THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF JAMES BOSWELL

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THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF JAMES BOSWELL

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CHAPTER I

INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND OF JAMES BOSWELL

The eighteenth century by reason of a combination of circumstances witnessed a rapid change, growth, and development in all phases of thinking and living. No other age, perhaps, has experienced such an avid interest in learning. The results of this change were soon evident in literature, science, religion, art, and architecture. Intellect became the god of literature; accuracy of design and fidelity to reality were the dominant motives to be attained in art; a frankness of line that was classic in its simplicity became the objective of architecture.

It is evident in this age, as well as in others, that certain reactionary forces brought about this new spirit and that they had a direct bearing on all phases of literature; therefore it is the purpose of the author to outline briefly some of the intellectual ideas relating to the nature of man, his conception of religion, his social manners and customs, and to reveal, through the Hypochondriack essays, that James Boswell was a peculiarly eighteenth-century figure in certain aspects of his moral philosophy.

One of the significant forces which influenced the mode of thought and behavior in the eighteenth century was the
scientific movement (1500-1700) that began with the work of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Bacon, Harvey, Descartes, and Boyle, and culminated with the experiments of Newton. Newton, by mathematical formulas, revealed a mechanical view of nature in which man and inanimate objects were harmonized. He, according to Randall, "effected so successful a synthesis of the mathematical principles of nature that he stamped the mathematical ideal of science, and the identification of the natural with the rational, upon the entire field of thought."¹ As a result of Newton's interpretation of nature, the thinkers of the eighteenth century believed that all action of life was centered in "a great, fixed, geometrical and mechanical order of nature, a mighty machine eternally pursuing the same unchanging round of cyclical processes. And the dominating ideals by which they swore and by which they tested all human conceptions were Nature and Reason."²

Nature was revealed in the physical universe; therefore it was natural. Since it was natural, it must be reasonable; thus it was rational. Consequently, what was natural and rational became the objective of intelligent thinkers. Religion, which will be discussed later, was natural through reason and nature, as well as in moral laws, and its fundamentals were: "acknowledgment of God's existence, duty towards

² Ibid., p. 274.
Him and our neighbour, necessity for repentance, future state of rewards and punishments." God's law was nature's law, and for one to follow its pattern was natural. "Nature," says Randall, "was God's model for man; nay, it was the very face of God himself."

A natural accompaniment of the new conception of nature and man was a growth of freedom in social, political, and economic fields. The social conscience was aroused so that more attention was given to slaves, criminals, the afflicted and insane people; yet little was done to improve their condition. The middle class began to weaken the dominance of the aristocracy and absolute monarchy. Many restrictions were lifted on trade and industry; consequently foreign trade increased, bringing in greater wealth; and industrialism gradually developed. Geographical discoveries, made by various explorers, paved the way for trade and created a growing interest in primitive society. Many people considered the simplicity of the savage state better than the complications of civilized society. And, at the same time, a spirit of cosmopolitanism was developing as a result of communication with distant parts of the world.

Locke, who has been called a prophet of the science of human nature, was important in eighteenth-century thought

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3 Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background, p. 7.
4 Randall, op. cit., p. 278.
because he accepted Newton's theory, yet he had ideas of nature and God that were adopted by the empiricists after his death and used to confute rational nature and religion. He formulated a science of human society that attacked the existing social and religious traditions in the light of what seemed rational and reasonable. He believed in setting authority in its place and deriving all knowledge from experience; and he hoped for a deductive system of religion and ethics. Reason was the most pertinent factor to him, for he asserts, "The great principle and foundation of all virtue and worth is placed in this, that a man is able to deny himself his own desires, cross his inclination and purely follow what reason directs as best." 5

Perhaps it would be relevant here to mention Randall's conception of the empiricists, as their theories conflicted with those of Newton and Locke and paved the way for progress later in the century. Concerning them Randall says:

The empiricists who, following Locke, took Europe by storm, were essentially critics: standing face to face with a traditional body of beliefs in which they profoundly disbelieved, particularly in religion, morals, and politics, they used their method to brush aside traditions and clear the ground for newer and better ideas. . . . But in the Age of Reason 'empiricism' was employed by a Voltaire to destroy revealed religion and absolute monarchy and Christian asceticism, and by the same Voltaire 'reason' was used to erect a 'rational' theology and 'natural' rights and a 'natural' moral law. 6

5 John Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, p. 10.
6 Randall, op. cit., p. 272.
From the preceding pages one may note that science played an important role in the conception of nature during the eighteenth century. It succeeded for a time, perhaps, because its theories fused harmoniously with the traditions of Christianity. As a result of this harmony, "design, order, and law" existed instead of confusion. Everything was in its proper order. Man was good, and the universe was perfect to the extent that Alexander Pope could say,

All Nature is but art, unknown to thee
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good:
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear,
Whatever is, is right.

Before continuing with the effects of the scientific movement on man's conception of nature, it is necessary for one to observe its effects on religion and, in this connection, to discuss the effects of another significant force on eighteenth-century thought, namely, the effects of the conflicts brought about by the Reformation and Renaissance. The Reformation "by calling in doubt all the points of faith, and reducing them to the level of controversy" caused many changes in orthodox traditions. Christianity, before this time had become involved in disputes, persecutions, and wars. Protestantism was anti-pagan and anti-Catholic. It had renounced the Holy See and, in its own organization, had split into

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*Wiley, op. cit., p. 6.*
many sects. Instead of teaching and practicing benevolence, tolerance, peace, and understanding, it was involved in controversies over the tenets of supernaturalism, revelation, miracles, and prophecies. The churches were permeated with superstitions, antiquated prejudices, and a false system of profound knowledge. Many of Christianity's leaders were ignorant, vile, and corrupt. This was true not only in the Protestant churches, but also in the Catholic. As a result of this condition the Puritan Reformation occurred. It, in itself, was a "reaffirmation of a necessity of doctrinal orthodoxy and an external law of faith and practice."\(^8\)

The Renaissance brought humanism into religion. Humanism, with the support of scientific reasoning, evolved a new idea of religion that caused a break with Christian tradition of this age, as well as with the religion of the Middle Ages. Randall states:

> From humanism, religion was permeated by a rejection of the traditional notion of the impotence and depravity of human nature, and the Renaissance emphasis on man's moral and intellectual worth; from the new science, by a spirit of subjecting all beliefs and practices to the tests of reasonableness and utility in this life.\(^9\)

The break with tradition was as significant to Christianity as the break between Protestantism and Catholicism. Rational religion was first recognized in Holland during the seventeenth century, but England was the first country to adopt it

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consistently. As has been stated, religion had become, to a certain extent, reasonable and rational. Leslie Stephen says, "It was generally held on all sides that there was a religion of nature capable of purely rational demonstration. The problem remained as to its relation to the revealed religion and the established creed."\(^{10}\)

To identify the creed, it is necessary for one to give the views of the orthodox leaders and the Deists. Both orthodox and Deists agreed that religion could be a doctrine of reason; that religion, in a sense, was nature; that the works of nature evidenced a deity; and that man was governed by morals, since God was within man. The orthodox insisted, however, upon the supernatural and Revelation. The Deists, radical rationalists, whom Hazard\(^{11}\) calls "rationalists with a nostalgia for religion," believed that God was a great creator who had experienced no further contact with his creation since he made it. "The function of God became for them simply that of starting the machine in the first place; since then, God has not needed to concern himself with the operation of his perfect creation, and his sole value intellectually, aside from giving a scientific explanation of the origin of things, was to guarantee that the world was operated upon a

\(^{10}\)Leslie Stephen, *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 96.

\(^{11}\)Willey, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
moral basis, that it was permeated by a moral order that would punish in hell the unrighteous and reward the righteous.\textsuperscript{12}

The freethinking of the Deists led to skepticism and theism later in the century. The skeptics and theists disputed future life and a moral order in the universe and believed that a rational world should be ordered to meet the requirements of reasonable beings. Hume, as a representative of skepticism, will be discussed later. For the first half of the century man was content with nature and reason. Life, nature, and religion were simple and satisfying. The requirements for religious living were easy. Willey says, in commenting upon the rules for natural religion: "Follow Reason, the God within; look after your conduct and your creed will take care of itself. In short, whether you looked without or within, Nature (without any supernatural revelation) offered you all that was needful for salvation."\textsuperscript{13}

Both Randall\textsuperscript{14} and Willey\textsuperscript{15} agree that "in the early and middle years of the eighteenth century the wealthy and the educated of Europe must have enjoyed almost the nearest approach to earthly felicity ever known to man."

From the preceding discussions it is apparent that the scientific movement affected nature and religion; that the Renaissance, by bringing humanism into religion, and the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Randall, op. cit., p. 295.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Willey, op. cit., p. 8.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Randall, op. cit., p. 279.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Willey, op. cit., p. 44.
\end{itemize}
Reformation, by calling into doubt all the points of faith and reducing them to the level of controversy, led to the growth of natural religion; and that, as a result of these, man accepted a rational universe with a rational deity and considered all partial evil to be universal good.

Another idea of nature that was prevalent in England at this time was primitivism. Lovejoy defines primitivism by saying:

The complex of inter-related ideas to which the historians of literature and philosophy have given the name of 'primitivism' is at once a philosophy of history and a theory of values, moral or aesthetic, or both. . . . As a philosophy of history primitivism is, of course, the belief that the earliest condition of man and of human society . . . was the best condition.16

Again he says,

Man has, throughout a great part of his historic march, walked with face turned backward; and a nostalgia for his original state, which tradition and piety had pleasingly idealized, has persistently beset him. That heaven lay about him, in his racial infancy has—if one may judge by the prodigious frequency of its iteration in literature—been one of the commonest and most tenacious of man's faiths.17

Primitivism, then considered man's original state as best, since by nature man was good, kind, and benevolent before he was corrupted by civilization. Man was dominated by good impulses. His life was simple and natural; and as a result, he was happy and content. He was born into his station and there he remained. The laws of nature were "immutable"

17Ibid.
and "eternal"; therefore primitivism logically led to a belief in degeneration rather than in progress as characteristic of modern civilization. Accordingly, in the eighteenth century physical nature and natural religion led man to believe that he could regain the happiness and goodness which he once had known by returning to the original mode of life. Those who disapproved of the prevailing laxities in moral, social, political, and religious life believed the "noble" savage a better example of virtue than man in Christian countries.

Never before had manifestations of cultural primitivism in literature been quite so abundant—though this was partly because, with the increase of readers, the multiplication of popular journals, and the vogue of the didactic or 'philosophical' novel, all current ideas and intellectual fashions were being more copiously reiterated in print and more assiduously and widely popularized than in any preceding age. Never, before, in modern times, had the praise of the simple life been sounded quite so eloquently, and with so moving an air of conviction, as by Rousseau; and never before had quite such seemingly engaging models of the noble savage and the life according to nature been available for primitivist uses as after the French and British voyages of exploration among the Polynesian peoples in the 1760's and 1770's. And primitivist premises had seldom, if ever, been so seriously, boldly and vigorously employed in polemic against the existing economic or political order, or against certain elements of the moral tradition of the west, as they were by Lahontan, Rousseau, Morelly, Diderot, and other writers of the period.\textsuperscript{18}

That the eighteenth-century concept of man and nature had been determined by the scientific movement, the conflicts in religion, resulting from the Reformation and Renaissance, and primitivism is evident. Optimism prevailed as a result of

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. xv-xvi.
man's acceptance of nature and nature's laws which were immutable, eternal, universal and uniform, simple and easy to comprehend and interpret. God as the creator, was benign and almighty, according to the orthodox, and to the Deists he was a good creator, for nature was his "own codex." Religion was natural and reasonable. To find its creed man had only to look in nature and in himself. There he would find the things that were necessary for him to do. He did not need to pray and seek God as a personal Savior; instead he should try to understand the wisdom of God in creation. If he lived rationally, he would be rewarded after his death. If he did not, he would be punished accordingly; thus man's life was fixed in the universe, and "whatever is, is right."

Although many intellectuals held the theory that man was good and exactly as he should be, other men contended that man was both good and bad; in other words, he was born with both good and bad qualities. This idea of man was not new in Western thought. For many years Christians and philosophers had argued concerning the "good" and "evil" of man's nature. The Christians insisted that man was good before the Fall, but after the divine malediction he had both good and evil qualities in his nature. He could develop goodness by avoiding or conquering evil.

Besides the Christian doctrine of the fall, another theory, that of the One and the Many, the Absolute and the world of things, had perplexed the Western mind since the time of Plato. The accepted theory was "that the One was 'Good,'
that is to say, it desired to communicate existence to the not-itself, and having desired this self-overflowing, it could not deny existence to any possible kind of being."\textsuperscript{19} The seed of the good and bad creatures were in the One, and he, not to be "self-absorbed" produced them; thus the One generated things which were evil and imperfect. Anything less than the One was imperfect, and it was evil according to its degree. It was better, though, to generate things of evil than to deny them germination. From this viewpoint "it was 'better' to create one angel and one man than two angels; one man and one monkey than two men, and so on. The realization of a 'full' universe is the greatest of all 'goods.'"\textsuperscript{20}

The degree in imperfection led to the doctrine of final causes and that of the immutability of species. Of this Whitney says:

\textit{In regard to final causality the traditional pattern of thought as it came down through the church fathers was something like this: nature was created for the use and convenience of man; there is a gradation in created beings from the lowest forms up to man; man, the nearest to God of earthly creatures, was created for the glorification of God and a final mystical absorption into his spirit. God, in other words, is the end or final cause of all creation as he is also the first cause. If man could only comprehend the whole scheme of things--and there were many theologians who apparently felt that they could qualify for the trial--he would see that even the most inconspicuous object in the universe has its appropriate place in the design of the whole for which it was uniquely and admirably adapted, and all parts of the whole work together toward a single end or}

\textsuperscript{19} Willey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 47. \textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
final cause. In other words, the design of the whole preceded the parts and was their final cause. The doctrine of immutable species was almost inseparable from that of final causality, for the perpetuation of the species was taken as one of the clearest proofs of an informing purpose in nature. 21

The doctrine of causality was valuable at this particular time because it was sanctioned by tradition; it served as the defense against the materialistic ideas of the mechanistic hypothesis; and, furthermore, it was essential to the principle of continuity, which Whitney summarizes as follows:

This universal system, which is the best of all possible systems that God might have created, is the manifest product of design in its symmetrical and harmonious pattern. One of the chief excellences of the system is the fecundity of nature in the creation of life forms. When all the forms of life are graded from the highest to the lowest, there is seen to be no gap in creation anywhere; every possible form has been created. Whatever apparent evil there may be in the system is due merely to the fact that one cannot have a complete chain at all without having a gradation from the most excellent to the least excellent forms of life. The evil for any species is incident to its place in the chain. Though members of the chain may strive to perfect themselves in their appointed sphere, the happiness of each member depends on knowing and keeping his proper place in the chain. If any species of being in the scale were to invade the province of the species just above, the whole system would be destroyed. 22

Observing the chain of being, one sees that a certain rank or position is given to each form of being. He may not progress, but he should console himself in that there are creatures above and below him and in that there would be a gap in the chain without him. Addison says:

Infinite goodness is of so communicative a Nature, that it seems to delight in the conferring

of Existence upon every degree of Perceptive Being. It is wonderful to observe, by what a gradual progress the world of Life advances through a prodigious variety of species, before a creature is formed that is complete in all its senses. 23

The chain of being, it seems, caused both optimism and pessimism. As long as man accepted his station as fixed and unimprovable, he was cheerful; and everything was as it should be. On the other hand, if he wished to proceed to the position above him, he was pessimistic.

Primitivism, in its true sense, then was not conducive to progress. It tended, instead, to degeneration. By the middle of the eighteenth century, primitivism, in a way, had been relegated to the background by a progressive movement, sentimentalism, which stressed the instincts, emotions, and sensibilities of man's nature rather than his reason. Stephen defines sentimentalism by stating:

Sentimentalism seems to be a name for several allied phases of thought which graduate imperceptibly into each other. . . . It is the name of the mood in which we make a luxury of grief, and regard sympathetic emotion as an end rather than a means—a mood rightly despised by men of masculine nature. It is, again, the name of the disposition to substitute feeling for logic, and therefore to avert our eyes from facts whenever facts suggest unpleasant contemplations. But it may also be used to mean the sympathy of the good Samaritan for the sick and wounded in the struggle whom the orthodox Pharisee passes by with his official non possumus. It sometimes implies the tendency to substitute a rose-coloured ideal for a faithful portraiture of life; and sometimes the power of detecting the real beauty which is concealed from vulgar observers by their dread of vulgarity. 24

23 Spectator, No. 215.

Sentimentalism, pure and simple, is that phase of thinking that emphasizes the innate goodness of man, or it is, as Bernbaum says, "confidence in the goodness of human nature." It advanced the idea that man's emotions and instincts were a better guide to action than his reason. Primitivism asserted that man, in his natural state, was dominated by good impulses, while sentimentalism advocated the thought that man was born with both good and bad qualities and that he did not become good by the exercise of his reason, but by development through his feelings. Sentimentalism evidently came into being as a result of man's dissatisfaction with the existing order of thought and society. It served, perhaps, as more of a social force rather than an intellectual; still it contained certain tendencies relating to the philosophic theories.

An element of sentimentalism, sensibility, contributed to English thought by its emphasis upon "delicacy and keenness of feeling and ultra-refinement of sensitiveness to beauty both natural and normal." It was characterized by strong emotional reaction, moods of depression, and thoughts of death. In this it coincided with two other movements, Romanticism and naturalism. The principal ideas they suggested were: a love for wild, rugged nature, the development of the imagination and emotional in man, a growing recognition of the worth of man as man, a trend toward the individualistic idea, and the growth of naturalistic ideas. The

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25 Ernest Bernbaum, The Drama of Sensibility, p. 2.
forerunners of the Romantic movement in poetry were: Collins, Young, Blair, and Gray.

Dryden and Pope represented the transitional ideas of the eighteenth century; Shaftesbury, Hume, and Richardson prepared the way for sentimentalism and progress by proclaiming that the moral and aesthetic perceptions are the effect of inner sentiment rather than reason; and Swift and Mandeville showed, by satire, the inconsistencies in nature and reason.

Dryden and Pope are important to English thought of the eighteenth century in their regard of nature, as they were more or less, a combination of optimism and pessimism. That they were influenced by the scientific investigations and the ideals of Christian traditions is evident in their writings; however, Pope was more progressive, perhaps, than Dryden. One is not sure what Pope believed. There is doubt that he knew himself. Again he may have expressed his ideas to agree with the prevailing concepts. As Leslie Stephen says, "The serious aim of the poet is to give a philosophy of human nature and the mere description of natural objects strikes him as silly unless tacked to a moral."27

Dryden seemed to write with conviction when he said:

These truths are not the product of thy Mind,
But dropp'd from Heaven, and of a Nobler Kind.
Reveal'd Religion first inform'd thy Sight,
And Reason saw not till Faith sprung the light.

Hence all thy Natural worship takes the Source:
'Tis Revelation what thou think'st Discourse.\textsuperscript{28}

With this the Deists certainly disagreed. Reason, instead of being associated with faith, was within man, if he would only follow it. Revelation was needless, as nature revealed everything that was useful and beneficial to man. In living according to reason, one did the will of the Lord according to his own volition; consequently he would be rewarded. Faith was "entirely built upon ratiocination," since it consists in trusting those to whom we believe God has spoken, and the latter must be established by evidence,\textsuperscript{29} and truth came from nature, for God was nature.

Although Dryden believed that truths were dropped from heaven, that revealed religion informed one's sight, and that faith gave the light, he was well aware of the theories about physical nature, as developed by the natural scientists and the materialistic philosophers. Commenting upon this nature, he says:

\begin{quote}
Is it not evident in these last one hundred years, when the study of philosophy has been the business of all the virtuosi in Christendom, that almost a new nature has been revealed to us--that more errors of the school have been detected, more useful experiments in philosophy made, more noble secrets in optics, medicine, astronomy, discovered, than in all those credulous and doting ages from Aristotle to us?\textsuperscript{30}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{28}Religio Laici, Lines 66-71.

\textsuperscript{29}Willey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{30}John Dryden, \textit{An Essay on Dramatic Poesy}, p. 16.
It may be seen that Dryden was uncertain and perplexed concerning the nature of man. He evidently reverted to the orthodox conception of nature later in his life; still one is left in doubt from the following statement in *The Hind and the Panther*:

My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires;  
My manhood, long misled by wand'ring fires,  
Followed false lights; and when their glimpse was gone,  
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.  
Such was I, such by nature still I am;  
Be thine the glory, and mine the shame.

Pope, it seems, was affected a great deal by science and natural religion. He was imbued with a love for the beautiful order of the universe or the chain of being. In his *Essay on Man* he found everything—nature, man, and God in harmony; accordingly man was good both socially and cosmically. His station was one of divine wisdom and goodness. Willey says, "Nature, for him [Pope], was a vast system of interconnected and interdependent parts, of which we see little, but enough to be convinced that it is an admirable Cosmos, moving according to unalterable laws." 31

The following verses indicate that Pope agreed with natural religion in the respect that man should look within himself to find God:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,  
The proper study of mankind is man.  
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,  
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:  
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side  
With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,

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He hangs between; in doubt to act or rest;  
In doubt to deem himself a god or beast;  
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;  
Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;  
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,  
Whether he thinks too little or too much:  
Chaos, of Thought and Passion, all confused;  
Still by himself abused or disabused:  
Created half to rise, and half to fall;  
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;  
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:  
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world.\textsuperscript{32}

Of the chain of being he says,

Of systems possible, if 'tis confest  
That Wisdom infinite must form the best,  
Where all must fall, or not coherent be,  
And all that rises, rise in due degree;  
Then in the scale of rea\'ning life, 'tis plain,  
There must be, somewhere, such a rank as man.\textsuperscript{33}

At first Pope believed, with many of the intellectuals  
of his day, that the scale of being was fixed and unimprovable  
so that one could not elevate his station; however, he illus-
trates a progressive theory, an evolutionary one in some re-
spects, by saying:

Vast chain of being! which from God began,  
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,  
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,  
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee,  
From thee to nothing.--  
On superior powers  
Were we to press, inferior might on ours;  
Or in the full, creation leave a void,  
Where one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd:  
From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,  
Tenth, or tenth thousandth, breaks the chain alike.\textsuperscript{34}

While other intellectuals had been tending to make nature  
divine, Shaftesbury defended human nature against traditional

\textsuperscript{32} Lines, 1-19. \textsuperscript{33} Lines, 43-48. \textsuperscript{34} Lines, 237-246.
detractions, in religion particularly. He was one of the first to consider man's nature as a resultant of the "immediate feeling and finer eternal sense." He affirmed the divinity of nature and believed that religion was based on nature, rather than on revelation, and that man was good because he was like nature. He thought that morality was natural, since the faculty, which man possessed by nature, enabled him to distinguish and prefer what was right, the harmonious and appropriate. Man's moral sense, according to Shaftesbury, could be improved by training. Man could learn to be virtuous by recognizing the worth and honesty of his affection. Reason and moral sense gave him the ability to choose right for its own beauty and appropriateness.

Confirming the preceding statements, Shaftesbury says:

We know that every Creature has a private Good and Interest of his own; which Nature has compelled him to seek, by all the advantages afforded him, within the compass of his make. We know that there is in reality a right and wrong state of every Creature; and that his right one is by Nature forwarded, and by himself affectionately fought. 35

Shaftesbury thought that religion, by giving false conceptions of the Deity, perverted man's moral sense. A God misrepresented harmed the affections of man. Man needed no help from God to recognize the right and wrong. Possibly there was no God. If there were a God, a universal Mind, he would be a benevolent and kind one. There might be a Supreme

35Earl of Shaftesbury, An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit, II, 15.
Being, but no Jupiter or Jehovah. Orthodoxy was an enemy to natural religion in that it was based on miracles rather than on the harmonious and beautiful order of things. This harmonious universe was a beautiful place where man practiced virtue by being affectionate and kind. Man was good if he were virtuous, and he became virtuous through his ability to recognize the good by its beauty and worth. A belief in rewards and punishments was unnecessary, yet it might influence one in the use of his moral sense. Shaftesbury was convinced that virtue depended upon the "natural" and "self-affections." One was virtuous who worked for the public good, as well as for his own. Man was the only being who did not live according to the laws of his nature. The pleasures of the mind were to be regarded more highly than those of the body; however, mental pleasures were the effects of natural affection. If one possessed the full and entire social affections, he abided by the dictates of nature and the rules of supreme wisdom. By doing this he attained morality, justice, piety, and natural religion.

David Hume, a representative of Anglo-Scottish eighteenth-century mind, defended nature against reason. He, as an archskeptic, used reason to reveal the limitations of reason. Willey gives this picture of him:

Hume is usually, and rightly, regarded as the archskeptic who overturned the philosophic card-castle erected by Descartes and his successors. He did, indeed, destroy all traditional certainties: matter, the soul, God, Nature, causation, miracles;
and by more rigorously applying the methods of Locke
and of Berkeley he demonstrated that their philosophy
led nowhere. A fresh start had to be made after his
work had been done, and in approaching him we begin
to cross the great intellectual watershed of the mid-
century. Hume is perhaps the writer in whom the dis-
tinctive characteristics of 'our excellent and indis-
pensable eighteenth century' are most completely ex-
pressed, and he is representative not least in this
--that his function was not so much to break new
ground as to break up old ground.\textsuperscript{36}

Before Hume, nature and reason were synthesized; after
him, nature and feeling. Hume was significant to the age be-
cause he demonstrated the fallacy of man's living by reason
alone. In his \textit{Treatise of Human Nature} he was inconsistent
in that he claimed to belong to the tradition which he en-
deavored to undermine. He strove to find a natural moral
law. Differing with the philosophers who accepted natural
religion, he had no theological presuppositions. He believed
that nature was a true order of existence and that it might
be justly represented or distorted by man's ideas. In a sense,
he thought that man should appeal to his common sense for
nature, but this did not apply to the existence of an external
order. He denied that belief was founded upon nature alone.
Nature, though not explainable by rational demonstration, was
efficacious in its principle of human nature. Nature was "not
determined by reason but by 'certain principles, which asso-
ciate together the ideas of these objects, and unite them in
the imagination."\textsuperscript{37} It was a product of man's imagination

\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Willey, op. cit.}, p. 110.

\textsuperscript{37}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 116.
and sensitivity, not reason. Human nature he considered more important than human reason, since metaphysics was a mental habit; and reason had destroyed itself.

While Hume was bold in speculation on skepticism, he was conservative in practice. In morals he conformed, more or less, to social standards, criticizing only ethical theories. All supernatural and metaphysical ideas for morality he rejected. Morality, to him, was sentiment. Man's reason was determined by the command of his heart and mind. Good and bad, in this connection, became a matter of statistics. Nothing was more important than man's sentiments of pleasure or uneasiness. Good consisted of the things that were approved by or agreeable to man. Human nature, then, was responsible for morality.

Hume in his *Essay of Miracles* was again inconsistent in that he based religion upon faith, yet he suggested that belief was based, to a certain extent, upon custom, experience, and a "reasonable" reason. Though he did not accept physical nature, he appealed to nature as the "fountain-light" of his age. The apostolic virtues he found useless and disagreeable, as the apostles, themselves, were illiterate and of low birth. He thought that miracles belonged to the primitive and barbaric ages, not to the Age of Enlightenment; in fact, he considered them destructive and impossible. They were destructive because they were not true, since the miracles, advocated by various religions, conflicted. They were impossible in that they violated the invariable laws of nature. He rejected
Theism, Deism, and Orthodox religion. One may wonder what religion remained to be accepted.

Mandeville's conception of human nature is interesting because it is unique. While most men of the eighteenth century found the nature of man good, Mandeville, a cynical and prurient writer, showed his contempt for it. He deemed himself and his neighbors despicable. Nature and man he judged corrupt. Nature was a power too mysterious for man's feeble intelligence. It was, in short, a "dark power whose action can only be inferred from facts not from any a priori theory of design, harmony, and order." To Mandeville virtue was no more than the renouncing of luxury. Modesty was not virtue, as it only hid the natural passions. It will be remembered that Shaftesbury thought that virtue was harmony in nature. In contrast, Mandeville interpreted virtue as a mere fashion that changed as readily as taste in dress or in architecture. Again he defined virtue as a taste for praise. In his celebrated Fable of the Bees, of which the subtitle was Private Vices, Publick Benefits, he showed society as a bee-hive, which is good as long as vice is practiced in it. Of it he says:

To enjoy the world's conveniences,  
Be fam'd in war, yet live in ease,  
Without great vices, is a vain  
Utopia seated in the brain:  
Fraud, luxury, and pride must live,  
Whilst we the benefits receive . . .

Do we not owe the growth of wine
To the dry shabby crooked vine,
Which, while its shoots neglected stood,
Choked other plants, and ran to wood
But blest us with its noble fruit
As soon as it was tied and cut?
So vice is beneficial found
When 'tis by justice looped and bound.\textsuperscript{39}

Willey comments on Mandeville and his significance to
the eighteenth-century ideas by saying:

Mandeville belongs to our story only because he
shared the eighteenth century belief in Nature--be-
cause he believed, that is to say, that you had only
to accept, to let natural causes produce their natural
effects, in order to arrive at a very tolerable state
of affairs. To get a good society, you need only go
on being as wicked as you like. But Mandeville stands
queerly poised between several conflicting schools of
thought; he is not of pure eighteenth-century extrac-
tion. Remove his 'Hobbist' or 'cynical' view of human
nature, and you get an eighteenth-century laissez-
faire liberal. Remove his complacent acceptance of
the splended hive, and you get a misanthrope or an
austere Christian moralist. As it is, he remains an
obstinate amalgam, irreducible to any simple formula,
though made up of ingredients which could only have
co-existed in his own age.\textsuperscript{40}

Swift, like Mandeville, used satire to point out the de-
fects in the nature of man and society. He believed that man
was divine by nature; that he degenerated or progressed accord-
ing to his moral living; that God gave man the ability with
which to reason; that reason was necessary in morality, as
well as in religion; that enthusiasm or fanaticism had no
place in religion; and that society should be directed by

\textsuperscript{39}Bernard de Mandeville, \textit{The Fable of the Bees}, II,
411-426.

\textsuperscript{40}Willey, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 99-100.
"standards of rationality, 'nature' and civilization for which the ancients stood."\textsuperscript{41}

While Swift satirized bitterly at times, his criticisms were based on important things. In \textit{Gulliver's Travels} Swift portrayed the Yahoo, man in his natural state, by using nauseating and disgusting satire to expose human vices, such as immorality, lewdness, filth, treachery, cruelty, and lack of reasoning. On the other hand, he depicted the Houyhnhnms, man as he should be, as patient, kind, and virtuous. The Houyhnhnms was without vices and incapable of pride.

Perhaps Swift used more skill and lucidity of expression in ridiculing the philosophy and philosophers of the eighteenth century than he did in any other field. He was keen in his dislike of anything based upon conjecture. One cannot help thinking that Swift was laughing to himself as he wrote in his serious mood of the inhabitants of Brobdingnag, who were defective in learning "as to ideas, entities, abstractions and transcendentals,"\textsuperscript{42} and who failed to classify Gulliver correctly because he was so small. Gulliver resented their lack of respect and replied, "Undoubtedly philosophers are in the right when they tell us that nothing is great or little otherwise than by comparison."\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., p. 103.

\textsuperscript{42}Jonathan Swift, \textit{Gulliver's Travels}, \textit{A Tale of a Tub}, \textit{Battle of the Books}, 1, 158.

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., p. 100.
Swift, continuing this theme, was convinced by the wild impossible schemes of the professors at the academy of Lagado that "there is nothing so extravagant and irrational which some philosophers have not maintained for truth." He again returned to lighter satire when he mentioned the great perplexities of the Houyhnhnms about his shoes and stockings. He declared that the gestures which the Houyhnhnms used were not unlike those of a philosopher when he attempted to solve some "new and unsolved phenomenon." And when Gulliver attempted to explain natural philosophy to the Master Houyhnhnm, the Master laughed at the idea that a creature capable of reasoning would value itself upon the basis of other people's conjectures. And finally, Swift dealt his most artful thrust at philosophy by having the governor of Glubdubdrib call up the ghosts of Descartes and Gassendi to have them explain their systems to Aristotle, and as a result of this conversation, Aristotle "freely acknowledged his own mistakes in natural philosophy, because he proceeded in many things upon conjecture, as all men must do."

From the preceding pages one may note that the eighteenth century witnessed many changing ideas and theories regarding man and his nature, his religion, and his social life. The combination of the philosophers who adopted Newton's theories, the religious conflicts that occurred as a result of the Reformation and Renaissance, and primitivism led man to accept

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the maxim, "Whatever is, is right," Nature, man, and God were synthesized in one harmonious order. What emerged as a result of this order was an optimism of acceptance; hence there could be no progress, only degeneration. At the same time some of the intellectuals, who could not accept the laws of nature as "immutable" and "eternal," were concentrating on the idea of change and progress. They argued that man's nature was not determined by reason, but by his instincts, emotions, and sensibilities; consequently three new trends of thought, sentimentalism, Romanticism, and naturalistic tendencies, originated in the middle of the eighteenth century, altering many old concepts of man's nature, as well as contributing new ones.

Many of the ideas that prevailed during the eighteenth century were adopted by Boswell in his journals, the Tour to the Hebrides, the Life of Johnson, and especially in the Hypochondriack essays, which will be discussed in the following pages.

In order for one to understand Boswell and to interpret his moral philosophy, it is necessary for one to take into full consideration Boswell, the man.
CHAPTER II

BOSWELL, THE MAN

On October 29, 1740, James Boswell, the eldest son of Alexander Boswell, later Lord Auchinleck, was born at Edinburgh, Scotland. Lord Auchinleck was a dignified judge of the Court of Session; he was a scholar who had studied at Leyden; he was a man of position and substance; he was a collator of Anacreon editions and the Greek lyricists; and he was the owner of a library which was one of the finest in Scotland, possibly in Great Britain. His wife, an Erskine of the Mar line, was evidently a pious and good woman of whom little is known.

James received his earliest tutoring from the Reverend John Dunn; then he attended the private academy of James Mundell. From the private academy he went to the University of Edinburgh, where he studied law and made two life-long friends, William Johnson Temple and Henry Dundas, first Lord Melville. In 1759 he studied under Adam Smith at Glasgow and in the following year went to London for the first time. Since Edinburgh had offered no great attractions to Boswell, he was immediately receptive to the gay life of London. The dashing elegance of the guards fascinated him. One may observe his inclinations from a letter to Temple, written on May 1, 1761:
A young fellow whose happiness was always centred in London, who had at least got there, and had begun to taste its delights — who had got his mind filled with the most gay ideas — getting into the Guards, being about Court, enjoying the happiness of the beau monde and the company of men of Genius; in short, every thing that he could wish — consider the poor fellow hauled away to the town of Edinburgh — obliged to conform to every Scotch custom, or be laughed at, — 'Will you hae some jeel?' Oh fie! Oh Fie! — His flighty imagination quite cramped, and he obliged to study Corpus Juris Civilis, and live in his father's strict family: is there any wonder, Sir, that the unlucky dog should be somewhat fretful?1

To be a sociable, mundane, and erudite gentleman was one of Boswell's early ambitions. While he was in London, he studied law; read literature, which included the classics, sporadically; and assimilated the things that were being discussed among young men of breeding. The theater was a constant source of amusement to him from the time when he first met David Ross. The actors he found agreeable and the plays enjoyable.

When he met Johnson in 1763, Boswell was only twenty-two years of age, while Johnson was fifty-three. Johnson was an eminent figure in contemporary letters; he had been recognized by a pension from the Crown, and he associated with a group of men who later became members of the famous Literary Club of London. Among this group were Reynolds, Gibbon, Adam Smith, the Warton brothers, Garrick, Goldsmith, and Bishop Percy.

1C. B. Tinker, Letters of James Boswell, I, 8. Hereafter all references to Boswell's letters will be to this edition.
Boswell, on the other hand, was by no means a rustic Scot. He had met and become intimate with such men as Temple, Erskine, Ross, Lord Hailes, Derrick, and Davies. Longaker in describing him says,

He had social graces, he was frank to the point of bluntness, he already had literary perceptions which were expressed with no compromise, and he was an interesting individuality. No matter with whom he was, it was soon he who became the center of attention, not as a star in whose reflected light others had their brilliance, but as one who gave conviviality to any group. Any gathering at which he was became a clearing-house for discussions of matters both great and small, for his youthful inquiries, his ingenious admissions, and even his lack of tact, put new life into the discussions of those groups whose manner of discourse was generally deliberate. In the company of those distinguished by rank and talents, he did not feel inferior. His frank inquisitiveness and his zealous manner of gaining his ends caused him to sit in celebrated company without shyness and restraint.²

Boswell was aware, perhaps, of the characteristics which made him acceptable to the company with whom he associated, for he says in the *Tour to the Hebrides*:

He had thought more than anybody supposed, and had a pretty good stock of general learning and knowledge. He had all Dr. Johnson's principles, with some degree of relaxation. He had rather too little than too much prudence, and his imagination being lively, he often said things of which the effect was very different from the intention. He resembled sometimes 'The best good man, with the worst natured muse.'³


³James Boswell, *Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 33.
Boswell's ambition, to become a prominent lawyer, was never realized; however, he had only himself to blame, for he regarded the bar and his own countrymen with disdain. Other interests, such as writing, the theater, traveling, drinking, and women, occupied his time. The eloquence of the English Courts appealed to him more than the Court of Sessions, and he lacked the seriousness and the assiduity necessary for the study of law; then his melancholy, or hypochondria, possibly prevented his accomplishing his desire, since he says,

Hypochondria sometimes brings on such an extreme degree of languor that the patient has a reluctance to every species of exertion. The uneasiness occasioned by this state is owing to a vivacity of imagination, presenting, at the same time, ideas of activity; so that a comparison is made between what is, and what should be. 4

Love and intrigues in love caused Boswell much perturbation of mind. For years he was in one entanglement after another, and he was evidently in love with all his women at times, at least the virtuous ones; furthermore he was capable of being in love with moral and immoral women at the same time. With this statement Lewis agrees, to a certain extent, by saying, "For Boswell is as capable of virtuous love as of desire for any passing drab of the town, and both passions can flourish in him simultaneously." 5

4Hypochondriack, No. VI, pp. 144-145.
5D. B. Wyndham Lewis, The Hooded Hawk, p. 43.
Boswell's affair with Mrs. Dodd, his "lively and admirably formed" mistress, and his courtship of Kate Blair occurred simultaneously; he was also corresponding with his "Italian angel," Signora of Siena and Isabella de Zuilen. Of his mistress Boswell says, "Had she never loved before, I would have lost every drop of blood rather than give her up. There's madness! There's delicacy!"6

Continuing concerning her, he says,

She debases my dignity. She has no refinement... She is kind. She is generous. What shall I do? I wish to get off; and yet how awkward would it be! And, after all, can I do better than keep a dear infidel for my hours of Paphian bliss?7

Then Boswell boasts, "You say well that I find mistresses wherever I am. But I am a sad dupe; a perfect Don Quixote."8

Of Catherine Blair, whom Boswell addressed as "Kate," "the Princess," "the Heiress," he says, "I do think her the finest woman I have seen, take her altogether; nor could I wish to be happier in a wife."9

He writes to Temple about her, "Love is a perfect fever of the mind. I question if any man has been more tormented with it than myself. Even at this moment, as I write, my heart is torn by vexing thoughts of the fine Princess of ours."10

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6Letters, I, 104.  
7Ibid., p. 102.  
8Ibid., p. 104.  
9Ibid., p. 127.  
10Ibid., p. 135.
Boswell, in speaking of his first love, a Miss W____t of whom nothing is known, declares,

I at first fell violently in love with her, . . . but now it is changed to a rational esteem of her good qualities, so that I should be extremely happy to pass my life with her, but if she does not incline to it, I can bear it aequo animo and retire into the calm regions of Philosophy. . . . She is just such a young lady as I could wish for the partner of my soul, and you know that is not everyone, for you and I have often talked how nice we would be in such a choice.\(^{11}\)

Isabella Agneta Elizabeth de Zuylen, the daughter of a rich nobleman, who was one of the governors of a Dutch Province, was Boswell's second love. She, according to Boswell's letters, proved quite an enigma to him. She had too much vivacity; too many male friends; too many speculations towards metaphysics; and too many modern theories concerning the relationship of man and woman. Still Boswell admired her affection, honesty, and good humor. He tells her, "I would not be married to you to be a king."\(^{12}\)

Yet he says in the same letter to her, "I love you more than ever. I would do more than ever to serve you."\(^{13}\)

Solving his love problems, to a certain extent, Boswell married Margaret Montgomerie, a quiet, sedate, unassuming, and affectionate partner in 1770. Boswell loved and esteemed her unwaveringly, even when he was unfaithful to her. His diaries and letters are full of references to her and her children. She developed tuberculosis shortly after her marriage and was

\(^{11}\)Ibid., p. 3.  \(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 53.  \(^{13}\)Ibid., p. 54.
a semi-invalid for several years before her death, which occurred in 1789.

In speaking of Boswell's marriage, Lewis says, "The Rake Boswell is married and reformed at last."

That Margaret's life with Boswell was no easy one is evident by his drinking, and infidelities; still she continued to love and comfort him as long as she lived. Boswell expresses some of his tenderest sentiments for his wife in his *Tour to the Hebrides* in declaring, "I value myself on having as constant regard - nay, love - for her as any man ever had for a woman, and yet never troubling anybody else with it." Avowing her good qualities, he says, "The cheerfulness and constant good sense of my valuable spouse have had the happiest influence upon my mind."

Referring to his absence from his wife, he observes,

I considered that my wife is uneasy when I am away - that it is not just and surely not kind, to leave her for such a portion of life when she sets such a value on my company and gives up everything else for me and my interest. And weak as it may be, I could not help having that kind of tender uneasiness which a lover has when absent from his mistress. Laugh at it who will, as not to be believed or as singular, I mark it as a fact, and rejoice at it, as it is the counterpart of more than ordinary conjugal felicity.

15 *Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 95.
If one word could be applied to Boswell, it would be contradiction, for he was good; he was bad; he was pious, yet, in a sense of the word, ungodly. His life was unique, strange, varied, full of changes, aspirations, and disappointments. Constantly throughout his life he promised, vowed, and prayed to do better; still he never reached "a steady felicity" in his life. Macaulay, however, thought that Boswell's greatness was obtained "by reason of his weakness. If he had not been a great fool, he would never have been a great writer."18

Vulliamy has this to say about Boswell's faults:

Goose though he was, we are not to regard Boswell as a goose of the ordinary kind. He was in bad company, but not the sort of bad company in which a mere cackling goose would naturally find him.19

Continuing in the same vein, he says,

He could solemnly worship at St. Paul's, and he could run after the girls in the Piazza. He could sit, all beaming reverence, at Queensberry's table; or cut more lively capers at drum, festino and masquerade. . . . At his own rooms in Downing Street he was able to entertain company, to drink or gamble, talk philosophy or talk bawdy.20

Boswell was interested in religion from the time he left his strict Presbyterian father until his death. He discussed it with whomever he came in contact, particularly with Johnson, Hume, Wilkes, Temple, Rousseau, and Voltaire. In conversation

with Voltaire, Boswell forced him to express veneration for a Supreme Being, a desire to resemble the Author of Goodness; and the probability of an immortal soul. Boswell esteemed and revered Johnson for his moral principles and his knowledge of religion. Commenting upon Johnson, he says,

I thank God that I have got acquainted with Mr. Johnson. He has done me infinite service. He has assisted me to obtain peace of mind. He has assisted me to become a rational Christian. I hope I shall ever remain so.22

With Johnson Boswell discussed such subjects in religion as skepticism and infidelity, transubstantiation, the soul, death, life after death, and numerous other themes and problems relating to man. He was inquisitive and zealous in his search for a satisfactory religious moral philosophy. On the occasion of one visit, Boswell asked Johnson to have the arguments for Christianity always in readiness so that he, Boswell, might have a steadfast religious faith and experience no uneasiness when it was attacked.23

Of Boswell's reverence Carlyle says, "None but a reverent man (which so unspeakably few are) could have found his way from Boswell's environment to Johnson's."24

Self-indulgence in drinking caused Boswell, the "reverent," the "rational," much anguish throughout his life. The excesses,

21Private Papers, 4, 19.  
22Letters, pp. 29-30.  
23George Birkbeck Hill, Life of Johnson, Ill, 316.  
which he began when he was quite young, became more constant as he grew older. His sociable disposition, the ever-open taverns, and the nightly punch bowls did not aid him in his resolutions to be steady and sober. That he sincerely tried to remain constant is apparent in all his writings, especially in his letters. He vowed, swore, and resolved anew to restrain himself from drinking and to become "a perfect man." After he had dissipated too much, he was tormented by spells of despondency, melancholy, and self-condemnation. He was truly a pathetic creature, as far as drinking was concerned; nevertheless he was no worse than many of his contemporaries.

Lewis says,

He stood up to the bottle no less and no more successfully than distinguished fellow topers in English literature like Addison, Steele, and Lamb, who have managed to capture the sternest critics' indulgence so successfully. With his superb constitution he was never a candidate for a nursing home, and between the bouts he was plainly fit for company.25

That Boswell did not condone his drinking is seen when he says,

Indeed my indulgence in wine has, of late years especially, been excessive. You remember what Lord Eliot said, nay what you, I am sorry to think, have seen. Your suggestion as to my being carried off in a state of intoxication is awful. I thank you for it, my dear friend. It impressed me much, I assure you.26

Iterating, Boswell says,

I thank you sincerely for your friendly admonition on my frailty in indulging so much in wine. I do resolve anew to be upon my guard; as I am sensible

25 Lewis, op. cit., p. 4.  
26 Letters, II, 447.
how very pernicious as well as disreputable such a habit is. How miserably have I yielded to it in various years. Recollect what General Paoli said to you. Recollect what happened at Berwick.27

In order for one to understand Boswell, the man, it is necessary to reveal more fully the gregarious phase of his character. No man, perhaps has been more eager to associate with men, particularly illustrious men, than he. The traits that tended to make him successful as a man and writer were: a blatant egotism, a constant sincerity, and an inveterate curiosity, a keen observation, an avid delight in the activities of men, and an earnest zeal for knowledge of human nature. This zeal, combined with ambition and vanity, caused him to have an unusual interest in celebrities. In their company he found his greatest delight. Even though he had met such men as Paoli, Voltaire, and Rousseau, his love for great men had not mitigated. He says in writing to Temple,

I am really the Great Man now. I have had David Hume in the forenoon and Mr. Johnson in the afternoon of the same day visiting me. Sir John Pringle, Dr. Franklin, and some more company dined with me today; and Mr. Johnson and General Oglethorpe one day, Mr. Garrick alone another, and David Hume and some more literati another, dine with me next week. I give admirable dinners and good claret and the moment I go abroad again, which will be in a day or two, I set up my chariot. This is enjoying the fruit of my labours, and appearing like the friend of Paoli. By the by, the Earl of Pembroke and Captain Meadows are just setting out for Corsica, and I have the honour of introducing them by a letter to the General.28

Boswell, as well as other prominent men of his age, was interested in travel. By the time he was fifty he had traveled

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27Ibid., p. 461. 
28Ibid., I, 160.
all over Europe, to Utrecht, Ferney, Rome, and Corsica. He embarked upon his continental tour at Harwich in 1763. At Utrecht he divided his time between study and amusement. His stay there was remarkable for his letters to Rousseau and Voltaire. At Naples he met John Wilkes, the "ingenious gentleman and thoughtless infidel," but the main objective of his tour was Corsica, an island whose people were fighting for their liberty against the Genoese under the leadership of Pasquale Paoli. Their cause roused the sympathy of Boswell's romantic sensibility. From this time on the Corsicans had an enthusiastic ambassador to defend their liberty, at least in writing. Boswell's first writing about Corsica was published in The London Chronicle, and in 1768 his journal, An Account of Corsica, The Journal of a Tour to that Island and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli, was published by Charles Dilly. In this journal Boswell revealed his literary skill in biographical selection and composition by relating gay and amusing incidents, and by his shrewd and kindly observations on human nature. His reputation was established at last. Before October of 1768 the journal was in its third edition. Men like Gray, Johnson, Horace Walpole, Lord Lyttleton, Garrick, and later Bonaparte esteemed it highly. Perhaps the most memorable incidents of Boswell's travels were his traveling to Berlin with George, Earl Marischal, who was a friend of Frederick the Great's, and his visits with Rousseau and Voltaire.

On Boswell's return to England he visited Johnson; then he went to Scotland because his presence there was imperative.
His mother had died while he was away; his father was ill; and his bond required that he be present to seek admission to the Society of Advocates.

Soon after he became an advocate (1776), the famous Douglas Case came up for trial. In this case Archibald Douglas claimed to be the real heir of the Douglas estate; however, in the court of session he was defeated. In the meantime Boswell had become so much interested in the case that he wrote in 1767 a book, entitled Dorando, a Spanish Tale, in which he summarized the Douglas Case, though in disguised form. Three editions of the book were published before it was suppressed. Later, in the same year Boswell wrote another volume, Essence of the Douglas Case, which presented the case rather aptly.

On April 2, 1773, Boswell returned to London for a visit. It was during this stay that he was elected to the Literary Club, thereby receiving the recognition for which he had so avidly aspired from the time when he first came to London. He also realized another desire when Johnson consented to accompany him on a tour of Scotland.

From Edinburgh Boswell and Johnson traveled through the principal cities of Scotland to the Hebrides where they visited Skye, Rasay, Col, Mull, Inchkenneth, Iona, and Icolmkill. They returned by way of Glasgow and Auchinleck to Edinburgh. Gay entertainment and genial hospitality were afforded by all types of hosts and hostesses, including the celebrated Flora McDonald.
Rustic dances and all-night drinking bouts characterized the isolated highlands. One of the most graphic pictures is depicted by Boswell in the Tour to the Hebrides when he describes the storm which caught their boat between Skye and Mull. Boswell, as usual, was praying and resolving anew. He says,

Piety afforded me a good deal of comfort. I prayed fervently to God, but I was confused, for I remember I used a strange expression: that if it should please him to preserve me, I would behave myself ten times better. . . . I shall never forget - at least I hope so - the good resolutions which I then formed.29

While he was considering his own precarious predicament, his thoughts turned to his wife. His conscience was stricken when he thought of her financial status. Commenting upon this, he says,

It distressed me to think how much my dearest wife would suffer should I now be lost, and in what a destitute, or at least wretchedly dependent, state she would be left. I upbraided myself as not having a sufficient cause for putting myself in such danger.30

For ten years (1774-1784) after the tour Boswell was beset by quarrels with his father, difficulties in money matters, his failure to enter Parliament, his desultory law practice, chronic melancholy which occasioned excess drinking to dull his faculties, and the death of his father in 1782 and that of his esteemed friend, Johnson, in 1784. Boswell and his father had never been congenial; his father failed to understand his eccentric son; their natures were not in harmony. Boswell verifies this statement by saying:

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29Tour, p. 249.  
30Ibid.
My wife and I dined with him [his father] on Saturday. He did not salute her, though he had not seen her for three months; nor did he so much as ask how she did; though she is pretty big with child. I understand he fancies that if I had married another woman, I might not only have had a better portion with her, but might have been kept from what he thinks idle and extravagant conduct. He harps on my going over Scotland with a brute (think how shockingly erroneous), and wandering (or some such phrase) to London. In vain do I defend myself... How hard is it, that I am totally excluded from parental comfort. I have a mind to go to Auchinleck next autumn and try what living in a mixed stupidity of attention to country objects, and restraint from expressing any of my own feelings, can do with him. I always dread his making some bad settlement. 31

That his stepmother was better to Boswell's children than his father is manifest in this statement: "She, however, behaves much better to the children than their grandfather does." 32

At this particular time (1774-1782) Boswell was quarreling with his father over the final settlement of the estate. Boswell believed in the feudal principle, that of the property going to the male heirs, while his father preferred some other kind of settlement; finally, however, Lord Auchinleck willed his estate to Boswell, with many misgivings; and Boswell assumed his responsibilities as befitted a Scottish laird.

In the literary field Boswell was not idle. He made occasional visits to London where he conversed with Johnson, giving attention to the minutest details of his observations, and traveled with him to Oxford, Lichfield, and Ashbourne. Beginning in 1777 and continuing through 1783, Boswell wrote a

series of seventy papers, called The Hypochondriack, which appeared monthly in The London Magazine. In these essays he writes of love, marriage, religion, death, drinking, and various other subjects that related to his life, as well as to the eighteenth-century mode of thought. He, as a hypochondriac, discusses melancholy throughout the series. He contrasts experience with theory; pleasures of the mind with pleasures of the senses; and the past with the present. He stresses emotion in love, the excellent and rational in man, and a steadfast felicity in everything.

Another work that he wrote at this period of his life was a Letter to the People of Scotland, a political pamphlet which attacked Fox's India Bill.

The remaining years of Boswell's life were characterized by a happy association with his literary friends; by his wife's illness, and later, her death in 1789; by the daily grind at the bar; by the continued difficulties in financial affairs; by his responsibility for the care and education of his children; by his work on and publication of the Life of Samuel Johnson in 1791; and by his ever-present melancholy which grew increasingly worse until his death in 1795.

When the Life of Johnson was published, it received immediate acclaim, acclaim which has continued through the years, as is shown by the numerous editions that have been published. It bestowed upon Boswell the adulation and praise for which he had striven all his life. It helped him to realize the "fruits of his labour." It gave him the prerogative
of calling himself a truly "great man." Salpeter\textsuperscript{33} expresses a thought with which most biographers and writers are in accord when he says that Boswell was the first of the biographers and that he has no second.

Though Boswell attained some of his objectives in life, he was never happy for any length of time because of his conflicting emotions and passions. Success came too late in his life for him to really enjoy it, since most of his friends and his wife had gone, leaving him desolate and lonely. Languor, depression, and gloom possessed him. He felt himself unfit to transact business. Visiting with friends could not aid him in forgetting himself. In jovial scenes he felt "no pleasure in existence except the mere gratifications of the senses."\textsuperscript{34} Bronson has, perhaps, the right conception of Boswell, the man, when he says,

Boswell's habitual mental state has close analogies with the child's faculty of make-believe, absorbed in his game, the child can tell himself to "be" any person or thing, and for him it is so. But all the time he remains himself, his divided consciousness poised above the real and ideal states of being.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{33}Harry Salpeter, \textit{Dr. Johnson and Mr. Boswell}, p. 65.

\textsuperscript{34}Letters, p. 440.

CHAPTER III

BOSWELL'S CONCEPTION OF RELIGION

In an age which was controlled, to a certain extent, by reason and rationalism, Boswell endeavored to keep his faith in the doctrines of Christianity. He strove to see God's plan in all the functions of man and nature, but there were many things in life that he found perplexing, mysterious, and unexplainable. The thought of death and the life hereafter filled him with terror; consequently when he pondered on these profound and inexplicable subjects, he was assailed by doubts and fears that plunged him into gloom and despair so that he could not determine whether God had permitted him to be tormented or whether evil spirits had been sent to cause him anguish and pain. He exclaims:

For me, a man of melancholy mind,
To suffer much in this rude world design'd,
Who oft in dreary sadness pass the day,
Forc'd through the thickest gloom to grope my way.
Whether some daemon from Hell's region sent
Permission has my being to torment,
Or Justice orders that my soul should groan
For former deep offences to atone;
Or if black vapours of this earthly frame
Can half extinguish my aethereal flame,
I cannot tell!—I only kiss the rod
With a firm faith in my eternal God!
Whom I adore with a devotion pure,
Sure he is good as of his power I'm sure.
Sure that his creatures must in end be blest
With pious hope I calm my troubled breast.¹

¹Hypochondriack, No. 43, II, 240.
When his faith wavered, however, he found solace in saying, "How blessed is the relief which he may have from the divine comforts of religion! from the comforts of God, the Father of Spirits, the Creator and Governour of the Universe, whose mercy is over all his other works, and who graciously hears the prayers of the afflicted." 2

That Boswell was influenced, to a certain extent, by scientific reasoning is evident. In all his theories of human behavior he attempted to be reasonable and rational; however, he could not adopt some of the ideas stressed in Deism. The Deists, it will be remembered, negated the conception of a divine God, as revealed in Jesus Christ. God, for them, was only a great inventor or creator. He was good because nature and man were of his design. He was an abstract being, not a personal Savior of mercy and compassion. His presence was not necessary, as man could visualize him in nature. Virtue was the pattern of man's existence. Man and nature were harmonized in a beautiful order in which there was an "eternal fitness of things" that ordained man's destiny. Since his destiny was determined, man had no prerogative. "Whatever is, is right"; therefore there was no progress for man. His duty, then, was to accept things as they were and to content himself with his station in the cosmic and the social scale.

Boswell was disturbed by this form of reasoning; consequently he, through hope and trust in God, endeavored to overcome all.

2Hypochondriack, No. 39, II, 45.
turmoil and fluctuating fancies. He longed for a beautiful resolute faith rather than for dubious reasoning. Constantly he felt the need to renew and establish his faith so that he would be able to contend with the spells of moroseness which often overwhelmed him to the extent that he said, "I could not preserve for any long continuance the same views of anything."  

Because of the conflicts existing in his mind, he found gratification in declaring:

> It is the characteristik of the Supreme Being, in the sacred writings, that he is 'the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.' And that in him is no varying, neither the least shadow of turning.' In proportion therefore as the intellectual faculties are exalted, will the character be fixed.

Religion, for Boswell, was a "belief in a great and good power, the supreme fountain of intelligence and felicity, joined with an habitual devotion or pious endeavours to direct all the powers of the soul towards that divine object, and, as much as may be, to approach to a similitude with what we conceive of the amiable nature of God."

Again he says,

> Religion is the noblest employment of the mind. Believe me, this is no prejudice. Is it not noble to adore the Supreme Lord of the Universe and to aim at rendering our souls divine? I own to you that mankind have confounded and perplexed religion. One thing, however, I am absolutely sure of, and that is devotion, the adoration of our great and good God.

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3 *Private Papers*, XIII, 57.

4 *Hypochondriack*, No. 64, II, 245.

5 *Hypochondriack*, No. 54, II, 156.
As to systems of faith, I am no bigot. I think I see a very great probability that Jesus Christ had a divine commission to reveal to mankind a certainty of immortality and an amiable collection of precepts for their conduct in this life, and that by his death, he attuned for the offences of the world which God's justice required satisfaction for. I am happy to believe this. It makes me live in cheerful hope. I do not believe that a few only shall be made happy in another world. My notions of God's benevolence are grand and extensive. I puzzle not myself with texts here, and texts here, with the interpretation of a gloomy priest, or with the interpretation of a gay priest; I worship my Creator and I fear no evil. 6

In reading Boswell's writings concerning religion, one may observe that religion, for him, was not a creed which was narrow in its limitations. It was not harsh and violent, but "elevating and pleasing"; it was "vital," "an object of perception and taste"; it was a pattern of living which enabled man to be tolerant and understanding; it was good and sweet, lacking dissimulation; it was more than a "rigid practice of morality"; it was a creed that could be lived every day if one persevered in his endeavor; and it could be experienced through pleasure, as well as through prudence and conscience. The highest pleasure that man could realize came through following the precepts of God. Boswell, in explaining pleasure as the aim of mankind, says,

This, however, is very rational; for that Pleasure is not only the aim but the end of our being, seems to be philosophically demonstrable. Therefore all the labour and all the serious business of life should justly be considered only as the means to that. That evil is perpetually mingling with our good,

6Letters, II, 49.
that pain is in a constant struggle with Pleasure in the existence of man is but too true, and we must wait with pious patience for a future consummation of felicity. But in the meantime it is our wisdom and our duty to make ourselves as happy as we can in our passage through this state of being, having always respect to the influence which our conduct may have upon our situation in a better state. This is the sum of unclouded, clear, religious morality.\textsuperscript{7}

Since pleasure was concordant with the love of God, man should discipline himself in order to gain knowledge of pleasure in its fullest meaning. He should cultivate pleasures of the mind, rather than those that conduce to physical happiness; however, divers pleasures which related to nature, the senses, the imagination, and the heart were propitious if they encouraged man to anticipate "that glorious period when we shall be received into the presence of HIM 'at whose right hand are Pleasures for evermore.'"\textsuperscript{8}

One may perceive a combination of reason, sentimentalism, and religion in the preceding statements. Man progresses to perfection through reason, as well as through feeling. He experiences evil with the good, and by overcoming evil he aspires to true felicity in the next world. While Boswell admitted that pleasure was advantageous, and that "to be happy so far as mortality and human imperfection will allow, is the wisest study of man,"\textsuperscript{9} he sought to maintain a rational equilibrium. He believed "That too much pleasure in general is unsafe, as

\textsuperscript{7}Hypochondriack, 40, II, 50. \textsuperscript{8}Ibid., II, 53. \textsuperscript{9}Hypochondriack, No. 6, I, 146.
being inconsistent with that moral discipline which religion recommends to us as candidates for immortal happiness, is undoubtedly true."10

Prudence, too, was necessary in experiencing religion. Commenting on this, Boswell avers,

Let us consider religion itself without Prudence; and we shall find that instead of doing all things decently and in order, and letting our light shine steadily before men, we shall cast our pearls before swine, and there shall be such excess and such ill-timed displays of what may be sincerely well meant, that there shall not be reverence but scorn; and however we ourselves may perhaps be benefited, our holy faith shall suffer in the estimation of the world, our injudicious conduct having the effect at once to lessen both us and our religion in the eyes of mankind.11

At times Boswell considered everything as pleasant and agreeable, and he felt his mind elevated to the heights of the sublime; then again he sank into despair and was troubled and perplexed by indifferent and transient ideas. His dark imagination made him indifferent to all thoughts of religion. In 1775 Boswell wrote to Temple:

While afflicted with melancholy, all the doubts which have ever disturbed thinking men, come upon me. I awake in the night, dreading annihilation or being thrown into some horrible state of being. We must own, my friend, that moral and religious truths are not such as that we can contemplate them by reason with a constant certainty. The disposition of our tempers, of our spirits, influences our persuasion though we know that we may help it in part. The other night, while I was gloomy, I felt a strong impression or recollection of the phrase in Scripture, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.'12

10 Hypochondriack, No. 17, I, 223.
11 Hypochondriack, No. 44, II, 86. 12 Letters, I, 239.
Again, in 1781, Boswell revealed his dejection when he wrote in his diary, "I was sadly dispirited; thought myself insignificant and subjected to a wretched destiny. Had no clear thoughts of any thing, no consoling pious feelings."\(^{13}\)

Often nothing seemed to dispel the murky clouds of doubt from Boswell's mind. When he could believe in religion, he seemed to experience exhilaration to the greatest extent. When he could not, he sank into morbid wretchedness. As a result, he sought to alleviate his misery by imbibing the fundamental principles of religion. In them he found his greatest comfort. He makes this plain in saying,

In order to have these comforts, which not only relieve but 'delight the soul,' the Hypochondriack must take care to have the principles of our holy religion firmly established in his mind, when it is sound and clear, and by the habitual exercise of piety to strengthen it, so as that flame may live even in the damp and foul vapour of melancholy. Dreadful beyond description is the state of the Hypochondriack who is bewildered in universal skepticism. . . .

By religion the Hypochondriack will have his mind fixed upon one invariable object of veneration, will have his troubled thoughts calmed by the consideration that he is here in a state of trial, that to contribute his part in carrying on the plan of providence in this state of being is his duty, and that his sufferings however severe will be found beneficial to him in the other world, as having prepared him for the felicity of the saints above, which by some mysterious constitution, to be afterwards explained, requires in human beings a course of tribulation. And in the mean time he will have celestial emanations imparted to him.\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\) *Private Papers*, XV, p. 14.

\(^{14}\) *Hypochondriack*, No. 39, II, 45-46.
Iterating, he says,

Surely the comfort which a religious man has in distress must be allowed to make his situation more desirable than that of an unbeliever; and in this view alone which of the two characters is best entitled to think itself superior to the other is obvious to the eyes of wisdom. ... All of us, and particularly Hypochondriacks, should resolve not to despair in gloomy seasons, because after a long lapse of time, and many alterations which we have experienced in many respects, the reality of a future state does not yet seem clearer and stronger. Let us consider we are still in life as much as ever; and that it is not till we have passed beyond death, that we can be sensible of the great change. In making a long voyage to a distant country which we long to reach, we perceive no difference at all as to our prospect of land, even after the greatest part of the voyage is over. We are still in the ocean, and we must wait with patience till a near approach shall bless us with the immediate sight of safety and enjoyment.

In the meantime, we may 'have peace and joy in believing,' we may have what is esteemed to be most pleasing in this state of existence—Hope! and what is peculiar to the hope of a religious man, it lasts as long as he lives.15

Regardless of the fact that Boswell advocated "peace and joy in believing," he, at times, saw life as a miserable state of being in which man must incessantly labor to ascertain the will of the Lord. Life was, to him, a period of probation, a state of existence wherein man must attempt to cleanse his life from material defilement. He often discussed this thought, as well as many other ideas, with William Temple. In a letter, written on November 3, 1780, he said:

Could not infinite wisdom and goodness have made us less miserable, if not more happy? We must be content to 'wait the great teacher Death, and God adore!' It is to me clear a priori that your question may be answered in the affirmative, supposing us to be such machines as the fatalists maintain. But,
as I think it nobler to be a free agent struggling
as we must, from some sad mysterious causes, I com-
fort myself with the Christian revelation of our be-
ing in a state of purification, and that we shall in
course of time attain to felicity. It is delightful,
Temple, to look forward to the period when you and I
shall enjoy what we now imagine. In the mean time,
let us be patient, and do what good we can.16

And again, on July 21, 1790, he wrote to Temple

What a state are we in!—dissatisfied with the
present, and longing for some other situation and
when we reach that, very often experiencing more un-
 easiness, nay imagining that what we wished to quit
was better. Surely, my dear friend, there must be
another world in which such beings as we are will
have our misery compensated. But is not
this a state of probation? and if it is, how awful
is the consideration. I am struck with your question,
'Have you confidence to entreat the divine aid?'
In truth I am sensible that I do not sufficiently 'try
my ways' as the Psalmist says, and am even almost in-
clined to think with you that my great Oracle, Johnson,
did allow too much credit to good principles without
good practice.17

After the death of his wife, Boswell was unusually de-
spondent, and he was often harassed by "dismal fits" of
melancholy which prevented him from being happy. At times he
felt some "gratifications" in living, but he experienced very
little "comfort." As a result of Temple's consolatory letters,
Boswell wrote to Temple, "Yet your encouraging letters make
me think at times that I may yet, by God's blessing, attain
to a portion of happiness, such as philosophy and religion
concur in assuring us that this state of progressive being
allows."18

In a letter addressed to his brother, David,

17 Ibid., pp. 399-400.
18 Ibid., p. 431.
in 1794, Boswell again expressed his idea of misery in this life by stating, "I am conscious that I can expect only temporary alleviation of misery, and some gleams of enjoyment. But these it is my right, nay I think my duty to have."  

"Reverential awe" gave Boswell some consolation in his endeavor to attain an invariable and steadfast hope. According to him, fear, rightly considered, was both "rational" and "truly agreeable," although it was often misinterpreted by the depressed and flighty who saw it by means of a "false medium." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," but man should not contemplate the Lord with disquieting anticipation of evil. He should regard Him as a God of love and affection, rather than a stern, severe master. Boswell describes religious fear by stating:

The religious fear which I mean to inculcate, is that reverential awe for the Most High Ruler of the universe, mixed with affectionate gratitude and hope, by which our minds are kept steady, calm, and placid, at once exalted by the contemplation of greatness, and warmed by the contemplation of goodness, while both are contemplated with a reference to ourselves. I am sensible that this is a subject of so sublime and delicate a nature, that precise precepts ought not to be given, there being such a multiplicity of varieties suited to different individuals by reason of different associations of ideas, which, though their original composition eludes our keenest investigation, have formed mental substances, if that expression may be used, which will be wrought upon very differently by the same operations. I would only recommend to my readers piety in general; and let each practise that mode of devotion which he finds has the best influence upon his disposition and conduct.

19Ibid., p. 462.  
20Hypochondriack, No. 2, I, 115.
Discipline, also, was advocated by Boswell as a significant factor in religion. He advocated it as one of the most important practices for believers in religion, as well as for others. He believed, in a sense, that man should use the "particular discipline which he [found] to be best for himself" in pleasure, penitence, distress, pride, and in many other things. He expresses his regard for discipline in the following manner. "I own I have a respect for every kind of discipline, for every mode which men more intellectual than corporeal have invented for bringing human nature to a state of greater perfection in any particular." 

Man should develop sympathy for his fellow creature.

As we advance in life we must be 'taught to feel another's woe, and precepts will not do without the more effectual discipline of distress.

That this is most certainly true none of us will doubt, who keep in mind with grateful reverence the mysterious condescension of the sacred author of our religion, who was himself tempted like as we are that he might have a feeling for our infirmities.

Pride, if not disciplined, was inconsistent with "amiable" religion.

Too much indulgence of pride is a selfish gratification, inconsistent with that benevolence towards others which it is our duty to cultivate. We are commanded by one the amiable precepts of our holy religion to do good and 'to communicate.'

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21 Hypochondriack, No. 40, II, 51.
22 Hypochondriack, 23, I, 284.
23 Hypochondriack, No. 29, I, 327.
To experience "vital" and "amiable" religion through pleasure, prudence, reverential fear and discipline, it was necessary for man to consult his main guide, a "well-informed" conscience. By following its dictates, he lived so that he could have his own approval, which was more valuable than the applause of men, when he came to die. Boswell explains the relevancy of conscience to religion by stating:

That a well-informed conscience should be the chief director of the actions of man, is most certainly true. I say, a well-informed conscience; for whatever pretty theories have been given us of the beauty of virtue—of the natural moral sense—of the sympathetic feeling of morality—a writer of temporary fashionable fame in this age, hath, amidst much levity, and I am afraid much contaminating extravagance of effusion, had the merit of introducing a decent and clear piece of induction, in which by reasoning upon an eminent example in sacred history he hath shewn that conscience needs to be informed. The pretty theories to which I have alluded, though they pretend to be systems of themselves, are only flowers of the fantastical engraftings upon the blessed plant of Revelation. For as Butler in his very able and candid Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion well observes, modern philosophers are forgetful for how much of their knowledge of good they have insensibly been indebted to their Christian education.25

If one accepted the authority of his conscience and practiced the virtues which have been mentioned, he obtained greatness of mind. Boswell summarizes his belief concerning the magnanimity of religion in the following:

That certain notions of religion should indicate an injudicious and extravagant mind may be admitted. But even in that case surely the mind which believes much, is more enlarged than the mind which believes

little, especially when the mind which believes much takes in magnificent and permanent views, bounded neither by time nor space. Whereas the mind which believes little, however it may be strong and lively, takes in very limited and uncertain views, and instead of the contemplations of immensity and eternity, has its attention fixed only on what is to be found in this scene of things.

Supposing then that Religion were altogether a fiction, it is so grand a work of the imagination that the very ambition of a noble mind must desire to preserve it; and a man of true spirit I should suppose can never fail to feel an indignant jealousy whenever he perceives any attempt to destroy a system so honourable to human nature.26

Perhaps it would be interesting, at this point, to contrast the thought manifested in the preceding paragraphs with some of the ideas expressed by Boswell in his journal, so that one may observe the variableness of his opinions, as well as the fluctuation of his moods. In May, 1781, Boswell wrote: "A Christian is of all Men the most miserable. Yet a religious life is pleasing."27

In August of the same year, he wrote at Edinburgh,

was exceedingly sunk, and could see no com-
fort. I could not call up my principles of Religion.
All was darkness and uncertainty. Yet I prayed to
God as a Christian morning and evening amidst all
this gloom.28

After Johnson's death in 1784, Boswell made the following statements:

My mind had for some days been unexpectedly
e vigourous, so that I could bear more than when re-
exaxed by melancholy. My resolution was to honour
his memory by doing as much as I could to fulfil his
noble precepts of Religion and Morality. I prayed to

26Hypochondriack, No. 54, II, 156-157.
27Private Papers, XIV, 233. 28Ibid., XV, 22.
God that now my much respected Freind was gone, I might be a follower of Him who I trusted was now by faith and patience inheriting the promises. But it gave me concern that I was conscious of a deadness in spiritual feeling, and indeed a cold indifference as to the awful subject of Religion, having just a sort of superficial speculation that I might take my chance with a careless hope of mercy. This, I believe, is the state of most people, even of those who have had the ordinary religious education.  

Even though Boswell doubted at times, it may be seen that he defended a religion which could be enjoyed through the emotions, which could be improved by means of mental processes, and which could be demonstrated by good deeds. Boswell emphasizes the need for manifestation by stating:

No such rigid practice of morality as is almost impossible for the frailty of human nature to attain, is expected from a religious man; and whatever some cold, hard-minded disputants have maintained, I have no doubt that good principles are often found in the same person with occasional bad practice. . . . Where there really are good principles, there is hope that good practice will in time be uniform. . . . Hypocrisy is indeed detestable; but an acquaintance with life, or even a fair examination of our own belief and conduct, will teach us to distinguish it from inconstancy. Far be it from me to encourage myself or others in the pernicious notion that good principles will atone for deliberate bad practice, and that conscience may safely be soothed by balancing faith against immorality. . . . If he be clearly conscious of the integrity of his principles, let him be ever striving to have his practice as good as he can. Let not frequent failures discourage him, and sink him into despair; but let him with animated resolution renew his endeavours, considering that the more honest good there is in his life, the proportion of evil will be the less, and good may at length predominate; while in the mean time the world ought and perhaps will be just enough to allow him credit for what merit he has. We should let our light shine before men such as it is, though it be but glimmering and flashy, hoping it may become

29Ibid., XVI, 66.
steady and bright. . . . When no appearance of Religion is to be found in a person's ordinary life and conversation, how is it to be supposed that there is in that instance any reality? 30

That Boswell advocated the belief in a Supreme Being is evident. He also supported the idea of a spiritual mind or soul, differing with Rosseau, Voltaire, Hume, and many other intellectuals of his day; yet he was contradictory in his arguments, as will be seen. He admitted "that man is composed of two distinct principles, body or matter and mind" 31 and that they act "mutually" upon each other; "that we have as clear an idea of spirit as of body, the substance of body or matter being something wherein the many sensible qualities which affect our senses subsist, and the substance of spirit being something wherein those operations which we experience in ourselves of thinking, knowing, doubting, and a power of motion subsist"; 32 that mind is a spiritual substance; 33 that the "body and mind are intimately united, and communicate one with another"; 34 that the "construction of the human mind is a mystery which there seems to be no probability will ever be known in this state of human existence"; 35

30 Hypochondriack, No. 54, II, 158-161.
31 Hypochondriack, No. 63, II, 237.
32 Hypochondriack, No. 48, II, 113-114.
33 Hypochondriack, No. 67, II, 269.
34 Ibid., 274.
35 Hypochondriack, No. 7, I, 151.
and that the mind is a "kingdom" which should be extended and
cultivated. 36

Boswell states further:

I am not sure but there may be such an analogy
between the nature of spirit and that of matter, as
to admit of a receptacle of ideas. How it may be I
have no conception, I go on as I set out, I am only
amusing myself with speculating on a curious faculty,
of which, it seems to me, I must remain in full and
astonished ignorance till the Great Giver of all in-
telligence shall be pleased to bestow a larger por-
tion of it. 37

Of "inexplicable" memory he says

While metaphysicks rack the sickly brain
What Memory is can any man explain?
Can any man with any clearness tell
How is produced what we all know so well?
If human souls are of an essence pure,
How fix ideas in them to endure?
And if material, canst not thou, Monro,
The little cells of our ideas show?
Ah! no. For here we ever, ever find
That all philosophers alike are blind. 38

Free will, infidelity, and immortality seemed to trouble
Boswell more than anything else in religion. Since he was
perturbed concerning them, he constantly thought on them,
talked about them, and wrote of them.

Boswell, like all educated men of the eighteenth century,
was acquainted with the writings of the Greek and Roman phi-
losophers. Many of the philosophers he regarded with esteem,
particularly Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, and Seneca. He
quoted from their works frequently in comparison with and

36Hypochondriack, No. 26, I, 308.
37Hypochondriack, No. 67, II, 270. 38Ibid., p. 267.
illustration of his opinions on various subjects. He differed with the Stoics, especially, on death and universal necessity. The Stoics argued that man was controlled by natural or universal laws; that man had no prerogative in his fate or destiny; that his happiness depended upon his destiny, which had been predetermined; that it was needless for him to combat universal will; that he should adapt his desires to the level of possible achievement in the fitness of things, since whatever is to be, will be. As may be seen, this coincides, to a great extent, with the belief, adopted by the Deists.

The Presbyterians agreed with the Stoics in that man's destiny was foreordained; however, they believed that God, not natural laws had predestined man's fate. The following verses of scripture illustrate their creed:

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
Having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.\(^{39}\)

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.
Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.\(^{40}\)

\(^{39}\textit{Ephesians }1.4-5.\)

\(^{40}\textit{Romans }8.28-30, 33.\)
Many of the Presbyterians interpreted these verses literally; consequently they believed that some people were called of God, while others were not. In a sense, then, those who were not called, had no hope; their destiny was sealed. There was no need for them to pray, to have faith, to practice good works, or to worship the Lord. On the other hand, those who were chosen could do, more or less, as they pleased, since they were saved, regardless of their actions. Boswell considered these ideas contrary to reason and inconsistent with religious principles. Of them he says,

What a wretched system is this which makes us absolute machines, and destroys the connection between Morality and Religion, taking away from us the hopes and fears of a future state, where we are to be judged according to our conduct in this life, under the benign influence of the propitiation offered up by Jesus Christ. The Glassites indeed require morality as an evidence of faith. But if a man is persuaded that it is to have no effect, he will act foolishly if he does not gratify every passion so far as he can do it with safety. I thought that such teaching /John Young's sermon on predestination and election/ as I heard today should not be allowed. . . . I could not but reflect with some uneasiness on the state of uncertainty which all men of all religions must be in as to their happiness after death; since whether it depends on election or on pious merit, we cannot know with confidence that we are of the blessed number. I comfort myself with the notion that in progress of time there will be Universal felicity.41

Again he says, in conversation with Johnson on moral evil and free will,

To be sure, there cannot be a free agent unless there is the power of being evil as well as good.

41Private Papers, XIV, 83-84.
We must take the inherent possibilities of things into consideration in our reasonings or conjectures concerning the works of God.\textsuperscript{42}

On one occasion when Boswell and Dr. Webster, the physician of Boswell's family, were discussing free will, Webster acknowledged that he could not understand God's allowing evil and that "\textit{prescience for certain} was equivalent to a \textit{Decree.}" Boswell, in recording the statement, made this comment, "In short he depended on \textit{Grace}; in which I agreed with him."\textsuperscript{43}

On his conversation, in the Counting House, with Sir William Forbes on fate and free will he says,

\textit{\textsuperscript{44}I talked of Religion and Fate and Freewill with an easy firmness quite different from the feeble melancholy with which I have conversed with him in that place on those subjects. For distress had given a kind of fever to my mind that produced a temporary strength. I often wonder What will be the view which one shall have at last when fairly in another state of being?}\textsuperscript{44}

As a result of Baron Gordon's statement, "It is certain from all eternity that every thing is to be either one way or another."\textsuperscript{45} Boswell said, "I was now for the first time again after a long interval brought into the distressing perplexity of fate and freewill."\textsuperscript{46}

That Boswell read everything available on universal necessity seems probable. When he read an article or book,

\textsuperscript{42}\textit{Tour to the Hebrides}, p. 85. 
\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Private papers}, XV, 120. 
\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}, XV, 54. 
\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}, XVI, 33. 
\textsuperscript{46}\textit{Ibid.}, XIV, 156.
advocating free agency, he was cheerful and elated. On the other hand, when he read anything defending it, he was sad and discouraged. In February, 1781, when he was visiting at Bothwell Castle, he read portions from three books that supported the theory of universal necessity. As a result, he was very much dispirited. He reveals his reactions to his reading by saying,

I read in Lord Monboddo's Ancient Metaphysics that there could be no such thing as contingency, and that every action of man was absolutely fixed and comprehended in a series of causes and effects from all eternity; so that there was an Universal Necessity. I then looked into Lord Kames's Sketches, where, though he retracts his foolish notion as to there being an intended delusive feeling of Liberty, he maintains the necessity of human resolutions and actions in the most positive manner. I was shocked by such a notion and sunk into dreadful melancholy, so that I went out to the wood and groaned. . . . I read some of Montesquieu's Persian letters, one of which is in favour of human liberty and fairly denies the universal prescience of GOD, which indeed is incompatible with liberty. But still the Arguments for Necessity were heavy upon me. I saw a dreary nature of things, an unconscious, uncontrollable power by which all things are driven on, and I could not get rid of the irresistible influence of motives.47

A few days later, when Boswell's mind was calm and serene, he remarked, "Liberty and Necessity was quite a distant Speculation which did not affect me."48

On another occasion, when Boswell was not feeling well, he remained at home all day and read Bryant's Address to Priestly against Philosophical Necessity. Since Bryant argued against

47 Ibid., XIV, 156.
48 Ibid., p. 158.
necessity, Boswell was in a very agreeable mood and was able to say, "I had this day so clear a head and so stout an understanding that I did not fear this Subject which has so often distressed me; and I studied it with a firm ease."49

After Captain Wellwood had mentioned Edward's Irresistible Grace and Kames's Necessity in conversation with Boswell on August 23, 1782, Boswell commented,

I dislike the subject, unless when I am in full spirits to assert my freedom. It is curious to think that the most inconsiderable human being may analyze the Mind of the Greatest. A presbyterian minister in an obscure parish may speculate on the motives of Burke, and be clear that he is a Machine. This is a provoking thought. To be considered as a mere machine or a reprobate from all eternity, even by a creature whom one despises, cannot but hurt one, while there is a possibility that the Creature may be in the right. And there is not absolute demonstration to the contrary.50

Perhaps the following quotation sums up Boswell's opinion on fate, "While I half apprehended that all was irresistible fate, I half hoped that there was free volition and agency, though I could not understand it."51

Infidelity, to Boswell, was both terrifying and fascinating. He endeavored to be with skeptics; still he gave reasons why Christians should not associate with them. He maneuvered to engage many unbelievers, Rousseau,52 Voltaire,53 and Hume54 particularly, in conversation and questioned them at length.

49Ibid., XV, 53.
50Ibid., p. 118.
51Ibid., XVI, 36.
52Ibid., IV, 73.
53Ibid., p. 19.
54Ibid., XII, 230.
concerning their conceptions of the soul, death, and immortality. He pondered over each statement that they made, revolving it in his mind to see its exact meaning. He constantly tried to combat any phase of unbelief that they expressed, yet he sorely doubted, as will be shown.

Boswell specifies reasons why Christians should not associate with doubters:

It is a difficult question how far sincere Christians should associate with the avowed enemies of religion; for in the first place, almost every man's mind may be more or less 'corrupted by evil communications'; secondly, the world may very naturally suppose that they are not really in earnest in religion, who can easily bear its opponents; and thirdly, if the profane find themselves quite well received by the pious, one of the checks upon an open declaration of their infidelity, and one of the probable chances of obliging them seriously to reflect, which their being shunned would do, is removed.55

Scott and Pottle agree in saying about Boswell's treatment of infidels, "The stiffness and intolerance with which he treats sceptics and infidels springs from his fear that if he gives them the slightest opportunity they will rob him of his treasure."56

To understand Boswell's attitude toward unbelievers, it is necessary for one to observe his comments upon them.

Of John Mac Laurin, with whom Boswell attended races, imbibed wine, and enjoyed other social activities, Boswell says "I only regretted his infidelity. It hurt me."57

Concerning George Wallace, who, also, associated with Boswell in social life, Boswell explains,

I liked his variety of knowledge, but was uneasy to think of his want of belieff; though to do him justice, he does not offensively obtrude it. It hurt me to be conscious that if I were strictly interrogated as to my own precise articles of faith, I should appear very unsettled.58

While David Hume was seriously ill and approaching death, Boswell visited him to see what his reactions would be toward religion and God in his last hours. Instead of finding Hume contrite and miserable, as he expected, he found him blithe and happy. This situation horrified Boswell. He exclaims,

I however felt a degree of horrour, mixed with a sort of wild, strange, hurried recollection of My excellent Mother's pious instructions, of Dr. Johnson's noble lessons, and of my religious sentiments and affections during the course of my life. I was like a man in sudden danger eagerly seeking his defensive arms; and I could not but be assailed by momentary doubts while I had actually before me a man of such strong abilities and extensive inquiry dying in the persuasion of being annihilated. But I maintained my Faith. I told him that I beleived the Christian Religion as I beleived History. Said he: 'You do not beleive it as you beleive the Revolution.' 'Yes,' said I, 'but the difference is that I am not so much interested in the truth of the Revolution; otherwise I should have anxious doubts concerning it. A man who is in love has doubts of the affection of his Mistress, without cause.'59

After Hume's death, John Johnston, who, at times, was in charge of Boswell's private affairs, and Boswell attended his funeral and then went to the Advocates' Library where they read part of his "worst" essays, the Epiquean, the Stoic,

58Ibid., XV, 57.  
59Ibid., XII, 230.
the Skeptic, and the one on natural religion, "from a kind of curiosity and self-tormenting inclination which we feel on many occasions." Boswell was "somewhat dejected in mind," as he often was after experiencing anything that caused him to waver or be infirm in his faith. He was pathetically eager to know the truth. In his search for it, however, he made a perceptible effort to be tolerant and reasonable. One may observe this attitude in the following remark, "Both Berkeley and Hume had a good deal of truth in their systems. Their fault is excess, by which while they augment the dominions of perceptions, they annihilate the substance and power both of body and mind." 

Finally he consoles himself by saying, "But I thought, that the gloom of uncertainty in solemn speculation, being mingled with hope, was yet more consolatory than the emptiness of infidelity. A man can live in thick air, but perishes in an exhausted receiver." 

The subject which troubled and perplexed Boswell most, perhaps, was death, together with the fear of annihilation. Scott and Pottle say,

Boswell never for a moment in his life feared that he would go to Hell. He feared death as abjectly as ever Johnson did, but it was for a more fundamental reason: it was because the stubborn scepticism of his nature kept whispering to him incessantly that Religion was all a dream; that with death he would cease utterly

60 Ibid., p. 25-26. Cf. XII, 35. 61 Ibid., XIV, 123. 
to be. And to be happy, even for a moment, he had to be convinced that he was immortal.  

Boswell says of annihilation:

As the soul 'startles at destruction,' no thinking person, though in a state of little enjoyment, would be content to sink into annihilation upon condition of rising into a much more happy state without any consciousness of former existence. If I am destroyed it is of no consequence to me, that another being in lieu of me has a large share of felicity.  

The thought of death lingered continually in Boswell's mind, oppressing and disquieting his spirit so that he was haunted by imagining, speculation, and dismal apprehension. It excited, intrigued, and agitated him as a flame does a moth. It incited his curiosity to the extent that he persisted in witnessing numerous executions and death scenes and in attending funerals. When friends or loved ones died, Boswell meditated, hoped, and prayed that they were enjoying true felicity in the next world. Realizing that death was inevitable, he attempted to prepare himself for it by establishing his hope in the "great article" of Christianity, the revelation of immortality. In recording an argument which he had with Andrew, a skeptic, he made this comment, "But I felt my advantage in believing a benignant Revelation of Immortality."  

63 Private Papers, XII, Introduction, p. v.  
64 Hypochondriack, No. 42, II, 66.  
65 Life, III, 188.  
66 Private Papers, XIV, 122.
Boswell expresses his fear of death in saying, "The dread of that awful event is so habitual to me that I can conceive nothing so desireable as relief from its gloom."  

He could not agree with the Stoics in their lack of fear:

The Stoicks, who must be acknowledged to have been the most exalted philosophers amongst the ancient heathens, have employed much ingenious and able reasoning to endeavour to produce a conviction that Death should not be feared. Their labours have in general only served to show what an arduous task they have in vain undertaken, and that Death truly is, what an eminent philosopher of another sect has emphatically called it . . . 'of all dreadful things the most dreadful.'

He states further:

Notwithstanding my persuasion that the fear of Death is rational, and will ever be found in a thinking being, I am very willing to allow all proper respect to that firmness and fortitude of which some men are possessed, who while they are sensible of the awful importance of launching from one state of being into another, support the thoughts of it with a calmness and humble hope becoming at once the dignity of human nature, and the humble confidence of piety.

Boswell admits that death has a beneficial effect:

The thought of Death should have a salutary influence upon our tempers and manners. . . . And were the thought of Death oftener present to our minds, I am persuaded we should be much more humane and kindly towards our fellow-creatures, who are to die as well as ourselves.

Pondering upon Johnson's fear of death, Boswell reveals divergent concepts of death:

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67 Hypochondriack, No. 55, II, 162. Cf. Private Papers, XIII, 28,

68 Hypochondriack, No. 15, I, 206.

69 Hypochondriack, No. 14, I, 205.

70 Hypochondriack, No. 16, I, 218.
How terrible then must death be to me. Yet I really have at times no great horror of it. ... I was now led to have a new state of reflection as to death: Neither to be indifferent from sensibility nor cheerful from imagination, but to consider it as an awful event which God intends should be awful. ... But Death being the important transition, we cannot but be struck with trepidation when we think of it.\textsuperscript{71}

Contradicting the idea that the fear of death is appalling he remarks,

I was in a dull, easy frame. I wondered to find Death and Immortality affect me very little. ... But it is amazing in what diversity of states a thinking Man will perceive himself to exist, and how unlike the impressions of the same objects will be at various periods.\textsuperscript{72}

Boswell, thinking on the inevitableness of death, says,

Undoubtedly the certainty of death, the positive assurance that 'it will come' should reasonably operate on our minds, so as to make it more an object of fear than if it were uncertain; so that it is a most extraordinary doctrine to maintain that it is most strange we should fear death, seeing that it is a necessary end, and will certainly come.\textsuperscript{73}

Since death is an evil, man should meditate upon it so that he will be prepared for its coming:

Death is not really an evil which may happen, but an evil which will certainly happen; and because, by a proper preparation for it, we may render it less hurtful, both with respect to our concerns in this world, and those in the world beyond the grave.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{71}Private Papers, XIII, 28.
\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., XIV, 14-15.
\textsuperscript{73}Hypochondriack, No. 15, I, 208.
\textsuperscript{74}Hypochondriack, No. 16, I, 216.
He should also prepare his soul.

And how infinitely more important is it to have our souls in a condition fit for a future state; for, without entering upon the theological question, whether our condition shall be irreversibly fixed after Death, no serious Christian will deny that there is at least an immense period at stake, when we make our transition from the present state of being.75

Boswell becomes happier, however, when he considers death to be only a sleep from which he will wake in a state of universal felicity.

Should not this miniature example sleep, this model of death, persuade us that the last Sleep of man will be similar, and that he shall awake in a bright morning of immortality. I acknowledge, however, that independent of Revelation, and above all of the illustrious proof exhibited in the resurrection of our SAVIOUR Jesus Christ, after being dead and buried, this hope would not be sufficiently strong in all states of mind.76

"This hope" was not satisfactory to Boswell. He exclaims, "This aweful Subject the next world puzzles all Mankind. For even Revelation does not give us any clear views of the mode of existence in the other world."77

Accordingly, he conjectures of the future state: "And to be sure the happiness of a future state is quite inconceivable by us at present."78 "Indeed we may consider that everything in a future state will be amazingly different from what we experience in the imperfection of this."79

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76 *Hypochondriack*, No. 42, II, III.
77 *Private Papers*, XIII, 106.
He continues with a rather bold statement that indicates the inconstancy of his mind regarding immortality:

A Man is immortal or not as he happens to die in a dull or a lively frame. I have often been an immortal Soul. At present it seems to me I am not of celestial fire. I am quite sensual, and that, too, not exquisitely but rather swinishly.80

Rightly to interpret the preceding statement, one must take into consideration that Boswell was often influenced by the physical aspects of life. He, at times, thought himself to be corrupt, and he could not visualize his soul as being immortal. He considered that his "humours [were] gross"; he experienced "a torpidity of mind"; and he envisioned no "lively hope of Immortality."

Boswell's account of his attending Treesbank, who was dying, is another illustration of his fluctuating ideas relating to the future life.

I repeated the first part of that beautiful consolatory Chapter, 'Let not your heart be troubled,' and I knelt upon the bed and offered up a short fervent prayer for my poor distressed friend. . . .

While I sat by him and was sincerely serious, I could not however prevent imaginations of scepticism from springing out in my mind at times. But I checked them, and considered that there is a rational preponderation both for a future state and for Christianity. Besides, one would surely cherish hope on a death-bed, were it only as studying immediate happiness.81

After Boswell's wife died, he found solace in saying, "I thank God for being pleased to grant me at this time of trial such impressions of faith and pious hope as afford me a benignant alleviation."82

80Ibid., XV, 46.  81Private Papers, XII, 57-58.  82Ibid., XVII, 162.
Continuing, he says, "The comforts of Piety prevent me from sorrowing as those who have no hope. I thank GOD, I have."83

Perhaps the following quotation illustrates Boswell's conception of the future world more clearly than any other which has been mentioned: "The Great Power who made us will, I hope, in another period of our existence gratify us with an explanation of all the mysteries in our own formation and progress through being which are now at all times so puzzling and sometimes so distressing."84

It may be seen that Boswell struggled incessantly to establish his faith in a Supreme Being, in the basic principles of religion, and particularly, in the revelation of immortality; that he advocated an amiable, vital, and liberal religion, which could be experienced through the emotions, as well as through the mind; that he believed in the demonstration of good works, "letting his light shine before men"; that he criticized all philosophies, yet he defended everything that was reasonable and rational; that he condemned physical or divinely imposed necessity and infidelity; and that he regarded death and annihilation with dismal apprehension.

Boswell was often contradictory regarding the principles he defended. He believed. He did not believe; then he rationalized. Perhaps he showed the greatest variability in his

83Ibid., p. 166.  84Ibid., XIV, 260.
concepts of death and immortality. To know what he thought is difficult because of his subjectiveness, his strong emotional reactions, and his moods of depression. That he was sincere, however, is evident.
CHAPTER IV

BOSWELL'S IDEA OF SOCIETY

The fundamental conception in every theory of society is man, since man is an integral part in the family which he creates and the society which he forms. Accordingly one must know Boswell's opinion of man in order to evaluate his social ideas.

Boswell, unlike Swift and Mandeville, considered man and society good; however he realized that man was weak and imperfect in certain respects. Since he was aware of man's faults, he adopted a rational and tolerant attitude of balance and restraint towards human nature, defending it against "false virtue" and rigid standards. He argued that man should determine and control his own actions by following a "well-informed" conscience, "the chief director of man's actions," by disciplining himself through the exercise of reason and prudence. In other words, he says, "We ought to conduct ourselves as to mental qualities; and not be always examining nicely into the characters of our neighbours."¹

For men who supported "that rigid false virtue which affects to despise and abhor human nature in general"² Boswell had no sympathy. Of them he says,

¹Hypochondriack, No. 24, I, 297.
²Hypochondriack, No. 52, II, 142.
We often find those who are denominated rigidly virtuous are remarkable for being censorious. Their virtue being only what is austere in duty, not what is mild and benevolent, so that they are truly but half virtuous, and that too without having the best half, they are disposed to lessen the merit of others, especially when it is of that kind in which they are deficient. . . . Whenever therefore I hear a man eager in general indiscriminate abuse of human nature, alleging that there is not true spirit, or friendship, or honesty, or piety to be found, I conclude that if he has not been miserably unfortunate, he is debased and wicked in an extreme degree. 3

Boswell found it more pleasant to admire human nature than to find fault with it, 4 since the weakness and imperfection of human nature would not bear too close an examination in any character, 5 and since there was nothing human so nearly perfect but that there might be something ridiculous found in it. 6 He saw no benefit in criticism, censure, ridicule, or sarcasm. Commenting upon censure, he says,

For my own part, I look upon it as a great misfortune to be quick-sighted to the faults and imperfections of others. It is the great study of civilized life to promote good-humour and complacency, by making ourselves and every thing about us appear as agreeable as we can; for which reason we endeavour to keep out of sight whatever is imperfect and offensive; and our inventions are exercised in multiplying modes of cleanliness and ornament. . . . It is said that no man is in perfect health; and it will be admitted that no man is completely virtuous. If a man has any infectious or loathsome disease, it is evident, and we shun him. A similar remark is to be made if he has any capital

3 Hypochondriack, No. 24, I, 294.
4 Hypochondriack, No. 67, II, 271.
5 Hypochondriack, No. 23, I, 285.
6 Hypochondriack, No. 62, II, 229.
vice. But they who are perpetually probing for faults and imperfections, whether of body or mind, are surely very unhappy. . . .

I believe upon the whole, that he who would pass his life comfortably should not only abstain from censure, but habituate himself to take things in the most agreeable view; and by no means to search for faults. 7

Concerning ridicule he says,

There may be innumerable sportive flights of a playful imagination which only exhilarate for the moment. But cutting Bajlery, depreciating Sarcasm, or any mode of Ridicule which destroys real good qualities is to be avoided as poison.

He states further, "Ridicule, I own, is no small gratification to those who can command it; for it gratifies at once risibility and pride, both of which are strong in human nature." 9

Since Boswell was cognizant of man's faults, he realized that his character could not be always constant and uniform. He affirms, "It is very erroneous, though a very common notion, that every man should have a constant uniformity of character; whereas it is in mingling of diversities that happiness consists." 10

Happiness and pleasure, according to Boswell, were essential to man in social life:

7 *Hypochondriack*, No. 24, I, 297-298.
8 *Hypochondriack*, No. 62, II, 229.
10 *Hypochondriack*, No. 25, I, 300.
Nothing should be reckoned desireable in itself, but be esteemed only as it produces happiness. Every man must judge for himself how much relaxation and what mode of relaxation does him most good.  

Pleasure was a word of extensive meaning to Boswell. Defining it, he says,

\[ \text{Pleasure} \] comprehends all things that are pleasing, all things that produce satisfaction, joy, or delight, and in general whatever we can perceive as an agreeable effect. It is therefore confining and debasing it when we refer it only to our senses. The Pleasure of mind when we attain to it is the highest pleasure. But I am willing to partake of every Pleasure that is innocent.

While Boswell suggested that pleasure of the mind was the highest pleasure which man could attain and that he, himself, was willing to participate in any innocent pleasure, he often found harmless pleasure ineffectual. He admits this in his journal when he says, "Harmless pleasure' seem to me too elegant or weak."

Boswell assumes a rational attitude in explaining that man is a "reasoning animal," as well as a "risible" one:

But human nature is not in general devoid of settled thinking. Though man must be distinguished as a risible animal, there is not a large portion of his existence spent in laughter. In his early years indeed he has much of it. But in his early years he

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11\textit{Ibid.}, p. 302.  
is an imperfect animal—He is green—He is not substantiated. And it will be allowed that men who after arriving at the full age of reason are continual laughers, have no credit by their merriment, but are with justice looked upon as foolish. Man is not more distinguishable as a risible, than as a reasoning animal, and the longer he lives he approaches the more to steadiness. 14

Boswell, then, argued that man was essentially good, even though he was weak and imperfect in many aspects of his living, that man to be tranquil should control his own behavior and not examine too closely his neighbor's actions; that man should praise and admire his fellow creature, rather than ridicule and censure him; that man should experience pleasure and happiness, since they were vital to living; and that man should be both a "risible" and "reasoning animal."

In the preceding paragraphs it may be seen that Boswell was tolerant and broadminded in his conception of man. He was also liberal and reasonable in his perspective of society—the family, the community, and the nation. In explanation he states:

To consider one's self as a part of a general system, and to think of the good of the whole may have been carried to an absurd excess by the stoicks of old, and by some philosophers of modern times who have assimilated their notions to those of that lofty sect. Yet it must be allowed, that much of our happiness arises from viewing our existence in that light. . . . The enjoyment of man is far from being merely selfish, but is in a considerable degree sympathetick. It extends to his wife and children, to his friends, to his countrymen, to all with whom he feels a connexion; and

14 Hypochondriack, No. 42, II, 65.
if his mind is enlarged enough, it extends itself to the whole human race.\textsuperscript{15}

Since Boswell advocated an unselfish, sympathetic enjoyment of man, he defended a civilized life in which man could find pleasure. He defines it by saying, "The civilized life which I oppose to savage life, is that rational, temperate, orderly, and well cultivated state of existence which a great proportion of mankind enjoy."\textsuperscript{16}

Boswell, being a gregarious person, seemed to find a great deal of satisfaction in the society which he upheld. His journal discloses that he followed the customs of his age in entertaining and being entertained. Evidently he associated with people of all classes; however, he spent much time in company with eminent and learned men. He preferred England and English people to Scotland and her people. He was particularly fascinated by London and its society and often commented upon his activities there. In 1778 when he was visiting London, he remarked, "I was struck with agreeable wonder and admiration by contemplating the immensity of the Metropolis and the multitude of objects; above all, by the number and variety of people; and all Melancholy was as clearly dissipated as if had never existed in my mind."\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15}Hypochondriack, No. 41, II, 58.
\item \textsuperscript{16}Hypochondriack, No. 20, I, 254.
\item \textsuperscript{17}Private Papers, XIII, 107.
\end{itemize}
He wrote at Edinburgh in 1780, "But still, as John Pringle said to me, I was born for England; and I am so much happier in London—Nay, any where in England—than in Edinburgh that it is hard I should be confined to this place."\textsuperscript{18}

On another occasion, after he had dined at Mrs. David Garrick's home with Johnson, Mrs. Carter, Dr. Burney, Reynolds, Miss More, and Mrs. Boscawen, he exclaimed: "I was really happy. My gay ideas of London in youth were realised and consolidated. I did my part pleasingly."\textsuperscript{19}

The only people whom Boswell criticized, it seems, were the philosophers of his day, the Presbyterians, the uncouth Scotch people, and the "very fine" people. Perhaps he ridiculed the "very fine" people because he was envious of them. That he never attained the eminence he desired is apparent in most of his writing.

In his comparison of the "very fine" with the savage he might have been amusing himself with his fanciful imagination which he often mentioned, or he might have been deriding those people who preferred savage simplicity to civilized society. Regardless of his reason, he deemed savages and "very fine" people alike in striving to make themselves beautiful, in narrow conversation, in restlessness, in gambling, in variety of amorous connections, in conceit, and in discourtesy. Amplifying upon incivility he says,

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., XIV, 40. \textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 203.
Our very fine people have actually studied themselves back into barbarism; for, instead of exerting those laudable little arts by which sluggish and untoward nature is roused and rendered gay, and the happiness of society is promoted by making every one of some consequence, and giving every one continually something to do, were it only to listen with attentive complacency, the modern very fine life is an absolute extinction of all good breeding. In short, one cannot without some indignation as well as wonder and pity behold the absurd abolition of all that system of good manners by which civilized society is raised so far above the rude state of nature. 20

To interpret Boswell's conception of society, one must ascertain his opinions on love and marriage, women and children. Love, as seen by Boswell, is a passion which deprives man of all philosophy. It is the most universal and most frequent of all passions. It is just as natural an appetite as hunger or thirst, but there is a difference between the distress caused by corporeal privation and the distress of a lover whose mistress has rejected him. It is sensual in its beginning but quite different afterward. Boswell explains,

In my opinion the original impulse may be sensuality; but the after progress is quite different. The fire may be kindled by the heat of coarse materials; but the flame burns into a pure brightness. Sensuality is the fuel by which the imagination is heated; but it will retain the heat long after the extinction of the fuel. 21

The passion of love as modified by experience is quite different from the general desire for enjoyment of the other sex.

20 Ibid., p. 259.

21 Hypochondriack, No. 11, I, 176-177.
For it is an extreme and inexplicable attachment to one particular woman to account for which, as I have characterised it as inexplicable, I need not be ashamed to acknowledge myself altogether at a loss. When the natural desire is thus modified, the analogy between it and hunger or thirst ceases. . . . A man, who is actuated only by sensual desire, will indulge it with any female whom he may meet; and like a glutton, who ravenously devours many dishes, will indiscriminately embrace a plurality of wenches. . . .

When Love is shared amongst several objects, the passion is nowhere so strong but that a man has the command of it. 22

The passion of love is an insensible combination of body and spirit.

For, if we carefully attend to the wishes of even the most romantic adorer, we shall find that he is never completely happy without the idea of being in contact with his mistress. And however he may talk in an elevated style that it is not a set of features or a complexion that he admires, yet the closest union of affections will not set his heart fully at rest, unless he holds his charmer in his arms. He cannot be sure that the jewel is his unless he has possession of the casket. . . .

I doubt if there ever has been a lover, philosopher enough to be content with the kernel without the shell; for whether it be founded in truth or not, it is certain we have all a persuasion not to be laid aside, that the body and mind are so intimately connected, that it is impossible to keep quite clear of the latter, if the former be much affected. 23

The formation of love is not usually sudden, although there can be very rare instances of "instantaneous mutual attraction" between people of corresponding qualities.

There is at first something in the person which pleases; and by at first I mean the point of time when the passion commences; for previous to that it frequently happens that the object of violent love is beheld not only without any favourable emotion but with aversion. . . .

22 Ibid., pp. 178-179. 23 Ibid., p. 177-178.
But there is no doubt that the most violent passion may be felt for an object destitute of every agreeable and good quality; nay, not only shall this be the case when a man is under a temporary delusion, as love is feigned to be blind, but a man who is distractedly enamoured of such an object shall be fully sensible of this; and yet shall be unable to free himself from the power of the passion.  

Love makes a man weak and submissive to his mistress so that he loses his inviduality.

But a lover is not ashamed to profess himself the most dependent creature that can be imagined, upon the favour of his fair one, to whom he gives the title of his mistress. He glories in wearing her chains. He is proud to be her slave. He pours out his tender distress in sighs. He bursts into tears, which spring from his broken heart; and if she is cruel to him, that is to say, will not love him, or allow him the possession of her sweet person, he renounces felicity. He is in despair. He abandons himself to every kind of effeminate dejection; yet, for all this, he is not despicable either in his own opinion or in that of the greatest part of mankind.

A man that is in love centers his attention on one woman who engages all his affection.

But a man who is in love feels himself fixed to one object which appears to his imagination to be peculiarly delightful; and as it absorbs all his fondness, he is quite indifferent about every other woman. I am now speaking of a man who is in love indeed; for I know that there are numerous gradations of the passion, and that the heart may sometimes be divided into many sections, though no doubt there is always a pre-eminent object as in every seraglio there is a favourite sultana.

24 Ibid., pp. 179-180.

25 Hypochondriack, 12, 186-187.

26 Hypochondriack, No. 11, I, 178-179.
The most prevalent love, that of "calm and moderate degree," leads to matrimony. It is "gentle" and mild, rather than violent and unrestrained.

As there is a degree of heat which produces only an agreeable warmth, and approaches not in its effects to the torments of burning, so we all know that there is a degree of love so gentle as to be truly pleasing, and far distant from the excruciating gloom of violent passion. This species of love we must allow to be the most general, and it is this which is meant in the greatest number of pretty little songs, and pieces of pastoral poetry and is represented emblematically by doves billing and cooing, cupids with festoons of flowers, and many other gay devices.\textsuperscript{27}

On the other hand, there is a very violent love or passion which man experiences for the woman who does not return his love.

It is to be observed that there is in it no mixture of disinterested kindness for the person who is the object of it. We have indeed many poetical instances of an affectation of this where a rejected lover prays for continued blessings on his Delia, and hopes she shall be happy with a more deserving swain. But we may be certain that these are false expressions; for the natural sentiment in such a situation is hatred, and that of the bitterest kind. We do not feel for her who is the object of our amorous passion, anything similar to the natural affection of a mother for her child. . . . On the contrary, the fondness for the object of our Love is purely selfish. . . . The natural effect of disappointed love, however shocking it may appear, is to excite the most horrid resentment against its object, at least to make us prefer the destruction of our mistress, to seeing her possessed by a rival. I say this is unrestrained nature, and wherever passion is stronger than principle it bursts forth into horrid deeds.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Hypochondriack}, No. 13, 190.

\textsuperscript{28}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 194-195.
As a result of disappointment in love man experiences the keenest distresses with which a human being can be tormented. As he who is so unfortunately afflicted suffers at once the unhappiness of being prevented from the enjoyment of what he ardently wishes to possess, and the pain of having his pride severely hurt, than which nothing shakes the mind more forcibly. Accordingly disappointed love is one of the most frequent causes of madness, as every body may be convinced, who has curiosity and firmness sufficient to visit the receptacles of insanity, and contemplate human nature in ruins.  

It may be seen, then, that Boswell considered love as a passion which was sensual in its beginning, but pure in its final development; that it was analogous to hunger and thirst until it was modified by an attachment for one particular woman; that it was an "insensible" combination of the qualities of mind and body; that it was not often formed suddenly; that it might be felt for a woman "destitute of every agreeable and good quality"; that it made man meek and submissive so that he lost much of his independence; that "love indeed" caused a man to center all his affections on one woman; that the "most general" love, which was "gentle" and "truely pleasing" led to marriage; that violent love often occasioned hatred for the object of man's affection; and that "disappointed love" sometimes caused madness.

From the summary which has been given, one may observe that Boswell gave more stress to love of the mind than to corporeal love. He did this purposely in the Hypochondriack essays so that he would not offend his readers. He explains,

29Ibid., pp. 196-197.
"If in my papers upon Love I have chiefly considered its effects upon the mind, that will easily be perceived to have been owing to a proper wish to avoid such ideas as any of my readers might think gross or indecent." 30

It has been shown that Boswell defended a "rational, temperate, and orderly" society and that he presented a liberal theory of love. In a similar manner, he supported marriage as established by British law, the "good, plain institution" of his age. He believed that marriage was "unquestionably the great support of civil society." 31 Enlarging upon this idea, he states:

That marriage should ever be respected by the wise and virtuous, is plain from the consideration, that it is the mode of continuing the human race in a regular and becoming manner. Man loves his species. He feels a pleasure in the contemplation of that multitude of beings of whom he is one; and he cannot but have a regard for an orderly institution to which he himself owes his education, and without which he is sensible that society would be a scene of gross and discordant confusion. . . .

A man therefore may be induced to marry from the principle that he shall by doing so, have a better connexion with society, and add more good to the general system than by any other means. 32

Love, according to Boswell, is beneficial to marriage as long as it conduces to the advancement of society; and

30 Hypochondriack, No. 40, II, 49.
31 Hypochondriack, No. 13, I, 192.
love in a moderate degree is safer than violent passion, since

a violent passion, even when it brings us to what we vehemently desire to attain, most commonly produces fatal effects, as a ship driven rapidly upon shore by a tempest is shattered to pieces, or otherwise damaged. Besides, we must keep in mind that as a storm sometimes drives ships from their moorings into the ocean, so love not infrequently loosens the conjugal anchors, and sets its victims adrift upon the waves of licentiousness. 33

Marriage would be more successful if it were entered upon as a permanent business transaction; but

Such is the constitution of our natures, that the advantages of the conjugal copartnery consist in the gratification of the passion of Love; at least these are the advantages which affect the imagination so strongly as to induce people to engage themselves in an indissoluble contract, attended with many certain inconveniences, and at the risk of many more. Without Love therefore, there would be very few marriages; since it is but a small proportion of mankind who have wealth enough to enable them to marry principally with a view to join stocks, so as to have the comforts and elegancies of life more at command by an union of their different powers. 34

The passion of love, then, is a prerequisite for marriage, but mutual complacency and kind attachment tend to produce greater happiness than love.

That there should be Love at first between those who are to be united for ever by marriage, seems very necessary. Warmth of passion being as requisite for coalescence of minds, as heat for the cohesion of metals. But they are ill prepared for happiness, who delude themselves with hopes that what is the compound effect of distance, restraint, and novelty, should subsist in intimacy, freedom, and sameness. . . .

33 Hypochondriack, No. 13, I, 192-193.
34 Ibid., p. 193.
The mutual complacency and kind attachment to which married people may attain, will be found to produce more happiness than the agitations of the passion of love.\textsuperscript{35}

The satisfying of natural appetites is a significant factor in marriage.

Ninety-nine of a hundred marry from the impulse of appetite, from immediate desire of a particular object. All who think it immoral to gratify the strongest natural inclination without the sanction of wedlock, and cannot or do not choose to repress it, must marry, and then do well. \ldots\ It is in vain to disguise, that the enjoyment of woman is the most general and the prime incentive to marriage, when man is in his vigour. \ldots

But I speak of marriage as it most frequently happens, taking a view of mankind in general; of marriage by which the world is continually furnished with new supplies of people; and I maintain that we owe it to the natural desire which is so exceedingly strong and prevalent. The motive of interest affects but a very limited number.\textsuperscript{36}

There are other motives for marriage besides the gratification of the natural desire:

That there are additional motives to marriage, besides what I have ventured to specify as the chief, I shall not deny. I will even admit that it is frequently not perceived to be the 'something which prompts' and also that in society highly civilized, the feelings of nature are so overwhelmed with artificial means of gratifying pride and pleasure, that they bear a very small proportion. Nor, am I so full of my own notion, as not to be sensible that the same man will have different motives for marriage at different periods of his life.\textsuperscript{37}

The main purpose of marriage is to experience pleasure in love and friendship with the opposite sex.

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 194.

\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Hypochondriack}, No. 41, II, 59-61.

\textsuperscript{37}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 60.
The primary intention of Marriage is the most perfect gratification of love and friendship between the sexes. All other considerations should be subordinate to this; and where other considerations have ascendancy in the conjugal union, it is not properly Marriage, but something else under that name. 38

Love develops into friendship:

When a man and woman have lived together for years, and they have gradually become habituated to each other, they will not feel disagreeably the change from livelier sensations of pleasure to comfortable satisfactions, nor regret that love has grown into friendship. 39

Happiness is to be promoted and nourished constantly in marriage.

I own I am one of those who think Marriage a good thing; and that if human happiness is not increased by it, the fault is not in the institution but in the parties. . . .

Accordingly we should be careful never to imagine that the wedding-day is the burial of love, but that in reality love then begins its life; and if we set out upon that principle, and are mindful to keep it up, and give due attention and aid to the progress of love thus brought into the well ordered well sheltered garden, we may enjoy I believe as much happiness as is consistent with the imperfection of our present state of being. . . .

For the happiness of the married state must not be left to mere chance. Man and wife must not live at random. There must be attention without restraint, and study without trouble, a certain easy management which adapts itself to the variations of life. 40

In order to preserve happiness, both husband and wife abide by the laws of the marriage contract.

But I am not bashaw enough to hold that all complacency must be on the woman’s side. Nay, I am willing to allow, that Marriage is an equal contract between man and woman; and that although, in a political


40 Hypochondriack, No. 42, II, 69, 72, 73.
view, infidelity is much more criminal in the wife than in the husband, yet in every other respect the offence is as great in one as in the other; and no man has a right to complain that his wife does not love him, and is not studious of his happiness, if he disgusts and shocks her by an intimate association with abandoned women. The injustice of that kind of profligacy is, I am afraid, not sufficiently perceived; so that men of good characters upon the whole, nay, men who esteem and even love their wives above all other women, are apt, from exuberance of appetite and capricious fondness of variety to indulge themselves in it.\(^{41}\)

A love of permanence exists in human nature, and it extends to marriage.

There is in human nature a love of permanency, as well as a love of variety. Identity of person is absolutely requisite in the idea of happiness, though the person must no doubt have changes of sensation to exist agreeably. There is an egotism in this view which is not only valuable, but without which man is nothing. \(\ldots\) This love of permanency, with reference to ourselves extends itself also to objects with which we are intimately connected. \(\ldots\) How much stronger then must it be, when applicable to a wife, 'the most delightful name in nature'. \(\ldots\) But we carry our love of permanency still farther, and please ourselves with an anxious hope that an agreeable union may be continued even in a future state of existence. \(\ldots\) And I doubt not that where there is a lasting love Marriage, it would be exceedingly distressing to both of the parties to be convinced that when death does them part, their union is dissolved for ever, and that they shall thenceforward exist as separate and unconnected beings.\(^{42}\)

Husband and wife should have common interests in life to be happy, yet "many couples in this metropolis" do not.

They instead of having one common train of life, contrive it so as very seldom to approach each other.

\(^{41}\)Hyochondriack, No. 43, II, 75-77.

\(^{42}\)Hyochondriack, No. 42, II, 66-68.
A husband is so far from being the sole cause of comfort and happiness in the matrimonial state, that he is only like the master or superintendent of a great manufactory, and the beneficial effect of subdivision of labour. . . . Different men attend a lady to different places of amusement; and conversation being shared with numbers, there is a gay variety, instead of the uniform dullness of frequent intercourse with the same person. Neither is it thought of any advantage to have an attention to fortune as a fund to both, since each can with less care, take occasionally what is wanted, as the birds peck at large, wherever they fly and hop about. 43

Superficial thinkers, believing that happiness is not promoted by marriage, vent their ridicule upon this subject.

Yet marriage stands its ground, and even the greatest part of the railers against it are observed to conform to it like other mortals. The explanation is obvious, a slight prospect takes in only restraint and all its concomitant ideas. A steady view discovers the real advantages. 44

That Boswell defended marriage as a beautiful well-ordered institution of society may be seen in the preceding statements. In all his precepts, he was reasonable and tolerant, particularly in his defense of a single standard of conduct for husband and wife. Doubtless he wrote in this manner to justify many of his own actions in marriage; however, he, realizing his frailty, possibly sought to formulate a standard which would incite him to proper living. In order to compare and contrast Boswell's theory with his practice, one must present additional information concerning mutual interests, money, and infidelity in marriage.

43 Ibid., pp. 63-64. 44 Ibid., p. 64.
Boswell, like every man of his period and station in life, sought to marry a woman "of rank and fortune." He pursued a young lady known only as Miss W____t,\textsuperscript{45} Isabella de Zuylen,\textsuperscript{46} Catherine Blair,\textsuperscript{47} Mary Ann Montgomery,\textsuperscript{48} and others, hoping to make an alliance which would benefit him financially and socially. On numerous occasions he wrote to Temple concerning his marital ambition. In 1764 he wrote to Temple about Isabella, "But, My Dear Temple, she is not by half so rich as I thought.... After all, when I consider my unhappy constitution, I think I should not marry, at least for some time, and when I do, should chuse a healthy, cheerfull woman of rank and fortune.\textsuperscript{49}

Finally, after delighting himself for several years by fanciful imagination of wealth and high social position, he married Margaret Montgomerie for love. Commenting upon his marriage, he said, "After having for years cherished a system of marrying for money, I at last totally departed from it, and married for love."\textsuperscript{50}

Constantly, throughout his life, Boswell was embarrassed by monetary difficulties. He wrote to Temple after his wife's death,

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{45}Letters, I, 3. \textsuperscript{46}Private Papers, IV, 22.
\textsuperscript{47}Letters, I, 109. \textsuperscript{48}Ibid., p. 162.
\textsuperscript{49}Private Papers, IV, 22.
\textsuperscript{50}Hypochondriack, No. 43, II, 69.
I cannot help thinking how strangely it has happened that I have never yet had, properly speaking, the advantages of a man of fortune, but have been continually straitened. My excellent wife was at less expence than any woman, even of much inferiour rank, and my genteel appearance has been occasional only. Yet I do believe I have had more enjoyment than many who have grand establishments.\textsuperscript{51}

Boswell seemed to love his wife in his peculiar manner, and he did not often criticize her; instead, he talked and wrote of her good qualities in glowing terms at different times during his marital life and even after her death. Occasionally, however, he censured her for not responding to his humor and enthusiasm. On one occasion when he was planning a trip to London in order to see Johnson, she objected to his going, knowing that he could not financially afford the expense of the journey. He, being vexed with her, wrote in his journal, "Though sensible and lively, she has not so much Philosophy (or rather enthusiasm and Superstition) as I could wish."\textsuperscript{52}

On another occasion, Boswell was reading \textit{Tom Jones} with appreciation, since he considered the thought expressed therein to be "human nature"; however, his wife disapproved of Fielding's "turn for low life." Again Boswell was angry with her. He was unable to understand her lack of imagination, her dry spirit. Writing in his journal, he criticized and praised her at the same time.

\textsuperscript{51}\textit{Letters}, II, 385-386.

\textsuperscript{52}\textit{Private Papers}, XIII, 7.
She has nothing of that English juiciness of mind of which I have a great deal, which makes me delight in humour. But what hurts me most, she has nothing of that warmth of imagination which produces the pleasures of vanity and many others, and which is even a considerable cause of religious fervour. Family, which is a high principle in my mind, and Genealogy, which is to me an interesting amusement, have no effect upon her. It is impossible not to be both uneasy and a little angry at such defects, (or call them differences;) and at times they make me think that I have been unlucky in uniting myself with one, who, instead of cherishing my genius, is perpetually checking it. But, on the other hand, I consider her excellent sense, her penetration, her knowledge of real life, her activity, her genuine affection, her generous conduct to me during my distracted love for her and when she married me, and her total disinterestedness and freedom from every species of selfishness during all the time she has been my Wife. And then I value her and am fond of her, and am pained to the heart for having ever behaved in a manner unworthy of her merit. . . . Whereas my excellent Spouse's prudence has kept me out of many follies, and made my life much more decent than it would have been without her. 53

It may be seen that Boswell's views of money and mutual interests in marriage were neither illogical nor immoderate. His actions, as revealed thus far in this chapter, were patterned to a great extent, upon the social rules of conduct which prevailed in his age; however, the comparison between his theory and practice ends at this point, and the contrast begins with his transient amorous connections.

While Boswell made many professions of love for his wife, he was frequently involved with some woman in illicit love; furthermore he seemed to experience intense delight in recording his intimacies in his journal, as well as in relating them to his wife. Why he confessed and revealed his licentious

acts is neither understandable nor explainable, unless one considers him a sadist. Even though Boswell was aware of the fact that his wife often read his journal and that she was shocked and grieved as a result of discovering each infidelity, he persisted in writing of one affair after another, leaving nothing to the imagination. On several occasions his wife threatened to live with him in name only, admitting at the same time that she remained with him only for the sake of the children. Yet she, following the custom of many women of her age, or of any other, usually forgave him soon after every occurrence and devoted herself to his happiness. On July 13, 1779, Boswell "acknowledged" a widow to his wife. Two days later he wrote in his journal:

My valuable Spouse had recovered her cherfulness and we were comfortable. She was so very good as to be disposed in two nights' time to forgive what I feared would have remained long against me. I vowed fidelity, and it was my sincere resolution to devote my utmost attention to make her easy and as happy as possible, and now that her own family was quite extinguished, to make up to her for the want to the utmost of my power. It is amazing how callous one may grow as to what is wrong by the practice of it. I trust this night's resolutions will by God's grace make me act as a good husband and Father of a family. My Father's absence this summer, I suppose, lessened my practice.54

At another time Boswell wrote the following: "I was heated with wine and was foolishly licentious in Libberton's Wynd with the Landlady, whom I had never seen before. Would not with P. C., as now married."55 His wife possibly saw

54Ibid., XIII, 269. 55Ibid., XV, 59.
this account when she read his diary a few days later. At any rate, she was hurt and angry. As a result, she told Boswell that she would continue to live with him only for decency and the children's sake.56

Several years before the two preceding incidents occurred, Boswell had written the following statements in his journal:

There was a handsom chambermaid lighted the fire in the parlour for me, and came again to see if it was burning. I was taken with her in a slight degree, and I mentioned to Temple, as a Priest, my speculations in concubinage: that no man was ever more attached to his Wife than I was, but that I had an exuberance of amorous faculties, quite corporeal and unconnected with affection and regard, and that my Wife was moderate and averse to much dalliance. 'Why might I not then be patriarchal.'57

On September 12, 1777, Boswell wrote concerning a maid and the plurality of women:

The Maid was pretty, and I toyed with her a little. I wish I may not be too lax as to women upon the old testament plan, fancying with some that Christ has not forbidden having a plurality of them. I sometimes think thus, but I am checked by considering that if there is not a restraint upon Christians in that particular much of the distinction between Sin and Holiness vanishes. But I meant no ill this night.58

Again on September 14, 1777, he wrote of his desire for a maid, censuring himself for having such a thought when he should be thinking of his "dear" wife and his "reverend" friend:

56Ibid., p. 66.
I fondled her too. I had immediate keen sensations of desire for women. I let them play about my fancy; but they were checked by looking back to my dear wife, to whom, be they religious or not, they could not but be ungracious, and by looking forward to my reverend friend, in whose opinion I believed they were immoral. 'How inconsistent,' thought I, 'is it for me to be making a pilgrimage to meet Dr. Johnson, and licentiously loving wenches by the way.' 59

The maids were not pretty at Dr. Taylor's home, where Boswell and Johnson stayed while they were in Ashbourne. As a result, Boswell said,

So I had no incitements to amorous desires, and all the time that I was at Ashbourne I had not the least wish for women. I thought that Dr. Johnson's company would afford me so much of a higher kind of pleasure--intellectual delight--that I could live quite well without the pleasure of enjoying women. 60

When Boswell was traveling by coach to Woodford in April, 1771, a widow wished to ride; but there were no seats left. Consequently Boswell suggested that she sit in his lap. Of his association with the widow, he wrote, "I grew very fond of her, cherished her in the coach, and when she went from us, kissed her repeatedly and warmly, and wished to be better acquainted with her. Such incidents are marrow to my bones." 61

In 1786, when Boswell was in London, he renewed his acquaintance with the notorious Margaret Caroline Rudd. He described one meeting with her by saying:

Never shall I forget the scene. So good, so generous, was she. Elegantly drest: satin couleur

59 Ibid., p. 16.  
60 Ibid., p. 47.  
61 Ibid., XIV, p. 194.
de rose; her hair in perfect taste—Not to be dis-composed. A kind wish to give me felicity before a separation. 62

Boswell recorded a conversation which he had with Colonel and Mrs. Stuart concerning Margaret Caroline on March 7, 1786:

I had raved to Mrs. Stuart of M. C., who with great propriety said that a Woman who thought as she did might retire with a lover to a desert island without remorse, but was culpable in offending against the laws of Society. Yet she could not but in some measure be pleased with her extraordinary talents. The Colonel swore at all this and said he would think of her only as a W__re. I was shocked by his hardness. 63

Thus it may be seen that in respect to unfaithfulness Boswell did not conform to the institution of marriage as established by English law. Many other instances of Boswell's licentiousness could be given, but countless experiences of his are too coarse, vulgar, and nauseating to reveal. That Boswell was no worse in his extramarital love life than many men of his day is possible, since the mind and manners of the eighteenth century were characterized by extreme coarseness. Yet it is doubtful that any other man was as frank as he in admitting his illicit loves. In matters of love, no man, perhaps showed greater contrast in theory and practice; for Boswell, having tormented and harassed his wife for years by his constant infidelities, could say after his wife's death,

The recollection of my dear valuable wife came painfully across me. It is impossible to describe fully what I suffer on that account. My thoughts are agitated with gloom and regret and tender sensations.

62 Ibid., XVI, 179. 63 Ibid., 178.
The consideration of the happiness I enjoyed with her, the steady support which her good sense afforded me, the recollection of my improper conduct on many occasions, all crowded upon my mind, seem to overwhelm it; and the dismal circumstance that I am never again to have her cheering and affectionate society in this world is so afflicting that I am amazed how I can for a moment forget it or ever be in the smallest degree easy. O Merciful GOD, be pleased graciously to shed consolation upon my wounded spirit.\textsuperscript{64}

Perhaps it would be interesting, here, to observe Cosmo Gordon's, Temple's, and Boswell's impression of Boswell as a member of society. In August, 1776, Boswell revealed Gordon's opinion of him and commented upon it when he wrote the following:

\cite{Cosmo Gordon} told me that it was universally agreed that I was malevolent. There is certainly such an opinion entertained of me... This is wrong; and though I am perfectly certain that I am the reverse of malevolent, it hurts me in some degree to be thought so.\textsuperscript{65}

Boswell explains his indifference to censure and gives reasons for his actions by saying,

I am indifferent as to all censure of my mode of living. To feel thus gives me a wonderful feeling of independence. But too much of it is not right. The Late Lord Eglintouny regretted to my Father my want of the sense of shame. It has been owing partly to a vain idea of my own talents; partly to a philosophical impression of the nothingness of all things in human nature.\textsuperscript{66}

Temple, as quoted by Pottle, portrays briefly Boswell's coarseness in the following:

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid., XVIII, p. 118. \textsuperscript{65}Ibid., XII, 24. \textsuperscript{66}Ibid., XVI, 25.
Boswell is irregular in his conduct and manners, selfish, indelicate, thoughtless, no sensibility or feeling for others who have not his coarse and rustick strength and spirits. Sorry I came to town to meet him. Detaining me here to no purpose. Seems often absurd and almost mad, I think.67

Boswell debases and extols himself as a citizen of the world:

How insignificant is my life at present! How little do I read! I am making no considerable figure in any way; and I am now forty years of age. But let me not despond. I am a man better known in the World than most of my countrymen. I am very well at the bar for my standing. I lead a regular, sober life. I have a variety of knowledge and excellent talents for conversation. I have a good wife and promising children.68

As has been said, Boswell was, perhaps, the most inconsistent man of his age. Still his theories on all established organizations were sane and fundamental. Boswell failed in practice, rather than in principle; and he excelled as a teacher, rather than as a reformer. That he could teach is evident, but he could not adhere to his own code of living. Thus far, Boswell's opinions on man, civilized society, love, and marriage have been given. In continuation, one may observe Boswell's idea of woman in society.

As a result of the scientific movement in England, women began to have more freedom and influence in society. Instead of being considered mere ornaments for man's diversion and happiness, they were deemed, to a certain extent, intellectually equal with men. Still there was not a great deal of mixed society during the age because of the prevalent clubs which

67Ibid., XV, 231. 68Ibid., XIV, 144.
were composed exclusively of men. Evidently Boswell admired women, but he was not too much interested in intelligent women. It will be remembered that he was critical of Zelide's intelligence and modern ideas. Thinking on Johnson's statement, "Depend upon it, no woman is the worse for sense and knowledge," Boswell wrote, "I must have this more amply discussed with him." 69

Vulliamy says of Boswell, "He never admired a woman for her understanding, or believed that she could have any worth speaking of." 70 Scott and Pottle agree with Vulliamy in saying

But Boswell really did not care for superior female intelligence; it intimidated him and made him uneasy. The one quality in a woman which roused his genuine interest was the power to enchant and allure. 71

Boswell concurs, to a certain extent, with Scott and Pottle when he states his opinion on modesty in women: "But I have my own private notions as to Modesty, of which I would only value the appearance: for unless a woman has amorous heat she is a dull companion, and to have amorous heat in elegant perfection, the fancy should be warmed with lively ideas." 72

That Boswell was fairly content with the existing conditions in society is apparent, although he, at times, amused

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69 Tour, p. 188.
70 C. E. Vulliamy, James Boswell, p. 97.
72 Ibid., p. 57.
himself by ridiculing high society. He tended to regard woman as a companion for diversion, rather than as a "divinity" to be adored.\textsuperscript{73} He contended that "the women in general" were superior to those of any other period,\textsuperscript{74} arguing, however, that there were comparatively few fine ladies\textsuperscript{75} and that they were no better than savages.\textsuperscript{76}

In order to ascertain Boswell's conception of children one should take notice of Boswell as a father. It has been seen that Boswell, as a husband, was a failure in certain aspects of his behavior; but he was an excellent father in that he respected and loved his children. That he was constantly associated with them is apparent in his journal. Each day he instructed them in "divine lessons," describing vividly many characters and stories from the Bible. No doubt he found solace and consolation in his children's devotion to him, since he had never experienced happiness and love with his own father. Evidence of his tolerance and understanding is shown by his friendly and intimate relations with his children. Throughout his life he evinced an avid interest in their social and intellectual development. Realizing that education was essential to happiness, he emphasized it for his own children, as well as for others. He says,

\textsuperscript{73}\textit{Hypochondriack}, No. 12, I, 189.

\textsuperscript{74}\textit{Hypochondriack}, No. 52, II, 147.

\textsuperscript{75}\textit{Hypochondriack}, No. 41, II, 61.

\textsuperscript{76}\textit{Hypochondriack}, No. 20, I, 260.
Good education is no doubt of infinite consequence, and it is strange that an anxiety for having our children well educated should not be as universal as that for having children; since it in a great measure makes the difference between children being the cause of happiness or of misery to parents. 77

Boswell believed that parents should educate their children for the benefit of society, instructing them in the things which were "usefull and agreeable." While he suggested that parents would find much pleasure in instructing their children, he considered few parents "fit for the task." He advocated "the ordinary mode of education which experience for ages has justified, and which has produced so many usefull and eminent men in all departments." 78 Concerning the methods of instruction, he says,

I would allow parents and preceptors to follow their own fancies as suited to the different talents and tempers of the children under their care, in various particulars of instruction. But as to these I would not have any general system framed, as I have never seen one that did not seem to me either impracticable or ridiculous. 79

One might wonder whether any educational theory of this age could surpass the one suggested by Boswell. It is interesting to note that Boswell was reasonable and rational in his theories, inconstant and variable in his emotions and practice.

Since Boswell, himself, was "changeful and unstable," he disliked innovations in the established customs and laws of his country. As he defended society, he, in like manner,

77 Hypochondriack, No. 46, II, 99.
78 Ibid., p. 98.
79 Ibid.
supported the laws and government which protected it. His attitude toward government was similar to his conception of man. While he admitted that it was good, he saw its imperfections. Regardless of its imperfection, "government was absolutely necessary for the preservation and happiness of society"; 80 and the best government was monarchial rather than democratic. He explains:

That the government of the universe itself is monarchial is no doubt a magnificent example to all nations; and there can be no doubt that a perfectly wise and virtuous king with unlimitted power would make the best government. . . .

Subordination is in my mind not only necessary for order, but conducive to the felicity of society. . . . The equality of men, for which some have argued, would be a dull monotonv. . . . Whereas in a monarchy with all the gradations of nobility, gentry, citizens, in short, all the numerous ranks of society, there is a delightful entertainment. . . . In a republick, men grow selfishly lazy in the consciousness of their dependency. Whereas in a monarchy there is a reciprocation of active benevolence from the highest to the lowest. 81

While Boswell advocated rule by a monarch, he believed that there should be "sentinels upon the constitution." In explanation he says,

That implicit trust should be reposed in a monarch. I certainly do not maintain, The superior intelligence of the British constitution is, that our monarch is for ever reminded that there are other guardians of it. But although I am sensible that our monarchy cannot be without error like the divine government, I confess that I cannot approve an unceasing violence of opposition producing a conflict resembling the Manichean system of two divine powers, one good and the other evil. 82

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80 Hypochondriack, No. 19. I, 239.
81 Ibid., pp. 245-246. 82 Ibid., p. 247.
As has been shown, Boswell had little regard for those men who delighted in the past. Human nature and society, to Boswell, were as good as they had been in other ages. They had not been altered by corrupt civilization. One age was only a repetition of another. Boswell had little regard for "that strange propensity which may be traced in every recorded period of time to lament the degeneracy of the age." 83 Instead, he advocated a progressive attitude in saying:

It is surely more agreeable to good notions of Providence, that the world should be in a progressive state of improvement; and I do sincerely think that this age is better than ancient times. . . . And every candid thinking man must acknowledge with comfort the peace and security which we enjoy under the regular administration of justice. 84

Boswell lived in an age which was characterized by crime, brutality, cruelty, lawlessness, sordidness, and "coarse-grained insensibility"; yet he could say,

As rapine and murder were more frequent in former ages than this, and treachery as frequent, so, it cannot be denied that Adultery was at least as frequent as it is now, and drunkenness a great deal more so. The two first crimes indeed decreased long before our time. But I will venture to say, that in other respects we have never had an age less criminal than this. The balance of morality therefore is in our favour. And notwithstanding the cry of infidelity and irreligion which however is not louder than in former times, I have the satisfaction to think that good Christians have no reason to lament that either the number or the weight of believers is diminished. We have a pious prince upon the throne. We have great lights in the church. We have many distinguished men amongst the

83 Hypochondriack, No. 52, II, 141.
84 Hypochondriack, No. 52, II, 143.
laity who have stood forth in support of the truth of Revelation.\textsuperscript{85}

It may be seen that Boswell loved and enjoyed man and society. He, realizing the weakness and imperfection of man, sought to praise rather than to censure. He, unlike many writers, deemed society good; hence he had no reforms to make. Instead he advocated happiness in living. His theories on established laws and customs were rational and liberal, although he, himself, could not conform to his own standards because of his emotional instability.

\textsuperscript{85}Ibid., 146.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

James Boswell, inconstant and variable in his emotions, sane and liberal in his theories, lived in an age which was characterized by many changing ideas regarding man and his nature, his religion, and his social life. As a result of the scientific movement, many intellectuals of the age believed that all action of life was centered in a vast order of nature, whose laws were immutable, eternal, universal and uniform. Man, nature, and God, according to these philosophers, were synthesized in a harmonious order in which there was an "eternal fitness of things" that ordained man's destiny.

Since nature and man were revealed in the physical universe, they were natural and good; therefore what was natural and rational became the objective of intelligent thinkers. A natural accompaniment of the new conception concerning man and nature was a growth of freedom in social, political, and economic life. Social consciousness was aroused so that more attention was given to the under-privileged people. The middle class began to undermine the authority of the aristocracy. Trade and industry increased as a result of fewer restrictions. Explorations created an interest in newly discovered countries and primitive society and gave impetus to a spirit of cosmopolitanism.
The conflicts in religion, occasioned by the Reformation and Renaissance, caused many changes in orthodox traditions. The Reformation questioned all points of faith and reduced them to the level of controversy. Before this time, Christianity, instead of teaching and practicing benevolence, tolerance, peace, and understanding, had become involved in controversies over tenets of supernaturalism, revelation, miracles, and prophecies. Superstition, antiquated prejudices, and a false system of profound knowledge permeated the churches. As a result of these conditions, the Puritan Reformation occurred. The Renaissance brought humanism into religion; and humanism, combined with scientific reasoning, evolved a new conception of religion that brought about a break with Christian tradition. Thus the Renaissance as well as the Reformation, abetted the growth of natural religion which accepted a rational universe with a rational deity and considered all partial evil universal good.

Because man accepted physical nature and natural religion, he deemed everything in its proper order and adopted the maxim, "whatever is, is right." At the same time, other intellectuals, rejecting the mutability of nature's laws, insisted upon change and progress and contended that man's nature was determined by his instincts, emotions, and sensibilities, rather than by reason. Accordingly, sentimentalism, Romanticism, and naturalistic tendencies originated, changing many old concepts of man's nature and adding new ones.
Boswell had little sympathy for the philosophies and philosophers of his day. He often criticized the Deists and materialists, deriding their vanity and superficial thinking. Philosophy as a love of wisdom he admired, but he considered that the philosophy of the Deists was only "plausible reasoning against established belief."\(^1\) Since belief was a necessity for Boswell, he, disregarding philosophy, sought to establish his faith in a Supreme Being and in the principles of religion. His concept of religion was liberal and tolerant; according to him, religion was elevating and pleasing, vital, amiable, and livable. It was the noblest employment of the mind if it were experienced through pleasure, prudence, and reverential fear. It did not demand perfection nor a rigid practice of morality. It brought man true happiness if he lived so that he could have his own approval when he came to die.

To reform man and society was not Boswell's purpose in writing. Instead, he considered man, woman, and the social institutions of his age superior to those of preceding periods. Admitting that all phases of society had their imperfections, he suggested the unselfish, sympathetic enjoyment of man, love of the mind, marriage as the great support of society, and the civilized society which most men enjoy.

Boswell, at times, reflects a great deal of sentimentalism and sensibility in his subjectiveness, in his wavering emotions,

\(^1\)Hypocondriack, No. 12, II, 184.
in his moods of depression, and in his thoughts of death. In most cases, however, he reveals keen discernment and intelligent reasoning in his theories and principles of living. That he was contradictory in theory and practice is evident. As Quennell says, "He aspired by turn to every virtue and was most vehement in his cultivation of those very moral qualities he was least capable of achieving."\(^2\)

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