's thought is not only consistent internally, but also with the Clarkean understanding of moral development.

### **'Cool Self-love'**

I argued in Chapter 1 that 'cool self-love' is a referent of conscience: 'cool self-love' is a responsibility and capacity agents have due to conscience; it is approved by conscience, and every act according to conscience is in our own best interest. As (i) the 'cool hour' is one in which 'cool self-love' is operative, the 'cool hour passage' does not, as Sidgwick stated, take us outside conscience; instead (ii), it concerns an agent who has not yet 'matured' beyond an AATC level of reflection and action.

With respect to (i), Butler stated that 'our ideas of happiness and misery' are 'the nearest and most important to us', and that:

religion...far from disowning the principle of self-love...often addresses itself to that very principle, and *always to the mind in that state when reason presides*...there can *no access be had to the understanding*, but by convincing men, that the course of life we would persuade them to is not contrary to their own interest.<sup>1136</sup>

Religion can only appeal to human beings when 'reason presides', and the cool hour is a period where 'reason presides', as it is one of reflection; it is when we seek to reason out and justify our actions to ourselves, so that we might cross Searle's 'gaps' into decision and action. Our reflective concern for our own interest in the 'cool hour', and for religion as that which satisfies that reflective concern, is part of Butler's contention that, 'prudence and imprudence...are of the nature of virtue',<sup>1137</sup> and that it is as human beings, 'perceive, and reason, and act, [that] we may be said to exist, or live, in a state of reflection'.<sup>1138</sup> We are only able to act with a

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<sup>1136</sup> S, XI.21 (my italics).

<sup>1137</sup> A, I.II.10.

<sup>1138</sup> A, I.I.24.

view to our own long-term interest because we have ‘conscience or reflection’, and acting with a view to our long-term interest is constitutive of what it means to be a rational agent. For us to understand our actions they must be intelligible to a rational agent; and a rational agent, who reflects on his actions and their consequences, would not act according to rational reflection if he acted contrary to his long-term interest. Thus, for rational agents to recommend actions to themselves they must consider their long-term interest, and the consideration of long-term interest in a ‘cool hour’ is something that happens under, and as a result of, ‘conscience or reflection’.

In terms of (i), the ‘cool hour’ is consistent with Butler’s view, discussed in Chapter 1, that ‘cool self-love’, as a motive for action, is only possible as a result of, and under the approval of, conscience; and that our ability to take account of our own interest is a responsibility we have as rational agents operating according to ‘conscience or reflection’. However, turning to (ii), the question still remains as to why Butler should describe our ideas of ‘happiness and misery’ as ‘the nearest and most important to us’ that ‘ought to prevail’ over ideas of Clarke’s ‘fitness’? The answer lies in the fact that the ‘cool hour passage’, not only concerns a reflective agent, but one without a fully-developed moral character.

### **The ‘Cool Hour’ in Context**

The neglected context of the ‘cool hour passage’ includes the fact that, in it, Butler is talking about the ‘obligation’ a reflective agent considers himself to be under to perform an act of benevolence. For Butler, it is ‘religion, from whence arises our strongest obligation to benevolence’,<sup>1139</sup> and which, in so doing, also appeals to ‘self-love...when reason presides’. Butler, again in the context of the ‘cool hour passage’, suggests, like the Clarkeans:

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<sup>1139</sup> S, XI.21.

that Christianity lays us under new obligations to a good life, as by it the will of God is more clearly revealed, and as it affords additional motives to the practice of it, over and above those which arise out of the nature of virtue and vice; *I might add, as our Saviour has set us a perfect example of goodness in our own nature.*<sup>1140</sup>

Let us say, for argument's sake, that heavenly reward is one of the 'additional motives' that does not 'arise out of the nature of virtue and vice'. Even if it were an 'additional' motive, the reflective agent of the 'cool hour' would still be AATC when he performed an act of benevolence from considerations of heavenly reward, because, in the 'cool hour', the reflective agent's action is based upon something he has experienced in conscience; not least its 'presages' and the 'self-condemnation' we suffer in conscience for failing our 'moral obligations':<sup>1141</sup>

[conscience] magisterially exerts itself, and approves...him the doer of... ['actions' 'in themselves just, right, good'] and...if not forcibly stopped, naturally and always...goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence which shall hereafter second and affirm its own.<sup>1142</sup>

However, as seen in Chapter 1 from discussion of Butler's understanding of our accountability to God, and God's 'moral government' of the world, heavenly reward is not an 'additional motive' that does not 'arise out of the nature of virtue and vice'. The prospect of heavenly reward does 'arise out of', because it concerns the essential difference between, 'the nature of virtue and vice'.<sup>1143</sup> According to Butler, as with the Clarkeans, scripture, in its

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<sup>1140</sup> S, XI.23 (my italics).

<sup>1141</sup> S, Preface.22-23.

<sup>1142</sup> S, II.10.

<sup>1143</sup> Butler maintained that, 'The notion...of a moral scheme of government...is not a fictitious, but a natural notion; for it is suggested to our thoughts, by the essential tendencies of virtue and vice' (A, I.III.38.), so that the promises of future reward, and threats of future punishment, found in scripture, are 'a republication of natural religion' (A, III.5). Thus, God's 'moral government' consists in 'rewarding the righteous, and punishing the wicked' (A, I.III.2), precisely because 'the good and bad tendencies of virtue and vice...are essential, and founded in the nature of things', so that 'the actual rewards and punishments of virtue and vice...arise directly out of the nature of things' (A, I.III.37). Indeed, as with the Clarkeans, although Butler maintained that the 'present' world, not least due to the Fall (see below), is 'mixed', so that 'virtue [is] sometimes prosperous, sometimes depressed' (A, I.III.32.), it is still possible for us to appreciate that the world was created by God, and is under God's government, according to the law of reason, because, even in the present 'mixed' state, 'vice...naturally occasions great inconvenience, and even misery' (A, I.III.13), while virtue is 'attended with' 'delight and enjoyment' (S, III.10), according to the 'essential' nature of both.

revelation of God's will, the happiness and future reward of virtue, and the misery and future punishment of vice, 'confirmed'<sup>1144</sup> what was already a matter of experience in conscience. Christianity's 'new obligations' are often, therefore, reiterations of our 'original' or 'prior obligations to piety and virtue':

that our being God's creatures, and virtue being the natural law we are born under, and the whole constitution of man being plainly adapted to it, are prior obligations to piety and virtue than the consideration that God sent his Son into the world to save it...<sup>1145</sup>

Although the 'new obligations' of Christianity are often a 'republication'<sup>1146</sup> and reinforcement of our 'original' or 'prior' obligation known through reason itself, the Christian revelation does introduce 'new obligations', 'additional' to that 'prior obligation', that could not have been known by natural reason alone. As we can see from the final line in the quotation above, and the italicised final line of the preceding quotation, according to Butler, such an 'additional' obligation is the mediation and example of Christ. As we shall see, Butler's understanding of the 'new obligation' of Christ continues to highlight his reliance on the Clarkean language of relations, while also demonstrating that, in Butler, as in CER, it is

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Butler argued that the 'doctrine' that the world is a 'state of trial' was 'the same with saying, that we are under the moral government of God' (A, I.IV.1), which consists in rewarding according to behaviour, and, in the world as a 'state of trial', 'our future interest' 'now' depends 'upon ourselves' because 'we have scope...for that good and bad behaviour' (A, I.IV.1). Like the Clarkeans, Butler held to a view of the Fall comparable to Kelly's reading of Clement of Alexandria. Although Butler admitted that it is 'difficult...to account for' the Fall, 'or even to form a distinct conception of the occasions and circumstances of it' (A, II.V.12), he maintained that, 'repetition of irregularities would produce habits. Thus the constitution would be spoiled; and creatures made upright, become corrupt and depraved', so 'it is plainly conceivable, that creatures without blemish, as they come out of the hands of God, may be in danger of going wrong' (A, I.V.28-29; see also: II.IX.9-12). For Butler, it is because our fallenness consists of an 'inward constitution and character', depraved by 'contracted habits of vice and folly' (A, I.IV.4), that we 'stand in need' of 'virtuous habits', so that we might develop, in place of our depraved 'character', a 'new' 'virtuous' one (A, I.V.12). Butler considered the 'present world', with 'trial and difficulties', '*peculiarly fit* to be a state of discipline for this purpose, to such as will set themselves to mend and improve' (A, I.V.31). Surrounded by the 'snares and temptations of vice' (A, I.V.31), 'the present world's being in a state of probation...is a theatre of action, for the manifestation of a person's character, with respect to a future one' (A, I.V.42). Thus, the 'state of discipline throughout this life...is a providential disposition of things' which can be compared with 'being placed in a state of discipline during childhood, for mature age' (A, I.V.18), so that we might have 'qualification for the future state' (A, I.V.20), as we might qualify for adulthood, by acquiring 'habits of attention, industry, self-government' through the 'exercise' of those virtues (A, I.V.7).

<sup>1144</sup> A, II.I.9.

<sup>1145</sup> S, I.2.

<sup>1146</sup> A, II.I.5.

possible for us to do that which is approved by conscience as a ‘virtuous agent’ *qua* AAOC or as a ‘virtuous act’ *qua* AATC.

## Relation and Revelation

Butler maintained that, ‘Moral *duties* arise from the nature of the case itself, prior to external command’.<sup>1147</sup> ‘Moral *precepts* are precepts, the reasons of which we see; positive *precepts* are precepts, the reasons of which we do not see’, so that there is a ‘distinction’ between ‘Moral *precepts*’ and ‘*duties*’, and ‘positive *precepts*’ and ‘*duties*’, where the latter ‘do not arise from the nature of the case, but from external command’.<sup>1148</sup>

With respect to our moral duties to God, ‘By reason is revealed the relation, which God the Father stands in to us’, so that it is from that ‘relation’, not from mere positive command, that ‘Hence arises the obligation of duty which we are under to him’.<sup>1149</sup> It is thus part of our moral duty to God to approach him with ‘the religious regards of reverence, honour, love, trust, gratitude, fear, hope’,<sup>1150</sup> as being our creator and ‘the fountain of all good’.<sup>1151</sup>

While ‘the relation which we stand in to God the Father, is made known to us by reason; the relation we stand in to Christ [and the Holy Spirit, is made known] by revelation only’.<sup>1152</sup>

However, as with God the Father:

the office of our Lord being made known, and the relation he stands in to us, the obligation of religious regards to him is plainly moral, as much as charity to mankind is; since this obligation arises, before external command, immediately out of that office and relation itself.<sup>1153</sup>

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<sup>1147</sup> A, II.I.26.

<sup>1148</sup> A, II.I.26.

<sup>1149</sup> A, II.I.17.

<sup>1150</sup> A, II.I.20

<sup>1151</sup> A, II.I.27.

<sup>1152</sup> A, II.I.27.

<sup>1153</sup> A, II.I.22.

It is by ‘Scripture’, not by reason, that ‘are revealed the relations, which the Son and Holy Spirit stand in to us’,<sup>1154</sup> but those relations are ‘real’ and not a ‘matter of pure revelation’.<sup>1155</sup>

Once the relations are made ‘known’ to us by revelation, our moral duties to the Son and Holy Spirit, like the Father, do not arise ‘merely from command in Scripture’, but, rather:

immediately arise, to the view of reason, out of the very nature of these offices and relations; as the inward good-will and kind attention, which we owe to our fellow-creatures, arises out of the common relations between us and them...<sup>1156</sup>

Butler’s comparison between our moral duties to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and those to our fellow-creatures, highlight that for him, like the Clarkeans, we have ‘obligations of reason, arising out of those relations themselves’,<sup>1157</sup> and that we can understand our moral duties from the perspective of ‘obligations of reason’ or from the perspective of mere command and/or self-interest:

[Christ] taught mankind...to [returning to our ‘tripartite’ duties] *live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*, in expectation of the future judgement of God. He confirmed the truth of this moral system of nature, and gave us additional evidence of it...He distinctly revealed...the rewards and punishments of a future life...he set us a perfect *example, that we should follow his steps*.<sup>1158</sup>

We can appreciate our duty to have ‘hope’ in, and ‘fear’ of, God from the perspective of the relation we stand in to him according to our ‘obligations of reason’; or we can have ‘hope’ in God merely from the perspective of receiving a reward, and ‘fear’ God simply because we are terrified by divine power. Likewise, we can view our obligation to fulfil our ‘tripartite’ duties as Christ taught us to do from the perspective of ‘obligations of reason’, or from the perspective of the same mercenary ‘hope’ and ‘servile fear’.<sup>1159</sup>

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<sup>1154</sup> A, II.I.17.

<sup>1155</sup> A, II.I.21.

<sup>1156</sup> A, I.II.20.

<sup>1157</sup> A, II.I.21.

<sup>1158</sup> A, II.V.15.

<sup>1159</sup> S, XIII.2.

The difference between these two approaches is that between an underdeveloped and a ‘mature’ moral ‘character’. To move from the former to the latter, Butler and the Clarkeans maintained that we may start to fulfil our obligations from the perspective of mere ‘hope and fear’,<sup>1160</sup> rather than our ‘obligations of reason’, at the start of our moral development in the world as a ‘state of trial’. However, once the process is started, it is through our progress in moral development that we will come to the point at which we are able to look upon obedience to divine authority, as well as the prospect of eternal reward, from the perspective of ‘obligations of reason’, rather than mere ‘hope and fear’:

veracity, justice...charity, regard to God’s authority, and to our own chief interest, are not only all three coincident...each of them is, in itself, a just and natural motive or principle of action...he who begins a good life from any one of them...cannot fail of becoming more and more, of that character, which is correspondent to the constitution of nature as moral; and to the relation, which God stands in to us as a moral Governor of it: nor consequently can he fail of obtaining that happiness, which this constitution and relation necessarily suppose connected with that character.<sup>1161</sup>

### **Re-reading ‘A Cool Hour’**

With the above in mind, we will return to the ‘cool hour passage’. In it, a reflective agent considers the ‘obligation’ he is under to perform an act of ‘benevolence’, of ‘love and charity’. Part of his considerations in a ‘cool hour’ are ‘obligations of reason’: that is, what Butler refers to in the passage as: ‘virtue or moral rectitude’; the ‘affection to and pursuit of what is right and good, as such’; ‘Common reason and humanity’; our (Clarkean and Shaftesburian) ‘ideas’ ‘of order, and beauty, and harmony, and proportion’.<sup>1162</sup>

However, it follows from the previous discussion of Butlerian conscience that, in a ‘cool hour’, a reflective agent, through its operations, is also aware of the ‘self-condemnation’

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<sup>1160</sup> A, I.V.36.

<sup>1161</sup> A, I.V.36.

<sup>1162</sup> S, XI.21.

he experiences by not doing that which conscience approves; and that he is further aware, through its ‘presages’, of God’s unfavourable judgement upon those who would contradict that which conscience approves.

Moreover, the context for the ‘cool hour passage’ itself highlights that the reflective agent in a ‘cool hour’ is also considering the ‘new obligations’ and ‘additional motives’ of ‘Christianity’, because he is considering the fact that ‘religion’ places him under the ‘strongest obligation to benevolence’.

On the one hand, the reflective agent of the ‘cool hour’, like the fully-developed Clarkeian moral agent, is able to perform AAOC by crossing the ‘gap’ into decision and action by choosing to obey conscience in order to satisfy his ‘obligations of reason’, rather than mere ‘hope and fear’. In the ‘cool hour’, he does not heed Christ’s ‘command’ and ‘example’ out of ‘servile dread’,<sup>1163</sup> but because they demonstrate that, ‘love and charity is plainly the thing in which...[Christ] had placed his religion’.<sup>1164</sup> The fully-developed moral character also places his religion in virtue by considering all that he reflectively experiences in the ‘cool hour’ (including ‘self-condemnation’, conscience’s ‘presages’, the ‘new obligations’ and ‘additional motives’ of ‘Christianity’, his ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ and ‘ideas’ of Clarkeian ‘fitness’) from the perspective of, and as aspects of, his ‘obligations of reason’ and love of God (see below).

On the other hand, he may choose to obey conscience simply out of ‘hope and fear’, so that he does only that which is ‘materially virtuous’<sup>1165</sup> (what Price called a ‘virtuous act’,

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<sup>1163</sup> S, XIV.2.

<sup>1164</sup> S, XI.23.

<sup>1165</sup> A, I.V.36.

and what has been referred to herein as AATC), because, on reflection, he obeys conscience only from the point of view of self-love or superior command. Such an agent, in the world as a ‘state of trial’, has difficulty fully integrating all his motives for moral action: he is unable to appreciate the connections between all that he is aware of, and considers as a basis for action, in conscience.

Butler and the Clarkeans are happy for a reflective, and so ‘attentive’,<sup>1166</sup> agent to begin to choose ‘virtuous acts’ *qua* AATC, on the basis of self-love and/or divine command, because they have a ‘moral certainty’ (through a reasoned faith) of what the underdeveloped moral character (like Shaftesbury’s sceptic: see below) does not yet appreciate: that there is no conflict between duty, obedience, the happiness of ourselves and of others. Butler and the Clarkeans are content for an immature agent in the ‘state of trial’ to be AATC, even solely on the basis of ‘hope and fear’, because it follows that he will at least be performing ‘materially virtuous’ acts. As a result of performing ‘materially virtuous’ acts, he will start to develop ‘virtuous habits’, and then, as his moral character develops, move away from simply performing ‘materially virtuous’ acts *qua* AATC to AAOC *qua* ‘virtuous agent’:

Against this whole notion of moral discipline, it may be objected...so far as a course of behaviour, materially virtuous, proceeds from hope and fear...it is only a...strengthening of self-love. But doing what God commands, because he commands it, is obedience, though it proceeds from hope or fear. And a course of such obedience will form habits of it. And a constant regard to veracity, justice, and charity, may form distinct habits of these particular virtues; and will certainly form habits of self-government, and of denying our inclinations, whenever veracity, justice, or charity requires it.<sup>1167</sup>

Thus, the ‘cool hour passage’ concerns a reflective agent engaged with the process of moral development and ‘discipline’, and so must be read in the context of Butler’s, and the

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<sup>1166</sup> A, II.VI.17.

<sup>1167</sup> A, I.V.36.

Clarkeans', understanding of the development of a 'mature' moral 'character' in the world as a 'state of trial':<sup>1168</sup>

[God] is the author and cause of all things...*more intimately present to us than anything else can be* [my italics]...with whom we have a nearer and more constant intercourse, than...with any creature: there must be some movements of mind and heart which correspond to his perfections, or of which those perfections are the natural object...when we are commanded to *love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our soul*; somewhat more [is]...meant than merely that we live in hope of rewards or fear of punishments from him...though these regards themselves are most just and reasonable, and absolutely necessary to be often recollected in such a world as this.<sup>1169</sup>

Butler and the Clarkeans described the prospects of 'futuraity' as necessary support, and 'inducements of reason',<sup>1170</sup> in the world as a 'state of trial' ('a world such as this') that can be 'recollected' as we reflectively consider what to do, and resolve to cross the 'gap' into decision and action. The judgement of God, and prospects of reward and punishment, which we experience in, and as, conscience mean that all moral agents – whether mature or immature – have a 'sense of security...and of danger in deviating from' conscience, and *what it is that* conscience approves, because rational 'creatures' are 'capable of considering' 'Consciousness of a rule or guide of action', as 'given' to us by our 'Maker'.<sup>1171</sup> Acting with a 'sense of security' is not, in itself, the difference between a mature and immature moral agent; rather, it is how the agent acts on the basis of that 'material' 'internal' to conscience. The underdeveloped moral agent, in a 'cool hour', may choose to do that which is 'materially virtuous', simply from the perspective of 'hope of rewards or fear of punishments'. Such an agent would be using the 'sense of security' he has in conscience, that he is following a rule laid out by God, as a means of performing a 'virtuous act' *qua* AATC. The 'mature'<sup>1172</sup> moral character, however, includes the 'sense of security' he has in following conscience amongst the 'material' he considers within practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards. With

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<sup>1168</sup> See footnote 1143 for an outline of Butler's view.

<sup>1169</sup> S, Preface.38.

<sup>1170</sup> A, I.IV.1.

<sup>1171</sup> A, I.VI.14.

<sup>1172</sup> A, I.III.26.

this ‘sense of security’, he will still choose to obey conscience as an act of obedience to God. However, he will not choose to do so from mere ‘hope’ or ‘fear’; but because he has made virtue his religion (see below).

### **Shaftesbury’s Sceptic**

In the context of both Butler’s and the Clarkeans’ shared view of the ‘state of trial’, Butler’s statement, in the ‘cool hour passage’, that our (‘practical’)<sup>1173</sup> ideas of ‘happiness and misery’ ‘ought to prevail’ over (‘abstract’)<sup>1174</sup> ideas of ‘harmony’ and ‘proportion’, is not only consistent with his empirical method, but also with practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards in CER.

While Butler, in the ‘cool hour passage’, described our ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ as ‘the nearest and most important to us’, he also (as above) stated that God is ‘more intimately present to us than anything else can be’. Further, he argued that ‘the natural authority of the principle of reflection is an obligation the most near and intimate, the most certain and known’.<sup>1175</sup>

The final quotation is from another well-known passage in Butler, where he criticised Shaftesbury for ‘not taking into consideration the authority, which is implied in the idea of reflex approbation’.<sup>1176</sup> In his response to Shaftesbury’s ‘sceptic not convinced of...[the] happy tendency of virtue’, Butler argued that, even for the sceptic, ‘the obligation on the side of interest really does not remain’:

though a man should doubt of everything else...he would still remain under the nearest and most certain obligation to the practice of virtue; an obligation implied in the very idea of virtue,

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<sup>1173</sup> A, I.III.38.

<sup>1174</sup> A, II.VIII.26.

<sup>1175</sup> S, Preface.21.

<sup>1176</sup> S, Preface.20.

in the very idea of reflex approbation...[and] since...so ... little...can...be gained by vice, [one can 'ask'] whether it be so prodigious a thing to sacrifice that little to the most intimate of all obligations...which a man cannot transgress without being self-condemned...This question...may be asked, even upon suspicion that the prospect of a future life were ever so uncertain.<sup>1177</sup>

If Butler, in the 'cool hour passage', really were arguing, as Sidgwick suggested, that 'self-love' should take precedence over 'conscience', thereby creating a tension within Butler's own account of the supremacy of conscience, then his criticisms of Shaftesbury would appear to add another tension into his thought, because here he seems to undermine the 'cool hour passage' itself. However, on the present reading of Butler, it is possible to resolve the apparent discrepancy between his response to Shaftesbury and the 'cool hour passage'.

Returning to (i) and (ii) above, the reflective agent of the 'cool hour' operates under conscience. He is 'attentive' to what he experiences in conscience, even if he has not understood how his reflective 'ideas' of intrinsic rightness relate to those of 'happiness and misery'. In the 'cool hour', while he chooses to perform an act of benevolence *qua* AATC, he takes seriously his experience in conscience of 'self-condemnation' and God's judgement. By performing actions at least 'materially virtuous', he is embarking on:

a course of active virtue and obedience to God's will...[which has] a tendency to habituate the mind, to be easy and satisfied with that degree of happiness which is allotted us, i.e. to moderate self-love.<sup>1178</sup>

Shaftesbury's sceptic, however, is not acting under conscience, according to 'cool' or 'moderate' self-love; the sceptic is allowing an immoderate and misguided self-love to encourage him to deny his own experiences, in conscience, of 'self-condemnation' and conscience's 'presages'. Indeed, even while disregarding his own experience in conscience, of

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<sup>1177</sup> S, Preface.22-23.

<sup>1178</sup> A, I.V.38.

how obeying conscience will satisfy the ‘manifest obligation’ to ‘one’s own happiness’,<sup>1179</sup> the sceptic behaves irrationally, by ignoring the ‘certain obligation’ of his own judgement, in, and as, conscience, that a particular action is the right one for him to perform. The reflective, and so ‘attentive’, agent appreciates that when something is deemed virtuous, it is deemed to be of overriding concern, ‘an obligation implied in the very idea of virtue’. He appreciates that, as it is his own conscience which has approved something as virtuous, his obligation to virtue is always, at the very least, his obligation to his own judgement, ‘an obligation implied...in the very idea of reflex approbation’.

Thus, Shaftesbury’s sceptic, if he stopped to reflect in a ‘cool hour’, would have to acknowledge that ‘the certain obligation’ of his own ‘reflex approbation’ of virtue ‘would entirely supersede’ his ‘uncertain’ opinion that his ‘obligation’ to his own happiness is best served by contradicting his own conscience.<sup>1180</sup> As with reasoning upwards and downwards in CER, Shaftesbury’s sceptic, if he took time to reflect in a ‘cool hour’, not only has a basis for doing that which is ‘materially virtuous’, by choosing to act according to conscience on the basis of that of which he is ‘certain’ in conscience; Shaftesbury’s sceptic, by at least choosing to act according to conscience, has a basis for starting the process of moral development. The sceptic in a ‘cool hour’ can start from that of which he is ‘certain’ in conscience, and reason upwards to include everything else he experiences in, and as, conscience. In doing so, he is able to consider reflectively *what* it is *that* he approves as virtuous, and all that it means to obey conscience and to perform an act of virtue. As his moral character matures, he will be able to pursue every act his conscience approves, not just with a commitment to the certainty that it is, for example, according to his own judgement, or in his own best interest, but with a self-

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<sup>1179</sup> S, Preface.20.

<sup>1180</sup> S, Preface.21.

conscious commitment to virtue from the perspective of satisfying all of his ‘obligations of reason’ as a rational agent.

### **‘Intimate’ Concerns of Conscience**

For Butler, it is not just the case, in the ‘cool hour’, that our ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ are ‘the nearest and closest to us’, such that they ‘ought to prevail’ over ‘abstract’ ‘ideas’ of ‘proportion’ and ‘harmony’. He also maintained that we have ‘intimate’ and ‘certain’ experience of God, and of our own ‘reflex approbation’, in, and as, conscience.

Butler stated in the ‘cool hour’ that our reflective ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ ‘ought to prevail’ over ‘abstract’ ‘ideas’ of ‘proportion’ and ‘harmony’. However, it turns out that he also argued that our ‘certain’ experiences of God’s judgement, and of our own judgement, ‘ought to prevail’ over ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’, when those ‘ideas’ are not, properly speaking, reflective ‘ideas’. The sceptic’s ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ are not, properly speaking, reflective ‘ideas’, precisely because they are not ‘ideas’ based upon our ‘intimate’ experiences, in conscience, of our own judgement and God’s judgement. The difference between Butler’s ‘cool hour passage’ and response to Shaftesbury’s sceptic shows that, for Butler, our ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ are only able to ‘prevail’ normatively over anything when they are reflective ‘ideas’, based upon the ‘material’ we experience ‘inside’ conscience, such as ‘self-condemnation’ and conscience’s ‘presages’.

The fact that God’s judgement and our own ‘reflex approbation’ are experiences ‘intimate’ to conscience, and that our reflective ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ are considerations dependent upon the operation of conscience, continues to highlight the danger

of reducing all that Butler meant by conscience. It also helps to limit suggested divisions between Butler and the Clarkeans.

The Clarkean position on moral development allowed for a sense in which reflective ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ ‘ought to prevail’ over ideas of intrinsic rightness, when those ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ are likewise based on our engagement with our experiences in conscience. The Clarkeans made it legitimate for self-concern to cause us to doubt the accuracy of our perception of intrinsic rightness. As an act of intrinsic rightness will be for ourselves *and* for others *and* for God, failure to be convinced that an action under consideration will satisfy our own best interests is a rational basis for doubting whether the action in question is a genuine act of intrinsic rightness. Indeed, while the Clarkeans would clearly not have endorsed the language of ‘ought to prevail’, their understanding of ‘Gospel-Motives’ and conscience’s ‘presages’ allowed for ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ to be the beginnings of our path to moral development, not least because such ‘ideas’ helped to stress the fact that our moral duties are something of an immediate ‘practical’ concern, rather than merely ‘speculative’. Certainly, the discussion in Chapter 3 showed the extent to which the Clarkeans would have agreed with Butler, in the following quotation, despite the fact that, as we saw in Chapter 1, Butler and the Clarkeans have been separated because the latter are viewed as having a greater confidence in human reason than the former:

Reason alone, whatever one may wish, is not in reality a sufficient motive of virtue in such a creature as man; but this reason joined with those affections which God has impressed upon his heart: and when these are allowed scope to exercise themselves, but under strict government and direction of reason; then it is we act suitably to our nature, and to the circumstances God has placed us in.<sup>1181</sup>

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<sup>1181</sup> S, V.4.

It also follows from the discussion above, and in Chapter 3, that the Clarkeans would have agreed with Butler's 'cool hour' and empirical method that we can engage with the moral life, and our own moral agency, by starting with the 'certain' and 'practical' 'fact' that our own judgement approves something as virtuous; the 'certain' and 'practical' 'fact' that we experience 'real self-dislike',<sup>1182</sup> whenever we act contrary to our conscience; and the 'certain' and 'practical' 'fact' that God has told us, in conscience, that '*he will*' 'punish the wicked', rather than 'from its appearing', in the 'abstract', 'fit that *he should*'.<sup>1183</sup> The Clarkeans would have agreed that the virtuous life can begin from such considerations as heavenly reward, divine command, the 'formal' obligation of our own judgement; and that we reason upwards from such considerations to take a wider view of what it means to seek heavenly reward, to have a 'formal' obligation to our own judgement, to obey the divine will and to imitate God's moral attributes, so that we make the concept of 'fitness' itself intimate to us as mature moral agents. They would also have agreed that such considerations always need to be 'recollected' in the world as a 'state of trial', as we continue to reason, not only upwards, but also back downwards, through all that we experience in conscience, so that when we cross the 'gap' into decision and action, we know that we have done our best to guard against our liability to error and corruption, and based our decision to act on a confident 'moral certainty'.

### **More 'Cool Hours'**

The above approach to the 'cool hour passage', and contention that it marks neither a tension internal to Butler, nor a tension between Butler and CER, can be explored further by turning to other 'cool hours' in Butler, which continue to highlight Butler's understanding, shared with the Clarkeans, of the stages of moral development under 'conscience or reflection':

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<sup>1182</sup> S, Preface.23.

<sup>1183</sup> A, I.VI.16; see also: A, I.III.38; A, II.VIII.25-26.

Let us...suppose a man...disengaged from business and pleasure, sitting down alone and at leisure, to reflect upon himself and his own condition of being. He would immediately feel...he was by no means complete of himself, but totally insufficient for his own happiness.<sup>1184</sup>

The problem in the ‘state of trial’ is that human beings ‘feeling this deficiency’, and being ‘unsatisfied with themselves’, ‘look out for assistance from abroad...which has given rise to various...amusements...needless...[except as they] hinder their feeling this deficiency’.<sup>1185</sup> In a ‘cool hour’, ‘feeling’ our ‘deficiency’, human beings are always in danger of having our ‘conceptions and desires of happiness’ diverted and misled, and of being prevented from truly reflecting upon ourselves and our ‘own condition of being’.<sup>1186</sup>

Human beings possess ‘various appetites, passions, and affections’ that are difficult to bring into order, under conscience, because, there is ‘any one of a thousand objects’<sup>1187</sup> at which they might aim. Moreover, human beings suffer from the fact that our ‘disordered sensuality’ makes us ‘covetous’ and ‘ambitious’<sup>1188</sup> of worldly objects:

it is taken for granted, that barely having the means and materials of enjoyment is what constitutes...happiness; that our interest and good consists in possessions themselves...not in the enjoyment of them...<sup>1189</sup>

Human beings, as a result of the ignorance and corruption of the ‘state of trial’, have come to think something ‘valuable’ ‘only as it tends to some further end’,<sup>1190</sup> without realising that that is what we are doing, so that we appropriate worldly objects as ends not realising that they are simply means. Consequently, we may mistakenly pursue a destructive cycle of seeking the

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<sup>1184</sup> S, XIV.11.

<sup>1185</sup> S, XIV.11.

<sup>1186</sup> S, XIV.11.

<sup>1187</sup> A, I.V.27.

<sup>1188</sup> S, II.5.

<sup>1189</sup> S, XI.20.

<sup>1190</sup> S, XIV.12.

further end of satisfaction through ‘external things’ by which ‘means our capacities and desires’ cannot be ‘satisfied and filled up’.<sup>1191</sup> For Butler, such an error is a natural consequence of:

Those...who have got this world so much into their hearts, as not to be able to consider happiness as consisting in anything but property and possessions, which are only valuable as a means to somewhat else.<sup>1192</sup>

The fully-developed moral agent breaks the destructive cycle of seeking satisfaction in that which does not allow us to ‘sit down’ ‘at rest’ ‘satisfied’, by appreciating that it is precisely because worldly ‘amusements’ only:

prevent our attending to...our internal poverty and want...[and] serve...chiefly, to suspend, instead of satisfying our conceptions and desires of happiness...It is plain that there is a capacity in the nature of man, which neither riches, nor honours, nor sensual gratifications, nor any thing in this world, can perfectly...satisfy; there is a deeper and more essential want than any of these things can be the supply of.<sup>1193</sup>

The fully-developed moral agent in Butler, as in the Clarkeans, is a *faithful* one, recognising that nothing ‘in this world’ brings lasting satisfaction, because ‘the present world is not our home...we are merely strangers and travellers in it, as all our fathers were’.<sup>1194</sup> In moving beyond considering the ‘foreign country’ of the present world as that which ‘may be to us that satisfactory good we are inquiring after’, such an agent no longer mistakes means for ends, and finds that ‘which may fill up all our capacities of happiness’, and ‘in which our souls may find rest’: namely, God, who is ‘the end, not the means; the thing itself, not somewhat in order to it’.<sup>1195</sup> The faithful moral agent appreciates that God is the ‘supply to all the faculties of our souls; a subject to our understanding, and an object to our affections’, on the basis of both his experience of ‘deficiency’, and reflective considerations, in a ‘cool hour’:

if you can lay aside that...confused...notion of happiness, as consisting in...[worldly] possessions; and fix in your thoughts, that it really can consist in nothing but a faculty’s having its proper object; you will clearly see, that *in the coolest way of consideration*...nothing is more

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<sup>1191</sup> S, XIV.11.

<sup>1192</sup> S, XIV.12.

<sup>1193</sup> S, XIV.11.

<sup>1194</sup> S, VI.14.

<sup>1195</sup> S, XIV.12.

certain, than that an infinite Being may himself be, if he pleases, the supply to all the capacities of our nature.<sup>1196</sup>

### The Devotional ‘Cool Hour’

In the original ‘cool hour passage’, the moral agent may be only AATC when he acts out of a regard to ‘hope and fear’. However, it follows from the above that the fully-developed moral agent, who acts on the basis of considerations in a ‘cool hour’, is performing an AAOC when he also acts with a regard to ‘hope and fear’. In the latter case, the fully-developed moral agent *qua* faithful moral agent appreciates that the ‘religious regards’ of ‘hope and fear’, along with ‘reverence, honour, love, trust, gratitude’,<sup>1197</sup> are part of his ‘moral duties’ *qua* ‘obligations of reason’ to God, who ‘is infinite in power, perfect in wisdom and goodness’.<sup>1198</sup> The faithful moral agent in a ‘cool hour’ who recognises the ‘obligations of reason’ he is under to God’s ‘infinite greatness, his goodness, his wisdom’,<sup>1199</sup> finds that, ‘As the whole attention of life should be to obey...[God’s] commands; so the highest enjoyment of it must arise from the contemplation of...[his] character, and our relation to it’.<sup>1200</sup> In others words, such agents possess ‘love of God’, in whom they seek to ‘rest’ their entire being ‘as their end’.<sup>1201</sup> ‘Hope and fear’ become part of ‘this definition of the love of God’, so far as, in the fully-developed moral agent, ‘fear’ is not ‘servile’, but ‘Reverence’ for the divine nature; and ‘hope’ is not the mercenary seeking of reward, but ‘ambition of his love and approbation, delight in the consciousness of it’.<sup>1202</sup> Such an agent ‘intends’ more than ‘that we live in hope of rewards or fear of punishment from’<sup>1203</sup> God by loving him ‘*with all our heart...soul...and mind*’, even

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<sup>1196</sup> S, XIV.12 (my italics).

<sup>1197</sup> A, II.I.20.

<sup>1198</sup> S, XIII.11.

<sup>1199</sup> S, XIII.17.

<sup>1200</sup> S, XIII.10.

<sup>1201</sup> S, XIII.2.

<sup>1202</sup> S, XIII.2.

<sup>1203</sup> S, Preface.38.

as he lives in ‘desire of his approbation, [and] delight in the hope or consciousness of it’.<sup>1204</sup> He lives in ‘hope’ of a future life as the time at which ‘God himself will be an object to our faculties, that he himself will be our happiness; as distinguished from the enjoyments of the present state’.<sup>1205</sup> His ‘hope’ is for a future time, where God ‘may be the immediate object of contemplation’;<sup>1206</sup> as such, his ‘hope’ is for the fulfilment of his current ‘devotion’ to God, which he is able to obtain, in the present world, within, and as a result of, ‘cool hours’, where he withdraws from the world of sensual gratification, into God:

Devotion is retirement, from the world he has made, to him alone: it is to withdraw from the avocations of sense, to employ our attention wholly upon him as upon an object actually present, to yield ourselves up to the influence of the Divine presence...to give full scope to the affections of gratitude, love, reverence, trust, and independence; of which infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, is the natural and only adequate object.<sup>1207</sup>

### **Moral Development and Love of God**

Far from marking a divide with the Clarkeans, Butler’s use of ‘cool hours’ is consistent with the Clarkean understanding of moral development. It is also consistent with their understanding of moral perception, and reflection, as *live* with ourselves, God and *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself, where *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself is also that for which we have a natural affection, as a result of engaging with, through reflecting upon, our moral perceptions.

In the original ‘cool hour passage’, we saw that the underdeveloped moral agent has difficulty fully integrating ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ with ‘ideas’ of ‘harmony’ and ‘proportion’. It is important to appreciate that the underdeveloped moral agent of the original ‘cool hour’ has difficulty understanding the proper ‘object’ for affections raised by the sight of

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<sup>1204</sup> S, XIII.3.

<sup>1205</sup> S, XIV.19.

<sup>1206</sup> S, XIV.15.

<sup>1207</sup> S, XIV.8.

Clarkean ‘fitness’ and Shaftsburian ‘harmony’, which he also experiences in a ‘cool hour’.

According to Butler:

There are certain ideas...we express by the words, *order, harmony, proportion, beauty*, the furthest removed from anything sensual...what is there in those intellectual images, forms, or ideas, which begets that approbation, love, delight, and even rapture, which is seen in some persons’ faces upon having those objects present to their minds?<sup>1208</sup>

The action under consideration, in the original ‘cool hour’ is one of benevolence; it is thus one which involves ideas of ‘harmony’ and ‘proportion’, because benevolence, as we have seen, like our ‘religious regards’ to God, are ‘moral duties’: duties, ‘the reasons of which we see’, because they are ‘obligations of reason’ that ‘arise out of the nature of case’, suitable to the ‘relations’ we stand in to God and others. Our ‘approbation, love, delight’ of ‘ideas’ of ‘harmony’ and ‘proportion’ means that the ‘absolute rectitude, the perfection of being’, ‘of the divine nature’, ‘must be in all senses...the highest object to mind’.<sup>1209</sup> God is an ‘object’ for ‘all those regards, all those affections of mind’,<sup>1210</sup> which we experience as part of our perceptive and reflective experience of ‘veracity and justice’, ‘equity and charity, and the right of the case’ as ‘in themselves’ ‘right and reasonable’,<sup>1211</sup> because they have their ‘perfection’ in God:

Of the several affections, or inward sensations, which particular objects excite in man, there are some, the having of which implies love of them, when they are reflected upon...To be a just, a good, a righteous man, plainly carries with it a peculiar affection to or love of justice, goodness, righteousness, when these principles are the objects of contemplation.<sup>1212</sup>

The Being who made us...upon whom we entirely depend, is the object of some regards. He hath given us certain affections of mind, which correspond to wisdom, power, goodness...which are raised upon view of those qualities. If...he be really wise, powerful, good; he is the natural object of those affections, which he hath endued us with, and which correspond to those attributes.<sup>1213</sup>

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<sup>1208</sup> S, XIV.14.

<sup>1209</sup> S, XIV.14.

<sup>1210</sup> S, XIII.2.

<sup>1211</sup> A, I.III.19-21.

<sup>1212</sup> S, XIII.6.

<sup>1213</sup> S, XIII.11.

The mature moral agent makes his ‘affection to what is just, and right, and good’, his ‘loyalty of heart to the Governor of the universe’.<sup>1214</sup> He appreciates that:

Religion does not demand new affections...only...the direction of those you already have, those affections you daily feel; though unhappily confined to objects, not altogether unsuitable, but altogether unequal to them. We only represent to you the higher, the adequate objects of those very faculties and affections.<sup>1215</sup>

Under conscience, he directs his affections towards their proper end in God in his devotional ‘cool hour’. The immature moral agent, who is aware of his own ‘deficiency’ in a ‘cool hour’, has not yet appreciated that his affections seek their end outside this world; he is in danger of allowing worldly objects to interfere with those affections and to ‘usurp’ conscience. For the immature moral agent, in a ‘cool hour’, reflective ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ ‘ought to prevail’ over ‘ideas’ of ‘harmony’ and ‘proportion’, because the former, in the ‘state of trial’, are the best way of attracting him to the path of virtue through the practice of ‘materially virtuous’ acts. Even if the underdeveloped moral agent, before he matures, treats virtue as a means to satisfying mere ‘hope and fear’, he has at least started on the path of virtue and moral development. In the mature agent, however, there is no sense in which ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’ ‘ought to prevail’ over ideas of ‘harmony’ and ‘proportion’; he appreciates what it would mean to have:

a real view of that *righteousness, which is an everlasting righteousness*; of the conformity of the divine will to the *law of truth*, in which the moral attributes of God consist; of that goodness in the sovereign Mind, which gave birth to the universe: add, what will be true of all good men hereafter, a consciousness of having an interest in what they are contemplating; suppose them able to say, *This God is our God for ever and ever*: would they be any longer to seek for what was their chief happiness, their final good? Would not infinite perfect goodness be their very end, the last end and object of their affections; beyond which they could neither have, nor desire; beyond which they could not form a wish or thought?<sup>1216</sup>

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<sup>1214</sup> S, XIV.6.

<sup>1215</sup> S, XIII.14.

<sup>1216</sup> S, XIV.17.

## Loving God, Loving Ourselves and Loving Others

J.H. Bernard and Pierre Force suggest that, when Butler refers to the controversy ‘in France, concerning *the love of God*, which was there called enthusiasm’,<sup>1217</sup> ‘Butler makes it clear that he sides with Fenelon’ over Bossuet.<sup>1218</sup> While Butler ‘substantially’<sup>1219</sup> follows Fenelon, his main response to the question whether we should ‘love God because loving God makes us happy (as Bossuet argued), or should our love of God be entirely disinterested (as Fenelon believed)?’<sup>1220</sup> is that: ‘the question, whether we ought to love God for his sake or for our own...[is] a mere mistake in language’.<sup>1221</sup>

Butler would not have agreed with what Bossuet meant by stating that our ‘will to be happy ...prompts our desire for all things’, so that ‘we seek nothing but’ happiness’, and ‘seek all other things for this purpose’.<sup>1222</sup> He would not have concurred with Bossuet’s condemnation of the view that: ‘There is an habitual state of love to God, which is pure from every motive of personal interest...neither the fear of punishment nor the hope of reward has any part’.<sup>1223</sup> But, while Butler would not have agreed with what Bossuet meant by condemning such an opinion, this does not mean that he agreed with all that Fenelon meant in holding it. It is consistent with the above discussion, to view Butler as agreeing with Fenelon’s ‘gradual ascension toward spiritual perfection’,<sup>1224</sup> but perhaps not with his description of the height of spiritual perfection, where:

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<sup>1217</sup> S, Preface.37.

<sup>1218</sup> Pierre Force, *Self-Interest Before Adam Smith: A Genealogy of Economic Science* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 193.

<sup>1219</sup> J.H. Bernard, *The Works of Bishop Butler*, 2 Vols. (London, Macmillan and Co., 1900), Vol.I, 20, fn.32.

<sup>1220</sup> Force, *op.cit.*, 193.

<sup>1221</sup> S, XIII.16.

<sup>1222</sup> Quoted by Force, *op.cit.*, 189.

<sup>1223</sup> Quoted by James Mackintosh, *On the Progress of Ethical Philosophy*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (Edinburg, Adam and Charles Black, 1872) (W. Whewell, ed.), 99.

<sup>1224</sup> Force, *op.cit.*, 185.

God is no more beloved...for the happiness which is found in loving him. We would love him as much, though by an impossible supposition he should know nothing of his being beloved, or would render eternally unhappy those who had loved him.<sup>1225</sup>

Instead, for Butler:

We [who love God, not the world] only offer and represent the highest object of an affection, supposed already in your mind. Some degree of goodness must be previously supposed: this always implies the love of itself, an affection to goodness: the highest, the adequate object of this affection, is perfect goodness: which therefore, we are to *love with all our heart, with all our soul, and will all our strength*. “Must we then, forgetting our own interest, as it were go out of ourselves, and love God for his own sake?” No more forget your own interest, no more go out of yourselves, than when you prefer one place, one prospect, the conversation of one man to that of another.<sup>1226</sup>

In Butler’s mature moral agent, ‘ideas’ of ‘happiness and misery’, and of ‘proportion’ and ‘harmony’, are inseparable, and not really different sets of ideas at all. The fully-developed moral agent appreciates how both God and virtue are themselves inseparable, and how both concern his own ‘condition of being’, upon which he reflects in a ‘cool hour’. The mature moral agent appreciates that the law, and fulfilment, of his nature is virtue, and it is in virtue that he seeks God as his creator and the ‘fountain’ of goodness itself. To love God personally is to love ourselves within our hope, and consciousness, of God’s personal love for us. The fully-developed moral agent is an individual who loves God as perfect goodness; the same ‘goodness’ he finds ‘exercised towards’ him as an individual in the promises of ‘future benefits’,<sup>1227</sup> and in his own ‘consciousness’ of God’s ‘presence’ as ‘more intimately present to us than anything else can be’.<sup>1228</sup> Our personal love, and personal experience, of God means that we are not able, nor meant to, forget ourselves when loving God.<sup>1229</sup>

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<sup>1225</sup> Quoted by Force, *op.cit.*, 185.

<sup>1226</sup> S, XIII.15.

<sup>1227</sup> S, XIII.16.

<sup>1228</sup> S, Preface.38.

<sup>1229</sup> Butler’s position is not fairly characterised by Thomas Dixon, when he states that, ‘according to Butler’, ‘Passions and affections were subservient to natural self-love...rather than to the love of God’; indeed, given the present discussion of Butler’s understanding of moral development in the ‘state of trial’, it is difficult to know what Dixon meant when criticising Butler for his ‘omission, in his treatment of the passions and affections, of the concepts of will, love of God, obedience, sin and the fall’; particularly as Dixon himself states that Butler ‘defended’ the ‘doctrine of the Fall’ in the *Analogy (From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category)* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 93; 87; 83).

The parallel here, for Butler, is that, just as a genuine love for our own true selves is only possible within our love of God, so there is no contradiction between loving ourselves and loving God and loving others. Just as the fully-developed moral agent places, within his devotional ‘cool hour’, his individual happiness in God, human beings must:

Let our charity towards men be exalted into piety towards God, from the serious consideration...we are all his creatures; a consideration which enforces that duty upon our consciences, as we have any regard to him...To relieve the poor *for God’s sake*, is to do it in conformity to the order of nature, and to his will, and his example, who is the Author and Governor of it...It is to do it in his behalf, and as to him.<sup>1230</sup>

Thus, although the ‘cool hour passage’ has been seen to reveal tensions internal to Butler’s thought and between his thought and CER, the present reading of Butlerian and Clarkeian conscience helps to dissolve such tensions. Butler, like the Clarkeans, thinks that self-love, benevolence, and obedience are all part of virtue, our ‘tripartite’ duties to ourselves, others, and God, and part of faith. As with the Clarkeian ‘single law of reason’, it is for the fully-developed moral agent to appreciate that, because the ‘Divine will’ is always in ‘conformity...to the law of truth, in which the moral attributes of God consist’,<sup>1231</sup> genuine acts of virtue are acts of faith, and vice versa. To choose to obey conscience is not only to choose to act according to our own judgement, and affection for *what* it is *that* conscience approves; to choose to obey conscience is to choose to ‘imitate’<sup>1232</sup> and to obey God. Consequently, to choose to obey conscience is to choose to ‘co-operate together with’<sup>1233</sup> God, in fulfilling our ‘part’ in the created ‘universe’;<sup>1234</sup> a ‘part’ which concerns acting for our fellow creatures as we find our own proper end, as virtuous agents, in the love of, and in a sought-for life with, God:

That which we more strictly call piety, or the love of God...which is an essential part of a right temper, some may...imagine no way connected with benevolence...[but] they must be

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<sup>1230</sup> *SPS*, II.21.

<sup>1231</sup> *S*, XIV.17.

<sup>1232</sup> *SPS*, VI.24.

<sup>1233</sup> *SPS*, VI.24.

<sup>1234</sup> *S*, XII.2.

connected, if there be...in being an object infinitely good. Human nature is so constituted, that every good affection implies the love of itself; i.e. becomes the object of a new affection in the same person...to be righteous, implies in it...love of righteousness; to be benevolent...love of benevolence; to be good...love of goodness...and the love of God as a being perfectly good, is the love of perfect goodness contemplated in a being or person. Thus morality and religion, virtue and piety, will at last necessarily coincide, run up into one and the same point, and love will be in all senses *the end of the commandment*.<sup>1235</sup>

## Part II

### Butler's Equivocation

It follows from Part I that the 'cool hour passage' has only been read as marking both internal inconsistencies in Butler's moral thought, and between his moral thought and CER, because the referents of Butlerian and Clarkeian conscience have been neglected. An appreciation of conscience's referents not only highlights Butler's and the Clarkeans' shared understanding of conscience, but also helps to draw out their shared understanding of moral development in the world as a 'state of trial'. It is in the context of such a shared understanding, consistent with their shared understanding of conscience, that Butler's 'cool hour passage' no longer marks either internal inconsistencies in Butler or between him and the Clarkeans.

Having discussed the 'cool hour passage' in Part I, we must turn in Part II to another passage in Butler which is used to mark Butler's disagreement with the Clarkeans: his equivocation, which runs as follows:

It is manifest great part of common language, and...common behaviour over the world, is formed upon supposition of...a moral faculty; whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason; whether considered as a sentiment of the understanding, or as a perception of the heart; or, which seems the truth, as including both.<sup>1236</sup>

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<sup>1235</sup> S, XII.23.

<sup>1236</sup> ONV, Diss.II.2.

Some scholars have viewed Butler's equivocation as emblematic of his lack of interest in the controversy between CER and Hutchesonian sentimentalism, and even his sympathy for the sentimentalist position.<sup>1237</sup> We will see below that such interpretations of Butler's equivocation are consistent with aspects of Hutcheson's and Hume's criticisms (HC) and the 'laicisation of natural law' criticisms (LNLC) of the Clarkeans. While LNLC and HC separate the Clarkeans from the Cambridge Platonists, and Hutcheson and Hume, with reference to Pascal's distinction between the 'order of the understanding' and the 'order of the heart',<sup>1238</sup> commentators on Butler's equivocation have likewise made his sentimentalist language of the 'moral sense' and 'perception of the heart' a point of separation between Butler and the Clarkeans. Below, I shall respond further to HC and LNLC as a means to demonstrating that Butler's equivocation does not mark a divide between him and the Clarkeans, because conscience in both could be, and was, described in the same 'equivocal' language. Although Butler's equivocation does not mark a divide between him and the Clarkeans, it is still significant, because it highlights tensions within the rational discourse of conscience itself, as a result of such 'equivocal' language.

### **The 'Order of the Heart'**

Butler's 'perception of the heart' and 'sentiment of the understanding' are reminiscent of Pascal's distinction between the 'order of the understanding' and the 'order of the heart'. It is with reference to Pascal's distinction that Griffen separates such latitudinarians as Tillotson from the original 'latitude-men': the Cambridge Platonists. It was 'By resolving "divine faith" into "moral certainty"' that, while 'the Cambridge Platonists divinised reason, the Latitudinarians rationalised divinity': 'the Latitudinarians differentiated the objects' of faith

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<sup>1237</sup> See: Penelhum, *op.cit.*, 5; W.D. Hudson, *op.cit.*, 29; Darwall, *Internal 'Ought'*, 248-249; Gill, *op.cit.*, 178; Schneewind, *Autonomy*, 348.

<sup>1238</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1966), I.XXIII.298; II.II.423.

and reason, ‘but not the processes’, so that ‘natural truth’ and ‘supernatural truth’ ‘proceeded by the same processes’.<sup>1239</sup> The Cambridge Platonists, however, placed the ‘true ground’ of faith in the ‘order of the heart’, rather than the ‘order of the understanding’. “Faith” with them was very much like [what they meant by] reason, in that both were operations of the entire personality’, so that ‘they thought...theological speculation, and mere ratiocination and discursive thinking, were antithetical to true religion’.<sup>1240</sup>

Beiser’s LNLC separation of CER and Cambridge Platonism is able to make the same use as Griffin of Pascal’s distinction,<sup>1241</sup> just as the Clarkeans have been distinguished from Hutcheson and Hume in HC, with reference to that same distinction.<sup>1242</sup> In both cases, it is the Clarkeans’ mathematical analogy that has been used to justify placing them on the side of the ‘order of the understanding’, rather than that of the ‘heart’. For HC, this is because reason is itself normatively *thin*; for LNLC, it is because the Clarkean use of the mathematical analogy makes reason appear *thin*, when contrasted with reason in Cambridge Platonism.

As with Shaftesbury and William Blake,<sup>1243</sup> the Cambridge Platonists were adamant that reason and truth, including moral and supernatural truth, concerned more than ‘mere logic-

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<sup>1239</sup> Griffin, *op.cit.*, 101.

<sup>1240</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>1241</sup> For the grounds, and limits, of such a use of Pascal, see: Susan James, *Passion and Action* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2003), 233-252; Ernst Cassirer, *The Platonic Renaissance in England* (Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1953) (J.P. Pettegrove, trans.), 42-65; Müller, *op.cit.*, 19-20; 51-54.

<sup>1242</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London, Duckworth, 1985), 53-55.

<sup>1243</sup> Shaftesbury and Blake summarise the difficulties LNLC find in the Clarkeans’ mathematical analogy, and how the Clarkean mathematical analogy (and Clarke’s Newtonianism) has appeared to some scholars to support Tindal’s appropriation of Clarke (for Clarke’s Newtonianism, and its potential connections with Arianism, deism and ‘theological voluntarism’, see: Redwood, *op.cit.*, 93-114; 168-172; 200-201; Margaret Osler, *Divine Will and the Mechanical Philosophy: Gassendi and Descartes on Contingency and Necessity in the Created World* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), 232-233; Larry Stewart, ‘Samuel Clarke, Newtonianism, and the Factions of Post-Revolutionary England’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 42:1 (Jan.-Mar., 1981), 53-72; S.D. Snobelen, “‘God of Gods, and Lord of Lords’: The Theology of Isaac Newton’s General Scholium to the *Principia*”, *Osiris*, Vol.16 (2001), 169-208; Peter Harrison, ‘Was Newton a Voluntarist?’ in J.E. Force and S. Hutton (eds), *Newton and Newtonianism: New Studies* (Dordrecht, Springer, 2004), 39- 64; Hudson, *English Deists*, 8-12; 106-114 and *Enlightenment and Modernity*, 8-9; 34-47; Ferguson,

chopping',<sup>1244</sup> and that 'No man is renewed by his knowledge only'.<sup>1245</sup> Just as 'God is not enjoyed by bare notion and speculation, but by imitation and resemblance',<sup>1246</sup> and 'Religion is not satisfied with a bare profession and partial reformation',<sup>1247</sup> Whichcote maintained that

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*op.cit.*, 78-82; 98-105; John Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982), 117-123; 131-133; 1425-145; 164-176; 196-197).

While Shaftesbury was 'distrustful' of the view that 'Nature' and human nature 'could be penetrated by the discovery of some single key' (Stanley Grean, *Shaftesbury's Philosophy of Religion and Ethics: A Study in Enthusiasm* (Ohio, Ohio University Press, 1967), 9-10), Blake also criticised the 'single vision and Newton's sleep' (Letter 'To Thomas Butts, 22 November 1802' in D.V. Erdman (ed.), *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, rvsd edn (New York, Random House, 1988) (hereafter 'Works'), 722). Blake in effect voiced Alexander Pope's criticism of Clarke's *a priori* demonstration. Pope referred to Clarke's 'high Priori Road' as that which caused us to 'reason downward, till we doubt of God' (*The Dunciad: Book the Fourth*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London, 1742), lns.463-464), not least because, as Collins put it, Clarke's demonstration 'made a question' of God's 'existence', 'which otherwise would be with few any question at all' (*Clarke-Collins*, 243). Similarly, for Blake: 'thus the Gospel Sir Isaac confutes/God can only be known by his Attributes' (*The Everlasting Gospel* in *Works*, 519). Blake's criticism here was consistent with his juxtaposition of 'Rational Demonstration' and 'Faith' (*Milton: Books the Second* in *Works*, 142), in opposition to the 'Natural Philosophy' of Bacon, Locke and Newton that taught 'Doubt & Experiment' (*Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion* in *Works*, 203). In Blake, 'Rational Philosophy and Mathematic Demonstration' (*ibid.*, 207) teach 'Doubt' which draws us away from 'Spiritual Knowledge' (*The Everlasting Gospel* in *Works*, 519) and further into the material world as we follow Newton into simply measuring the visible world. However, while 'Doubt' fuels the need to 'Experiment', 'Experiment' never satisfies 'Doubt', so 'the Philosophic & Experimental would soon be the ratio of all things & stand still, unable to do other than repeat the same dull round over again' (*There is No Natural Religion* in *Works*, 3). Blake made the materialism and egoism of deism the culmination of modern science: 'Deism, is the Worship of the God of this World by the means of what you call Natural Religion and Natural Philosophy, and of Natural Morality or Self-Righteousness, the Selfish Virtues of the Natural Heart' (*Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion* in *Works*, 201).

Shaftesbury invoked the mathematical analogy as part of his own ethical realism; however, he would have agreed with Blake's 'God forbid that Truth should be Confined to Mathematical Demonstration' ('Annotations to the Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds' in *Works*, 659). According to Shaftesbury, to argue by demonstration is to follow only 'the cool way of reason' and to argue 'abstractedly and drily' (*The Moralists, a Philosophical Rhapsody* in *Characteristics*, 306). Like Blake, Shaftesbury was concerned that 'Science or speculation' interfered 'with a more practical sort' of philosophy, while 'shut[ting] the door against better knowledge', so that 'modern deism' was the child of the 'newly espoused' modern science, when it 'conceit[edly]' 'pretended' (*Soliloquy*, 130-135) to explain the world by bringing it under a 'system' which made the world 'as...simple as you could wish' (*Moralists*, 295). For Shaftesbury, 'whoever sincerely defends virtue and is a realist in morality must...by the same scheme of reasoning, prove...a realist in divinity' (*ibid.*, 267). Modern science, as revealed in 'modern deism', undermined realism in both senses. While theorising about the world allows "'a deity'" to be spoken of 'in venerable terms', the idea of God is not one for 'mere speculation' but 'our strongest affections', so that 'the notion is dry and barren' 'when all the while a providence is never meant nor anything like order or the government of a mind admitted' (*ibid.*, 268). 'Modern deism', through modern science, placed the realism of God (and so of morality) in doubt by making him a speculative concept, explainable away in terms of the mechanism of the world. Likewise, 'The studiers of the "mechanism" of human nature placed the realism of morality (and so of God) in question. While "modern projectors" made the world "as... simple as you could wish", they also "reduce" human nature to "one simple view", of "the lowest and narrowest compass", and so the most easily understood: "self-interest" (*Sensus Communis, an Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* in *Characteristics*, 54).

<sup>1244</sup> W.R. Inge, *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought* (London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1926), 49.

<sup>1245</sup> *Works*, III.LV, 126.

<sup>1246</sup> *Works*, IV.LXXXVII, 299.

<sup>1247</sup> *Works*, IV.LXXXIV, 240.

‘bare speculation, knowledge and notion, is very little in the way of virtue’,<sup>1248</sup> and true ‘knowledge’ must ‘go forth into act’.<sup>1249</sup> In LNLC, the Clarkeian invocation of the mathematical analogy restrains how far they can be read as saying with Whichcote that, ‘Religion doth possess and affect the *whole* man’,<sup>1250</sup> rather than merely an individual’s discursive reason. While, for the Clarkeans, our passive perception of intrinsic rightness begins our engagement with *what* it is *that* is right in itself independent of ‘human desires and sentiments’, for the Cambridge Platonists, ‘the insight and vision of reason comes only as a result of action, from having the right commitment of will and living according to it’.<sup>1251</sup>

In response to the LNLC and HC separation of the Clarkeans into the ‘order of the understanding’, we have already seen that the Clarkeans maintained, with Whichcote, that ‘Goodness is not without Delight and Choice’.<sup>1252</sup> Clarkeian conscience highlights how the Clarkeans agreed with Whichcote that ‘It lies upon us to *awaken* ourselves to the knowledge God hath made us to, by serious consideration, impartial self-examination, and free communication one with another’,<sup>1253</sup> so that it is only:

When the Principles of our Religion become the *Temper* of our Spirits...we are truly religious...the only way to make them become so, is, to reason ourselves into an Approbation of them...nothing, which is the Reason of Things, can be refused by the Reason of Man; when understood.<sup>1254</sup>

It is further possible to respond to the HC and LNLC use of Pascal’s distinction by following Susan James’ observation that, while, for the Cambridge Platonists, ‘we experience intellectual joy when we will correctly rather than when we merely understand’,<sup>1255</sup> this does

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<sup>1248</sup> *Works*, IV.LXXXVII, 290.

<sup>1249</sup> *Works*, III.LV, 126.

<sup>1250</sup> *Aphorisms*, No.956.

<sup>1251</sup> Beiser, *op.cit.*, 169.

<sup>1252</sup> *Aphorisms*, No.5.

<sup>1253</sup> *Works*, III.LIV, 124

<sup>1254</sup> *Aphorisms*, No.28.

<sup>1255</sup> James, *op.cit.*, 229.

not mean that CER has to maintain that ‘reasoning’ is ‘unemotional’; rather, they could, as with James’ reading of Descartes, maintain that ‘reasoning excites emotion’ and is ‘shot through with joy and desire’.<sup>1256</sup> In line with James’ understanding of Cartesian ‘intellectual emotion’, Price refers to ‘mental feelings’, precisely when making use of Butler’s equivocation (although it should be noted that Price does reverse Butler’s wording):

The truth seems to be...in “contemplating the actions of moral agents, we have...a *perception of the understanding*, and a *feeling of the heart*; and...the latter, or the effects in us accompanying our moral perceptions, depend on two causes. Partly, on the positive constitution of our natures: But principally on the essential congruity or incongruity between moral ideas and our intellectual faculties.”<sup>1257</sup>

The fact that both Butler and the Clarkeans appealed to a normative concern for God-given ‘instinctive determinations’, and for the natural affections we experience as a result of our encounter, in conscience, with moral duty, limits the LNLC and HC use of Pascal’s distinction, and makes it difficult for Butler’s equivocation to justify the separation of Butler and the Clarkeans. For example, Butler’s equivocation is itself consistent with the emotive language of conscience’s ‘presages’, found in Butler, the Clarkeans, and the other Anglican thinkers discussed in RR, where conscience is (as we have seen) described as, for example, ‘wounded’, ‘terrified’, providing ‘lashes’, and so on. Moreover, despite the fact that the Clarkeans objected to Hutcheson’s reduction of moral qualities to Lockean secondary qualities, it was difficult for the Clarkeans to avoid such analogies as colour and taste in their own writings.<sup>1258</sup> As Hudson notes, with reference to Cudworth’s ‘higher intellectual instinct’, there are bound to be flashes of sentimentalism within rational intuitionism, consistent with the fact that:

if, as our rationalist authors thought, a rational being...has...‘real’ affection leading him to practise virtue, reason must be more than a simple faculty which discovers the truth or falsity

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<sup>1256</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>1257</sup> *Review*, 62.

<sup>1258</sup> See: *Discourse*, 42; *TFMG.II*, 155; *Review*, 73.

of propositions...It must also be a kind of love or desire – to quote Butler, a ‘perception of the heart’...[and] ‘a sentiment of the understanding’.<sup>1259</sup>

## Conscience and Heart

The language of Butler’s equivocation not only hints at Pascal’s distinction, it also hints at Roms.2:14-15,<sup>1260</sup> and so the principal reason why the language of the heart and of the understanding are part of the rational discourse of conscience in both Butler and the Clarkeans. It is the ‘law written on our heart’, with ‘conscience bearing witness’, which makes us, returning to the associations between conscience and *to hegemonikon*,<sup>1261</sup> a ‘law to ourselves’. The language of the heart within the rational discourse of conscience does not refer to isolated parts of an individual, his affections or his reason, his will or his understanding, but rather to the *whole* person, and all that we experience, and for which we are responsible, as individual human beings. As Sanderson put it: ‘Conscience is the hearts [sic] consciousness’.<sup>1262</sup> Butler’s equivocation does not mark a divide with CER, or the rational discourse of conscience more generally; it speaks to their shared understanding, as rational theorists of conscience, of ‘the whole system...of affections, (including rationality,) which constitute the heart, as this word is used in scripture and on moral subjects’:<sup>1263</sup>

“I will give My laws in your hearts, and in your minds will I write them.” [Hebs.10:16; Jer.31:33] that is, you shall be governed by the law of natural and essential equity...that law which is put into every man’s nature...Our mind being thus furnished with a holy rule, and conducted by a divine guide, is called conscience; and is the same thing which in scripture is sometimes called, “the heart”.<sup>1264</sup>

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<sup>1259</sup> W.D. Hudson, *op.cit.*, 10.

<sup>1260</sup> Rivers also draws this connection (*op.cit.*, Vol.II, 218-220).

<sup>1261</sup> The further parallel here is that *to hegemonikon* was ‘located in the heart’ (A.A. Long, *Stoic Studies* Berkeley, University of California, 1996), 243).

<sup>1262</sup> Sanderson, *op.cit.*, 4.

<sup>1263</sup> S, XII.8.

<sup>1264</sup> Taylor, *Ductor*, I.I.i.8.

## Tensions in the Rational Discourse of Conscience

Even though Butler's equivocation is not that surprising, given that the rational discourse of conscience in RR itself contained 'equivocal' language, Butler's equivocation is still significant as a means of highlighting tensions within the rational discourse of conscience.

Hume, as part of the controversies between the rationalists and sentimentalists, made the deliberately contentious statement that, 'Reason is wholly inactive and can never be the source of so active a principle as conscience'.<sup>1265</sup> Isabel Rivers suggested that, in the early modern period, 'It seems fair to assume that as reason shifts its meaning from right reason to reasoning, so conscience takes its place in the moral vocabulary'.<sup>1266</sup> Consistent with Rivers, we have seen how 'conscience or reflection', in Butler and the Clarkeans, was part of demonstrating why, and how, reason was not, *contra* Hume, 'wholly inactive'. However, the Butlerian and Clarkean use of conscience, in the context of a dynamic understanding of reason *qua* RR, as well as an understanding of reason *qua* limited human faculty, does create tensions within their understanding of conscience.

A dynamic understanding of reason is always in danger of subsuming conscience. If human reason and rationality can alone denote our reflective and perceptive moral capacities, and our ability to understand God's nature and will, we might wonder what role conscience fulfils, except as expressing our immediate emotional experience of God's judgement, our guilt and anxiety concerning a future state, and our own self-condemnatory sense of wrongdoing.

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<sup>1265</sup> *Treatise*, 3.1.1.10

<sup>1266</sup> Rivers, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, 64.

The same point can be made the other way round. We have seen that Butler and the Clarkeans limit the powers of human reason in the world as a ‘state of trial’, even to the extent that our practical and ‘intimate’ experiences of God’s and our own judgement in conscience can take precedence over speculations concerning the rational moral order. In a world of human weakness, where conscience is still efficacious, and its assurances are to be trusted, a greater stress appears to be laid on its emotional, as opposed to rational, aspects. Indeed, for John Henry Newman (who took Butler as an influence) conscience *qua* ‘a voice, or the echo of a voice, imperative and constraining’, ‘is always emotional’.<sup>1267</sup> The rationalists’ discourse of conscience might make conscience appear superfluous, except in its capacity to convey our emotional responses to good and bad behaviour; and it is due to the emphasis it receives in such a capacity, over and above limited human reason,<sup>1268</sup> that the extent to which conscience can be represented as rational, rather than affective, is not clear. Indeed, if conscience has ‘presages’, and is a witness to God (God’s voice within us), as well as to our feelings of shame and guilt, it would appear to be much closer to the latter than the former. Balguy captures something of this uncertainty when he stated: ‘whether we mean by conscience merely the operation of our intellectual faculty, or an instinctive principle superadded thereto’.<sup>1269</sup> Likewise, Clarke maintained that God:

has endued...[us] with *Reason* and *natural Conscience*, to distinguish between Good and Evil; and to forewarn...[us], as it were by an inward and perceptual Instinct, of the certainty of a future Judgement.<sup>1270</sup>

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<sup>1267</sup> John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 99-100.

<sup>1268</sup> Mossner highlights this point with reference to Butler’s equivocation: ‘This statement must be construed as meaning that conscience is fundamentally intuitive...but that it is capable of development through habit and education. Reason can no longer find in itself and by itself the perfect rule for guidance of life when it must seek support from an ally directly inspired by the Divine Being. Undermined by the theological doctrine at this crucial point, it [reason] is no longer infallible’ (*op.cit.*, 123-124).

<sup>1269</sup> *SFS*, I.XIX, 358.

<sup>1270</sup> *Sermons*, I.XIV, 213.

## The Naturalisation of Conscience

Sidgwick claimed that the influence of Butler's thought made it easier for conscience to be read naturalistically. Butler's equivocation might be looked upon as supporting Sidgwick's claim that, in Butler, 'the cognitive element of the moral consciousness fell into the background', such that, through the rise of evolutionary ethics, 'the proof that the moral impulse was derived seemed to afford at least presumptive evidence that its authority was usurped'.<sup>1271</sup>

In light of what has been said above, Sidgwick's contention is overstated. Not only did both Butler and the Clarkeans (rather than just 'Clarke' as Sidgwick states) treat 'the moral faculty' 'as really a faculty of "intuition" or rational apprehension of right and wrong',<sup>1272</sup> but both also treated conscience, and so the 'rational apprehension of right and wrong' itself, in a way which might be described as pushing 'the cognitive element of moral consciousness...into the background'.

While Sidgwick is right to point to the influence of Butler's equivocation in the context of conscience's naturalisation, it is not possible to ignore, alongside Butler, not only the influence of Hutcheson's moral sense (as on the likes of Smith and the theological utilitarians discussed below), but also the tensions within the rational discourse of conscience itself.

It is possible to explore the nuanced agreement with Sidgwick's claim through a necessarily brief discussion of Adam Smith and the eighteenth-century theological

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<sup>1271</sup> Henry Sidgwick, 'The Theory of Evolution in Its Application to Practice' in Henry Sidgwick, *Essays on Ethics and Method* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2000) (M.G. Singer, ed.), 12-13.

<sup>1272</sup> *Ibid.*, 12; 12, fn.1.

utilitarianism of John Gay, Edmund Law, David Hartley, Daniel Waterland and William Paley.<sup>1273</sup>

## Adam Smith

For Dugald Stewart, ‘Butler himself has not asserted the authority and supremacy of conscience in stronger terms than Mr. Smith’.<sup>1274</sup> Stewart based his view of Smith upon the latter’s own Butler-esque equivocation:

it is not that feeble spark of benevolence which nature has lighted up in the human heart...capable of counteracting...self-love. It is a stronger power, a more forcible motive...It is reason, principle, conscience, the inhabitant of the breast, the man within, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct.<sup>1275</sup>

Smith’s ‘impartial spectator’ thus bears the familiar hallmarks of the rationalists’ conscience, with its referents. While the ‘impartial spectator’ is formed through sympathetic engagement with others, it is a ‘much higher tribunal’ than society; it is ‘the tribunal of their own consciences’,<sup>1276</sup> where ‘conscience’ denotes, not only that through which we have ‘appeal to a still higher tribunal, to that of the all-seeing Judge of the world’,<sup>1277</sup> but that through which we experience virtue as both our law and God’s law, and suffer divine punishment and ‘self-condemnation’ for failing to act virtuously:

Since [‘our moral faculties’]...were plainly intended to be the governing principles of human nature, the rules which they prescribe are to be regarded as the commands and laws of the Deity, promulgated by those vicegerents which he has thus set up within us...Those vicegerents of

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<sup>1273</sup> The theological utilitarians provide their own circle of influence: in the ‘Preface’ to his *Observations on Man* (London, 1749), David Hartley credited John Gay’s ‘Dissertation’ with suggesting to him the theory of association; Gay’s ‘Dissertation’ was prefixed to Law’s translation of Archbishop King’s *An Essay on the Origin of Evil* (London, 1731); Law originally dedicated his translation to Waterland; and Paley dedicated *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (London, 1785) to Law, and enjoyed the patronage of Waterland, and, particularly, Law; see: Edmund Paley, *An Account of the Life and Writings of William Paley* (London, 1825; republished Gregg International Publishers, 1970); Gascoigne, *op.cit.*, 128-129.

<sup>1274</sup> Dugald Stewart, *The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man* in *The Works of Dugald Stewart*, 7 Vols. (Cambridge, Hilliard and Brown, 1829), Vol.V, 214.

<sup>1275</sup> Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 6th edn, III.iii.6 in D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (eds), *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith*, 6 Vols. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976), Vo.I.

<sup>1276</sup> *Ibid.*, III.ii.32.

<sup>1277</sup> *Ibid.*, III.ii.33.

God within us, never fail to punish the violation of them, by the torments of inward shame, and self-condemnation.<sup>1278</sup>

However, while Stewart is satisfied with the Butlerian pedigree of Smith's 'impartial spectator', Stewart adds the following caveat:

It is only to be regretted that, instead, of the metaphorical expression...man within the breast...he had not made use of the simpler and more familiar words *reason* and *conscience*. This mode of speaking was...obtruded upon him, by the theory of sympathy...[and] has the effect...of keeping out of view the real state of the question, and...to encourage among inferior writers a figurative or allegorical style...<sup>1279</sup>

Stewart has reservations about the 'precision' of Smith's language of 'this inmate of the breast, this abstract man, the representative of mankind and substitute of the Deity, whom Nature has constituted the supreme judge of all their actions'.<sup>1280</sup> As with Butler's own equivocation, such imprecision makes it more difficult to convey, and will perhaps help to undermine, one's claims about conscience's 'authority and supremacy'.

However, the further point here is that while others would agree with Stewart that Smith's language is imprecise, they would say that such imprecision was not 'obtruded upon him' by his theory of sympathy, but rather by the need to dress it in the familiar trappings of the rational discourse of conscience. Smith, in his descriptions of the 'impartial spectator', picked up on a central tension within the rational discourse of conscience: that it is 'partly of immortal, yet partly too of mortal extraction'.<sup>1281</sup> One question is where Smith lays the

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<sup>1278</sup> *Ibid.*, III.v.6.

<sup>1279</sup> Stewart, *op.cit.*, 214. Ironically, Stewart echoes Smith's comments on Shaftesbury, where Shaftesbury's discussion of 'duality of soul' (see Introduction), which Smith criticises, has been read as suggesting Smith's 'impartial spectator' (Brown, *op.cit.*, 51-52): '...ornaments...in language...are...apt to make ones [sic] stile dark...Lord Shaftesbury is...most liable to this error. In the third volume of his works, talking of mediating and reflecting within one-self he contrives an innumerable number of names for it each more dark than another as, Self-conversation, forming a plurality in the same person etc.' (*Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Lecture 2.8-16 in J.C. Bryce and A.S. Skinner (eds), *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith*, 6 Vols. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976), Vo.IV.

<sup>1280</sup> *TMS*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, III.ii in Raphael and Macfie, *op.cit.*, 130 fn.

<sup>1281</sup> *TMS*, III.ii.32. The rational discourse of conscience suggests that conscience is authoritative, because 'Conscience' was 'given to every particular man...to be as God unto him' (Sanderson, *op.cit.*, 36); as such, the

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rational discourse supplies the basis for treating individual judgement as self-sufficient. However, the rational discourse also maintains that conscience is potentially erroneous: conscience is not itself the rule or standard of RR; conscience is the potentially fallible human judgement of what is according to the rule that is given to conscience by God. Laurence Sterne's Mr Yorick draws attention to this central internal tension for the rational discourse: 'your conscience is not a law...God and reason made the law, and have placed conscience within you to determine...like a British judge...who makes no new law, but faithfully declares that law which he knows already written' (*Tristram Shandy* (New York, New American Library, 1962), 115).

According to Sanderson (like Perkins, and returning to the associations between conscience and the Socratic *daemon*), 'Conscience is placed in the middle...beneath God, but above Man' (*ibid.*, 37). Consequently, conscience 'receiveth a diverse condition...for it hath the condition of a power regulating, or of a thing regulated' (*ibid.*, 37). Due to its 'diverse condition', conscience must be 'taken into a double consideration' concerning its 'double obligation...the Active and passive' (*ibid.*, 38). 'The Active obligation of conscience' is for 'humane Acts' to be made in 'conformity' to conscience 'as a rule over them'; 'The passive obligation of the Conscience is that by which it is obliged to conform itself to the Divine Will, to which as to a Rule it is subjected' (*ibid.*, 38).

Conscience's 'diverse condition' creates tensions within the rational discourse that helped lead to conscience's fragmentation (see end of chapter):

(a) it is not just that there is a 'passive obligation' of conscience, but that to which conscience is passively obliged is that which conscience passively receives, when conscience is considered authoritatively as God's 'Hand-maid' (*ibid.*, 37). If conscience is God's 'Preacher of his eternal Law...[that] dictate[s] to...[an individual] what he ought to do' (*ibid.*, 36), such that, as Whichcote put it, 'No man can *Command* his Judgment; therefore every Man must *Obe*y it' (*Aphorisms*, No.871), then whatever our individual judgement happens to be has the authority of God. The rational discourse of conscience can be used to make fidelity to individual judgement part of respecting the fact that God 'alone' is 'the Lord of Conscience' (*ibid.*, 38).

(b) the 'Active obligation' of conscience concerns not just our obligation to conform ourselves to the dictates of conscience, but our responsibility, as Tillotson put it, to 'be careful to inform our Conscience aright' (*op.cit.*, 6). Here it seems that while God 'alone' is 'the Lord of Conscience', we are also responsible for controlling, and correcting, it, and that it is possible that 'Conscience', which God has given us in his 'stead', to 'sometimes...embrace only the shadow of a Law' (Culverwell, *op.cit.*, 57). The difficulty for conscience *qua* British judge who has erroneously applied the law is with what measure it is able to correct its mistake. There is scripture, but, as Sanderson pointed out, with reference to the central Pauline text on conscience, 'Scripture...is not the sole and Adequate Rule of Conscience' (Sanderson, *op.cit.*, 120), 'for otherwise the Gentiles who have not the Scripture should have no Rule for their Conscience' (*ibid.*, 119). There is reflecting upon the 'natural law' with 'natural reason', but, as Taylor famously contended, human 'reason is not the law, or its measure' and, 'besides this, reason is such a box of quicksilver that it abides nowhere...it looks to me otherwise than to you who do not stand in the same light that I do' (Taylor, *Ductor*, II.I.i.31).

While in (a) the rational discourse informs the deistic use of the status of 'conscience' as justification for treating individual judgement as self-sufficient; in (b), the rational discourse also supplies the basis for treating conscience as merely limited individual judgement.

Indeed, between the divine authority of conscience and the limits of human reason (which include the limits of conscience, because 'conscience...is also reason' (*ibid.*, II.I.i.30)) lies a notable tension for such figures as Sanderson, Taylor and Culverwell within the tradition of RR itself. The tension here does not concern where one lays the emphasis upon the divine or human part of conscience, but the related problem of where one places the emphasis in our understanding of the nature of obligation and law. Taylor and Culverwell, in particular, have been looked upon as occupying an awkward position in RR, as herein explored, due to their voluntarist language concerning the relationship between law and superior will, where, as Cumberland put it, 'Laws being nothing but practical Propositions, with Rewards and Punishments annex'd, promulg'd by competent Authority' (Cumberland, *op.cit.*, Introduction.vi); see: Sanderson, *op.cit.*, 38-39; Taylor, *Ductor*, II.I.i; II.I.i.30; Culverwell, *op.cit.*, 65. While it is not possible here to debate the position of such figures within the tradition of RR (which would require the assessment of the difficult balance between voluntarism and intellectualism in a history of even, broadly speaking, Thomistic definitions of natural law), it is worth pointing out that, as the paradigm of conscience is the paradigm of right reason, tensions within the rational discourse of conscience, about how one explains its nature and authority, are bound to connect with tensions in RR itself. For Culverwell, Taylor, and the balance between intellectualism and voluntarism in natural law more generally, see: Knud Haakonssen, *Natural Law*, 15-62, 'Natural Law Without Metaphysics: A Protestant Tradition' in A.M. Gonzalez (ed.), *Contemporary Perspective on Natural Law* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008), 67-86; Hoopes, *op.cit.*, 165-185; Schneewind, *Autonomy*, 58-140; Crowe, *op.cit.*, 214-233; Richard Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979), 54-81; 101-118; 156-172; Tully, *op.cit.*, 28; 34-38; Linda Kirk, *Richard Cumberland and Natural Law* (Cambridge, James Clarke & Co., 1987), 1-12; 24-41; H. Trevor-Hughes, *The*

emphasis in his theory of the ‘impartial spectator’, and if his references to the divine aspects of conscience are merely lip service to tradition.

Smith, as Edmund Burke put it: ‘seeks for the foundation of the just, the fit, the proper, the decent, in our most common and most allowed passions; and making approbation and disapprobation the tests of virtue’.<sup>1282</sup> Thus, while Smith is aware that some passions, such as grief or selfishness, can be overpowering, and reach a ‘high pitch’, he argues that they are moderated by sympathy.<sup>1283</sup> As a result, society emerges as the place within and through which our moral capacities are formed, as we gain a greater understanding of ourselves, and appreciate the value of others’ individuality, through sympathetic engagement. For Smith, therefore:

A moral being is an accountable being...An accountable being...must give an account of its actions to some other...Man is accountable to God and his fellow-creatures. But though he is...principally accountable to God...he must...conceive himself as accountable to his fellow-creatures, before he can form any idea of the Deity.<sup>1284</sup>

As a result of Smith’s understanding of sympathy, it has been suggested that, within the ‘Smithian model, moral faculties are summoned by the world’,<sup>1285</sup> so that Raphael can discuss Smith’s theory of conscience as the precursor of Freud’s superego, because it is ‘built up in the mind as a reflection of the attitudes of society’.<sup>1286</sup> Indeed, Henry Bitterman insists that any ‘non-empirical’ elements in Smith are inert references, even to the extent that:

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*Piety of Jeremy Taylor* (London, Macmillan, 1960), 45-75; Robert Hoopes, ‘Voluntarism in Jeremy Taylor and the Platonic Tradition’, *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 13:4 (Aug., 1950), 341-354; R.A. Greene and Hugh Macallum, ‘Introduction’ in Culverwell, *op.cit.*, xiv-xlvi; Robert Horwitz, ‘Introduction’ to John Locke, *Questions Concerning the Natural Law* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1990) (R. Horwitz, J.S. Clay and D. Clay, eds); Jon Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics in Restoration England* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1999), 56-87; Darwall, *Internal ‘Ought’*, 23-52; Klinck, *op.cit.*, 189-193.

<sup>1282</sup> Quoted by Raphael and Macfie, *op.cit.*, Introduction, 28.

<sup>1283</sup> *TMS*, I.i.1-iv.10.

<sup>1284</sup> *TMS*, III.iii.3, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Raphael and Macfie, *op.cit.*), 111 fn.

<sup>1285</sup> Michael Shapiro, ‘Eighteenth Century Intimations of Modernity: Adam Smith and the Marquis de Sade’, *Political Theory*, 21:2 (May, 1993), 283.

<sup>1286</sup> D.D. Raphael, *Adam Smith* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1985), 41.

It is possible there is an element of deliberate deception in Smith's remarks about religion...Perhaps he succeeded in misleading posterity, where he intended only to appease the pious among his contemporaries.<sup>1287</sup>

Whether or not one would wish to go so far as Bitterman,<sup>1288</sup> Raphael points out that Smith incorporated a more traditional view of conscience into his discussion of sympathy in subsequent editions of *TMS*, not least because he wished to strengthen his account of the individual's sense of right and wrong, even if it should be contrary to public opinion.<sup>1289</sup> In doing so, we can see why Adam Ferguson suggested that Smith confused conscience and sympathy,<sup>1290</sup> and why, returning to Sidgwick, such a confusion helped (if it was not, in Smith, already an instance of) conscience to its naturalisation. Thus, Charles Darwin, who also followed Butler's equivocation in using 'conscience' and 'moral sense' synonymously, quoted Smith's understanding of sympathy in his discussion of the evolution of conscience (even as a theoretical possibility in animals), on the basis of 'social instincts' and developed 'intellectual faculties'.<sup>1291</sup> And William Hazlitt, who claimed Butler and Smith as influences, replaced conscience with imagination, thereby effecting a 'transmutation'<sup>1292</sup> of conscience, within which the capacity for individual agency is secularised to the extent that, as Stewart feared, even the term conscience is replaced by those familiar from Smith: imagination and sympathy.<sup>1293</sup>

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<sup>1287</sup> Henry Bitterman, 'Adam Smith's Empiricism and the Law of Nature', *The Journal of Political Economy*, 48:5 (Oct., 1940), 710.

<sup>1288</sup> For responses to the position Bitterman represents, see: Lisa Hill, 'The Hidden Theology of Adam Smith', *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 8:1 (Spring, 2001), 1-29 and Laurence Dickey, 'Historicising the "Adam Smith Problem": Conceptual, Historiographical, and Textual Issues', *The Journal of Modern History*, 58:3 (Sept., 1986), 579-609.

<sup>1289</sup> D.D. Raphael, *The Impartial Spectator: Adam Smith's Moral Philosophy* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2009), 32-42.

<sup>1290</sup> Adam Ferguson, 'Of the Principle of Moral Estimation' in Eugene Heath (ed.), *Adam Ferguson: Selected Philosophical Writings* (Exeter, Imprint Academic, 2007).

<sup>1291</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981), I, 70-106; 81.

<sup>1292</sup> Uttara Natarajan, *Hazlitt and the Reach of Sense: Criticism, Morals, and the Metaphysics of Power* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998), 83.

<sup>1293</sup> For the influence of Butler and Smith on Hazlitt's understanding of imagination and sympathy, see: Hazlitt, 'On Self-Love' in H. Bloom (ed.), *Literary Remains of the Late William Hazlitt* (New York, Chelsea House,

## The Theological Utilitarians

Among the theological utilitarians, Law demonstrates, in line with Sidgwick, that the theological utilitarians viewed Butler's equivocation as making conscience friendly to their own associationist reading of conscience:

*Moral Sense or Conscience*, (as the meaning of that Word is well fix'd by Mr. Butler)...is...*Rule* and *Obligation*. As a natural *Instinct*, it directs us to approve such Actions as tend to produce Happiness in others, and so is a *Rule* whereby we determine all such Actions to be virtuous, as it gives us pain or makes us uneasy at the Neglect of these Actions...[it] obliges us to pursue them, or *makes* the practice of them absolutely necessary to our Happiness: Which is the true meaning of the Word *Oblige*.<sup>1294</sup>

Hartley, like Law and Waterland (see below), exhibited the influence of Butler's equivocation through his synonymous use of 'conscience' and 'moral sense'. Indeed, Hartley, who was a friend of Butler's,<sup>1295</sup> spoke of conscience in Butlerian terms, emphasising 'the divine Signature of Conscience',<sup>1296</sup> and the fact that, 'This Moral Sense...carries its own Authority with it',<sup>1297</sup> while also arguing for 'the Deduction of all our moral Judgements, Approbations, and Disapprobations, from Association alone'.<sup>1298</sup> Waterland highlights how, again in line with Sidgwick, once conscience was made susceptible to an associationist/evolutionary reading, it was not only the nature and authority of conscience within the rational discourse that was undermined, but ethical realism itself:

Since it has been shewn...*Moral Obligations*...built upon...supposed *Fitnesses*...resolve at last into *Conscience* or the *Moral Sense*, and...that this *Sense* is not of Nature's forming but acquir'd by Custom...'tis evident that its Determinations can be no certain Rule to act by, no solid Foundation to build Morality upon.<sup>1299</sup>

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1983); 'My First Acquaintance With Poets' in Bloom, *op.cit.*, 280; 283-284; 290 and *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action* (London, 1805), 62-68; 231-246.

<sup>1294</sup> Edmund Law, *An Essay on the Origin of Evil*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2 Vols. (London, 1732) *op.cit.*, Vol.I, 86-87.

<sup>1295</sup> See: Tennant, *op.cit.*, 124-125.

<sup>1296</sup> David Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations*, 2 Vols. (London, 1749), Vol.II, 284.

<sup>1297</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol.I, 497.

<sup>1298</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol.I, 499.

<sup>1299</sup> Daniel Waterland, *The Nature, Obligation, and Efficacy, of the Christian Sacraments Considered*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London, 1730), 43.

While Hartley, Law and Waterland help to provide support for Sidgwick's position, they also indicate why agreement with his understanding of Butler's influence upon conscience's naturalisation must be moderated. Not only must Hutcheson's influence also be considered, alongside tensions within the rational discourse of conscience itself, but the robust Lockean epistemology of theological utilitarianism must also be included. Within theological utilitarianism, Lockean epistemology shows itself, with or without Butler, capable of subsuming Clarke's conscience and Hutchesonian moral sense, and thereby undermining both CER and Hutchesonian sentimentalism themselves.

Such theological utilitarians as Waterland and Paley refer to Hutcheson and Hume in support of their associationist interpretation of conscience.<sup>1300</sup> However, even if Waterland thought that the associationist reading of 'conscience' or 'moral sense' was the logical consequence of (if it was not already contained in) Hutcheson's theory, he was also clear that, 'there is no Necessity of recurring to a [Hutchesonian] *Moral Sense*, or natural Principle of Benevolence', because it is possible 'to shew how' that which Hutcheson took to be natural affections 'may be all acquired upon the Hypothesis of *Self-love*, and *that only* being natural'.<sup>1301</sup> Likewise, Hartley, while invoking the language of conscience familiar from the rational discourse, rejected not only the Clarke's conscience, so far as it concerned 'the eternal Reasons and Relations of Things', but also the Hutchesonian moral sense, so far as it concerned 'a moral Instinct...a Disposition producing in us moral Judgements concerning Affections and Actions'.<sup>1302</sup>

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<sup>1300</sup> See: Waterland, *op.cit.*, 38-40; Paley, *op.cit.*, 13-14.

<sup>1301</sup> Waterland, *op.cit.*, 37.

<sup>1302</sup> Hartley, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, 498.

The theological utilitarians objected to Clarke's 'fitness', when the Clarkeian understanding of a rational moral order appeared to make something other than the will of God, with its sanction of reward and punishment, the 'immediate criterion of virtue'. For the theological utilitarians, 'fitness, without relation to some end, is scarce intelligible',<sup>1303</sup> so that the Clarkeans were mistaken when they suggested that anything could be 'fit' or 'unfit' (and that human beings could be under an obligation to act accordingly), without regard to how they tended towards the end of human happiness in obedience to divine command.

With respect to Hutchesonian sentimentalism, as opposed to Clarkeian rationalism, such theological utilitarians as Law<sup>1304</sup> and Gay left room for a somewhat rhetorical use of 'moral sense...and public affections'.<sup>1305</sup> However, the problem with Hutcheson's theory of the moral sense was that it had fallen back into 'the doctrine of innate ideas',<sup>1306</sup> which Locke had refuted. Hutcheson did not need to rely on 'occult qualities' to understand the moral sense, because 'our approbation of morality, and all affections whatsoever, are finally resolved into reason pointing out private happiness'.<sup>1307</sup> So what seems to us to be an innate moral sense is really just 'acquired' through association:

a constant Habit of approving virtuous Actions for the sake of their good Tendency towards private Happiness...[so that, eventually, we are] pleased with them, when no such Tendency is apprehended'.<sup>1308</sup>

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<sup>1303</sup> John Gay, 'Dissertation Concerning the Fundamental Principle and Immediate Criterion of Virtue' in E.A. Burtt (ed.), *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill* (New York, Random House, 1939), 776.

<sup>1304</sup> 'Instinct, affection, Moral Sense, &c, may seem to imply, that these are all *innate*...whether the Deity has *implanted* these Passions, Instincts, and Affections in us, or has framed and disposed us in such a manner...that we shall necessarily *acquire* them; they'll be alike natural...in either Sense' (Law, *op.cit.*, 87).

<sup>1305</sup> Gay, *op.cit.*, 771.

<sup>1306</sup> *Ibid.*, 771.

<sup>1307</sup> *Ibid.*, 771.

<sup>1308</sup> Waterland, *op.cit.*, 41.

While Law and Gay thought it might be acceptable ‘to suppose a moral sense’, provided we ‘deny’ that it is ‘innate or implanted’,<sup>1309</sup> Paley (like Waterland above) is more dubious about the expression. Paley agreed that what is called the ‘moral sense’ is explained by the ‘*process of association*’, and so by our ‘habit of approving’ of virtuous acts;<sup>1310</sup> but he also maintained ‘that there exist no such instincts as compose what is called the moral sense, or that they are not now to be distinguished from prejudices and habits’.<sup>1311</sup> According to Paley:

it is not a safe way of arguing, to assume certain principles as so many dictates, impulses, and instincts of nature, and then to draw conclusions from these principles, as to the rectitude or wrongness of actions...I suspect, that a system of morality, built upon instincts, will only find out...excuses for opinions and practices already established...will seldom correct or reform either.<sup>1312</sup>

Paley (like Bentham)<sup>1313</sup> grouped together ‘the existence of a moral sense; of innate maxims; of a natural conscience; that the love of virtue and hatred of vice are instinctive; or the perception of right and wrong intuitive...[as] only different ways of expressing the same opinion’.<sup>1314</sup> Each of these falls foul of Lockean epistemology, but each of them also falls foul of Locke’s rejection of the syllogism:<sup>1315</sup> that is, they become means of preventing individuals from engaging with, and taking responsibility for, themselves and the world around them by protecting particular beliefs, people and institutions from analysis and criticism.

## The Secularisation of Conscience

What Paley highlights is that an account of the secularisation of conscience *qua* naturalisation, with which Sidgwick is concerned, must also include another aspect of conscience’s secularisation: the perhaps more familiar story of how conscience was, in the

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<sup>1309</sup> Gay, *op.cit.*, 785.

<sup>1310</sup> Paley, *op.cit.*, 13-14.

<sup>1311</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>1312</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>1313</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996) (J.H. Burns and H.L.A. Hart, eds), II.14 fn.

<sup>1314</sup> Paley, *op.cit.*, 9-10.

<sup>1315</sup> See footnote 842.

eighteenth century, ‘transforming itself from a Christian liberty into a natural right and as such into a political demand’.<sup>1316</sup>

On the one hand, the use of conscience to defend the right of, and responsibility for, private judgement is consistent with the rational discourse of conscience; as John Dunne notes, ‘Political autonomy had been understood from the first to be autonomy of conscience’.<sup>1317</sup> On the other hand, like Butler’s equivocation, it reveals tensions between conscience’s referents within the rational discourse, which contributed not only to Sidgwick’s naturalisation of conscience, but to the secularised reduction of conscience to individual judgement.

For Anthony Low, Milton asserted his radical Protestantism in *Paradise Lost*, when he speaks of conscience as the ‘Umpire Conscience’ that God ‘inserts directly into the individual soul’, such that the individual’s understanding of moral value, ‘rests only on the direct inspiration of God’.<sup>1318</sup> The rational discourse of conscience likewise emphasised conscience’s divine nature, and so implied the autonomous efficiency of a human capacity. Moreover, although the rational discourse of conscience maintained an objective measure for conscience, the individual nature of conscience, and so our means of judging that measure, meant that any disagreements about the correct moral and religious outlook should be tolerated, because conscience was the individual’s God-given means of discerning truth. Thus, for Whichcote, ‘A Man has as much Right to use his *own Understanding*, in judging of Truth; as he has a Right to use his own Eyes, to see his way’;<sup>1319</sup> and for the Puritan, Roger Williams, who founded Rhode Island, any religious persecutors or ‘hunters’ must ask themselves: ‘[as] I

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<sup>1316</sup> Anthony Lincoln, *Some Political and Social Ideas of English Dissent, 1763-1800* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1938), 182.

<sup>1317</sup> John Dunne, *The City of the Gods* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), 210.

<sup>1318</sup> Anthony Low, *Aspects of Subjectivity: Society and Individuality from the Middle Ages to Shakespeare and Milton* (Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 2003), 141.

<sup>1319</sup> Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, No.40.

have fought against many severall sorts of *Consciencs*, is it beyond all *possibilitie* [sic] and *hazard*, that I have not fought against *God*, that I have not persecuted *Jesus* in some of them?’<sup>1320</sup>

In Scotland, while John Witherspoon, in his early work, had criticised the tolerance of Moderate theologians and the Scottish literati for their laxity concerning the Westminster Confession,<sup>1321</sup> the view of conscience which Witherspoon took from the Confession would later underpin his support for liberty and toleration. In his satire, *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, Witherspoon had lampooned the ‘Moderate Man’ as viewing ‘rigid adherence to the Confession of Faith’ as an unnecessary and offensive ‘hedge of distinction’, which treats ‘those that differ from the church’ uncharitably.<sup>1322</sup> In 1785, however, Witherspoon (who was the only cleric to sign the American Declaration of Independence) wrote the preface to the

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<sup>1320</sup> Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenant Yet More Bloody* (London, 1652), 311.

<sup>1321</sup> L. Gordon Tait, *The Piety of John Witherspoon: Pew, Pulpit and Public Forum* (Louisville, Geneva Press, 2001), 8-11; 27-28; 173-175. As John McIntosh notes, the Calvinist ‘Popular’ party held up conscience as the ‘Christian liberty’, and supported American independence (*Church and Theology in Enlightenment Scotland: The Popular Party, 1740-1800* (East Linton, Tuckwell Press, 1998), 125-175). It is also worth noting here that Witherspoon, not only, like the Clarkeans, defended the rational discourse of conscience, with its referents, against Hutcheson’s moral sense, but also, in doing so, made explicit reference to Clarke. See: *Ecclesiastical Characteristics: or, The Arcana of Church Policy*, 2nd edn (Glasgow, 1754); *A Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage* (Glasgow, 1757) and *A Serious Apology for the Ecclesiastical Characteristics* (Edinburgh, 1763); see also: Lord Dreghorn, *The Philosopher’s Opera* (Edinburgh, 1757); George Anderson, *An Estimate of the Profit and Loss of Religion* (Edinburgh, 1753) and *A Remonstrance Against Lord Viscount Bolingbroke’s Philosophical Religion* (Edinburgh, 1756). For the controversies over church patronage and the Douglas affair, of which these works form a part, see: McIntosh, *op.cit.*, 92-124; Adrienne Scullion, ‘The Eighteenth Century’ in Bill Findlay (ed.), *A History of Scottish Theatre* (Edinburgh, Polygon, 1998), 80-136; Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1985), 74-92; Barton Swaim, *Scottish Men of Letters and the New Public Sphere, 1802-1834* (Lewisburg, Bucknell University Press, 2009), 106-107; E.C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd edn (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980), 356-369 and *The Forgotten Hume* (New York, AMS Press, 1967), 38-66; David Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 1-26; Fania Oz-Salzberger, *Translating the Enlightenment: Scottish Civic Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), 96; Y.S. Lee, ‘Giants in the North: Douglas, the Scottish Enlightenment, and Scott’s Redgauntlet’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 40:1 (Spring, 2001), 109-122; Thomas Ahnert, ‘Clergyman as Polite Philosophers: Douglas and the Conflict between Moderates and Orthodox in the Scottish Enlightenment’, *Intellectual History Review* 18:3 (2008), 375-383.

<sup>1322</sup> John Witherspoon, *Ecclesiastical Characteristics: or, The Arcana of Church Policy*, 2nd edn (Glasgow, 1754), 13.

principles of a new system of Presbyterian Church government in America, which, quoting the Westminster Confession, maintained:

‘God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men[’]...Therefore, the synod reassert the rights of private judgement...and call for full freedom of religion for all.<sup>1323</sup>

Thus, it is not surprising that Tindal felt able to appropriate Butler, Clarke, and the rational discourse of conscience more generally, when justifying his support for the supremacy of what Thomas Brown had called the individual’s ‘private reason’.<sup>1324</sup> Such dissenting and secularising consequences of the rational discourse of conscience perhaps reached their fullest expression in Thomas Paine’s declaration that, ‘My own church is my own mind’; reason and conscience have become associated with private judgement, which the individual must always be at liberty to exercise authoritatively as a measure of truth, in order that ‘he be mentally faithful to himself’.<sup>1325</sup>

### **The Fragmentation of Conscience’s Referents**

For Butler and the Clarkeans, conscience was not authoritative because it was the individual’s own judgement, or God’s, but because it was both, and because both were determined by the rational moral order. Conscience was intimately our own, yet also from God; our own judgement, but God’s judgement on us; our individual judgement of what is right, but also humanity’s universal judgement, according to the rational moral order. The degree of individual autonomy, afforded by the rational discourse of conscience in Butler and the Clarkeans, avoided divine command submissiveness, but never amounted to self-sufficiency: it placed the authority of individual conscience within each of its referents.

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<sup>1323</sup> Quoted by, Tait, *op.cit.*, 20.

<sup>1324</sup> Thomas Brown, *Religio Medici*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1955) (J-J. Denonain, ed.), 8.

<sup>1325</sup> Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* in B. Kuklick (ed.), *Thomas Paine: Political Writings*, revd edn (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), 268.

To interpret conscience as simply private judgement, therefore, misrepresents its meaning within the rational discourse, but highlights the fact that, as individual consciences differ, ultimately conscience could only be reliably reduced to one of its referents, our own judgement, to which even the Clarkeans and Butler sometimes (although in the context of reasoning upwards and downwards and human moral development) normatively retreated.

Thus, the naturalisation of conscience, and its secularised reduction to individual judgement, are not just, returning to Paley, connected to each other; they both concern tensions between conscience's referents within the rational discourse which made that discourse difficult to sustain.

What I have called the referents of conscience might be understood today as different ways of understanding conscience. There is the conscience *qua* individual judgement of Article 14 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights; or the religious conscience, conscience *qua* God's will, which, for Newman, 'is the creative principle of religion', because it draws us before God, impressing upon our 'imagination...the picture of a Supreme Governor'.<sup>1326</sup> Modern invocations of conscience divide conscience, by defining it in relation to only one of its referents, and so reinforce the ambiguity of the term: the conscience under discussion may be, for example, religious, political, or Freudian. Conscience's referents in the rational discourse meant that conscience was not reducible to a collocation of societal and parental influence; individual feeling and judgement; or divine command. However, the rational discourse of conscience also suggested that each of these was, if not the grounds for moral norms, an important element of our experience of moral norms, as aspects of our reflective moral consciousness and formal moral education. The basis for using the term 'conscience' to refer

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<sup>1326</sup> Newman, *op.cit.*, 101.

to just one of its referents can be sought in the rational discourse of conscience, so far as that discourse itself provided the means for describing conscience as divine inspiration, fallible human judgement, rational intuition and our (acquired or otherwise) emotional responses to specific behaviour.

## **Conclusion**

The principal concern of this study has been to use the referents of Butlerian and Clarkeian conscience to respond to various criticisms of Butler and the Clarkeans, and to prevent their ethical thought from being unduly separated. The ‘cool hour passage’ and Butler’s equivocation, along with his method, have not only been used to justify the criticism that Butler is internally inconsistent in his discussion of conscience; they have also been used to illustrate opposition between Butler’s moral thought and CER.

In Part I of this chapter, I have shown that the ‘cool hour passage’, and Butler’s method, only appear to mark inconsistencies internal to Butler, and between him and the Clarkeans, when their shared understanding of conscience and moral development have not been fully appreciated.

In both Butler and CER, that which we intuit to be right in itself is that which is according to the law of reason *qua* RR. Our creation by God with conscience not only made the law of reason the law of our own nature and judgement; it is in, and as, conscience that human beings experience the law of reason as the law of our own nature and judgment, the law of God’s nature, and the law of the created universe itself.

First, the emphasis in the ‘cool hour passage’, and Butler’s method, upon the natural and ‘practical’ fact of our own happiness, and our own nature and judgement, does not mean that Butler undermined his understanding of conscience’s ‘superintendency’. Butlerian conscience is that in, and as, which we experience the law of reason as the law of our own nature and judgement. Further, as we are rational agents in virtue of being created with conscience, it defines our nature, and what is in our own interest, as rational agents. Moreover, it is in conscience that we recognise that our ‘tripartite’ duties under the law of reason *qua* RR include our responsibility to ourselves, for acting according to our nature and judgement, and in our own best interests, as rational agents under conscience.

Second, the emphasis in the ‘cool hour passage’, and Butler’s method, upon the natural and ‘practical’ fact of our own happiness, and of our own nature and judgement, does not mark opposition between Butler and the Clarkeans:

(a) In Butler, as in CER, our decision to obey conscience includes our awareness, in, and as, conscience of all that it means to act according to reason *qua* RR. Our experience of, for example, our own, and God’s, judgement, our affection for others, our ‘hope’ of reward, and our ‘relish’ after truth which has its ‘origin’ in God, are all normative concerns under conscience, because they are all part of our experience of moral judgement, and of what it means to do that which is right in itself according to reason *qua* RR.

(b) Butler and the Clarkeans also agree that, in the world as a ‘state of trial’, the development of mature moral character can begin from choosing to obey conscience simply because to do so is to satisfy our own (or God’s) judgement, or our reflective concern for our own interests. As has been seen above, therefore, Butler’s ‘cool hour passage’ has been

misinterpreted because, without the distinction between AATC and AAOC, it has not been appreciated that Butler is there discussing an underdeveloped moral character. In Butler and the Clarkeans, an immature moral agent, who chooses to obey conscience because it is, for example, in his own best interests, has at least started on the path of virtue and moral development, by performing ‘materially virtuous’ acts *qua* AATC. It is in the practice of virtue, and the development of ‘virtuous habits’, that both Butler and the Clarkeans expect the moral agent, as his moral character matures, to begin to appreciate (not least on the basis of all that he experiences in, and as, conscience) that to obey conscience is to do more than simply act in his own best interest or according to his own (or God’s) judgement. That is not to say that Butler or the Clarkeans think that the mature moral agent surrenders his concern, as a rational agent, for acting in his own best interest, or according to his own (or God’s) judgement, whenever he chooses to perform AAOC *qua* ‘virtuous agent’. Rather, the fully-developed moral agent performs AAOC *qua* ‘virtuous agent’, and is committed to the law of reason *qua* RR, precisely because he commits every act of conscience to himself *and* to others *and* to God on the basis of *faithful* reflection in conscience.

The discussion of Butler’s equivocation in Part II also responds to the suggestion that Butler’s equivocation, like the ‘cool hour passage’, marks a divide between him and the Clarkeans. It has been argued that Butler’s equivocation is not important in terms of distinguishing between him and the Clarkeans, but that it is still significant when interpreted in the light of the shared referents of Butlerian and Clarkean conscience. Rather than signifying a difference between them, Butler’s equivocation is not only consistent with Clarkean language concerning conscience, but with tensions internal to the rational discourse of conscience itself. Thus, through an appreciation of conscience’s referents, Butler’s equivocation becomes a means of discussing the place of both Butler and the Clarkeans within conscience’s

secularisation, when this resulted from tensions between each of conscience's referents within their shared rational discourse of conscience.

## Conclusion

The preceding study has resisted the tendency to reduce the meaning of Butlerian conscience, by seeking to establish its referents. In doing so, I have argued for a non-reduced understanding of it, and provided a new perspective on, while responding to accepted interpretations of, Butler's equivocation, 'cool hour passage' and empirical method.

In the first place, this study has shown that such aspects of Butler as his method and 'cool hour passage' only appear to support the charge of internal inconsistency when the meaning and place of Butlerian conscience have been reduced. Butlerian conscience is not simply, for example, our intuition, and approval, of intrinsic rightness *or* our own judgement *or* God's judgement; it is our intuition, and approval, of intrinsic rightness *and* our own judgement *and* God's judgement. The opportunity to develop an understanding of conscience's referents made it possible to distinguish between AATC and AAOC, and, in turn, to appreciate Butler's understanding of the process of moral development. A Butlerian moral agent develops from merely acting AATC because to obey conscience is to act according to only one of its referents. Consequently, the emphasis upon considerations of self-interest in the 'cool hour passage', and on an individual's nature and judgement as part of Butler's method, are consistent with his understanding of the starting-point for moral development as an immature moral agent.

In the second place, by arguing that Butlerian and Clarkeian conscience shared the same referents, this study has argued that, just as such aspects of Butler as his method and 'cool hour passage' do not mark any internal inconsistency in Butler, so they do not mark any wider inconsistency between Butler and the Clarkeans. Rather, as with Butler, this study has used the referents of conscience, and the distinction between AATC and AAOC, to examine the

Clarkeans' own understanding of the process of moral development in the world as a 'state of trial'. It has been argued that the Clarkeian understanding of moral development was the same as Butler's, so that his method and 'cool hour passage' function within his moral thought in the same way as they would within CER. This study makes it inconsistent for critics of CER to use such aspects of Butler as his method and 'cool hour passage' to read Butler more favourably than the Clarkeans. MacIntyre, for example, on the basis of Butler's method, suggests that, 'What is valuable in Butler is his revival of the Greek notion of moral reasoning as determined by premises about what will or will not satisfy our nature as rational animals'.<sup>1327</sup> In the context of Hutcheson's and Hume's criticisms of the Clarkeans (HC), and the 'laicisation of natural law' criticisms of the Clarkeans (LNLC), it would appear that Butler's method, on MacIntyre's reading, helps Butler to avoid HC and LNLC. However, we have seen that, as Butler and the Clarkeans shared the same theory of conscience, and, as a result, the same understanding of moral development, not only does Butler's method no longer mark a break between his moral thought and CER, but, as such, he and the Clarkeans can only be considered able to avoid such criticisms as HC and LNLC in the same way.

Thus, in responding to reduced readings of Butlerian conscience, this study has provided the grounds for introducing the same non-reduced understanding of conscience into CER. And, further, the non-reduced meaning and place of conscience in CER has been used to highlight limitations in leading criticisms of the Clarkeans. It has been seen in this study that the Clarkeian conception of conscience makes it more difficult for the Clarkeans to be dismissed as 'naïve'<sup>1328</sup> and 'confused'<sup>1329</sup> 'philosophers', 'incomparably' weaker than their

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<sup>1327</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, rvsd edn (London, Routledge, 2002), 106.

<sup>1328</sup> Beiser, *op.cit.*, 298.

<sup>1329</sup> Finnis, *op.cit.*, 42.

‘sentimentalist’ contemporaries,<sup>1330</sup> whose moral thought was a ‘failure’<sup>1331</sup> that rested upon the ‘sheer rectitude’,<sup>1332</sup> ‘dogmatism’ and ‘bluster’ of ‘the ““hotline view”, according to which beliefs based on moral intuition are self-evident in the sense of self-guaranteeing or indefeasible’.<sup>1333</sup> Such criticisms of the Clarkeans both express, and rest upon, the charge of complacency, whereby CER is reduced to the assertion that human beings passively, and self-evidently, perceive intrinsic rightness with the certainty with which we see the truth of basic mathematical problems. The account of Clarkean conscience in this study has not only emphasised the active, as opposed to passive, nature of moral consciousness, but also undermined the charge of complacency. The Clarkean understanding of moral development in the world as a ‘state of trial’ means that human beings are responsible for actively engaging with, and assessing, *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself, not least because we are capable of erroneous intuitions of intrinsic rightness.<sup>1334</sup>

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<sup>1330</sup> Korsgaard, *Kingdom*, 37, fn.12.

<sup>1331</sup> Finnis, *op.cit.*, 40.

<sup>1332</sup> Beiser, *op.cit.*, 298.

<sup>1333</sup> Roger Crisp, ‘Sidgwick and the Boundaries of Intuitionism’ in Stratton-Lake (ed.), *op.cit.*, 60-61

<sup>1334</sup> Thus, this study suggests it is possible to draw CER into aspects of Robert Audi’s re-appraisal of Rossian intuitionism. Audi accepts that, as with the Clarkeans, ‘By comparing his candidate basic moral truths to...(elementary) truths of logic and mathematics’ (*Moral Knowledge and Ethical Character* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), 47), Ross’ ‘unprovability claim...creates the mistaken impression that genuine intuitions are either infallible or justificationally indefeasible, or both’ (*ibid.*, 39). However, Audi does not think that Ross, despite ‘the most common conception of intuitionism’ (*ibid.*, 38), is ‘committed’ to ‘the epistemic indefeasibility of the “self-evident” judgements that reflection yields’ (*ibid.*, 39). Rather, Audi contends that ‘an intuitionist – indeed, even a rationalist one like Ross – may be a fallibilist about the sense of self-evidence’ (*ibid.*, 46). Audi points out that the ‘claim’ ‘That a proposition does not admit of proof is an epistemic fact about it and leaves open that a person might have only poor or overridden grounds for *believing* it’ (*ibid.*, 38). Not only is it possible for Ross, and, as we have seen, the Clarkeans, ‘to regard intuitions as capable of being unjustified or even false’ (*ibid.*, 39), ‘Intuitionism requires that before one can be intuitively justified in accepting a moral standard, one must have an adequate understanding of the proposition in question; this often requires reflection’ dependent upon the ‘requirements of adequate maturity and “sufficient attention”’ (*ibid.*, 43). Thus, ‘Despite...[Ross]’...unfortunate analogy between moral principles and...mathematical ones, he provides a place for reflective equilibrium to enhance...or override...our justification for an “intuitive” moral judgement’ (*ibid.*, 55). ‘To be sure’, parallel to reasoning upwards and downwards in CER, ‘The intuitionist’ might ‘use the procedure of reflective equilibrium’ ‘more to refine moral principles already accepted than to discover moral principles’ (*ibid.*, 50), but this does not mean that Rossian (or Clarkean) intuitionism, maintained ‘that there cannot be good arguments for certain self-evident propositions’ (*ibid.*, 47). Rather, through ‘the procedure of reflective equilibrium’, ‘One can compare one’s intuitions with each other, with those of people one respects...with the results of applying plausible generalisations to...situations...and one can strive to get...these items...into a...coherent whole’ (*ibid.*, 50). Audi argues that the procedure of reflective endorsement is part of Rossian intuitionism, not least because, like CER, but unlike ‘Kantian and utilitarian theories’, it is ‘pluralist’ (*ibid.*, 33). Ross’ ‘ethical pluralism’, as found in his *prima facie* duties of, for example, beneficence, honesty and promise-keeping (*ibid.*, 34), did not give way into ‘hierarchism’, whereby ‘some of the *prima facie*

## Conscientious ‘Complex Wholes’

One way of summarising the approach taken here to Butlerian and Clarkeian conscience is with reference to Moore’s ‘complex wholes’, where conscience, with its referents, is that through, and in, which we are able to experience the moral as a ‘complex whole’.<sup>1335</sup> Within human moral consciousness, each referent of conscience forms an ‘organic unity’, whereby natural considerations, which would be non-moral (but still AATC) on their own (such as acting in our own best interest), form part of a whole, which intrinsically possesses the quality of rightness. Within moral consciousness, each referent forms an essential part of what we will experience as the moral whole, so that we will only approve as right (and be able to perform *qua* AAOC) those actions which unify or satisfy each one of them.

The present understanding of conscience and its referents in Butler and the Clarkeans highlights how they could have agreed with Moore that, ‘Good is good and that is the end of the matter’,<sup>1336</sup> while also agreeing with his emphasis in the following remark:

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duties automatically outweigh...others’, because for Ross, and ‘intuitionists in general’, there is not ‘a complete ordering of duties in terms of moral weights (a ranking of duties from strongest to least strong)’ (*ibid.*, 37). Consequently, ‘a prima facie duty is not necessarily final, and to recognise such a duty as applicable to oneself is not sufficient for knowing what, all things considered, one should do’, so that ‘one should focus on the specific facts and, in that light, determine what one’s actual duty is’ (*ibid.*, 34; 36). Audi thus describes Ross’ prima facie duties as ‘*ineradicable but overridable*’: the prima facie duty to promise-keeping is self-evident, but it is ‘not self-evident...that no medical emergency will intervene and override my duty to keep’ a particular ‘promise’ (*ibid.*, 34-35). The Clarkeans would agree that the moral agent is responsible for solving such conflicts as they arrive in particular instances. Moreover, the Clarkeans, as we have seen, as part of the distinction between ‘practical’ and ‘absolute’ virtue, allowed moral agents to disagree legitimately about what it is their duty to do in a particular instance, so long as their choice of action is based on the ‘reflection and maturity’ (*ibid.*, 44) which enables them to perform every act they choose as moral with intention of ‘rectitude’.<sup>1335</sup> The related observation here, of course, is that the Clarkeans should, and, perhaps (despite the emphasis, particularly in Price, upon the fact that our ‘ideas of *right* and *wrong* are simple ideas’ (*Review*, 41)), sometimes did, understand rightness as a ‘complex’ quality; see: Raphael, ‘Introduction’ in *Review*, xxv-xxxi; Stratton-Lake, ‘Introduction’ in Stratton-Lake (ed.), *op.cit.*, 11-18; Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics* (Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 1966), 26-28 and ‘Virtue is a Predicate’, *The Monist*, 54:1 (Jan., 1970), 76-77. While Hume criticised CER for failing to appreciate that ‘A moral action...is a complicated object’ (*Enquiry*, Appendix I.238), Balguy did suggest that ‘*Moral Fitness* is either immediately self-evident, as in *simple* Duties; or demonstrable, as in *complex* ones’ (*TFMG.II*, 149), and also, in light of the ‘*positive* Rewards’ of ‘Virtue’, ‘set before us’ by ‘Revelation’, and ‘those Advantages and Enjoyments which *naturally* flow from Virtue’, Balguy referred to ‘that complex Good, which is meant by a blessed Immortality, of whatsoever Ingredients it may consist’ (*First Letter*, 9-10).

<sup>1336</sup> G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968), 6.

I should never have thought of suggesting that goodness was “non-natural”, unless I had supposed...it was “derivative” in...that, whenever a thing is good...its goodness...“depends on the presence of certain non-ethical characteristics” possessed by the thing in question...if a thing is good...then that it is so *follows* from the fact that it possesses certain natural intrinsic properties, which are such that from the fact that it is good it does *not* follow conversely that it has those properties.<sup>1337</sup>

According to Butler and the Clarkeans, that which is right in itself is that which is according to the law of reason, and that which is right in itself would remain right in itself whether rational agents ignored the law of reason or (like ‘brute’ creatures) did not have access to it. However, while the foundation of rightness is not utility or divine or human will, creatures created with a rational nature, in a world made according to the law of reason, will encounter the law of reason as *something*, and it will be as something that exists in, and concerns, both the world and themselves. The law of reason determines that justice, equity, charity and so on are right in themselves; however, justice, equity and charity exist as something in the world, such that they are what we encounter in the world, and in ourselves, as, for example, innocence and suffering, sympathy and gratitude, and whatever it is that we approve of as satisfying our responsibilities as rational agents to ourselves *and* to others *and* to God. *What* it is *that* is determined by the law of reason is *what* it is *that* we encounter in the world as fitting to relations that are themselves determined by reason. Happiness and divine command might not be the grounds of rightness, but they are what Price called the ‘subject-matter of virtue’: that with which we are concerned as rational agents, within a world made according to reason, as we try to satisfy our duties to ourselves, to others and to God; duties which we experience as enjoined by reason, according to relations determined by reason.

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<sup>1337</sup> G.E. Moore, ‘A Reply to My Critics’ in P.A. Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore*, 2 Vols. (Lasalle, Open Court, 1968), Vol.II, 588.

## Moral Facts and Facts of Rational Human Nature

Despite opposition by the likes of MacIntyre and Warnock to both modern and early modern intuitionism, Butler and the Clarkeans would have been able, with certain caveats, to agree that, ‘statements about what is good...just are a kind of factual statement’.<sup>1338</sup> Moral statements are about the nature of human beings and the world as they were created by God according to the eternal law of his own nature. However, Butler, and particularly the Clarkeans, were alert (like Moore above) to the dangers of over-emphasis: pressing the fact that *what* it is *that* is right in itself is intimate with, just as it is an intimate concern for, an individual’s nature and judgement *qua* created rational agent is always in danger of justifying a deistic nominalism in which the individual is the heaviest object in the moral universe. Butler’s and the Clarkeans’ conception of individual human agents is not one in which our gravitational pull draws all meaning, and all possibility of meaning, into ourselves; rather, it is one in which individual human agents, by receiving the divine gift of reason, are able to recognise ourselves as active, and self-responsible, participants in a realm of meaning, of and within which we stand neither as creators nor passive subjects. All that reason *is* for Butler and the Clarkeans – and, consequently, the different perspectives which a moral agent is required to take, in conscience, upon the actions he chooses as moral – demonstrates how (in opposition to neo-Kantian criticisms of the Clarkeans (KC), as well as HC and LNLC) the Clarkeans, like Butler, are able to be ‘substantive realists’ without maintaining that ‘reasons for acting...depend on nothing internal to the agent’.<sup>1339</sup> In this study, we have seen that the Clarkeans and Butler understood reflective moral consciousness to be that within which we experience *what* it is *that* we perceive to be right in itself as an active encounter with all that reason *is qua* our law, God’s law and the law of the created universe itself. All that the Clarkeans meant by the law of reason, rational

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<sup>1338</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London, Duckworth, 1985), 148.

<sup>1339</sup> Darwall, *Internal ‘Ought’*, 328.

perception and conscience, limits the extent to which they, any more than Butler, can be included in the criticisms someone like Darwall has for Moorean intuitionism, as that which makes ‘the desire to act for reasons...in no sense integral to the self’ and somehow ‘superadded to our nature rather than deeply expressive of it’.<sup>1340</sup>

### The ‘False Trichotomy’

As the Butlerian and Clarkeian moral agent is neither creator nor passive subject, I have argued that a full understanding of conscience, with its referents, in Butler and CER highlights how Butler and the Clarkeans have been read within something akin to Ameriks’ and Hare’s ‘false trichotomy’, and how it is possible to approach them from outside it.

Although KC and the proto-Kantian reading of Butler (KR), with which this study opened, aim to use Butler’s conception of conscience to separate him from the Clarkeans, the meaning and place of conscience in both shows that only the same form of practical moral reasoning is available to them. In the world as a ‘state of trial’, with limited human faculties, the practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards that is available to them may appear to be circular:<sup>1341</sup> a cycle of reviewing relevant ‘material’, and the connections between them; but the ‘material’ reviewed within such a process is not unimportant. In both Butler and the

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<sup>1340</sup> Darwall, *Impartial Reason*, 57.

<sup>1341</sup> Although practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards may appear circular, the understanding of moral development in Butler, of which such reasoning is a part, does help to answer the charge that Butlerian conscience is ‘viciously circular’. The criticism here is that, ‘The most palpable defect of Butler’s scheme is, that it affords no answer to the question, “What is the distinguishing quality common to all right actions?”’ (Mackintosh, *op.cit.*, 123-124). Consequently, Butler is involved in a ‘vicious circle’ (*ibid.*, 124), because ‘What...is meant by acting wrongly? Disobeying conscience’ (Stephen, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, 42-43), such that ‘it is a truism that conscience has authority to rule in us’ (A.N. Prior, *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1949)). However, we have seen that Butler does identify the ‘distinguishing quality common to all right acts’. All right acts satisfy the ‘moral law’, which is God’s ‘attribute’, and, as God’s ‘attribute’, was the guiding principle ‘of that goodness in the sovereign Mind, which gave birth to the universe’ (S, XIV.17). As such, the ‘distinguishing quality common to all right acts’, in Butler, and the Clarkeans, is that they are acting for ourselves *and* for others *and* for God, according to our ‘tripartite’ duties under the law of reason *qua* our law, God’s law, and the law of the created universe itself.

Clarkeans, practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards is part of the reflective system of resolve, necessary for crossing ‘gaps’ into rational decision and action. For both, practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards is also part of the process of moral development, where the fully-developed moral character, on the basis of reflecting upon all that he experiences in, and as, conscience, has not only increased self-awareness, but, as such, has gained a heightened awareness of everything for which he is responsible, and of all the relations of which he is a part, as a rational agent.

We have seen, in opposition to KC and KR, that it is not just in Butler that conscience is that through which an agent gains a ‘critical perspective on her own motives’;<sup>1342</sup> and it is not just in Butler that, ‘The principle of reflection enables an agent to step back from actual motives (principles of action) and ask: What motive should I act on?’,<sup>1343</sup> so that Butler, in contrast with the Clarkeans, is able to conceive ‘of the will, as the capacity to make demands of oneself’.<sup>1344</sup> Likewise, we have seen that it is not just in the Clarkeans that the fully-developed moral agent understands that his capacity to make demands of himself is also his capacity to have demands made upon him by others and by God. In both Butler and the Clarkeans, human agency concerns individual accountability to the law of reason *qua* our law, God’s law, and the law of the created universe itself. Consequently, in opposition to KC and KR, Butler and the Clarkeans, not only include such considerations as ‘self-condemnation’, utility, divine command, and the endorsement of our own judgement, in the ‘material’ we consider when we choose to act morally, but, for both, fully-developed moral agents are responsible, with only a ‘moral certainty’ in the world as a ‘state of trial’, for the standard they impose upon themselves when they choose an action as the morally right one.

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<sup>1342</sup> Darwall, *Internal ‘Ought’*, 278

<sup>1343</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>1344</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

Although the understanding of ‘self-imposition’ and ‘reflective endorsement’ in Butler and CER will not be the same as in neo-Kantianism, because, in the former, unlike the latter, ‘values’ are not ‘created by human beings’,<sup>1345</sup> it is noteworthy that Korsgaard discusses conscience *qua* a ‘knowing together’ as evidence of the fact that ‘the idea that a moral motive is one approved in reflection did not originate with Kant’.<sup>1346</sup> Thus, KC and KR themselves indicate the importance of a non-reduced understanding of the meaning and place of conscience in Butler and the Clarkeans, if we are to interpret them effectively.

Both Butler and the Clarkeans would have agreed with Korsgaard that, ‘The mind’s authority does not depend upon the experience of...negative moral emotions, but it absolutely implies it’.<sup>1347</sup> In a way directly relevant to the ‘self-condemnation’ and ‘presages’ that, for both, we experience in, and as, conscience, Korsgaard argues that it is in the fact that we ‘punish ourselves, by guilt and regret and repentance and remorse’ that we can discover ‘that we are in a position to require things of ourselves’:<sup>1348</sup> it is in the power of ‘a person’s own mind’ to ‘impose sanctions on her’ that we can experience the ‘legislative authority [we have] over ourselves’.<sup>1349</sup>

Of course, from inside the ‘false trichotomy’, Korsgaard wants to call such ‘legislative authority’ ‘voluntarist’:

if we suffer for being immoral...our nature is in a position to punish us...by the voluntarist criterion of authority that means...our nature has authority over us, and is in a position to give us laws.<sup>1350</sup>

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<sup>1345</sup> Korsgaard, *Sources*, 112.

<sup>1346</sup> *Ibid.*, 92; 93, fn.2.

<sup>1347</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>1348</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>1349</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>1350</sup> *Ibid.*, 66, fn.37.

However, outside the ‘false trichotomy’, it does not appear necessary to call our experience of such ‘legislative authority’ ‘voluntarist’, although it could be called AATC, and lack of a mature moral character, whenever a rational agent does not get further than, in Hooker’s language, ‘seeming’ to himself to be the maker of law. In opposition to KR, ‘Practical reasoning’ in Butler is not ‘entirely *formal*’;<sup>1351</sup> but, at the same time, in both Butler and the Clarkeans there is a point in the process of moral development, and practical moral reasoning upwards and downwards, where conscience will, and must, be understood formally and embraced as a formal principle.

According to Butler and the Clarkeans, the underdeveloped moral agent can start on the path of virtue and moral development by choosing to perform ‘materially virtuous’ acts *qua* AATC, simply because to do so is to follow his own judgement; and, more than this, in the world as a ‘state of trial’, even the fully-developed moral agent accepts that the actions he chooses as moral may not be ‘materially’ the right thing to do, even as he intends rectitude in the performance of them on the basis of his own practical moral reasoning. Thus, it is not the case, in opposition to KR, that ‘Butler’ merely ‘defines conscience *formally*, not by its connection to an independent order’,<sup>1352</sup> just as it is not the case, in opposition to KC, that limited human ‘reason’, in either Butler or the Clarkeans, ‘reliably track[s]’ ‘external’ ‘independent normative facts’ that belong to some distant ‘realm of ethical fact’.<sup>1353</sup> Rather, in both Butler and Clarkeans, mature moral agents are always responsible, in the world as a ‘state of trial’, for seeking, through ‘practical reasoning’, ‘guidance by considerations that we can reflectively endorse’.<sup>1354</sup>

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<sup>1351</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

<sup>1352</sup> Darwall, *Internal ‘Ought’*, 279.

<sup>1353</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

<sup>1354</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

## **Tensions Within Conscience**

While the present study has argued that appreciating the meaning and place of conscience within Butler and the Clarkeans helps to respond to various criticisms of them, the purpose of the present study has not been to suggest that Butler, CER, or the rational discourse of conscience itself, are immune from criticism. In the final chapter, it has been shown how the referents of conscience can be used to draw out central tensions within the rational discourse of conscience. So far as the underlying argument of the present study has been that conscience, with its referents, must be taken seriously when approaching Butler and the Clarkeans, any criticisms of Butler and the Clarkeans which focus upon tensions within their theory of conscience's referents would go some way towards satisfying that underlying argument. Although it has only been possible, in Chapter 4, to give a brief indication of the wider significance of appreciating conscience's referents, I do suggest that approaching conscience from the perspective of its various referents will help to highlight the modern fragmented understanding of conscience. An appreciation of its referents will not only be useful in guarding against reading a fragmented, and reduced, understanding of conscience back into our interpretations of the likes of Butler and the Clarkeans; it will also help to chart the secularisation of conscience, and to place such figures as Butler and the Clarkeans within a history of conscience's secularisation.

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