

Benedict de Spinoza

Ethics

(Trans. R.H.M. Elwes, 1883)

Selections from PART IV

OF HUMAN BONDAGE *OR* THE STRENGTH OF THE EMOTIONS.

PREFACE.

Human infirmity in moderating and checking the emotions I name bondage: for, when a man is a prey to his emotions, he is not his own master, but lies at the mercy of fortune: so much so, that he is often compelled, while seeing that which is better for him, to follow that which is worse. Why this is so, and what is good or evil in the emotions, I propose to show in this part of my treatise. But, before I begin, it would be well to make a few prefatory observations on perfection and imperfection, good and evil.

When a man has purposed to make a given thing, and has brought it to perfection, his work will be pronounced perfect, not only by himself, but by everyone who rightly knows, or thinks that he knows, the intention and aim of its author. ...

But, after men began to form general ideas, to think out types of houses, buildings, towers, &c., and to prefer certain types to others, it came about, that each man called perfect that which he saw agree with the general idea he had formed of the thing in question, and called imperfect that which he saw agree less with his own preconceived type, even though it had evidently been completed in accordance with the idea of its artificer. This seems to be the only reason for calling natural phenomena, which, indeed, are not made with human hands, perfect or imperfect: for men are wont to form general ideas of things natural, no less than of things artificial, and such ideas they hold as types, believing that Nature (who they think does nothing without an object) has them in view, and has set them as types before herself. Therefore, when they behold something in Nature, which does not wholly conform to the preconceived type which they have formed of the thing in question, they say that Nature has fallen short or has blundered, and has left her work incomplete. Thus we see that men are wont to style natural phenomena perfect or imperfect rather from their own prejudices, than from true knowledge of what they pronounce upon.

Now we showed ... that Nature does not work with an end in view. For the eternal and infinite Being, which we call God or Nature, acts by the same necessity as that whereby it exists. ... of his existence and of his action there is neither origin nor end. Wherefore, a cause which is called final is nothing else but human desire, in so far as it is considered as the origin or cause of anything. ... Perfection and imperfection, then, are in reality merely modes of thinking, or notions which we form from a comparison among one another of individuals of the same species; hence I said above, that by reality and perfection I mean the same thing. For we are wont to refer all the individual things in nature to one genus, which is called the highest genus, namely, to the category of Being, whereto absolutely all individuals in nature belong. Thus, in so far as we refer the individuals in nature to this category, and comparing them one with another, find that some possess more of being or reality than others, we, to this extent, say, that some are more perfect than others. Again, in so far as we attribute to them anything implying negation—as term, end, infirmity, etc.,—we, to this extent, call them imperfect, because they do not affect our mind so much as the things which we call perfect, not because they have any intrinsic deficiency, or because Nature has blundered. For nothing lies within the scope of a thing's nature, save that which follows from the necessity of the nature of its efficient cause, and whatsoever follows from the necessity of the nature of its efficient cause necessarily comes to pass.

As for the terms *good* and *bad*, they indicate no positive quality in things regarded in themselves, but are merely modes of thinking, or notions which we form from the comparison of things one with another. Thus one and the same thing can be at the same time good, bad, and indifferent. For instance, music is good for him that is melancholy, bad for him that mourns; for him that is deaf, it is neither good nor bad. ...

In what follows, then, I shall mean by “good” that, which we certainly know to be a means of approaching more nearly to the type of human nature, which we have set before ourselves; by “bad,” that which we certainly know to be a hindrance to us in approaching the said type. Again, we shall say that men are more perfect, or more imperfect, in proportion as they approach more or less nearly to the said type. ... no given thing can be said to be more perfect, because it has passed a longer time in existence. The duration of things cannot be determined by their essence, for the essence of things involves no fixed and definite period of existence; but everything, whether it be more perfect or less perfect, will always be able to persist in existence with the same force wherewith it began to exist; wherefore, in this respect, all things are equal.

DEFINITIONS.

I. By *good* I mean that which we certainly know to be useful to us.

II. By *evil* I mean that which we certainly know to be a hindrance to us in the attainment of any good.

VII. By an end, for the sake of which we do something, I mean a desire.

VIII. By virtue (*virtus*) and power I mean the same thing; that is ... virtue, in so far as it is referred to man, is a man's nature or essence, in so far as it has the power of effecting what can only be understood by the laws of that nature.

AXIOM.

There is no individual thing in nature, than which there is not another more powerful and strong. Whatsoever thing be given, there is something stronger whereby it can be destroyed.

PROP. II. *We are only passive, in so far as we are part of Nature, which cannot be conceived by itself without other parts.*

PROP. III. *The force whereby a man persists in existing is limited, and is infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes.*

PROP. IV. *It is impossible, that man should not be a part of Nature, or that he should be capable of undergoing no changes, save such as can be understood through his nature only as their adequate cause.*

Corollary.—Hence it follows, that man is necessarily always a prey to his passions, that he follows and obeys the general order of nature, and that he accommodates himself thereto, as much as the nature of things demands.

PROP. VI. *The force of any passion or emotion can overcome the rest of a man's activities or power, so that the emotion becomes obstinately fixed to him.*

PROP. VII. *An emotion can only be controlled or destroyed by another emotion contrary thereto, and with more power for controlling emotion.*

PROP. VIII. *The knowledge of good and evil is nothing else but the emotions of pleasure or pain, in so far as we are conscious thereof.*

PROP. XIV. *A true knowledge of good and evil cannot check any emotion by virtue of being true, but only in so far as it is considered as an emotion.*

PROP. XV. *Desire arising from the knowledge of good and bad can be quenched or checked by many of the other desires arising from the emotions whereby we are assailed.*

PROP. XVI. *Desire arising from the knowledge of good and evil, in so far as such knowledge regards what is future, may be more easily controlled or quenched, than the desire for what is agreeable at the present moment.*

PROP. XVII. *Desire arising from the true knowledge of good and evil, in so far as such knowledge is concerned with what is contingent, can be controlled far more easily still, than desire for things that are present. ...*

Note.—I think I have now shown the reason, why men are moved by opinion more readily than by, true reason, why it is that the true knowledge of good and evil stirs up conflicts in the soul, and often yields to every kind of passion. This state of things gave rise to the exclamation of the poet:—

“The better path I gaze at and approve,
The worse—I follow.” *

Ecclesiastes seems to have had the same thought in his mind, when he says, “He who increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” I have not written the above with the object of drawing the conclusion, that ignorance is more excellent than knowledge, or that a wise man is on a par with a fool in controlling his emotions, but because it is necessary to know the power and the infirmity of our nature, before we can determine what reason can do in restraining the emotions, and what is beyond her power. I have said, that in the present part I shall merely treat of human infirmity. The power of reason over the emotions I have settled to treat separately.

[* “Video meliora proboque, / Deteriora sequor.” — Ovid, *Metamorphoses* vii, 20]

PROP. XVIII. *Desire arising from pleasure is, other conditions being equal, stronger than desire arising from pain.*

Proof.—Desire is the essence of a man ... that is, the endeavour whereby a man endeavours to persist in his own being. Wherefore desire arising from pleasure is, by the fact of pleasure being felt, increased or helped; on the contrary, desire arising from pain is, by the fact of pain being felt, diminished or hindered; hence the force of desire arising from pleasure must be defined by human power together with the power of an external cause, whereas desire arising from pain must be defined by human power only. Thus the former is the stronger of the two. Q.E.D.

Note.—In these few remarks I have explained the causes of human infirmity and inconstancy, and shown why men do not abide by the precepts of reason. It now remains for me to show what course is marked out for us by reason, which of the emotions are in harmony with the rules of human reason, and which of them are contrary thereto. But, before I begin to prove my propositions in detailed geometrical fashion, it is advisable to sketch them briefly in advance, so that everyone may more readily grasp my meaning.

As reason makes no demands contrary to nature, it demands, that every man should love himself, should seek that which is useful to him—I mean, that which is really useful to him, should desire everything which really brings man to greater perfection, and should, each for himself, endeavour as far as he can to preserve his own being. This is as necessarily true, as that a whole is greater than its part.

Again, as virtue is nothing else but action in accordance with the laws of one’s own nature, and as no one endeavours to preserve his own being, except in accordance with the laws of his own nature, it follows, *first*, that the foundation of virtue is the endeavour to preserve one’s own being, and that happiness consists in man’s power of preserving his own being; *secondly*, that virtue is to be desired for its own sake, and that there is nothing more excellent or more useful to us, for the sake of which we should desire it; *thirdly* and lastly, that suicides are weak-minded, and are overcome by external causes repugnant to their nature. Further, ... we can never arrive at doing without all external things for the preservation of our being or living, so as to have no relations with things which are outside ourselves. Again, if we consider our mind, we see that our intellect would be more imperfect, if mind were alone, and could understand nothing besides itself. There are, then, many things outside ourselves, which are useful to us, and are, therefore, to be desired. Of such none can be discerned more excellent, than those which are in entire agreement with our nature. For if, for example, two individuals of entirely the same nature are united, they form a combination twice as powerful as either of them singly.

Therefore, to man there is nothing more useful than man—nothing, I repeat, more excellent for preserving their being can be wished for by men, than that all should so in all points agree, that the minds and bodies of all should form, as it were, one single mind and one single body, and that all should, with one consent, as far as they are able, endeavour to preserve their being, and all with one consent seek what is useful to them all. Hence, men who are governed by reason—that is, who seek what is useful to them in accordance with reason,—desire for themselves nothing, which they do not also desire for the rest of mankind, and, consequently, are just, faithful, and honourable in their conduct.

Such are the dictates of reason, which I purposed thus briefly to indicate, before beginning to prove them in greater detail. I have taken this course, in order, if possible, to gain the attention of those who

believe, that the principle that every man is bound to seek what is useful for himself is the foundation of impiety, rather than of piety and virtue. Therefore, after briefly showing that the contrary is the case, I go on to prove it by the same method, as that whereby I have hitherto proceeded.

PROP. XIX. *Every man, by the laws of his nature, necessarily desires or shrinks from that which he deems to be good or bad.*

PROP. XX. *The more every man endeavours, and is able to seek what is useful to him—in other words, to preserve his own being—the more is he endowed with virtue; on the contrary, in proportion as a man neglects to seek what is useful to him, that is, to preserve his own being, he is wanting in power.*

Note.—No one, therefore, neglects seeking his own good, or preserving his own being, unless he be overcome by causes external and foreign to his nature. No one, I say, from the necessity of his own nature, or otherwise than under compulsion from external causes, shrinks from food, or kills himself: which latter may be done in a variety of ways. A man, for instance, kills himself under the compulsion of another man, who twists round his right hand, wherewith he happened to have taken up a sword, and forces him to turn the blade against his own heart; or, again, he may be compelled, like Seneca, by a tyrant's command, to open his own veins—that is, to escape a greater evil by incurring a lesser; or, lastly, latent external causes may so disorder his imagination, and so affect his body, that it may assume a nature contrary to its former one, and whereof the idea cannot exist in the mind ... But that a man, from the necessity of his own nature, should endeavour to become non-existent, is as impossible as that something should be made out of nothing, as everyone will see for himself, after a little reflection.

PROP. XXI. *No one can desire to be blessed, to act rightly, and to live rightly, without at the same time wishing to be, to act, and to live—in other words, to actually exist.*

PROP. XXII. *No virtue can be conceived as prior to this endeavour to preserve one's own being. ...*

Corollary.—The effort for self-preservation is the first and only foundation of virtue. For prior to this principle nothing can be conceived, and without it no virtue can be conceived.

PROP. XXIII. *Man, in so far as he is determined to a particular action because he has inadequate ideas, cannot be absolutely said to act in obedience to virtue; he can only be so described, in so far as he is determined for the action because he understands.*

Proof.—In so far as a man is determined to an action through having inadequate ideas, he is passive ... that is ... he does something, which cannot be perceived solely through his essence, that is ... which does not follow from his virtue. But, in so far as he is determined for an action because he understands, he is active; that is, he does something, which is perceived through his essence alone, or which adequately follows from his virtue. Q.E.D.

PROP. XXIV. *To act absolutely in obedience to virtue is in us the same thing as to act, to live, or to preserve one's being (these three terms are identical in meaning) in accordance with the dictates of reason on the basis of seeking what is useful to one's self.*

PROP. XXVI. *Whatsoever we endeavour in obedience to reason is nothing further than to understand; neither does the mind, in so far as it makes use of reason, judge anything to be useful to it, save such things as are conducive to understanding.*

PROP. XXVIII. *The mind's highest good is the knowledge of God, and the mind's highest virtue is to know God.*

Proof.—The mind is not capable of understanding anything higher than God, that is, than a Being absolutely infinite, and without which nothing can either be or be conceived; therefore, the mind's highest utility or good is the knowledge of God. Again, the mind is active, only in so far as it understands, and only to the same extent can it be said absolutely to act virtuously. The mind's absolute virtue is therefore to understand. Now, as we have already shown, the highest that the mind can understand is God; therefore the highest virtue of the mind is to understand or to know God. Q.E.D.

PROP. XXXV. *In so far only as men live in obedience to reason, do they always necessarily agree in nature.*

Proof.—In so far as men are assailed by emotions that are passions, they can be different in nature, and at variance one with another. But, men are only said to be active, in so far as they act in obedience to reason; ... it follows that men, in so far as they live in obedience to reason, necessarily do only such things as are necessarily good for human nature, and consequently for each individual man; in other words, such things as are in harmony with each man's nature. Therefore, men in so far as they live in obedience to reason, necessarily live always in harmony one with another. *Q.E.D.*

Corollary I.—There is no individual thing in nature, which is more useful to man, than a man who lives in obedience to reason. ...

Corollary II.—As every man seeks most that which is useful to him, so are men most useful one to another. ...

Note.—What we have just shown is attested by experience so conspicuously, that it is in the mouth of nearly everyone: "Man is to man a God." Yet it rarely happens that men live in obedience to reason, for things are so ordered among them, that they are generally envious and troublesome one to another. Nevertheless they are scarcely able to lead a solitary life, so that the definition of man as a social animal has met with general assent; in fact, men do derive from social life much more convenience than injury. Let satirists then laugh their fill at human affairs, let theologians rail, and let misanthropes praise to their utmost the life of untutored rusticity, let them heap contempt on men and praises on beasts; when all is said, they will find that men can provide for their wants much more easily by mutual help, and that only by uniting their forces can they escape from the dangers that on every side beset them ...

PROP. XXXVI. *The highest good of those who follow virtue is common to all, and therefore all can equally rejoice therein.*

Proof.—To act virtuously is to act in obedience with reason ... and whatsoever we endeavour to do in obedience to reason is to understand ... therefore ... the highest good for those who follow after virtue is to know God; that is ... a good which is common to all and can be possessed by all men equally, in so far as they are of the same nature. *Q.E.D.*

Note.—Someone may ask how it would be, if the highest good of those who follow after virtue were not common to all? Would it not then follow ... that men living in obedience to reason, that is ... men in so far as they agree in nature, would be at variance one with another? To such an inquiry I make answer, that it follows not accidentally but from the very nature of reason, that man's highest good is common to all, inasmuch as it is deduced from the very essence of man, in so far as defined by reason; and that a man could neither be, nor be conceived without the power of taking pleasure in this highest good. For it belongs to the essence of the human mind ... to have an adequate knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God.

PROP. XXXVII. *The good which every man, who follows after virtue, desires for himself he will also desire for other men, and so much the more, in proportion as he has a greater knowledge of God.*

Proof.—... desire, in so far as it is referred to the mind, is the very essence of the mind; now the essence of the mind consists in knowledge, which involves the knowledge of God, and without it, can neither be, nor be conceived; therefore, in proportion as the mind's essence involves a greater knowledge of God, so also will be greater the desire of the follower of virtue, that other men should possess that which he seeks as good for himself. *Q.E.D.* ...

Note I.—He who, guided by emotion only endeavours to cause others to love what he loves himself, and to make the rest of the world live according to his own fancy, acts solely by impulse, and is, therefore, hateful ... But he, who endeavours to lead men by reason, does not act by impulse but courteously and kindly, and his intention is always consistent. Again, whatsoever we desire and do, whereof we are the cause in so far as we possess the idea of God, or know God, I set down to *Religion*. The desire of well-doing, which is engendered by a life according to reason, I call *piety*. Further, the desire, whereby a man living according to reason is bound to associate others with himself in friendship, I call *honour* [*Honestas*]; by *honourable* I mean that which is praised by men living according to reason, and by *base* I mean that which is repugnant to the gaining of friendship. ...

... it is plain that the law against the slaughtering of animals is founded rather on vain superstition and womanish pity than on sound reason. The rational quest of what is useful to us further teaches us the

necessity of associating ourselves with our fellowmen, but not with beasts, or things, whose nature is different from our own; we have the same rights in respect to them as they have in respect to us. Nay, as everyone's right is defined by his virtue, or power, men have far greater rights over beasts than beasts have over men. Still I do not deny that beasts feel: what I deny is, that we may not consult our own advantage and use them as we please, treating them in the way which best suits us; for their nature is not like ours, and their emotions are naturally different from human emotions. ...

Note II.—... Every man exists by sovereign natural right, and, consequently, by sovereign natural right performs those actions which follow from the necessity of his own nature; therefore by sovereign natural right every man judges what is good and what is bad, takes care of his own advantage according to his own disposition, avenges the wrongs done to him, and endeavours to preserve that which he loves and to destroy that which he hates. Now, if men lived under the guidance of reason, everyone would remain in possession of this his right, without any injury, being done to his neighbour. But seeing that they are a prey to their emotions, which far surpass human power or virtue, they are often drawn in different directions, and being at variance one with another, stand in need of mutual help. Wherefore, in order that men may live together in harmony, and may aid one another, it is necessary that they should forego their natural right, and, for the sake of security, refrain from all actions which can injure their fellow-men. ...

On this law society can be established, so long as it keeps in its own hand the right, possessed by everyone, of avenging injury, and pronouncing on good and evil; and provided it also possesses the power to lay down a general rule of conduct, and to pass laws sanctioned, not by reason, which is powerless in restraining emotion, but by threats. Such a society established with laws and the power of preserving itself is called a State, while those who live under its protection are called citizens. We may readily understand that there is in the state of nature nothing, which by universal consent is pronounced good or bad; for in the state of nature everyone thinks solely of his own advantage, and according to his disposition, with reference only to his individual advantage, decides what is good or bad, being bound by no law to anyone besides himself.

In the state of nature, therefore, sin is inconceivable; it can only exist in a state, where good and evil are pronounced on by common consent, and where everyone is bound to obey the State authority. Sin, then, is nothing else but disobedience, which is therefore punished by the right of the State only. Obedience, on the other hand, is set down as merit, inasmuch as a man is thought worthy of merit, if he takes delight in the advantages which a State provides.

Again, in the state of nature, no one is by common consent master of anything, nor is there anything in nature, which can be said to belong to one man rather than another: all things are common to all. Hence, in the state of nature, we can conceive no wish to render to every man his own, or to deprive a man of that which belongs to him; in other words, there is nothing in the state of nature answering to justice and injustice. Such ideas are only possible in a social state, when it is decreed by common consent what belongs to one man and what to another.

From all these considerations it is evident, that justice and injustice, sin and merit, are extrinsic ideas, and not attributes which display the nature of the mind. But I have said enough.

PROP. XL. *Whatsoever conduces to man's social life, or causes men to live together in harmony, is useful, whereas whatsoever brings discord into a State is bad.*

Proof.—For whatsoever causes men to live together in harmony also causes them to live according to reason ...

PROP. XLI. *Pleasure in itself is not bad but good: contrariwise, pain in itself is bad.*

Proof.—Pleasure is emotion, whereby the body's power of activity, is increased or helped; pain is emotion, whereby the body's power of activity is diminished or checked; therefore pleasure in itself is good, &c. *Q.E.D.*

PROP. XLII. *Mirth cannot be excessive, but is always good; contrariwise, Melancholy is always bad.*

PROP. XLIII. *Stimulation may be excessive and bad; on the other hand, grief may be good, in so far as stimulation or pleasure is bad.*

PROP. XLIV. *Love and desire may be excessive.*

Note.— ... We sometimes see men so absorbed in one object, that, although it be not present, they think they have it before them; when this is the case with a man who is not asleep, we say he is delirious or mad; nor are those persons who are inflamed with love, and who dream all night and all day about nothing but their mistress, or some woman, considered as less mad, for they are made objects of ridicule. But when a miser thinks of nothing but gain or money, or when an ambitious man thinks of nothing but glory, they are not reckoned to be mad, because they are generally harmful, and are thought worthy of being hated. But, in reality, Avarice, Ambition, Lust, &c., are species of madness, though they may not be reckoned among diseases.

PROP. XLV. *Hatred can never be good.*

Note.—Between derision (which I have ... stated to be bad) and laughter I recognize a great difference. For laughter, as also jocularly, is merely pleasure; therefore, so long as it be not excessive, it is in itself good. Assuredly nothing forbids man to enjoy himself, save grim and gloomy superstition. For why is it more lawful to satiate one's hunger and thirst than to drive away one's melancholy? I reason, and have convinced myself as follows: No deity, nor anyone else, save the envious, takes Pleasure in my infirmity and discomfort, nor sets down to my virtue the tears, sobs, fear, and the like, which are signs of infirmity of spirit; on the contrary, the greater the pleasure wherewith we are affected, the greater the perfection whereto we pass; in other words, the more must we necessarily partake of the divine nature. Therefore, to make use of what comes in our way, and to enjoy it as much as possible (not to the point of satiety, for that would not be enjoyment) is the part of a wise man. I say it is the part of a wise man to refresh and recreate himself with moderate and pleasant food and drink, and also with perfumes, with the soft beauty of growing plants, with dress, with music, with many sports, with theatres, and the like, such as every man may make use of without injury to his neighbour. For the human body is composed of very numerous parts, of diverse nature, which continually stand in need of fresh and varied nourishment, so that the whole body may be equally capable of performing all the actions, which follow from the necessity of its own nature; and, consequently, so that the mind may also be equally capable of understanding many things simultaneously. This way of life, then, agrees best with our principles, and also with general practice; therefore, if there be any question of another plan, the plan we have mentioned is the best, and in every way to be commended. There is no need for me to set forth the matter more clearly or in more detail.

PROP. XLVI. *He, who lives under the guidance of reason, endeavours, as far as possible, to render back love, or kindness, for other men's hatred, anger, contempt, &c., towards him.*

Proof.—All emotions of hatred are bad; therefore he who lives under the guidance of reason will endeavour, as far as possible, to avoid being assailed by such emotions; consequently, he will also endeavour to prevent others being so assailed. But hatred is increased by being reciprocated, and can be quenched by love, so that hatred may pass into love; therefore he who lives under the guidance of reason will endeavour to repay hatred with love, that is, with kindness. *Q.E.D.*

Note.—He who chooses to avenge wrongs with hatred is assuredly wretched. But he, who strives to conquer hatred with love, fights his battle in joy and confidence; he withstands many as easily as one, and has very little need of fortune's aid. Those whom he vanquishes yield joyfully, not through failure, but through increase in their powers; all these consequences follow so plainly from the mere definitions of love and understanding, that I have no need to prove them in detail.

PROP. XLVII. *Emotions of hope and fear cannot be in, themselves good.*

Proof.—Emotions of hope and fear cannot exist without pain. For fear is pain, and hope cannot exist without fear; therefore these emotions cannot be good in themselves, but only in so far as they can restrain excessive pleasure. *Q.E.D.*

Note.—We may add, that these emotions show defective knowledge and an absence of power in the mind; for the same reason confidence, despair, joy, and disappointment are signs of a want of mental power. For although confidence and joy are pleasurable emotions, they nevertheless imply a preceding pain, namely, hope and fear. Wherefore the more we endeavour to be guided by reason, the less do we depend on hope; we endeavour to free ourselves from fear, and, as far as we can, to dominate fortune, directing our actions by the sure counsels of wisdom.

PROP. L. *Pity, in a man who lives under the guidance of reason, is in itself bad and useless.*

Proof.—Pity is a pain, and therefore is in itself bad. The good effect which follows, namely, our endeavour to free the object of our pity from misery, is an action which we desire to do solely at the dictation of reason; only at the dictation of reason are we able to perform any action, which we know for certain to be good; thus, in a man who lives under the guidance of reason, pity in itself is useless and bad. *Q.E.D.*

Note.—He who rightly realizes, that all things follow from the necessity of the divine nature, and come to pass in accordance with the eternal laws and rules of nature, will not find anything worthy of hatred, derision, or contempt, nor will he bestow pity on anything, but to the utmost extent of human virtue he will endeavour to do well, as the saying is, and to rejoice. We may add, that he, who is easily touched with compassion, and is moved by another's sorrow or tears, often does something which he afterwards regrets; partly because we can never be sure that an action caused by emotion is good, partly because we are easily deceived by false tears. I am in this place expressly speaking of a man living under the guidance of reason. He who is moved to help others neither by reason nor by compassion, is rightly styled inhuman, for he seems unlike a man.

PROP. LII. *Self-approval may arise from reason, and that which arises from reason is the highest possible.*

Proof.—Self-approval is pleasure arising from a man's contemplation of himself and his own power of action ... But a man's true power of action or virtue is reason herself ...

Note.—Self-approval is in reality the highest object for which we can hope. ... fame becomes the most powerful of incitements to action, and life under disgrace is almost unendurable.

PROP. LIII. *Humility is not a virtue, or does not arise from reason.*

Proof.—Humility is pain arising from a man's contemplation of his own infirmities. But, in so far as a man knows himself by true reason, he is assumed to understand his essence, that is, his power. Wherefore, if a man in self-contemplation perceives any infirmity in himself, it is not by virtue of his understanding himself, but by virtue of his power of activity being checked. But, if we assume that a man perceives his own infirmity by virtue of understanding something stronger than himself, by the knowledge of which he determines his own power of activity, this is the same as saying that we conceive that a man understands himself distinctly, because his power of activity is aided. Wherefore humility, or the pain which arises from a man's contemplation of his own infirmity, does not arise from the contemplation or reason, and is not a virtue but a passion. *Q.E.D.*

PROP. LIV. *Repentance is not a virtue, or does not arise from reason; but he who repents of an action is doubly wretched or infirm.*

Proof.—... the man allows himself to be overcome, first, by evil desires; secondly, by pain.

Note.—As men seldom live under the guidance of reason, these two emotions, namely, Humility and Repentance, as also Hope and Fear, bring more good than harm; hence, as we must sin, we had better sin in that direction. For, if all men who are a prey to emotion were all equally proud, they would shrink from nothing, and would fear nothing; how then could they be joined and linked together in bonds of union? The crowd plays the tyrant, when it is not in fear; hence we need not wonder that the prophets, who consulted the good, not of a few, but of all, so strenuously commended Humility, Repentance, and Reverence. Indeed those who are a prey to these emotions may be led much more easily than others to live under the guidance of reason, that is, to become free and to enjoy the life of the blessed.

PROP. LV. *Extreme pride or dejection indicates extreme ignorance of self.*

PROP. LVI. *Extreme pride or dejection indicates extreme infirmity of spirit.*

PROP. LXVII. *A free man thinks of death least of all things; and his wisdom is a meditation not of death but of life.*

PROP. LXVIII. *If men were born free, they would, so long as they remained free, form no conception of good and evil.*

Proof.—I call free him who is led solely by reason; he, therefore, who is born free, and who remains free, has only adequate ideas; therefore he has no conception of evil, or consequently (good and evil being correlative) of good. *Q.E.D.*

Note.—... This, and other matters which we have already proved, seem to have been signified by Moses in the history of the first man. For in that narrative no other power of God is conceived, save that whereby he created man, that is the power wherewith he provided solely for man's advantage; it is stated that God forbade man, being free, to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that, as soon as man should have eaten of it, he would straightway fear death rather than desire to live. Further, it is written that when man had found a wife, who was in entire harmony with his nature, he knew that there could be nothing in nature which could be more useful to him; but that after he believed the beasts to be like himself, he straightway began to imitate their emotions, and to lose his freedom; this freedom was afterwards recovered by the patriarchs, led by the spirit of Christ; that is, by the idea of God, whereon alone it depends, that man may be free, and desire for others the good which he desires for himself, as we have shown above.

PROP. LXX. *The free man, who lives among the ignorant, strives, as far as he can, to avoid receiving favours from them. ...*

Note.—I say, as far as he can. For though men be ignorant, yet are they men, and in cases of necessity could afford us human aid, the most excellent of all things: therefore it is often necessary to accept favours from them, and consequently to repay such favours in kind; we must, therefore, exercise caution in declining favours, lest we should have the appearance of despising those who bestow them, or of being, from avaricious motives, unwilling to requite them, and so give ground for offence by the very fact of striving to avoid it. Thus, in declining favours, we must look to the requirements of utility and courtesy.

PROP. LXXI. *Only free men are thoroughly grateful one to another.*

PROP. LXXII. *The free man never acts fraudently, but always in good faith.*

PROP. LXXIII. *The man, who is guided by reason, is more free in a State, where he lives under a general system of law, than in solitude, where he is independent.*

Proof.—The man, who is guided by reason, does not obey through fear: but, in so far as he endeavours to preserve his being according to the dictates of reason, that is, in so far as he endeavours to live in freedom, he desires to order his life according to the general good, and, consequently, to live according to the laws of his country. Therefore the free man, in order to enjoy greater freedom, desires to possess the general rights of citizenship. *Q.E.D.*

Note.—These and similar observations, which we have made on man's true freedom, may be referred to strength, that is, to courage and nobility of character. I do not think it worth while to prove separately all the properties of strength; much less need I show, that he that is strong hates no man, is angry with no man, envies no man, is indignant with no man, despises no man, and least of all things is proud. These propositions, and all that relate to the true way of life and religion, are easily proved ... namely, that hatred should be overcome with love, and that every man should desire for others the good which he seeks for himself. ... the strong man has ever first in his thoughts, that all things follow from the necessity of the divine nature; so that whatsoever he deems to be hurtful and evil, and whatsoever, accordingly, seems to him impious, horrible, unjust, and base, assumes that appearance owing to his own disordered, fragmentary, and confused view of the universe. Wherefore he strives before all things to conceive things as they really are, and to remove the hindrances to true knowledge, such as are hatred, anger, envy, derision, pride, and similar emotions, which I have mentioned above. Thus he endeavours, as we said before, as far as in him lies, to do good, and to go on his way rejoicing. ...