

Opinion We call by this name the judgments in form of
men & things when ^{or} these judgments depend not altogether on evidence
but upon instinctive belief, authority, or a variety of circum-
stances, not easily defined or classified. Opinion should be
left open to correction. It evinces weakness to be tenacious
of opinions however formed (or adapted). But whilst we guard against
this extreme let us beware that we do not, (Camellia-like)
change our opin^s with every change of placed circumstances
obstinacy & levity to be guarded against. Opinion has a strong
influence on the above mentioned principles viz. app^s, pass^s, &
Desires &c. Though but little over app^s. Affection often precedes
opinion. e.g. Parents, children, relatives &c. Opin. does not govern
brutes but is a strong & powerful instrument in the gov. of man.
Superstition has ever had great influence on opinions.

Finally. With the Skeptic every thing is only Opinion.
Rational Principles of action ^{the} governing ^{ment} reason
in opposition to instinct & passion. Reason respects the end
as well as the means.

There are two Rational principles of action, 1st &
regard to our interest on the whole (or chief good) Here inquire
how this idea of chief good is formed, & what it is (vide Reid)
It is sometimes called Self-love. app^s, pass^s, affection, all
seek present good. Self-love be a regard to our good on whole
has been styled selfishness by some New-England writers. (not true)
A man is rightly called selfish when he regards his own interest
solely & exclusively. But there is no opposition or repugnance
between Benevolence & Self-love. The wise man according
to the Stoics, was more ideal being as a perfect model of work
among Greeks & Romans. Stoics divided goods into those of the
body, of the soul & of fortune. The 2nd had great influence on
the 3rd (or fortune). The Ruling passion (vide Pope's en. of
the character of man p^o to 2nd) gives the outline of purpose &
leads to happiness or misery, it does calm to be deprecated
(calm in the coast of Africa) Cataline an example of unshak-
ness (vanity exception).

Well regulated Self love leads to virtuous conduct. (R)
But ^{regard the chief good} 1st a doubtful guide 2nd a weak monitor, 3rd a
bad implement in its exercises. Remarks: men short sighted
2nd Our rational principles impress us seldom immediately.
We look at things present 3rd not as affections, for it im-
plies care & anxiety. — Happiness is not to be found here
the pursuit of it is like a man chasing his shadow.
Finally chief wisdom & the only sure foundation for
happiness is to surrender ourselves entirely to God.

15 Analysis of Conscience, or the Moral Principle
Conscience is that faculty by which we distinguish right
conduct from wrong. Or rather it ^{implies} is a perception of right
or wrong attended with correspondent feelings. 1st A percep-
tion of pleasure or pain variable in proportion to moral
sensibility. 3rd A perception of merit or of demerit in the agent.
1st Any action to be morally right or wrong, must first be
free. 2nd perfectly in our power & known to be so.
3rd done in faith. 4th Whoever firmly believes any given
action to be right or wrong to him it is such as he believes it
to be. ("Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.") Yet a per-
son is culpable where information seen he had, who does
not avail himself of the information.
2nd Whenever we follow implicitly the dictates of conscience,
we are sensible of a pleasurable emotion arising from
the reflection that we have done what was our duty to do &
on the other hand when we transgress the dictates of Consc.
a painful, or at least a disagreeable emotion arises from
the consideration that we have done what we ought not or
omitted to do what we ought to have done.
3rd We are naturally disposed to reward one who performs
a good action with praise at least, if not otherwise.
"Lays delatari virtute." Virtue has always been considered
worthy of praise though though not always rewarded. We
likewise are sensible of disapprobation when we perceive
ill conduct, & ascribe to it demerit according to its baseness
or atrocity. But demerit does not always provoke reprobation.
The idea of right as that of Power is simple. To attempt
to define it would be making it more obscure.
The power of Consc. is innate (or congrate) though it
comes to maturity by degrees; or is tutored by the experience
we have of our own conduct & by the examples of good & ill
which are furnished us by others. (Locke's opinion to the
contrary notwithstanding.)

or discernment

This perception of right & wrong supposes the reality of moral distinctions, & does not depend on the constitution of the mind.

All the arguments adduced to prove the cultivation of our other faculties, Attention, abstraction, memory, association, judgment, reasoning &c. bear with united force in proof of the fact that moral discernment, or Conscience, is susceptible of a high degree of improvement. Hence much depends on the due culture & proper exercise of this faculty which at first is tender & delicate & easily warped.

This perception of right & wrong in human conduct supposes the reality of moral distinctions & does not depend on the constitution of the mind as some allege. Neither is it the result of positive law, as Hobbs maintains. For no law or system of laws can ~~render~~ that wrong which is intrinsically right, or conversely. Nor is it the result of the Divine Will as many Theologians suppose. For this would be to ascribe to the Divine will many things very foreign from Him. Platonic philosophers sometimes used the phrase 'the God within the mind' to denote Conscience. But it is very probable they meant only by this that Conscience is the to designate Conscience as that faculty, possessed of Supreme (central) Authority, & of power to divide the light from the darkness in the chaos of the passions.

Nor is it resolvable into utility, as Paley has attempted to show. Actions in the abstract are right or wrong according to their tendency; but the agent is virtuous or vicious according to his design. Thus. If the question be, Whether relieving common beggars be right or wrong? we inquire into the tendency of such a conduct to the public advantage or inconvenience. If the question be, Whether a manro- that reason? We inquire into his design, whether his liberality springs from charity or from a pretension to an action.

It is evident our concern is with the actions in the abstract. The diff. between virtue & utility is further shown by the following arguments. 1st. There is great diversity of opinion as to utility. 2nd. The sentiment of moral approbation & disapp. shows itself in life prior to the idea of utility e.g. in children. The great mass of mankind too have strong feelings of approbation & disapp. who exhibit but little notion of utility. The relation of right & wrong is an ultimate relation & stands alone.

Objections answered. These various opinions of men
or moral duty may be accounted for ^{1st} from their
situations (E.g. opinion as to usury. Violence of resentment
among savages) 2nd from dif. speculative opinions as to the
connections between ends & means (E.g. questions of policy in
Congress. Legislators may be agreed as to the end to be ac-
complished, whilst they entertain various opinions as to means
Br^d The same formal actions are dif. among dif.
nations. The emotion implied in Consc. is pleasant or
painful according to the moral qualities of the object
perceived. This emotion is, in com. Lang. called mor-
al feeling & the obj. of it is what may be termed the
beauty of virtue or the deformity of vice. The 1st was
called by the ancient Greeks the to kalon a thing
distinguished from the utility of virtue, or that in it
by which it tends to produce public or private
happiness, & called the to ayaton - both together
called the ^{ka} kalayabia. There is an analogy between
Conscience & intellectual taste. Though they are not
identical. (Allison says that these qualities termed beau-
tiful in material obj.s are only signs of beauty in mor-
al. ^{intell.} Another analogy is there are moral qualities in vir-
tue corresponding to qualities in nature & these excite
similar emotions. The softer qualities, modesty, sym-
pathy, meekness, politeness &c. belong to the beautiful
in virtue. Sternness, courage, fortitude, justice belong
to the sublime.