

THE PHILOSOPHY OF GEORGE TURNBULL

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To Tuli

Abstract

George Turnbull (1698-1748) is one of the figures of the Scottish Enlightenment who has been largely overlooked. In this thesis I give the first detailed analysis of his major writings by focusing on a set of principles that guided and unified his work. I show that he constructed a unified system of philosophy and a proper Science of Man, which in turn draws attention to his relevance as an important figure of the early stages of the Scottish Enlightenment. I present an interpretation of Turnbull's work that takes into account the deep interconnectedness of his texts and considers his anatomy of the human mind as the foundation on which he develops his theories of education, painting, religion, law, and politics. The unity of his work and the set of principles that guide it allow us to gain a deeper understanding of Turnbull's thought and its place within its eighteenth-century context, highlighting his unique contribution to the development of the Science of Man.

Preface

This thesis is the final product of three very enjoyable years at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Otago. I have benefitted immensely from the academic atmosphere and a number of persons that have contributed to my development as a philosopher and as a human being.

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between Dunedin and South America, they were always close. My grandma, to whom this thesis is dedicated, has been in my thoughts every day since I left Colombia in 2008, and I thank her for showing me the natural goodness of human beings.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Preface	iv
Table of Contents	1
List of Abbreviations	3
1 Introduction	5
1.1 The life of George Turnbull	8
1.2 The Science of Man and the Scottish Enlightenment	14
2 Turnbull's Guiding Principles	34
2.1 The Natural Goodness of Mankind	35
2.2 The Great Chain of Being	45
2.3 <i>Philosophia Exprimentalis</i>	54
3 The anatomy of the human mind	63
3.1 Turnbull on Natural and Moral Philosophy	64
3.2 Power and Knowledge	72
3.3 Body and Mind	84
3.4 The Law of Association	91
3.5 The Moral Sense	104
3.6 Private and Public Interest	111
3.7 Society	117
3.8 The Immortality of the Soul	122
3.9 Human Nature and the Problem of Evil	129
4 Education	137
4.1 Education for Virtue	139
4.2 The Association of Ideas and Education	145
4.3 Progress, Education, and Learning	149
4.4 How to Educate for Virtue	152
5 Art, Virtue and Education	172
5.1 Painting, Morality, and Truth	174
5.2 The Life of Painters	179

5.3	The Unity of Art and Science	184
5.4	The Rise and Fall of Ancient Society	188
5.5	Bringing Art Back	195
6	Religion and the Scriptures	204
6.1	Natural and Christian Religion	206
6.2	The Unity of Natural, Moral, and God	219
6.3	Virtue, Vice, and the Scriptures	230
6.4	The Future State	237
7	Law	252
7.1	Heineccius' <i>System</i> : law of nature	253
7.2	Heineccius' <i>System</i> : law of nations	281
7.3	Turnbull's <i>Discourse</i>	291
8	Conclusion	297
8.1	Turnbull's System of Philosophy	298
8.2	The Development of <i>Principles 1</i>	302
8.3	The ESD and Moral Philosophy	303
8.4	Thoughts for further research	305
	Bibliography	308

List of Abbreviations

Works by George Turnbull

- Doctrines* *A philosophical enquiry concerning the connexion between the miracles and doctrines of Jesus Christ... the third edition.* London: printed for R. Wilcock, 1739.
- Education* *Observations upon liberal education.* Edited by Terrence O. Moore. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2003.
- Principles 1* *The principles of moral and Christian philosophy Vol. I, The principles of moral philosophy,* Edited by Alexander Broadie. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005.
- Principles 2* *The principles of moral and Christian philosophy Vol. II, The principles of Christian philosophy.* Edited by Alexander Broadie. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005.
- Painting* *A treatise on ancient painting, containing observations on the rise, progress, and decline of that art amongst the Greeks and Romans...* London: printed for the author; and sold by A. Millar, 1740.
- System* Johann Gottlieb Heineccius, *A Methodical System of Universal Law: Or, the Laws of Nature and Nations, with Supplements and a Discourse by George Turnbull. Translated from the Latin by George Turnbull.* Edited by Thomas Albert and Peter Schröder. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008.
- Christianity* *Christianity neither false nor useless, tho' not as old as the Creation...* London: printed for R. Wilcock, 1732.
- Enquiry* *An impartial enquiry into the moral character of Jesus Christ: wherein he is considered as a philosopher. In a letter to a friend.* London: printed for J. Roberts, 1740.
- History* *The history of the world translated from the Latin of Justin: with some necessary remarks by way of notes; and a prefatory discourse...* The second edition. London: printed for S. Brit. and B. Dod., 1746.
- Characters* *Three dissertations; one on the characters of Augustus, Horace and Agrippa, With a Comparison...* London: printed for R. Dodsley, 1740.

CHAPTER ONE

1 Introduction

George Turnbull (1698-1748) is one of those figures of the Scottish Enlightenment who has been neglected by modern scholarship. Only a handful of researchers have examined his work in any detail, and most of those few who recognize the name know only that he was Thomas Reid's teacher. Those who have actually spent more time investigating the life and work of Turnbull have given us some insight into his thought, but no one has yet attempted to provide an overview of his whole system of philosophy.

This thesis is an attempt to offer a detailed examination of Turnbull's thought by providing a framework that allows us to interpret his work. There are two features that we need to take into account if we want to understand the philosophy of George Turnbull: we must (a) consider his different texts as a unified whole that (b) is grounded in his commitment to three guiding principles. These two features will allow us to conduct a proper examination of Turnbull's thought, shedding light not only on one of the obscure figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, but also on the development of moral philosophy as a science in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Turnbull published texts on moral philosophy, religion, art, education, and law. By examining his texts we can see that his writings are all connected in some way. In fact, Turnbull himself constantly cross refers to his works within his writings, which unfortunately has led some commentators to believe that Turnbull is just being repetitive and makes no original contribution to the thought of the time; instead, it is intimated, all he does is borrow ideas from a number of authors.¹ Though it is true that Turnbull tends to be repetitive throughout his texts, and that he often refers to other writers of the time and the ancient world, the philosophical system he constructs does make an original contribution to eighteenth-century thought. It is not mere repetition that links his texts together, but rather the expression in every one of his works of a set of core beliefs that guided his thought. As I will argue in this thesis, Turnbull's contribution and originality arises from his systematic application of three guiding principles throughout all his texts.

I have identified three main principles or axioms that serve as the supporting pillars of all his thought. As we will see, these three guiding principles are linked together and depend on each other. Though it is true that none of these principles are Turnbull's own creation, the way he

¹ I will explore in more detail the common opinion of Turnbull in chapter eight of this thesis.

combines and develops them are unique to his work. The following three statements sum up the guiding principles:

- Human nature is naturally good
- Everything is embedded in “the great chain of being”
- Experience and observation are the sole grounds for knowledge of the natural world.

In this thesis I explain how Turnbull conceived these three principles and combined them to form the supporting pillars of his work. I will rely on them to achieve a twofold purpose: (1) to show that the guiding principles are the heart of Turnbull’s philosophical system; and (2) to argue that such principles are a heuristic tool that help us gain a better understanding of Turnbull’s system of philosophy. It is not the case that Turnbull attempts to establish or justify these principles throughout his work; rather, he assumes them to develop his system of philosophy. The three guiding principles will be fundamental in my attempt to argue for the following three main claims in this thesis:

1. Turnbull’s texts are better understood as interrelated parts of a system of philosophy that is driven by his three guiding principles.
2. There is a developmental aspect to Turnbull’s system: his anatomy of the human mind is the foundation upon which he develops his religious, aesthetic, pedagogical and political work.
3. The distinction between experimental and speculative philosophy provides the best framework to explain the impact the rise of experimental philosophy had on Turnbull’s thought.

In the next two sections of this chapter I set up the context for the examination of Turnbull’s work. I first give a brief account of his biography, and then I sketch the salient details of the science of man developed in the Scottish Enlightenment. In chapter two I examine in detail Turnbull’s set of guiding principles. This will allow us to explore Turnbull’s different texts and to argue for the three claims I made above. In chapter three I analyze Turnbull’s main text, *The Principles of Moral Philosophy* (hereafter *Principles 1*), where he develops the anatomy of the human mind. In chapters four, five, six and seven I look at the development of the theory established in *Principles 1* in four different areas: education (*Observations upon Education*), art (*Treatise on Ancient Painting*), religion (*Principles of Christian Philosophy*), and politics (Heineccius’ *A Methodical System of*

Universal Law) respectively. Chapter eight concludes the thesis with an evaluation of the main claims I set out to prove.

1.1 The life of George Turnbull

Even though not much is known of George Turnbull's life, the few details we have shed some light on the motivation and aims of his work. Turnbull was born in Alloa, Scotland, on July 11 around 3 p.m. His father was the Reverend George Turnbull (1657-1704), minister of Alloa and Tynninghame.² His mother was Elizabeth Glass, daughter of Alexander Glass of Sauchie. His father kept a diary, published in 1893, which contains some few details about George's childhood and about the Turnbull family in general. George's father was ordained in London in May 1688 and moved to South Queensferry (now part of Edinburgh) where he performed offices for some time. In November that year he was officially appointed to the parish of Dalmeny upon request from the people there and the advice of the previous minister. In 1690 he was appointed to the parish of Alloa (where George was born) and then in 1699 to the parish of Tynninghame, where he preached until his resignation in 1731. The editor of the diary comments that this Reverend seems to have been a dedicated pastor who earned a good reputation and his parishioners liked him. He married Elizabeth Glass in 1695, of whom not much is known. They had 9 children (7 boys and 2 girls) of whom George was the third eldest.

From his father's diary we know that George frequently fell ill during his early years: three cases of fever (twice in 1699 and once in 1700), the whooping cough (pertussis) in 1701, and the measles in 1704. That same year his father records that George fell into a well. Nothing is known of his life until the year 1711 when he enrolled at the University Edinburgh for the arts course.

² For this biographical sketch I have relied on almost all the sources used by Paul Wood and M. A. Stewart: George Turnbull, "The Diary of the Rev. George Turnbull, Minister of Alloa and Tynninghame, 1657-1704," in *Miscellany of The Scottish History Society Vol. XV*, ed. Robert Paul (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1893); M.A. Stewart, "Berkeley and the Rankenian club," *Hermathena* 139 (1985): 25-45; "George Turnbull and educational reform," in *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment: proceedings of a conference held at the University of Aberdeen*, ed. by J J Carter and J H Pittock (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), 95-103; and "Turnbull, George (1698-1748)," in *The Dictionary of Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2000); Paul Wood, "Turnbull, George (1698-1748)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Commission on Historical Manuscripts: Historical Manuscripts Commission. *Report on manuscripts in various collections, vol viii* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1913); James McCosh, *The Scottish philosophy: biographical, expository, critical, from Hutcheson to Hamilton* (1875).

For the period between 1711 and 1717 no details are available, but around 1716-17 an important event took place: he joined the Rankenian Club. Turnbull began studying Divinity in 1717 and around the same time he became one of the first members of the club known for their engagement with the philosophy of George Berkeley, a notable influence on Turnbull, as we will see later. As M.A. Stewart points out, most of what has been commonly known about the club is based on legends and conjectures, but Stewart goes beyond this and gives us perhaps the most reliable account of the club. A notice from the *Scots Magazine* for 1771 reveals that Berkeley thought that “no persons understood his system better than this set of young gentlemen in North Britain.” The account also shows that the Rankenians were invited by Berkeley to travel to Bermuda with him to establish a college.³

It seems that initially the club focused on discussing “new radical ideas in religion and politics,” as Stewart shows from the examination of a manuscript by Robert Wallace.⁴ Stewart lists Robert Wallace, William Wishart, John Smibert, George Young, John Stevenson, Colin MacLaurin and George Turnbull as the early members of the club. Besides their correspondence with Berkeley, the Rankenians were known for following Lord Shaftesbury’s work and rejecting the idea that human beings were naturally vicious and selfish.

Stewart conjectures that from 1716 until May 1721 when he received his MA, Turnbull possibly studied for the ministry and law, and took up some private tutoring. Around this time he also prepared a manuscript “in which he limited the state’s role in religion to the universal protection of freedom of thought,” but no one would publish it.⁵ Turnbull’s early interest in law and politics would later reemerge in his publications, revealing the influence the Natural Law tradition had on his thought. The other relevant event from this period is his attempt to start a correspondence with John Toland regarding freethinking, morals, and religion. Turnbull wrote to Toland from Edinburgh under the pseudonym Philocles in 1718. This shows that very early on in his career Turnbull was concerned with the connection between natural and revealed religion, a concern that would occupy two of his pamphlets and *Principles* 2, a theme that we will examine in more detail in section 3.8 and chapter six.

³ Scots Magazine, “Memoirs of Dr. Wallace of Edinburgh.” *The Scots Magazine* 33 (1771): 340-344.

⁴ Stewart, “Berkeley and the Rankenian club,” 27.

⁵ Stewart, “George Turnbull and educational reform,” 95.

A month before his graduation, Turnbull was appointed Regent at Marischal College, Aberdeen, on April 14, 1721, taking over the third year class. Another Rankenian and friend of Turnbull, Colin MacLaurin, was also appointed at Marischal in the same year. Besides fulfilling his regency duties, he corresponded with Lord Molesworth between 1722 and 1723. In the first of these letters, dated August 2, 1722, Turnbull praises the work of Lord Shaftesbury (as we will see later, one of the major influences on Turnbull's thought) and asks Molesworth to send him a copy of Shaftesbury's *Judgment of Hercules* (only 30 copies were printed at the time). Turnbull concludes the letter complaining about the education system in Scotland and everywhere, since "philosophy is a traffic and science is retailed for a piece of bread."⁶ Turnbull's concern with the quality of education would result in his 1742 *Education*, the topic of chapter five of this thesis.

In the second letter, dated November 5, 1722,⁷ we find more details of Turnbull's views on education, which reveal the emphasis on the practical focus that education should have. Turnbull tells us that "'Tis indeed on the Education of y^e youth that the Foundation stones of Publick Liberty must be layed" and that he hopes that "our Academies become really good & Wholesome Nurseries to the Publicke." We also find in this letter two aspects of Turnbull's thought on education that play a prominent role in the overall argument of his *Education*: the unity of all the sciences and the importance of natural histories for education. Turnbull, complaining about the current state of education in Aberdeen, longs for the day when "the Sprightly arts & Sciences, which are so Essential in the formation of a gentiel & liberal Character be again reunited with Philosophy from which by a fatal Error they have been so long severed!" Lastly, while praising Molesworth's *Account of Denmark as it was in 1692* Turnbull affirms that "It is in the histories of mankind that the value of Liberty is best learned, as weel as the ways by which it has been lost & preserved."⁸ We will examine these important features of Turnbull's thought on education in chapter five.

After this letter Molesworth offered to send to Turnbull his complete works. In a letter of 14 May, 1723, asks Molesworth to procure him a travelling tutorship, but this did not materialize. More importantly, the letter shows Turnbull's thought on the relation between religion and the

⁶ George Turnbull to Lord Molesworth, Tinninghame, 3 August 1722, *Report on manuscripts in various collections*, vol viii, 344.

⁷ George Turnbull to Lord Molesworth, Aberdeen, 5 November 1722, 352.

⁸ In the *Report on manuscripts in various collections* only a small portion of the letter is printed, so I have relied on the portions quoted by Stewart in "George Turnbull and Educational Reform," 96, 99-100.

state. Summarizing a text he wrote but never published, as we mentioned before, he tells us that his purpose was to show:

...that a fair and impartial exercise of reason was the best and worthiest part an understanding creature could act in matters of thought or faith, and that no rational society could have any common interest in matters of that sort but the common defence of this common and noblest privilege of rational beings.⁹

Besides this mention of a rational form of religion (which we will examine in detail in chapter six) Turnbull distances himself from the freethinking crowd by affirming that in a sense religion is necessary for society:

But now, My Lord, though I be as sincere and hearty a lover of freethinking as ever, I begin to doubt a little whether, upon an impartial balance of all the interests and advantages of society, some established worship and mode of religion and public order of priests or teachers would not be found absolutely necessary, if not for the upholding of society, at least for the right management of it.¹⁰

In 1723 his first cohort of students graduated. They had to defend a graduation thesis written by Turnbull and published the same year, entitled *De scientiae naturalis cum philosophia morali conjunctione* (On the unity of natural science and moral philosophy). From 1723 to 1726 he guided his second group of students to graduation. Among this second group was Thomas Reid. The graduation thesis they had to defend was *De pulcherrima mundi cum materialis tum rationalis constitutione* (On the very beautiful constitution of the world both material and rational). Both theses were the foundation for his book on moral philosophy, and they also show that Turnbull was the first academic in Scotland to promote the use of the experimental method of natural philosophy in moral philosophy.

We have seen Turnbull's discontentment with education in Scotland in his correspondence with Molesworth. In March 1725 this sentiment was made clearly evident in a quarrel between most of the faculty and the principal of Marischal at the time, Thomas Blackwell the elder. The dispute was about the election of the rector, who was supposed to be chosen by the students. Principal

⁹ George Turnbull to Lord Molesworth, Edinburgh, 14 May 1723, 360.

¹⁰ George Turnbull to Lord Molesworth, Edinburgh, 14 May 1723, 361.

Blackwell cancelled the election, but the majority of the faculty voted against the principal's action and decided to run the election. The faculty, however, could not go through with their plan, thanks to a suit from the Court of Session that Blackwell secured.¹¹

Following this event MacLaurin resigned and moved to Edinburgh to take on the job of deputy to James Gregory, Professor of Mathematics at the time. Turnbull left without permission for Groningen as a tutor for the Udney family. At Groningen he enrolled his students in history classes and in Barbeyrac's law class. As it is clear from Turnbull's notes to his translation of Heineccius' *A Methodical System of Universal Law* (which we will examine in detail in chapter seven) he regarded Barbeyrac's work highly, as well as the natural law tradition which had considerable impact on his work.

In October he was recalled to Aberdeen, and as a letter he sent to Charles Mackie at the same time shows, his dislike for Aberdeen had deepened:

And indeed I wish heartily I may be so lucky as to have no more to do with that place. But I know I need not put you in mind how much I want to be delivered from Aberdeen; & how much I wish something better would cast up.¹²

However, he returned in January 1726 and took his class through to graduation, only to retire a year later. On his retirement Marischal awarded him their first honorary LLD.

From 1727 to 1732 Turnbull worked as private tutor to Andrew Wauchope of Niddry. They travelled together to Edinburgh, Groningen, Utrecht, the Low Countries, Germany, and France. He returned to London in 1732 and pressured MacLaurin and Mackie to get him a job. He then received a second LLD, this time from the University of Edinburgh.

But Turnbull's employment prospects were not good. Finding himself unable to get a job, Charles Talbot, the Lord Chancellor, advised him to enroll at Exeter College, Oxford. Turnbull had the intention of joining the Anglican Church, and in the Michaelmas term 1733 was granted a BCL.

¹¹ James McCosh, *The Scottish philosophy*, 92. See also Roger Emerson, *Professors, Patronage and Politics: The Aberdeen Universities in the Eighteenth Century* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1992), 47-50.

¹² Quoted by Stewart in his "George Turnbull and the Educational Reform," 97.

He stayed in London, trying to make as many profitable social connections as possible, and in 1735 he became one of the first subscribers to the Society for the Encouragement of Learning, a “project to raise capital to publish works of learning without surrendering copyright to the booksellers.”¹³ However, the bad state of his finances forced him to leave London and travel to Italy as a private tutor for Thomas Watson, son of Lord Rockingham. During his travels through Italy between 1735 and 1737 he formulated the plan for his book on painting. Alan Ramsey the painter, who was also in Italy at the time, helped Turnbull to secure Camilo Paderni to illustrate the plates for the book. Ramsey wrote to a friend that Turnbull had trouble paying Paderni’s bill. He returned to London and attended the meetings of the Society for the Encouragement of Learning from April 1737 to May 1739. It seems that Turnbull had two purposes for attending the meetings: he wanted the Society to fund his book, and he also hoped to become secretary for the Society.

In 1739 Turnbull used his connections with Thomas Birch and Arthur Ashley Sykes and was ordained by the Bishop of Winchester, Benjamin Hoadly. He moved to Kew for a while, working as a tutor, and in 1741 was appointed honorary chaplain to the Prince of Wales. A year later he became rector at the parry of Drumachose, Derry County. He was appointed to this job by his friend Thomas Rundle. However, thanks to his connections with people in Court circles from his time in London, he traveled with Horatio Walpole (1723-1809)¹⁴ to Italy as his tutor, in 1744. They traveled to Milan and Turin, and lived in Florence for two years (1745-46), departing then to Rome. It seems that one of the reasons for the move to Rome was the desire of the Duke of Newcastle to get information on the exiled Jacobites through Turnbull. This duty got him to The Hague by 1748, where he passed away.

A couple of letters from Sir Horace Mann to Horace Walpole give a few details regarding the final years of Turnbull’s life. He was meant to meet the secretary of the ciphers, Antonio Rota, to find out the plans of the Pretender. In a letter dated December 21, 1745, Mann reports that Turnbull was “in a bad way,” referring to possible attacks of rheumatism.¹⁵ His health did not seem to improve, for in a letter dated January 4, 1746, Mann reports that Turnbull was still ill and that it seemed unlikely that he would recover.¹⁶ Things only got worse, and in April Mann

¹³ Stewart, “George Turnbull and educational reform,” 98.

¹⁴ This Walpole is the son of Horatio Walpole (1678-1757) and nephew of Robert Walpole (1676-1745).

¹⁵ Sir Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, Florence, 21 December 1745, in *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole’s Correspondence*, Vol. XIX. ed. W.S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 184-185.

¹⁶ Sir Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, Florence, 4 January 1746, 192.

reports that he “is in [a] very weak way and often out of order.”¹⁷ It seems that his health never improved, and finally he died of unknown causes on January 1, 1748.

His first publications are the graduation theses for 1723 and 1726, but his first proper work is the 1731 *Doctrines and Miracles of Jesus Christ* (hereafter *Doctrines*) that was actually written in 1726. A second edition would appear in 1732 and a third in 1739. His next publication appeared in 1732: *Christianity neither False nor Useless...* (hereafter *Christianity*). In it Turnbull defends Samuel Clarke against Tindal’s criticisms. In 1740 he published another religious text titled *An Impartial Enquiry into the Moral Character of Jesus Christ* (hereafter *Enquiry*). We will examine these texts in chapter 6. 1740 is also the year of publication of most of his major texts, *The Principles of Moral Philosophy* and *The Principles of Christian Philosophy* (hereafter *Principles 2*) (initially separate, later as a 2 volume set), and *A Treatise on Ancient Painting* (hereafter *Painting*). That same year he published a collection of discourses, most of which he translated from French, titled *Three dissertations; one on the characters of Augustus, Horace and Agrippa...* (hereafter *Characters*). The following year he published his translation of Heineccius’ *A Methodical System of Universal Law* (hereafter *System*) with extensive notes and remarks and two supplements, *A Supplement Concerning the Duties of Subjects and Magistrates* and *A Discourse upon the Nature of Moral and Civil Laws*. Finally, he published a translation of Justin’s *History of the World* and the last of his main texts, *Observations Upon Liberal Education* (hereafter *Education*).

1.2 The Science of Man and the Scottish Enlightenment

In this section I want to sketch out a general description of the kind of project Turnbull engaged with. In order to construct a proper interpretation of Turnbull’s philosophy we need to consider the context in which his work is situated. This is a difficult task given that the notions of Enlightenment and Scottish Enlightenment are highly contested, and the fact that a wide variety of projects can be thought of as belonging to the science of man. In this thesis, I do not attempt to make a contribution to this particular debate over and above my claims about Turnbull. However, since I believe that Turnbull’s project can be characterized as a project of the science of man, I need to flesh out the details of what I take to be the science of man. I will first consider the generalities of the debate regarding the notion of Enlightenment, and after setting this issue aside I will discuss the science of man. For this second task I will rely on the relevant

¹⁷ Sir Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, Florence, 5 April 1746, 232.

secondary literature and on some of the projects carried out by eighteenth-century philosophers to show the range of projects within the science of man, drawing a parallel with Turnbull's own project.

The historiography of the Enlightenment¹⁸ is highly contested. Scholars for the past thirty years have come up with a variety of interpretations of the period. In particular, it seems that scholarship has gone from an account of *the* Enlightenment to a plurality of Enlightenments, and then some scholars, notably Jonathan Israel and John Robertson,¹⁹ have gone back to interpreting the Enlightenment as a unified movement. The latter, in a survey of scholarship of the Enlightenment in his *The Case for the Enlightenment* identifies two traditional views (literary and philosophical) and groups more recent approaches to the Enlightenment under three types: intellectual, social, and national.

The literary view centered the Enlightenment on the thought of the French *Philosophes*, while the philosophical view examined the enlightenment from a Kantian perspective, assuming that his philosophy "could be regarded as a systematic summation of the entire intellectual project of the Enlightenment."²⁰ While these two views might have given the Enlightenment a unified intellectual framework and placed it in the second half of the eighteenth century, they also raised a number of issues that the new interpretations addressed. Advances in the scholarship of the various figures of the Enlightenment would seem to point to the view that there is not an overarching intellectual banner (such as 'the Age of Reason') and that the timeline for the period had to set its beginning well before mid-seventeenth century.

The new approaches (directions, as Robertson calls them) address these issues but raise a number of problems of their own. Let us examine them briefly. The focus on the intellectual side of the Enlightenment has resulted in accounts of the period that give us a better picture of what was going on despite the fact that there is no unifying framework like the one posited by the more traditional approaches. Robertson phrases this in terms of the importance of religion for

¹⁸ Even though I talk about the Enlightenment in singular, I am not committing here to the view that there is such a thing as *the* Enlightenment. I am mainly using the term loosely to encompass attempts to argue for either *the* Enlightenment or a plurality of Enlightenments.

¹⁹ See for example Jonathan Israel. *Radical enlightenment: philosophy and the making of modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); *Enlightenment contested: philosophy, modernity, and the emancipation of man 1670-1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); and John Robertson. *The case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples, 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²⁰ Robertson, *The case for the Enlightenment*, 12. The account I am giving here of the scholarship of the Enlightenment I have borrowed from Robertson.

the development of the thought of the figures of the Enlightenment which, even though better than the traditional accounts, results in some degree of vagueness such that it was now very unclear what exactly could be considered “Enlightenment thinking.”²¹

The social approach provides an interpretation of the Enlightenment that is grounded in the study of culture and society. I am sympathetic to this line of interpretation, given that it recognizes that the figures that developed the intellectual aspect of the Enlightenment were also persons embedded in a particular society and culture. Robertson points out two aspects that can be better understood under this approach: freemasonry and the *salons* and clubs of the period.²² However, this approach carries with it the danger of disregarding the intellectual side for a perspective that focuses entirely on society and culture. Although it is crucial to recognize the social context in which the ideas of the period were developed, this does not mean that the ideas themselves, as Robertson points out, play a less important role than society and culture.

Finally the national approach answers to the Franco-centric conception of the Enlightenment taken by the traditional view. By focusing on the Enlightenment in a national context we have achieved a better understanding of Enlightenment thought by relating the different ideas to a localized setting. The main issue with this line of research is that it entails a plurality of Enlightenments distinct from each other.²³ On this view we end up with a Scottish Enlightenment that might have nothing to do with the French Enlightenment, and it is clear that this is problematic.

So what are we to make of Robertson’s account of Enlightenment scholarship? In particular, how are we to make sense of the Enlightenment for engaging in an investigation of an individual figure? As I mentioned earlier, given that my thesis is about the philosophy of George Turnbull I am not attempting to make a contribution to the debate or a case for a particular interpretation of the Enlightenment. However, it is important to recognize how a particular understanding of the Enlightenment affects the research of the thought of an individual figure.

It is very difficult to make sense of the thought of George Turnbull without relating it to its context, and the three new directions that Robertson identifies have all something to offer to this

²¹ Robertson, *The case for the Enlightenment*, 16.

²² Robertson, *The case for the Enlightenment*, 19-21.

²³ Robertson, *The case for the Enlightenment*, 27-28.

investigation. Whatever position one takes regarding the definition of 'Enlightenment,' we need to recognize the contextual setting (intellectual, social and national) in which Turnbull's philosophy was developed. In particular, his thought stems from a specific religious concern with the debate between natural and revealed religion that leads to what David Fate Norton and Alexander Broadie have described as Turnbull's 'providential naturalism.'²⁴ We will examine this in detail in chapter six and section 3.8 of this thesis. We also need to consider the social and national context: Turnbull's concern with the education system in Scotland and his relation to other figures of the time can shed light on his philosophy.

Whatever one makes of the Enlightenment debate, what I want to take from it is the importance of relating the thought of a particular figure (George Turnbull in this case) within its context without leaving his actual intellectual activity and ideas in the background. Leaving the interpretation of the Enlightenment in general aside, there is still another issue regarding Turnbull's context: how do we relate Turnbull's thought to the Scottish Enlightenment in particular?

The Scottish Enlightenment has received a lot of attention in the past four decades. It faces similar problems to the ones discussed above regarding the Enlightenment in general. In particular, there seems to be an interpretation of the Scottish Enlightenment that, in an attempt to give an overarching approach, raises a number of problems. An insightful essay by Roger Emerson (which I will rely on as my guide for the present discussion) argues against this interpretation which he summarizes at the beginning of his paper: "Some people today seem to think that the Scottish Enlightenment was mainly talk about moral, political-economic and social theories produced after c. 1730."²⁵

Emerson refers to the work of Nicholas Phillipson, John Pocock and John Robertson in particular. The work of Phillipson is of particular interest here since, as Emerson points out, he gives the science of man a central role in his interpretation of the Scottish Enlightenment. He claims that the Scottish Enlightenment resulted in:

²⁴ David F. Norton, "George Turnbull and the Furniture of the Mind," in *Journal of the history of ideas* 36, no. 4 (1975), 712 ; and Broadie in his introduction to *Principles* 1, xvii.

²⁵ Roger Emerson, "What is to be Done About the Scottish Enlightenment?" in *Essays on David Hume, Medical Men and the Scottish Enlightenment* (Surrey:Ashgate, 2009), 225.

...a new language of civic morality...which provided the Scots with a new understanding of civic virtue and that ‘sociological’ understanding of the Science of Man which is the unique contribution of the Scots to the philosophy of the Enlightenment.²⁶

I believe that the science of man is an important feature of the period in Scotland, but I do not think that the Scottish Enlightenment can be reduced to it. I agree with Emerson and believe that an interpretation like that of Phillipson only focuses on a limited set of features while it leaves out important considerations, offering at best a partial account of the Scottish Enlightenment. Alexander Broadie points this out in his introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* where he identifies three accounts of the period: the political economic, the scientific, and the inclusive.²⁷ The particular view that Emerson argues against fits in the first of Broadie’s categories. While the first two viewpoints tend to leave aside important features of the period (science in the first case, and moral and social fields in the second), the third approach attempts to draw from the first two without prioritizing any of them. Though it might seem to have an advantage over the first two viewpoints, it manages to include the scientific and social aspects of the Scottish Enlightenment by focusing on the culture of the figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, and in this sense it prioritizes another aspect of the period that can leave it open to the same criticisms offered against the first two approaches.

It seems then that the main problem stems from prioritizing one aspect of the Scottish Enlightenment over the others. This opens the field for a more holistic approach that considers the different aspects on the same level. Though this sounds like it might lead to a more plausible account of the Scottish Enlightenment, there is still much work to be done. Emerson considers a number of aspects²⁸ that need to be developed in order to properly understand the Scottish Enlightenment both in its local and European setting. For example, there is still work to be done regarding the connection of the Scots to European centers like Amsterdam, Leiden, and Paris; the role of religion, the church, politics and patronage in the life and work of Enlightened Scots are all aspects that need to be further studied. Emerson’s account shows that there is still a lot of work to be done in the field. The difficulty of adopting a coherent account of the Scottish

²⁶ Nicholas Phillipson. “The Scottish Enlightenment,” in *The Enlightenment in National Context*, edited by Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 22.

²⁷ Alexander Broadie, “Introduction” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by Alexander Broadie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

²⁸ See Emerson, “What is to be Done About the Scottish Enlightenment?”, 227-247.

Enlightenment for this investigation on Turnbull's philosophy might be problematic, but I believe there is a way to avoid it.

It is possible to define a suitable context for our investigation of Turnbull's thought if we take a general interpretation of the Scottish Enlightenment (one endorsed by Emerson) and consider the science of man as part of (or embedded within) the movement that Emerson describes. He tells us that the Scottish Enlightenment should be viewed as part of a European Enlightenment defined as:

...a great improving, secularizing movement driven mainly by notions of utility and rationality—a movement which saw in rational criticism and the use of the sciences the best means for making improvements.²⁹

I agree with most of Emerson's description, one he claims Jonathan Israel argues for.³⁰ However, the secularizing aspect needs to be taken with caution for the case of the Scottish Enlightenment. As Emerson himself comments, most of the figures of the Scottish Enlightenment were religious (most almost all of them Christian), and more work needs to be done to understand the role played by religion in the period.

Regardless, the science of man can be understood as a part of this movement, given the caution placed on the secularizing aspect. As we will see later on, some projects of the science of man were secular (notably David Hume's work) and others, like Turnbull's, tried to fit in the improving and rational aspect with the belief in a Christian God. What I am proposing here is that whatever we make of the Enlightenment in general and its Scottish manifestation, we understand the science of man as a feature of this period, and in turn think of Turnbull's philosophy as one project within the science of man movement. I want to make clear that I am not reducing the Scottish Enlightenment to the science of man. All I am saying is that we can set a proper context for this investigation by giving a general definition of the science of man and placing Turnbull's philosophy within it, drawing a parallel with other projects. In what follows I will sketch out a general definition of the science of man and refer to other projects that can provide us with a suitable context for the examination of Turnbull's thought.

²⁹ Emerson, "What is to be Done About the Scottish Enlightenment?", 226.

³⁰ Jonathan Israel. *Enlightenment Contested* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

I want to add a note here regarding the authors whom I refer to in this discussion: it might be thought that it is anachronistic to refer to writers who constructed their projects after Turnbull's time, like Thomas Reid and Lord Kames for example. However, there is a reason for my choice of authors. There are two ways one might interpret 'suitable context:' the context in which the thought of a particular figure (Turnbull in this case) was formulated (context of formulation), or, instead, the context in which we can contrast and compare the thought of a particular figure (context of comparison). In Turnbull's case, the context of formulation can be constructed by referring to the work of Locke, Butler, Hutcheson, and those figures working on a science of man in the first three decades of the eighteenth century. This context of formulation is useful for assessing Turnbull's originality and intellectual debts, but if we want to assess Turnbull's importance for the science of man as a whole, we also need to consider the work of figures whose work was published after Turnbull's death. For this latter aspect we must turn to the context of comparison.

If we want to properly assess Turnbull's thought we must construct both a context of formulation and a context of comparison. For the former, instead of condensing it here in the introduction I refer to it throughout the remaining chapters of this thesis, so that this way we can see how Turnbull's work relates to the ideas developed by those figures working in the science of man around the same time Turnbull developed his thought. For the context of comparison the situation is different. Our aim in constructing such context is to get a good grasp of the features that define the movement known as the science of man, so that we can see how Turnbull's work fits along those projects developed by Scottish figures from Hutcheson to Reid. In this sense, referring to authors whose thought developed after Turnbull's death will help us construct the context of the Scottish science of man as a whole. This is why, in constructing the context of comparison in this section I quote from several authors whose work was published after Turnbull's time. This will allow us to get a taste for the variety of projects within the science of man while providing a definition that encompasses all such projects.

Nicholas Phillipson's definition of the science of man serves as a starting point for the sketch I am providing here. He tells us that:

...it was founded on a desire to study scientifically what we should call the contents of the mind and what contemporaries called 'ideas' or 'beliefs'. These ideas made intelligible the external world, God and even the self, and to understand their origins

was the key to understanding the principles of morality, justice, politics and philosophy.

In a similar vein Broadie points out that the scientific investigation of the human mind, even more than the investigation of the natural world, could give us knowledge of God. He refers to Turnbull and Colin Maclaurin to illustrate this idea.³¹ In general, the achievements of science in the seventeenth century and early decades of the eighteenth century inspired a number of figures to attempt to achieve in moral philosophy what has been successfully achieved in natural philosophy.³² The general idea of the science of man was to apply the methods of the latter to the former.

I want to build on Phillipson's general definition of the science of man by expanding on certain features that modern commentators have identified. The first feature describes key terms of the project: importance of nature, virtue, sociability, and progress. The second feature briefly discusses the inspiration that the philosophers of the science of man found in the work of Bacon, Locke, and Newton. Lastly, the third feature goes over the method that was essential to the project: that of mathematics and natural history. Of course, these are not the only features of the science of man. As we will see, there was a range of projects within the science of man each of which had unique features. For example, while some projects were deeply secularizing, others were not. While there is no unique description that can accommodate all the diverse projects within the science of man, the three features I have listed above give a good basis for identifying which kind of projects can be characterized as a science of man in the context of the Scottish Enlightenment..

Carl Becker gave a set of lectures that were published for the first time in 1932 as *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers*.³³ It has been an influential (though now dated) book for our understanding of the eighteenth century and it is useful in our present discussion to identify those terms that hold an important place in the science of man. Although Becker focuses mainly on the work of the French *Philosophes* to support his claims, the different ideas he discusses can be identified in the work of the figures working on a science of man in Scotland.³⁴ Becker

³¹ Alexander Broadie, 'The Human Mind and its Powers' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by Alexander Broadie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 61-62.

³² Anand Chitnis, *The Scottish Enlightenment: A Social History* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), 93.

³³ Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).

³⁴ Ibid. 33.

mentions certain terms that characterize different centuries, and for the eighteenth century he identifies “nature, natural law, first cause, reason, sentiment, humanity, perfectibility, [and] progress.”³⁵ Of these, the most relevant for the science of man are nature³⁶, natural law, humanity, progress and we must add another term, absent from Becker’s list: sociability. Arguably, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries highlight the great progress of science: the former in the science of nature, the latter in human science.³⁷ The enlargement of knowledge in general resulted in the assignment of a central role to nature. Becker, referring to the works of Voltaire, Hume, and Rousseau as examples, tells us that “in each of them nature takes without question the position customarily reserved for the guest of honor.”³⁸ It was the source of all our knowledge and the object of our enquiries, both in the external world and within ourselves. Further, one of the ideas we could establish from the observation of nature was the goodness and existence of God.³⁹ What the natural philosophers had achieved for science was taken up as a model by the eighteenth-century moral philosophers who developed the science of man.⁴⁰ Since human beings were a part of nature, moral philosophers could hope to achieve knowledge of the human mind just the way the scientists had acquired knowledge of the natural world. As Gladys Bryson phrases it, “The Scottish moralists were convinced that there could be no sound science of man unless it were built on ‘the facts of human nature.’”⁴¹

A look at some of the science of man projects can shed light on the importance of nature for the science of man. Perhaps the text that best summarizes the salient features of the science of man is David Fordyce’s *Elements of Moral Philosophy*.⁴² Almost the whole text became the entry for moral philosophy in the first edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in 1771. He tells us that:

³⁵ Ibid. 47.

³⁶ John Randall comments that “the two leading ideas of the eighteenth century, [were] Nature and Reason.” In John Randall, *Making of the modern mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), 255.

³⁷ Deborah Redman, *The rise of political economy as a Science: methodology and the classic economists* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 102.

³⁸ Becker, *Heavenly City*, 51

³⁹ Ibid. 67; Roger Emerson, “Science and moral philosophy in the Scottish Enlightenment.” In *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. M.A. Stewart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 23.

⁴⁰ Emerson, “Science and moral philosophy,” 23.

⁴¹ Gladys Bryson, *Man and society: the Scottish inquiry of the eighteenth century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945), 114.

⁴² David Fordyce, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy, in Three Books with a Brief Account of the Nature, Progress, and Origin of Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Kennedy (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2003).

Moral Philosophy contemplates *Human Nature*, its *Moral Powers* and *Connections*, and from these deduces the Laws of Action...*Moral Philosophy* has this in common with *Natural Philosophy*, that it appeals to *Nature* or *Fact*.⁴³

Henry Home, more commonly known as Lord Kames, also points to the importance of nature for the science of man:

Having made out, that the nature of man is the foundation of the laws that ought to govern his actions, it will be necessary to trace out human nature, so far as regards the present subject.⁴⁴

Hume makes a stronger claim than Fordyce and Kames, placing human nature and the science of man as the key element in all kinds of knowledge:

’Tis evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature; and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. Even *Mathematics*, *Natural Philosophy*, and *Natural Religion*, are in some measure dependent on the science of MAN.⁴⁵

The importance of (human) nature for the science of man is clear. But the figures working on the science of man would connect human nature to another of the key terms listed above: virtue. The philosophers engaged in this project wanted to go beyond the plain understanding of how the human mind works and show that human beings are made for virtue. The progress of science in general, some thought, carried with it a threat to religion, and this entailed the danger of losing the moral guidelines that were embedded in it. Trying to avoid this, some of the scientists of man directed their understanding of human nature towards showing that we did not need religion (revelation in particular) in order to be virtuous; rather, it was in our nature to be so.⁴⁶ Roy Porter finds that this was a distinguishing feature of the Enlightenment: “the secularity of its model of mankind questing for freedom through the Socratic ‘know yourself’ and its

⁴³ Fordyce, *Elements*, 12-14.

⁴⁴ Henry Home, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion, Corrected and Improved, in a Third Edition. Several Essays Added Concerning the Proof of a Deity*, ed. Mary Catherine Moran (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 23.

⁴⁵ David Hume, *A treatise of human nature*, 2 vols, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁴⁶ Becker, *Heavenly City*, 86-88.

modern corollary, ‘do it yourself.’”⁴⁷ However, this was not a feature present in all the projects of the science of man. While virtue remains important, figures like Hume would keep it separate from God and religion, while others like Turnbull and Butler argued that religion and revelation confirmed and strengthened the virtuous character of mankind that was derived purely from nature.

David Fordyce’s description of moral philosophy places this virtuous character as a central aim:

Therefore it is called *Ethics, Disciplina Morum*. In fewer Words, it is the “*Knowledge of our Duty and Felicity, or the Art of being virtuous and happy*.”⁴⁸

A variant of this description can be found in Francis Hutcheson’s *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. While the achievement of a virtuous character is still present, Hutcheson’s description shows that the focus of his project was to show that virtue was part of our nature:

His principal Design is to shew, “That Human Nature was not left quite indifferent in the affair of Virtue, to form to it self Observations concerning the Advantage, or Disadvantage of Actions, and accordingly to regulate its Conduct.”⁴⁹

Butler and Turnbull share Hutcheson’s approach and argue in their work for virtue as a natural feature of human beings. However, this endeavor brought forward one issue in particular. Showing that human beings were naturally made for virtue was one thing, but the existence of evil posed a serious problem for all thinkers who followed this particular path in their science of man: if we are all naturally virtuous, then why do we find individuals, and sometimes even entire cultures that are not? Turnbull himself deals with this issue, as we will examine in chapter three. The response of those working on a science of man was, in general, that by expanding our understanding of the constitution of the human mind perhaps we could not only explain this

⁴⁷ Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the creation of the modern world* (New York: Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 2000), 48.

⁴⁸ Fordyce, *Elements*, 13.

⁴⁹ Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry Into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008), 9. Hutcheson and Turnbull both use quotation marks for emphasis, as it is the case with this quote.

difference among individuals and cultures, but actually do something about it.⁵⁰ The second part of the previous statement leads to the third key term: progress.

The term ‘progress’ is not only reserved for the science of man, but, as we have already discussed, it relates to the Enlightenment in general.⁵¹ It can be argued that the enlargement of knowledge was the condition that made the Age of Enlightenment superior to previous ages. They desired to separate themselves from all that was wrong with the past⁵² and held the hope that we could advance, since “the intellectual garden was choked with weeds.”⁵³ This motivated enlightened men and women in general to focus on the practical side and use science for the progress of society.⁵⁴ The progress of science was their inspiration: they firmly believed that no other period of time had understood the natural world as fully as the seventeenth and eighteenth century scientists did. If they could do the same for the moral world⁵⁵, then they could also be superior to the past in this respect too.⁵⁶ The science of man project was a contribution to this progress. We were not only naturally made for virtue, but we could also, by truly understanding how the human mind works, develop our faculties and overcome prejudices to become virtuous.⁵⁷

Lastly, those engaged with the science of man were also concerned with the human aspect of sociability. The idea that human beings are naturally selfish, put forward notably by Hobbes and Mandeville, led almost all of the figures constructing a science of man to object to this idea and instead argue that human beings are naturally sociable. We find Hutcheson, Butler, Turnbull and many others in this group. On the other side we find David Hume, who argued that human beings are not by nature sociable:⁵⁸

In general, it may be affirm’d, that there is no such passion in human minds, as the love of mankind, merely as such, independent of personal qualities, of services, or of relation to ourself. ’Tis true, there is no human, and indeed no sensible, creature,

⁵⁰ Redman, *The rise of political economy*, 111.

⁵¹ Alexander Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment: the historical age of the historical nation* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001), 38. Broadie is careful with this common interpretation and argues that among the literati the idea of improvement was rather “a guarded or qualified optimism.”

⁵² Bryson, *Man and society*, 79; Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 16.

⁵³ Porter, *Enlightenment*, 61.

⁵⁴ Becker, *Heavenly City*, 84-85.

⁵⁵ Bryson, *Man and society*, 93.

⁵⁶ Porter, *Enlightenment*, 59.

⁵⁷ Alexander Broadie gives a nice description of this idea of “moral progress” in *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 78-79.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of this feature of Hume see Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment*, 297-301.

whose happiness or misery does not, in some measure, affect us, when brought near to us, and represented in lively colours: But this proceeds merely from sympathy, and is no proof of such an universal affection to mankind, since this concern extends beyond our own species.⁵⁹

I point out this difference between Hume and (in particular) Turnbull to show the difference between their science of man projects. However, while differing on the natural/unnatural condition of sociability, both of them argue that it is a necessary feature for the progress of mankind.⁶⁰ Whether natural or not, the projects belonging to the science of man had to deal with the concept of sociability in some way.

The science of man then can be interpreted as an enterprise which consists in the scientific understanding of the nature of the human mind, directed towards the achievement of virtue and the progress of society in general.

Those working in the science of man in the eighteenth century pay tribute to figures of the seventeenth century, and in some cases the latter even have an important role in the projects. Though we find references to a number of authors, there are three that stand out in particular: Bacon, Locke⁶¹, and Newton.⁶² Though the debt each individual figure working on a science of man owes to these three icons varies significantly, each of them appears more than any other authors in a whole range of science of man projects.

Francis Bacon is one of the most important figures of the early modern period. It is understandable that natural philosophers would find him inspiring and follow his work and methods. Moral philosophers, those developing the science of man in particular, shared a deep admiration for Lord Verulam. His method, as we will discuss in more detail later, was only one aspect that moral philosophers found of value in his work. They were inspired by something more fundamental: they recognized that Bacon was the first instigator of the scientific study of human nature. The division of the sciences presented in *De augmentis scientiarum* and the *Novum*

⁵⁹ Hume, *Treatise*, 309.

⁶⁰ We will examine Turnbull's thought on this in chapter three. See also Hume, *Treatise*, 337.

⁶¹ Roy Porter describes Locke's place in the Enlightenment as "far and away the key philosopher in this modern mould." Porter, *Enlightenment*, 60. Israel instead argues that we should consider Spinoza as the key figure of the period. See Israel's series of books, in particular *Radical Enlightenment: philosophy and the making of modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

⁶² Redman, *The rise of political economy*, 153.

organum made the advancement of society and human beings stand out as the main purpose of enlarging our knowledge of nature. This in turn gave a special status to the concept of humanity, and most of the figures involved with the science of man saw Bacon as the first figure to give the study of human nature its due importance and its primacy over the study of the natural world. They saw in Bacon's work the inspiration to show that the science of man was the most important, and that the rest of the sciences were subservient to it. As Roger Emerson phrases it:

The obligation to make a new study of the mind was very great, for, as Bacon had shown, all that was known related to the mind of man.⁶³

After Bacon, the second figure on the list provided the figures developing a science of man an epistemological framework that many relied on. Descartes and Hobbes developed theories of human nature, but the philosophers of the science of man criticized the former for not being really scientific, and the second one for mistakenly observing human beings as selfish creatures. The one thinker who was considered to have carried out a proper science of the mind and human nature was John Locke. His *Essay* provided many figures of the eighteenth century with a framework to carry out their research.⁶⁴ John Randall has a nice synthesis of what Newton and Locke provided to eighteenth-century thinkers. Regarding Locke, he tells us that he inspired "the attempt...to discover and formulate a science of human nature and human society, and to criticize existing religious and social traditions in the light of what seemed rational and reasonable."⁶⁵

Unlike Descartes and Hobbes, Locke was seen as truly using scientific methods to study the human mind. He became the model to follow for the science of the mind. Even though he never properly developed a system of moral philosophy, the advocates of the science of man adopted his philosophy of mind and from it developed their own moral philosophy. Even those who opposed some of his ideas, like Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, still adopted features of his epistemology. Hutcheson in particular disagreed with the idea of habit as central for morality, but

⁶³ Emerson, "Science and moral philosophy," 24.

⁶⁴ Paul Wood summarizes nicely the key features the work of Locke provided for the science of man. Paul Wood, "Science, Philosophy, and the Mind," in *The Cambridge History of Science, Volume 4, Eighteenth-Century Science*, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 805-808. See also Jane Rendall, *The Origins of the Scottish enlightenment* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 21-23.

⁶⁵ Randall, *Making of the modern mind*, 255.

relied heavily on the association of ideas for his development of beauty and virtue. Locke can be seen as a father figure to the eighteenth-century science of man.⁶⁶

David Fordyce offers an instance of the tribute paid to Locke. In addition to his *Elements*, Fordyce published a discourse that was read to students at the beginning of their course. He gives an account of the history and progress of philosophy to show that their age has contributed immensely to the acquisition of knowledge. Among the great men of the time he mentions Locke:

...the celebrated Author of the Essay on the Human understanding, who contributed more than any other to banish from the schools that unintelligible Jargon, those insignificant Subtilties & perplex Logomachies which had prevailed hitherto, & who gave us a simple but elegant history of the progress and operation of the human Mind.⁶⁷

Sir Isaac Newton, a major figure of the Enlightenment, is also important for the science of man. Recently, the centrality of Newton for the period has been reconsidered and it has been argued that though important, Newton and his methods were not the only inspiration behind the science of man.⁶⁸ Locke and Bacon were at least equally important, and as far as methodology goes the science of man seems to apply a method broader than a Newtonian one, as we will discuss in more detail below. The science of man was not strictly Newtonian, but the thinkers involved in the project did recognize Newton as a fundamental contributor to the enlargement of knowledge. As John Randall puts it, “Issac Newton 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.”⁶⁹ In particular, his discovery of natural laws created the hope to obtain also general laws of human nature: those to which all phenomena of the human mind could be reduced. Not all the projects focused on the discovery of laws of human nature, but they found in Newton’s achievements inspiration to develop the science of man. This was the case with Turnbull, as we will see in chapter three.

⁶⁶ For the importance of Locke for the formation of the “natural history of man” see Paul Wood, “The natural history of man in the Scottish Enlightenment,” *History of science* 28 (1990): 89-123.

⁶⁷ Fordyce, *Elements*, 197.

⁶⁸ For a case of this see Eric Schliesser’s discussion on Newton’s influence on Hume. “Hume’s Newtonianism and Anti-Newtonianism,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.).

⁶⁹ Randall, *Making of the modern mind*, 255.

The last feature of the science of man we examine, namely, its method, is closely related to two of the figures we just discussed. Bacon and Newton not only provided the hope for the acquisition of knowledge of the human mind, but they also showed the philosophers of the science of man the proper methods to acquire such knowledge. Far from being a Newton-inspired project,⁷⁰ the study of the science of man can be better characterized as applying an experimental method, which encompasses both the Baconian use of natural histories and the Newtonian method of analysis and synthesis. This is not to say that the experimental method is a mixture of Baconian and Newtonian methodologies, but rather that they can be both characterized as experimental. Within the science of man, some projects used one or the other, some used both. In general terms, the figures working in the science of man believed that knowledge of human nature could be acquired by employing experimental methods “in the spirit of Bacon and Newton.”⁷¹ A look at some of the projects will help illustrate the adoption of such methods for the study of human nature in more detail.⁷²

I begin by quoting Thomas Reid to give the flavor of the general account of method given by philosophers working in the science of man:

Wise men now agree, or ought to agree in this, that there is but one way to the knowledge of nature’s works, the way of observation and experiment...it is the only way by which any real discovery in philosophy can be made.⁷³

The emphasis on observation and experiment is present in the experimental methodology, regardless of whether it is considered Baconian or Newtonian. However, there are some salient features that identify each of these. An important feature of the Baconian method is the construction of natural histories. Based on facts and observation, natural histories were the solid foundation for any sort of generalization scientists were to make. Paul Wood argues that Bacon “prescribed the compilation of natural histories to complement experimentation and inductive

⁷⁰ See Emerson for his discussion on how the science of man emerged from a “pot-purri of new methods.” Emerson, “Science and moral philosophy,” 18.

⁷¹ Bryson, *Man and society*, 143.

⁷² Wood discusses the application of methods in the study of the mind. See Wood, “Science, Philosophy, and the Mind”; Redman focuses on the role of mathematics and history and the methods of analysis and synthesis for her description of the Scottish science of man in *The rise of political economy*.

⁷³ Thomas Reid, *The works of Thomas Reid. 2 Volumes* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1999), Vol. 1, 97.

reasoning, and he claimed that these histories constituted the true foundation of the sciences.”⁷⁴ Most of the philosophers who carried out projects within the science of man found great value in the collection of a natural history of man.⁷⁵ As Wood points out⁷⁶, Adam Ferguson is a great example of this feature. The following quote is taken from his *Principles of Moral and Political Science*:

In respect to what men have actually done or exhibited, human nature is a subject of history and physical science: Considered in respect to the different measures of good and evil, of which men are susceptible, the same nature is a subject of discipline and moral science. In treating of Man, as a subject of history, we collect facts, and endeavour to conceive his nature as it actually is, or has actually been, apart from any notion of ideal perfection, or defect.⁷⁷

By observing the way human beings behave and have behaved through history, those engaged with the science of man thought we could find out the way the human mind works. Historical accounts of societies and cultures served, in particular, as examples: we could both be wary of the mistakes that have been made and recognize the features that are present all throughout history.⁷⁸ What most scientists of man found was that across cultures and history human beings show some natural disposition towards virtue even in the worst scenarios. As Broadie comments in his discussion of Hume on history, it “has the power to engage the faculty of will in the direction of virtue.”⁷⁹ The collection of histories was important to understand those cases where the natural disposition towards virtue is not evident, and to find out those external circumstances that hinder it.

Some authors, while recognizing the importance of the collections of facts and observation thought that a further step was needed in order to carry their inquiries to a proper end. From the collections of observations we need to make generalizations and discover those general laws that

⁷⁴ Wood’s claim needs to be taken carefully, since natural histories included experiments. However, in the passage where I took the quote from Wood is arguing that “there was more to Bacon’s method than the use of experiments and induction.” Wood, “Science, Philosophy, and the Mind,” 803.

⁷⁵ Wood argues that Locke “cast himself the role of natural historian in the *Essay*.” Wood, “Science, Philosophy, and the Mind,” 807. See also Wood, “The natural history of man”.

⁷⁶ Wood “The natural history of man,” 100-102.

⁷⁷ Adam Ferguson, *Principles of moral and political science; being chiefly a retrospect of lectures delivered in the college of Edinburgh. By Adam Ferguson, L. L. D. & F. R. S. E. Late Professor of Moral Philosophy. In two volumes. .. Vol. 1* (Edinburgh: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1792), 1.

⁷⁸ On this point see Becker, *Heavenly City*, 88-102.

⁷⁹ Broadie, , *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 48.

explain all the phenomena.⁸⁰ It was this additional step that some of these authors thought Newton's work provided for the science of man.⁸¹ They believed that Newton was not just observing phenomena; he moved beyond this and through his method of analysis he was deducing general laws from facts and observation, and then by the method of synthesis he was explaining further phenomena from the laws previously deduced. Bryson identifies laws with principles and tells us that "For their science of man, as well as for physics or astronomy, the writers of the century sought to weld together their observations with what they called general principles."⁸²

David Hartley shows in his *Observations on man* an instance of the importance of the method of analysis and synthesis for the science of man:

The proper method of philosophizing seems to be, to discover and establish the general laws of action, affecting the subject under consideration, from certain select, well-defined, and well-attested phaenomena, and then to explain and predict the other phaenomena by these laws.⁸³

David Fordyce expresses this same idea in his account of moral philosophy:

We must collect the *Phaenomena*, or *Apearances of Nature* in any given Instance; trace these to some *General Principles*, or *Laws of Operation*; and then apply these *Principles* or *Laws* to the explaining of other *Phaenomena*.⁸⁴

This Newtonian method was adopted by many thinkers in their development of the science of man. However, the way the method was adopted was not uniform across the range of projects. Redman identifies two strands of the Newtonian method that vary depending on who interpreted it: the mathematico-deductive of the *Principia*, and the hypothetico-deductive of the

⁸⁰ This is a similar description of what Redman claims was what eighteenth-century thinkers conceived to be science. Redman, *The rise of political economy*, 103-105.

⁸¹ Becker mentions how more than his achievements, it was Newton's method what really marvelled thinkers in the eighteenth century. Becker, *Heavenly City*, 58.

⁸² Bryson, *Man and society*, 23.

⁸³ Hartley, *Observations on man, his frame, his duty, and his expectations. In two parts. By David Hartley, M. A. Volume 1* (London: S. Richardson, 1749), 6.

⁸⁴ Fordyce, *Elements*, 14.

Opticks. She claims the latter was the one the Scottish thinkers usually adopted.⁸⁵ They observed human beings and their minds, and from such observations built their theories and explained human nature. In addition to the Newtonian method, Paul Wood has rightly highlighted the influence of the natural law tradition — Grotius, Pufendorf, and Cumberland in particular — on those projects of the science of man that were concerned with the discovery of general laws of human nature.⁸⁶ As we will see throughout the chapters of this thesis, the natural law tradition had an impact on Turnbull's work.

In particular, authors like Turnbull most likely saw in the work of the figures of the natural law tradition an attempt to study human beings and society by applying scientific methods. Their use of scientific methods is illustrated by Grotius' comments on the use of history in his *The Rights of War and Peace*:

Histories have a double Use with respect to the Subject we are upon, for they supply us both with Examples and Judgments. Examples, the better the Times and the wiser the People were, are of so much the greater Authority; for which Reason we have preferred those of the ancient *Grecians* and *Romans* before others. Nor are the Judgments we meet with in Histories to be despised, especially when they agree...⁸⁷

As we will see in Turnbull's thought on art and education in particular, history plays a very important role.

We can sum up this general sketch of the science of man to conclude this chapter. Though it must be recognized that there was a wide variety of projects within the science of man, they can all be considered as part of a group that: (a) places considerable importance on concepts like nature, virtue, progress and sociability. Those engaged with the science of man developed their projects as an attempt to contribute to the progress of humanity by giving an account of human nature that would hopefully lead to virtue and wellbeing. (b) The projects found their guides in the work of figures of the seventeenth century, most notably (though not exclusively) Bacon, Locke and Newton. (c) The projects were guided by a commitment to study human nature and society by following the methods applied in the study of natural philosophy. Their methodology

⁸⁵ Redman, *The rise of political economy*, 107.

⁸⁶ Wood, "Science, Philosophy, and the Mind," 808-809.

⁸⁷ Hugo Grotius. *The Rights of War and Peace*, 3 vols. ed. Richard Tuck, from the Edition by Jean Barbeyrac (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 123-124.

can be characterized as scientific, drawing from the work of most notably Bacon, Newton, and the natural law tradition.

In the remaining chapters of this thesis we will examine a particular project within the science of man movement: the one developed by George Turnbull.

CHAPTER TWO

2 Turnbull's Guiding Principles

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the three guiding principles that Turnbull commits himself to. Even though he was not the first philosopher to come up with such principles, I hope to show throughout this thesis that his originality lies in the combination of the three and his consistent application of them throughout his whole system of philosophy. Since Turnbull's development and application of the principles will be clear when we examine each of his texts, in this chapter I will refer to those thinkers and traditions that, arguably, most influenced Turnbull: George Berkeley, Joseph Butler, Cicero, Francis Hutcheson, Sir Isaac Newton, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, and the Natural Law tradition.

2.1 The Natural Goodness of Mankind

A number of intellectuals in Turnbull's context held the belief that human beings are naturally good, and this belief can be traced back to Cicero and the Stoics. In the early decades of the eighteenth century Lord Shaftesbury argues for the view that human beings are sociable and virtuous by nature, contrasting Hobbes' picture of humanity that depicted individuals as selfish by nature. Shaftesbury was criticized by Bernard Mandeville in his *Fable of the Bees*⁸⁸, and in 1726 Hutcheson defended Shaftesbury's views in his *Inquiry*.⁸⁹ Around this time Turnbull was a regent at Marischal, and even though his main publications only appeared in 1740, the lectures he gave in the 1720's contain the basic substance of his work, as he acknowledges in the preface to his *Principles*.⁹⁰ Given this situation, it would be fair to assume then that both Turnbull and Hutcheson were developing similar positions around the same time.

The idea of a social and benevolent human nature was not exclusive to the authors mentioned in the previous paragraph (Mandeville and Hobbes excepted); it can also be found in the thought of George Berkeley, Joseph Butler, and in the work of the leading figures of the Natural Law Tradition, Hugo Grotius and Samuel Pufendorf. Berkeley reflects on the social nature of mankind in his *Alciphron*,⁹¹ while Butler examines the idea in more detail in his *Sermons* and his

⁸⁸ Mandeville, Bernard. *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, 2 Vols, ed. F.B. Kaye. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1988).

⁸⁹ Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry Into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, ed. W Leidhold. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008).

⁹⁰ Turnbull, *Principles*, 17.

⁹¹ George Berkeley. *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher. The Works of George Berkeley*, vol. 3, ed. A.A. Luce and T. E. Jessop. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1950).

Analogy.⁹² Both Grotius and Pufendorf acknowledge the sociable aspect of human nature as they each develop their own systems of natural law. Let us examine how these thinkers argued for the natural goodness of mankind in order to construct Turnbull's first guiding principle.

One of the ways to argue for natural sociability was to focus on the end or purpose of human beings. For instance, Shaftesbury begins his *Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit* by showing that everything that exists has an end, that whatever conduces to that natural end is good, and whatever gets us away from it is evil (ill). He relies on the final end or purpose of things in order to establish the definition of any given concept, which requires us to understand the relation between parts and whole. This relation between parts and whole will be explored in more detail in the next section when we examine the concept of the great chain of being.

With the emphasis set on the end of things, 'good' is defined as whatever conduces to the end of the individual/species/world/universe, and 'evil' whatever is contrary to it:

To this End, if any thing, either in his Appetites, Passions, or Affections, be not conducing, but the contrary; we must of necessity own it *ill*, to him. And in this manner he is *ill, with respect to himself*; as he certainly is *ill, with respect to others of his kind*, when any such Appetites or Passions make him any-way injurious to them. Now if by the natural constitution of any rational Creature, the same Irregularitys of Appetite, which make him ill *to Others*, make him ill also *to Him-self*; and if the same Regularity of Affections, which causes him to be good in *one* sense, causes him to be good also in *the other*; then is that Goodness by which he is thus useful to others, a real Good and Advantage to himself.⁹³

In the specific case of human beings, we are evil when we are injurious to ourselves or to other members of our species. However, this needs to be further specified: in order to find out what affections or qualities are natural or good, and which ones unnatural or evil we need to determine how they relate to the particular end of the individual, the species, and the world. For Shaftesbury, selfishness or self-love, for example, is not evil if kept in due balance:

⁹² Butler, Joseph. *The analogy of religion, natural and revealed, to the constitution and course of nature. To which are added, two brief dissertations: ...The Works of Joseph Butler*, vol. 1, ed. W.E. Gladstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896); *Sermons. The works of Joseph Butler*, vol. 2, ed. W.E. Gladstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896).

⁹³ Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times. 3 Volumes. Vol. 2*. ed. Douglas den Uyl (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001), 9.

And thus, if there be found in any Creature a more than ordinary Self-concernment, or Regard to private Good, which is inconsistent with the Interest of the Species or Publick; this must in every respect be esteem'd an ill and vicious Affection...On the other side, if the Affection towards private or Self-good, however *selfish* it may be esteem'd, is in reality not only consistent with publick Good, but in some measure contributing to it; if it be such, perhaps, as for the good of the Species in general, every Individual ought to share; 'tis so far from being ill, or blameable in any sense, that it must be acknowledg'd absolutely necessary to constitute a Creature *Good*. For if the want of such an Affection as that towards Self-preservation, be injurious to the Species; a Creature is ill and unnatural as well thro' this Defect, as thro' the want of any other natural Affection.⁹⁴

We can see in this passage that if self-love conduces to the individual's private interest but goes against that of the public, then it is a vicious affection. However, if self-love is only prejudicial to society when it is immoderate, then the moderate version of it is not really evil or vicious. Further, if the affection does not injure the species but rather conduces to its end, then this affection is actually considered good.

There is one further caveat to this definition of 'good.' If an affection or action promotes the end of the individual/species/world, but is motivated by fear of punishment or anything other than the creature's own nature, then the affection is not really good. Good affections/actions can only be deemed truly good if the motivation derives from the creature's own nature.

Nothing therefore being properly either Goodness or Illness in a Creature, except what is from *natural Temper*; "A good Creature is such a one as by the natural Temper or Bent of his Affections is carry'd *primarily and immediately*, and not *secondarily and accidentally*, to Good, and against Ill": And an *ill Creature* is just the contrary; *viz.* "One who is wanting in right Affections, of force enough to carry him *directly* towards Good, and bear him out against Ill; or who is carry'd by other Affections directly to Ill, and against Good."⁹⁵

This is the case for sensible creatures in general; but since human beings go beyond mere good to virtue, Shaftesbury further elaborates.

⁹⁴ Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, 13-14.

⁹⁵ Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, 15.

Shaftesbury's theory of virtue requires a faculty of the mind known as the moral sense. In the *Characteristicks* we find the seed of this concept which Hutcheson later adopted and developed. Turnbull also adopts this faculty of the mind in his theory, which we will examine in detail later. For now it suffices to understand how this moral sense helps Shaftesbury construct the belief in the natural goodness of human beings to which Turnbull faithfully commits himself.

Now that Shaftesbury has established that a good action depends on its being conducive to the end of the individual/species/world, he clarifies his concept of virtue, which is exclusively for human beings. For a human being to be considered virtuous, she has to recognize the action/affection itself as being good. This is why the moral sense plays an important role. Its function is to reflect on the action/affection and its consequences to judge it to be good or ill:

So that if a Creature be generous, kind, constant, compassionate; yet if he cannot reflect on what he himself does, or sees others do, so as to take notice of what is *worthy* or *honest*; and make that Notice or Conception of *Worth* and *Honesty* to be an Object of his Affection; he has not the Character of being *virtuous*: for thus, and no otherwise, he is capable of having a *Sense of Right or Wrong*; a Sentiment or Judgment of what is done, thro' just, equal, and good Affection, or the contrary.⁹⁶

Since this moral sense is part of human nature, we cannot help but judge of actions as good or ill (in Shaftesbury's sense of these terms) and promote the former and avoid the latter. Therefore, human beings cannot by their nature be absolutely evil or vicious. Even if bad habits and superstition might confuse the judgments of the moral sense, such a faculty in itself cannot be ill and it is in this respect that Shaftesbury thinks that human beings cannot be 'absolutely ill.'

Turnbull follows those thinkers who reacted against the description of human beings as selfish and vicious by nature, proposing a more optimistic image of humanity. The extent of Turnbull's commitment to this principle is exhibited in his distancing himself from the Calvinism he was brought up with and his eventual conversion to the Church of England. Turnbull could not have continued to subscribe to a theology in which all human beings are characterized as damned after the Fall and there is nothing we can do to change or overcome Original Sin.

⁹⁶ Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, 18.

I will now turn to other authors where we find the idea of the natural goodness of mankind. I have reserved the relevant details of Hutcheson's theory for the examination of Turnbull's text, since it is more useful to draw a parallel in that context than to comment on it here.

Cicero is one of the authors whom Turnbull constantly refers to in all of his texts. The idea of a social human nature designed for virtue is explored in detail in his main works on ethics, *De finibus* and *De officiis*.⁹⁷ In *De finibus* Cicero explores and comments on the ethical systems of the Academy, the Epicureans, and the Stoics. The idea of the natural sociability of human beings appears in his exposition of the Stoics while exploring their thought on the nature of human beings:

Hence as it is manifest that it is natural for us to shrink from pain, so it is clear that we derive from nature herself the impulse to love those to whom we have given birth. From this impulse is developed the sense of mutual attraction which unites human beings as such; this is also bestowed by nature.⁹⁸

According to Cicero's exposition, the Stoics and the philosophers of the Academy agree not only on the natural sociability of human beings but also on their natural disposition towards virtue:

Well, these philosopher's [Plato's disciples] observed (1) that we are so constituted as to have a natural aptitude for the recognized and standard virtues in general, I mean Justice, Temperance and the others of that class (all of which resemble the rest of the arts and differ only by excelling them in the material with which they work and in their treatment of it); they observed moreover that we pursue these virtues with a more lofty enthusiasm than we do the arts; and (2) that we possess an implanted or rather innate appetite for knowledge, and (3) that we are naturally disposed towards social life with our fellow men and towards fellowship and community with the human race; and that these instincts are displayed most clearly in the most highly endowed natures.⁹⁹

Cicero's version of the natural goodness of mankind is perhaps most clearly summarized in a passage from *De officiis* where he discusses the concept of propriety:

⁹⁷ Cicero. *De officiis*, ed. Walter Miller. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938.); *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, 1921).

⁹⁸ Cicero, *De finibus*, 283.

⁹⁹ Cicero, *De finibus*, 304-305, square brackets added.

Further, as to the duty which has its source in propriety, the first road on which it conducts us leads to harmony with Nature and the faithful observance of her laws. If we follow Nature as our guide, we shall never go astray, but we shall be pursuing that which is in its nature clear-sighted and penetrating (Wisdom), that which is adapted to promote and strengthen society (Justice), and that which is strong and courageous (Fortitude). But the very essence of propriety is found in the division of virtue which is now under discussion (Temperance). For it is only when they agree with Nature's laws that we should give our approval to the movements not only of the body, but still more of the spirit.¹⁰⁰

If we observe the nature of human beings we can see clearly that we are made for virtue, as the passages taken here from Cicero show. It is by following our nature that we can achieve the end or purpose we are designed for. We can also see that the natural sociability of mankind plays an important role in both Shaftesbury and Cicero. In the seventeenth-century, Grotius and Pufendorf would build their systems of natural law on this sociability.

In the 'Preliminary discourse' to *The Rights of War and Peace*,¹⁰¹ Hugo Grotius identifies the sociability of human beings as a key difference between us and the other animals:

For Man is indeed an Animal, but one of a very high Order, and that excels all the other Species of Animals much more than they differ from one another; as the many Actions proper only to Mankind sufficiently demonstrate. Now amongst the Things peculiar to Man, is his Desire of Society, that is, a certain Inclination to live with those of his own Kind, not in any Manner whatever, but peaceably, and in a Community regulated according to the best of his Understanding; which disposition the Stoics termed 'Οικειωσιν. Therefore the Saying, that every Creature is led by Nature to seek its own private Advantage, expressed thus universally, must not be granted.¹⁰²

Jean Barbeyrac translated and added extensive notes to the main works of both Grotius and Pufendorf. Turnbull makes frequent use of these notes, as we will see when we explore his thought on law. I mention him at this stage because Barbeyrac adds an extensive note to the

¹⁰⁰ Cicero, *De officiis*, 103.

¹⁰¹ Hugo Grotius. *The Rights of War and Peace*,

¹⁰² Grotius, *Rights of War and Peace*, 79-81.

above passage in which he expands on the natural sociability of human beings and refers to Aristotle, the Stoics, Cicero, Epicurus, and Lord Shaftesbury, all of whom believed in the natural sociability of mankind.¹⁰³ This helps him illustrate the acceptance of the concept of natural sociability by a number of renowned authors.

Besides Grotius, Samuel Pufendorf is the other main figure of the natural law tradition whom Turnbull constantly refers to in his texts. However, the idea of sociability that Pufendorf explores in *The Whole duty of Man, According to the Law of Nature*¹⁰⁴ is different from that found in Grotius' work. It seems that for Pufendorf the desire for society possessed by human beings stems from a natural weakness that we have, since we are incapable of surviving without the help of other members of our species. The sociability of mankind is still a law of nature, but it is characterized more as a necessity rather than a natural disposition.¹⁰⁵ It seems then that Turnbull, following Barbeyrac, would side with Grotius rather than Pufendorf, at least as far as the natural sociability of mankind is concerned.

Finally, we can complete this exposition of the sociability of human nature by looking at the work of George Berkeley and Joseph Butler. Both of them made a contribution to the debate regarding natural and revealed religion, Berkeley in *Alciphron* and Butler in his *Analogy*. They also share a similar account of the natural sociability and goodness of human beings. In his dialogue, Berkeley argues for the natural goodness of mankind through the character of Euphranor against a mistaken conception of human nature voiced by the character of Alciphron. The latter believes that for something to be natural to mankind "it must appear originally therein; it must be universally in all men; it must be invariably the same in all nations and ages."¹⁰⁶ From this it must follow then that virtue cannot be natural to mankind. Using an analogy with plants, Berkeley argues that some aspects can still be natural even though they are not present from the beginning, or across all nations, just like oranges are not present in an orange tree from the beginning nor will the tree give the same fruit if planted in different regions. The same is the case with reason and virtue:

¹⁰³ Ibid, fn. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Samuel von Pufendorf. *The Whole Duty of Man According to the Law of Nature*, trans. Andrew Tooke, ed. Ian Hunter and David Saunders, with Two Discourses and a Commentary by Jean Barbeyrac, trans. David Saunders (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2003).

¹⁰⁵ Pufendorf, *Whole Duty of Man*, 52-56.

¹⁰⁶ Berkeley, *Alciphron*, 55.

Euphranor: Answer me, Alciphron, do not men in all times and places, when they arrive at a certain age, express their thoughts by speech?

Alciphron: They do.

Euphranor: Should it not seem, then, that language is natural?

Alciphron: It should.

Euphranor: And yet there is a great variety of languages?

Alciphron: I acknowledge there is.

Euphranor: From all this will it not follow a thing may be natural and yet admit of variety?

Alciphron: I grant it will.

Euphranor: Should it not seem, therefore, to follow that a thing may be natural to mankind, though it have not those marks or conditions assigned; though it be not original, universal, and invariable?

Alciphron: It should.

Euphranor: And that, consequently, religious worship and civil government may be natural to man, notwithstanding they admit of sundry forms and different degrees of perfection?

Alciphron: It seems so.

Euphranor: You have granted already that reason is natural to mankind.

Alciphron: I have.

Euphranor: Whatever, therefore, is agreeable to reason is agreeable to the nature of man.

Alciphron: It is.

Euphranor: Will it not follow from hence that truth and virtue are natural to man?

Alciphron: Whatever is reasonable I admit to be natural.¹⁰⁷

Virtue then is natural to human beings because it is reasonable. Berkeley confirms the natural sociability of mankind a few pages later, using the analogy between the natural and moral worlds

¹⁰⁷ Berkeley, *Alciphron*, 57.

that we will explore in more detail in the final section of this chapter. For the time being I just want to point out Berkeley's description of human beings and our sociable nature:

Should it not therefore seem to follow [from the analogy between the natural and moral worlds], that reasonable creatures were, as the philosophical Emperor observes, made for one another; and, consequently, that man ought not to consider himself as an independent individual, whose happiness is not connected with that of other men; but rather as the part of a whole, to the common good of which he ought to conspire, and order his ways and actions suitably, if he would live according to nature?¹⁰⁸

Butler's views on human nature are very similar to Berkeley's, and his ideas seem to have had great impact on Turnbull's own, as we will see throughout this thesis. Butler's main account of human nature can be found in the first three of his *Sermons*. In the preface to this collection of sermons Butler tells us that if we examine all the affections and faculties (not just self-love detached from the other affections) that make up human nature we will find that we are made for virtue:

It is from considering the relations which the several appetites and passions in the inward frame have to each other, and, above all, the supremacy of reflection or conscience, that we get the idea of the system or constitution of human nature.

And from the idea itself it will as fully appear, that this our nature, i.e. constitution, is adapted to virtue, as from the idea of a watch it appears, that its nature, i.e. constitution or system, is adapted to measure time.¹⁰⁹

We will see in chapter three that Turnbull follows Butler closely in his own analysis of the anatomy of the mind. Before concluding this section and summarizing Turnbull's second guiding principle, I would like to comment on the relation between goodness and virtue present in the account given so far. In Shaftesbury's theory, it seems that virtue consists in reflecting on actions and judging them good or evil, promoting the former and preventing the latter. 'Good' in this account has been already defined as that which conduces to the end of the individual/species/system. So it seems that we have here a character-based definition of virtue.

¹⁰⁸ Berkeley, *Alciphron*, 63, square brackets added.

¹⁰⁹ Butler, *Sermons*, 9-10.

In Cicero we find a different interpretation of virtue, but one that is still character-based. There are four main divisions or “cardinal virtues”: Wisdom, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. In *De officiis* Cicero gives a definition of virtue in general where we see that it consists in having a particular set of skills:

And, indeed, virtue in general may be said to consist almost wholly in three properties: the first is [Wisdom,] the ability to perceive what in any given instance is true and real, what its relations are, its consequences, and its causes; the second is [Temperance,] the ability to restrain the passions (which the Greeks called *πάθη*) and make the impulses (*ὁρμαί*) obedient to reason; and the third is [Justice,] the skill to treat with consideration and wisdom those with whom we are associated, in order that we may through their co-operation have our natural wants supplied in full and overflowing measure, that we may ward off any impending trouble, avenge ourselves upon those who have attempted to injure us, and visit them with such retribution as justice and humanity will permit.¹¹⁰

In a similar vein to Shaftesbury's and Cicero's interpretation of virtue, Butler believes that virtue consists in following our nature¹¹¹, and we are naturally disposed to approve of what is good. Virtue then is not equivalent to good, but rather the promotion and approval of good. As we will see in the next chapter, this is the sense in which Turnbull understands the relationship between good and virtue: given that we are naturally built to approve of goodness and abhor evil, virtue consists in following the former and avoiding the later. Though virtue must be deemed good (since it is conducive to our particular end), this is not to say that virtue and goodness are one and the same.

We can now conclude our exposition of Turnbull's first guiding principle. All of Turnbull's work is propelled by this belief in the natural goodness of human beings: it is the basis for his construction of the anatomy of the human mind; it guides the way education should be aimed at perfecting and developing our good nature; it becomes the object of artistic representation; and finally it provides the ground for his argument to prove the existence of God. I will show how all this pans out in due course. Let us sum up Turnbull's first guiding principle:

¹¹⁰ Cicero, *De officiis*, 186-187.

¹¹¹ Butler, *Sermons*, 6-11.

Natural goodness of mankind:

Turnbull's belief in the natural benevolence and sociability of human beings is the foundation for a more positive representation of humanity than that argued for by Hobbes and Mandeville. Turnbull believes that all human beings are benevolent by nature and prone to virtue. We are all made in such a way that we are not only capable of virtue, but are actually designed ('hard wired') to be virtuous. If we observe our natural make up we can see this clearly. Once we have done this, we can have a better understanding of the way we are meant to live in order to promote our natural end (virtue).

All three of Turnbull's guiding principles are linked together and depend on each other to function as the foundation for his philosophical system. An important aspect of his construction of human nature is the relation we have to the whole system. By considering human beings as a part of the great chain of being we can show the special place we have in the universe as well as define what our natural end truly is.

2.2 The Great Chain of Being

I have borrowed the phrase 'The Great Chain of Being' from Arthur Lovejoy's famous book.¹¹² In his classic treatment of the subject he presents a wonderful exposition of the idea, tracing its origins historically from Plato, through its development in the medieval period and its importance for eighteenth-century science. Although I rely on Lovejoy's exposition as a foundation for the concept of the great chain of being, I will also refer to a different conception of nature that can be found in a number of the figures who influenced Turnbull. Such is the case of Shaftesbury's idea of the system of nature, which Lovejoy overlooks. Turnbull at least merits a footnote where Lovejoy refers to *Painting*. None the less, Lovejoy's account can help us construct Turnbull's own adaptation of the great chain of being.

Lovejoy identifies three principles that characterize the idea of the great chain of being: the principle of plenitude, the principle of continuity, and the principle of gradation. They are all

¹¹² Arthur Lovejoy, *The great chain of being* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953).

interdependent and follow from each other. He defines the principle of plenitude by expanding on Plato's version:

I shall call it the principle of plenitude, but shall use the term to cover a wider range of inferences from premises identical with Plato's than he himself draws; i.e., not only the thesis that the universe is a *plenum formarum* in which the range of conceivable diversity of *kinds* of living things is exhaustively exemplified, but also any other deductions from the assumption that no genuine potentiality of being can remain unfulfilled, that the extent and abundance of the creation must be as great as the possibility of existence and commensurate with the productive capacity of a 'perfect' and inexhaustible Source, and that the world is better, the more things it contains.¹¹³

The first and most important feature of the great chain of being is that it is full; there are no gaps in creation and therefore the whole of the universe is complete. The second principle that Lovejoy identifies, continuity, seems to follow from the notion of the fullness of the universe.

Lovejoy points to Aristotle's definition of *continuum* as the source of the principle of continuity that was attached to the principle of plenitude by medieval thinkers and by other figures later in the eighteenth century:

Aristotle did not, indeed, formulate the law of continuity with any such generality as was afterwards given to it. But he furnished his successors, and especially his late medieval admirers, with a definition of the continuum: "Things are said to be continuous whenever there is one and the same limit of both wherein they overlap and which they possess in common." That all quantities — lines, surfaces, solids, motions, and in general time and space — must be continuous, not discrete, Aristotle maintained. That the qualitative differences of things must similarly constitute linear or continuous series he did not with equal definiteness assert, still less that they constitute a single continuous series. Nevertheless, he is responsible for the introduction of the principle of continuity into natural history.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Lovejoy, *The great chain of being*, 52.

¹¹⁴ Lovejoy, *The great chain of being*, 56.

Lovejoy recognizes that the principles of plenitude and continuity are not linked together within the work of Plato and Aristotle. However, the development of the idea of the great chain of being in the medieval period would see the two principles as necessarily connected and the latter “logically implied” by the former.

The third and final principle of the great chain of being is that of gradation, which Lovejoy also finds to originate in Aristotle. This principle is also meant to follow logically from the other two principles:

Everything, except God, has in it some measure of “privation.” There are, in the first place, in its generic “nature” or essence, “potentialities” which, in a given state of its existence, are not realized; and there are superior levels of being, which, by virtue of the specific degree of privation characteristic of it, it is constitutionally incapable of attaining. Thus “all individual things may be graded according to the degree to which they are infected with [mere] potentiality.” This vague notion of an ontological scale was to be combined with the more intelligible conceptions of zoological and psychological hierarchies which Aristotle had suggested, and in this way what I shall call the principle of unilinear gradation was added to the assumptions of the fullness and the qualitative continuity of the series of the forms in natural existence.¹¹⁵

It seems that in this principle of gradation a hierarchy of nature is implied. However, there is another conception of nature that states the fullness and unity of the system of nature while not requiring that there be some sort of ‘unilinear gradation.’ Before examining such variant understanding of nature we should sum up Lovejoy’s concept of the great chain of being:

The result [of the three principles] was the conception of the plan and structure of the world which, through the Middle Ages and down to the eighteenth century, many philosophers, most men of science, and, indeed, most educated men, were to accept without question — the conception of the universe as a “Great Chain of Being,” composed of an immense or — by the strict but seldom rigorously applied logic of the principle of continuity — of an infinite, number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest kind of existents, which barely escape non-

¹¹⁵ Lovejoy, *The great chain of being*, 59.

existence, through “every possible” grade up to the *ens perfectissimum* — or, in a somewhat more orthodox version, to the highest possible kind of creature, between which and the Absolute Being the disparity was assumed to be infinite — every one of them differing from that immediately above and that immediately below it by the “least possible” degree of difference.¹¹⁶

Even though in Lovejoy's work we find part of the framework for understanding the concept of the great chain of being we still need to examine the alternate interpretation of nature already mentioned. Such an interpretation focuses on an understanding of nature as a system that is complete and governed by general natural laws. It seems that Turnbull's own adaptation of the great chain of being is a combination of these two varying interpretations of nature, as I hope to show by examining Turnbull's work in more detail in the following chapters.

We will see that most of the authors that Turnbull refers to in his texts held Lovejoy's idea of the great chain of being in some form: Samuel and John Clarke, Alexander Pope, and John Locke among the ones Lovejoy mentions. However, Shaftesbury, Berkeley and Butler seem to hold an interpretation of the system of nature that highlights the functioning of the universe through general natural laws. In what follows I will explore Shaftesbury's Berkeley's, and Butler's account of nature.

To begin with, Shaftesbury places mankind within— and intrinsically linked to— the whole system of the universe. His discussion of what determines that some particular creature is good, as we saw in the previous section, requires understanding the specific end of the creature and the relation between the parts and the whole. Shaftesbury begins by describing one creature in particular and then gradually widens the circle to eventually arrive at the ring that comprises the whole universe. The principles of fullness and continuity are present in Shaftesbury's account. The relation between parts and whole show that the features of a particular creature relate to other creatures, making it part of a bigger system. Shaftesbury illustrates this by referring to the relation between male and female parts, and this in turn makes them both part of a larger system which he labels “Species of living creatures, who have some one *common Nature*, or are provided for, by some one *Order* or *Constitution* of things subsisting together, and co-operating towards their conservation and support.”¹¹⁷ The species itself is just part of a larger system, the Animal one, which Shaftesbury illustrates with the relation between flies and other species: “Flies [are]

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, 10.

also necessary for the existence of other Creatures, both Fowls and Fish. And thus are other Species or Kinds subservient to one another; as being *Parts* of a certain *System*, and included in one and the same *Order* of Beings. From the “Animal System” he expands to the “System of Earth,” then to the “Planetary System,” and then finally to the “Universal system” with which he concludes:

And if it be allow'd, that there is in like manner a SYSTEM *of all Things, and a Universal Nature*; there can be no particular Being or System which is not either good or ill in that *general one* of the *Universe*. For if it be insignificant and of no use, it is a Fault or Imperfection, and consequently ill in the general System.¹¹⁸

As we will see when we explore Turnbull's work, the great chain of being is central to the argument for the natural benevolence of mankind, as Shaftesbury's description shows. The way we decide if an affection/action is absolutely good/evil is by examining the consequences it has for the individual as well as the way it affects the group, species, world, and universe. An affection/action can be labelled absolute good or evil only if it is good or evil to the whole of the Universe. This applies to all creatures, but as we have seen, human beings have something unique that all the other creatures inferior to us are not capable of: virtue. We, unlike all other animals, are capable of recognizing the goodness or illness of an action/affection by reflecting upon it; this is what gives human beings a status of more than mere sensible creatures within the great chain of being.

However, the special place human beings hold is not defined by the place we hold in a hierarchical structure. We hold a special place because we are the only beings designed for virtue. Given that the universe is regulated by general laws, an examination of our nature will show that the end we are made for is goodness and virtue.

Of course, the idea that human beings have a special place in nature is held by many thinkers, and not only those from the Enlightenment period. I will refer here to passages from Locke and Pope, to illustrate the importance of the concept of the great chain of being in Turnbull's immediate context.

¹¹⁸ Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, 11.

Turnbull refers to Locke in numerous parts of his work. As we will see in chapter three, the law of association is one of the key aspects in Turnbull's anatomy of the mind. Lovejoy quotes Locke's description of the great chain of being. It is useful to insert the quote from Locke's *Essay* here in full:

It is not impossible to conceive, nor repugnant to reason, that there be many *Species of Spirits*, as much separated and diversified one from another by distinct Properties, whereof we have no *Ideas*, as the *Species* of sensible Things are distinguished one from another, by Qualities, which we know, and observe in them. That there should be a more *Species* of intelligent Creatures above us, than there are of sensible and material below us, is probable to me from hence; That in all the visible corporeal World, we see no Chasms, or Gaps. All quite down from us, the descent is by easy steps, and a continued series of Things, that in each remove, differ very little one from the other... we shall find every-where, that the several *Species* are linked together, and differ but in almost insensible degrees.¹¹⁹

Locke's account clearly shows the three principles Lovejoy identifies. The chain of nature is full, linked together, and graded. However, there is no mention of the regularity in nature given by general laws. The same is the case with the thought of another figure which appears constantly in Turnbull's work: Alexander Pope. Turnbull illustrates almost every argument he explains with a quote from Pope's *Essay on Man*. There are many passages that illustrate the idea of the great chain of being, the following perhaps the clearest:

Say first, of God above or Man below,
What can we reason but from what we know?
Of Man what see we, but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer?
'Thro' worlds unnumber'd tho' the God be known,
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.
He, who thro' vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs...¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ John Locke, *An essay concerning human understanding*, ed. Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), III, vi, 12.

¹²⁰ Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, ed. Maynard Mack, in *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, vol. III, part 1, ed. John Butt (London: Methuen Press, 1958), 14-16.

Of Systems possible, if 'tis confest
That Wisdom infinite must form the best,
Where all must fall or not conherent be,
And all that rises in due degree;¹²¹

In order to complete the framework for Turnbull's notion of the concept of the great chain of being we must turn to Berkeley and Butler to illustrate the idea of a system of nature governed by general laws. A passage from Berkeley's *Principles*¹²² will help us illustrate this interpretation of nature. Berkeley is answering an objection regarding the purpose for the organization and order of nature, and as part of his reply he presents his conception of the system of nature:

But to come nearer the difficulty, it must be observed, that though the fabrication of all those parts and organs be not absolutely necessary to the producing any effect, yet it is necessary to the producing in things in a constant, regular way, according to the Laws of Nature. There are certain general laws that run through the whole chain of natural effects: these are learned by the observation and study of Nature, and are by men applied as well to the framing artificial things for the use and ornament of life, as to the explaining of the various phenomena: which explication consists only in showing the conformity any particular phenomenon hath to the general Laws of Nature, or, which is the same thing, in discovering the *uniformity* there is in the production of natural effects; as will be evident to whoever shall attend to the several instances, wherein philosophers pretend to account for appearances.¹²³

It is clear that the main of focus of Berkeley's description is on the regularity provided by the laws of nature. Butler also comments on the important role of the regularity of general natural laws, but he reincorporates the principle of gradation into his conception of nature. Both Butler and Turnbull use the concept of gradation to show that the current stage of human beings is one of learning and preparation for a future, more perfect stage. I will expand on this later; let us focus now on Butler's description of nature and its laws. This passage is taken from the introduction to his *Analogy*:

¹²¹ Pope, *An Essay on Man*, 18-19.

¹²² Berkeley, George. *The Principles of Human Knowledge. The Works of George Berkeley*, vol. 2, ed. A.A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964).

¹²³ Berkeley, *Principles*, 67-68.

Let us then, instead of that idle and not very innocent employment of forming imaginary models of a world, and schemes of governing it, turn our thoughts to what we experience to be the conduct of nature with respect to intelligent creatures; which may be resolved into general laws or rules of administration, in the same way as many of the laws of nature respecting inanimate matter may be collected from experiments.¹²⁴

It is relevant to point out here that in the above quote by Butler we can see the connection between the interpretation of nature as a great chain of being, regulated by general laws, and the methodology required to discover human nature which we will examine in the following section. For Turnbull's version of the great chain of being, we will see that it manifests the principles of fullness, continuity, and gradation identified in Lovejoy's concept, but there is also an important place reserved for the regularity and order of the universe given its general natural laws.

Despite his extensive borrowing in this account, Turnbull's interpretation of the system of nature is interesting. This progressive (gradation) and linked (continuity) chain of nature, along with our special place in it defines our purpose in life. The belief in the natural goodness of human beings shows virtue as our natural end. When this belief is embedded in the progressive chain of nature, a further dimension is added: we can recognize the special place we hold, and we can understand that our life is just a learning stage within the whole chain. Here Turnbull builds on the two conceptions of nature already discussed.

Turnbull follows Shaftesbury and Butler closely in giving man a special place within the system of the universe given our natural inclination towards virtue. He embeds this idea within the progressive chain of nature that defines our purpose. From the belief that human beings are naturally good, we can easily see that we hold a special place by comparing ourselves to other creatures. But since the chain of nature is graded we also realize that we are not as perfect as other links (angels, God) within the chain. This shows that there is progress in the whole chain of nature, and it makes us realize that our life is just a stage of learning and preparation for the next, more advanced (in terms of perfection) stage.

There is one particular consequence of this principle that is going to be of great importance for the development of Turnbull's philosophical system. The fact that nature is continuous will give

¹²⁴ Butler, *Analogy*, 15.

him a sub-principle that will unify the domain to which his set of guiding principles can be applied: the unity of all the sciences. We will see in due course how this plays a key role in his system. Turnbull constantly refers to the connection between the natural and moral worlds, and in this aspect he seems to be strongly influenced by Butler's *Analogy*. Science is the study of nature, whether natural or moral, and the principle of continuity will allow him to draw analogies between the two worlds and apply the experimental method of natural philosophy in his moral enquiries, which is the topic of the next section. We will see how Turnbull relies on this union between the moral and natural worlds when we examine Turnbull's anatomy of the human mind. For the moment I will just refer to Butler's own expression of the unity of moral and natural to finish our exploration of the great chain of being:

Indeed the natural and moral constitution and government of the world are so connected, as to make up together but one scheme: and it is highly probable, that the first is formed and carried on merely in subserviency to the latter; as the vegetable world is for the animal, and organized bodies for minds. But the thing intended here is, without inquiring how far the administration of the natural world is subordinate to that of the moral, only to observe the credibility, that one should be analogous or similar to the other.¹²⁵

As we will examine later on, Turnbull's adaptation of the great chain of being resembles Butler's account of nature in the sense that there is not merely an analogy between the natural and moral worlds, instead, they are both actually two complementary parts of the same unified whole. We can now sum up Turnbull's second guiding principle:

The Great Chain of Being:

Turnbull believes that nature is the great chain of being: it is complete and continuous, and all its parts occupy a place depending on their degree of "perfection." It is regulated by general natural laws that account for the order of the universe and point to an intelligent designer. Further, the natural goodness of human beings within the whole system of nature gives us a special place within the whole of nature. Given the gradation and regularity of

¹²⁵ Butler, *Analogy*, 164.

nature and its laws, our purpose in life is virtue, but our current life is only a stage within the great chain of being; a stage of preparation for the next one.

The two guiding principles we have examined so far work together: the special place we hold in the progressive chain of nature is given by our natural goodness, and the fact that we are part of this chain helps us define our natural end or purpose (virtue). However, Turnbull still needs to find a proper methodology that allows him to acquire proper knowledge of the human constitution and argue for our good nature and the divine government of the world. Here is where his third guiding principle comes into play: the commitment to the method of experimental philosophy.

2.3 *Philosophia Experimentalis*

In the exposition of the two previous guiding principles we have referred to a number of authors that had some impact on Turnbull's thought. However, with the exception of Locke and Butler, none of those authors can be described as proponents of the experimental method. Turnbull, like Butler, borrows this belief not from moral, but from natural philosophy. In particular (as he confesses in the preface to *Principles 1*), he "takes a hint" from Sir Isaac Newton. Turnbull's third guiding principle is the commitment to experimental philosophy and its methodology for all our enquiries, "whether natural or moral." In order to understand what experimental philosophy amounts to it is helpful to place it in a framework that places the terms 'experimental' and 'speculative' as the salient terms of reference for the study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy.

Peter Anstey and Alberto Vanzo have argued for the use of this new framework.¹²⁶ Instead of the commonly used empiricist/rationalist divide, an epistemological distinction, it is more historically accurate to refer to the experimental/speculative divide, a methodological distinction. There are a number of reasons to adopt such framework. In the first place, it is clear from early modern texts that the terms the authors were using were those Anstey and Vanzo argue for. 'Empiricism' and 'rationalism,' in the sense we use them now, only appeared after Kant. Not only was the experimental/speculative distinction (ESD) widely deployed, but the fact that it is a

¹²⁶ Peter Anstey, "Experimental Versus Speculative Natural Philosophy," in *the Science of Nature in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Peter R. Anstey and John A Schuster (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005) 215-242; Peter Anstey and Alberto Vanzo, "The Origins of the Early Modern Experimental Philosophy," *Intellectual History Review*. 22(4) (December 2012): 499-518.

methodological instead of an epistemological distinction provides us with a better understanding of what the various figures of the period were trying to achieve. In what follows I will briefly sketch the details of the ESD and then explore Turnbull's commitment to experimental philosophy.

Francis Bacon's work provides a helpful starting point for understanding the origins of the distinction. In his *De augmentis scientiarum* Bacon constructs a tree of knowledge where he distinguishes between speculative and operative natural philosophy. Traditionally, natural philosophy was considered as a speculative (theoretical) type of knowledge. Bacon introduced a type of natural philosophy that was non-speculative, namely operative natural philosophy. Mechanics, for example, was classified under this branch and related to physics, which held a place within speculative natural philosophy.¹²⁷ This distinction of two branches of natural philosophy was Bacon's innovation that influenced later attempts to construct trees of knowledge. For example, John Dunton divided Philosophy into Natural and Moral, and the former was again divided into Speculative and Experimental.¹²⁸ Though this distinction is not here a methodological one, the terms would be used to refer to two different ways of pursuing natural philosophy.

From this introduction of a practical side to natural philosophy, those who followed Bacon adopted his rejection of mere speculation and the importance of experiments, facts and observations as the source of our knowledge of the natural world. As Anstey tells us "Bacon famously opposed idle speculation and promoted the derivation of natural knowledge from experiment."¹²⁹ The following passage from Bacon's *Novum organum* where he attacks the 'Idols of the theatre or theories' illustrates this attitude:

Now in general the substance of philosophy takes a lot from a little or a little from a lot, so that either way philosophy rests on too narrow a basis of experience and natural history, and gives its verdict on the authority of fewer data than it should. For philosophers of the rational family wrench things various and commonplace

¹²⁷ Anstey and Vanzo, "The Origins of the Early Modern Experimental Philosophy," 510-511.

¹²⁸ Anstey and Vanzo, "The Origins of the Early Modern Experimental Philosophy," 500.

¹²⁹ Anstey, "Experimental Versus Speculative Natural Philosophy," 217.

from experience, things neither securely established nor carefully examined and weighed, and leave the rest to meditation and intellectual agitation.¹³⁰

The broad definition of the ESD is founded on this distinction of the way to acquire knowledge. While experimental philosophers observed the phenomena and from their observations constructed their theories; speculative philosophers first constructed their theories and then checked to see if the phenomena fitted; if it did not, then instead of changing their theory they disregarded the phenomena as an exception to the rule. It would follow from this definition that the favoured methodology would be that of experimental philosophy, with speculative philosophy being nothing but a collection of conjectures, fantasies and fables disconnected from the real world.

Those who first labelled themselves 'experimental philosophers' were within the circle of the early Royal Society. Newton himself, somewhat later, became the representative figure (along with Bacon and Robert Boyle) of experimental philosophy in the eighteenth century.¹³¹ Characteristically, experimental philosophers attacked their opponents for being speculative philosophers and the term 'speculative' is usually used as a derogatory term. The following passage from Thomas Spratt's *History of the Royal Society* gives us a nice summary of the experimental philosophy promoted by the Royal Society and illustrates the derogatory use of 'speculative:'

From what I have said, may be gather'd, That *Experimental Philosophy* will prevent mens spending the strength of their thoughts about *Disputes*, by turning them to *Works*: That it may well be attended by the united *Labors* of many, without wholly devouring the time of those that *labor*: That it will cure our minds of *Romantic swelling*, by shewing all things familiarly to them, just as large as they are...The *Formal* man may be compar'd to the meer *Speculative Philosopher*: For he vainly reduces every thing to grave and solemn general *Rules*, without discretion or mature deliberation. And lastly, the *Prudent* man is like him who proceeds on a constant and solid cours of *Experiments*.¹³²

The following table sketches, roughly, the two methods:

¹³⁰ Francis Bacon. *The Oxford Francis Bacon, vol. XI, Novum organum*. Edited by Graham Rees and Maria Wakely. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 99.

¹³¹ See Alan Shapiro, "Newton's 'Experimental Philosophy,'" in *Early Science and Medicine* 9 (2004):185-217.

¹³² Spratt, T. *History of the Royal Society*. Edited by J. I. Cope (Washington University studies, 1959).

EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY	SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rejection of hypotheses - Emphasis on observation and experiment as the primary sources of knowledge and foundation of natural philosophy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Construct hypotheses without previous recourse to observation -Use of a priori principles -Construction of systems

Experimental philosophy was then the only correct path to knowledge, and those practising speculative philosophy were doing nothing more than the mere construction of fables and fantasies that had nothing to do with reality. This is not to say that the distinction was used by the British as no more than a means of justifying the superiority of their intellectual inquiries; on the contrary, their deep methodological commitment to the experimental method was what justified their use of the term 'speculative' as derogatory. It is useful to refer to some of the texts by experimental philosophers to grasp the general details of their method. I will refer to Colin MacLaurin and Sir Isaac Newton to show the application of the method in natural philosophy. With a general overview of the method we can then turn to Joseph Butler and David Fordyce to show how it was to be applied specifically in moral philosophy.

MacLaurin, Turnbull's colleague at Marischal in the early 1720's, is recognized as one of the most important of Newton's Scottish followers in the early eighteenth century. Newton himself recommended him to be appointed deputy to the professor of mathematics at the University of Edinburgh, James Gregory, in 1725. He soon replaced Gregory in that post.¹³³ MacLaurin wrote *An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries* soon after Newton died, but it was only published in 1748, two years after his own death. In that book he includes a brief historical account of the developments in natural philosophy where he contrasts the speculative and experimental methods. The former he identifies with Descartes and Spinoza:

¹³³ Colin MacLaurin, *An account of Sir Isaac Newton's philosophical discoveries* (New York: Olms, 1971), iv-v. Other important Scottish Newtonians were David Gregory and John Keill.

In all these [theories], *Spinoza* has added largely, from his own imagination, to what he had learned from *Des Cartes*. But from a comparison of their method and principles, we may beware of the danger of setting out in philosophy in so high and presumptuous manner; while both pretend to deduce compleat systems from the clear true ideas, which they imagined they had, of eternal essences and necessary causes. If we attend to the consequences of such principles, we shall more willingly submit to experimental philosophy, as the only sort that is suited to our faculties.¹³⁴

Some pages later MacLaurin presents a summary of the mistake of speculative philosophers and promotes experimental philosophy as the correct path to follow:

Tho' these learned men [Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz] may have shown abundance of genius and invention in their writings; yet they, and all others who have followed a like method, have begun at the wrong end, in tracing the chain of causes, and have attempted to form a scheme of philosophy that far surpasses the human faculties... We are to endeavour to rise, from the effects thro' the intermediate causes, to the supreme cause. We are, from his works, to seek to know God, and not to pretend to mark out the scheme of his conduct, in nature, from the very deficient ideas we are able to form of that great mysterious Being. Thus natural philosophy may become a sure basis to natural religion, but it is very preposterous to deduce natural philosophy from any hypothesis, tho' invented to make us imagine ourselves possess of a more complete system of metaphysics, or contrived perhaps with a view to obviate more easily some difficulties in natural theology. We may, at length, rest satisfied, that in natural philosophy, truth is to be discovered by experiment and observation, with the aid of geometry, only; and that it is necessary first to proceed by the method of *analysis*, before we presume to deliver any system *synthetically*.¹³⁵

In this account we can identify the salient features of experimental philosophy: rejection of hypotheses and speculation, emphasis on experiment and observation, and the method of analysis and synthesis, of course adopted from Newton. It is relevant to mention here that in the first decades of the rise of experimental philosophy its practitioners promoted the Baconian method which focused on the collection of natural histories. However, adherence to this method

¹³⁴ Ibid, 77.

¹³⁵ Ibid. 90-91.

declined at the beginning of the eighteenth century and the Newtonian method became the flag-bearer for experimental philosophy. A concise explanation of the experimental method as it is found in Newton's work is expressed in Cotes's preface to the second edition of *Principia*. Just like in MacLaurin's account, we find a clear expression of the experimental method and the anti-hypothesis stand identified with Newton. Cotes begins by categorizing three different types of philosophers: the first two in line with the method of speculative philosophers and the third class reserved for the practitioners of experimental philosophy:

But when they [second class of philosophers] take a liberty of imagining at pleasure unknown figures and magnitudes, and uncertain situations and motions of the parts; and moreover of supposing occult fluids, freely pervading the pores of bodies, endued with an all-performing subtilty, and agitated with occult motions; they now run out into dreams and chimera's, and neglect the true constitution of things; which certainly is not to be expected from fallacious conjectures, when we can scarce reach it by the most certain observations. Those who fetch from hypotheses the foundation on which they build their speculations, may form indeed an ingenious romance, but a romance it will still be.

There is left then the third class, which profess experimental philosophy. These indeed derive the causes of things from the most simple principles possible; but then they assume nothing as a principle, that is not proved by the phenomena. They frame no hypothesis, nor receive them into philosophy otherwise than as questions whose truth may be disputed. They proceed therefore in a twofold method, synthetical and analytical. From some select phenomena they deduce by analysis the forces of nature, and the more simple laws of forces, and from thence by synthesis shew the constitution of the rest. This is incomparably the best way of philosophizing, which our renowned author most justly embraced before the rest; and thought alone worthy to be cultivated and adorned by his excellent labours.¹³⁶

Cotes' description refers to the methods of analysis and synthesis, which we will see are adopted by Turnbull in his moral philosophy. So far all I have said about the experimental method concerns natural philosophy, but the method would also find adherents outside natural philosophy after the work of Newton. Turnbull was most likely the first one in the line of

¹³⁶ Sir Isaac Newton. *The mathematical principles of natural philosophy*. In two volumes. Edited by Andrew Motte (London: printed for Benjamin Motte, 1729.)

thinkers who attempted to apply the experimental method of natural philosophy to their moral inquiries. Hutcheson, around the same time as Turnbull, also calls for the importance of facts and observation, but he is not as thorough or committed as the former.¹³⁷

The adoption of the experimental method in moral enquiries converted the study of morality into a science; a 'science of man.' Turnbull was the first to systematically carry out this proposal, and the details of his application of the method will be explored in detail in the following chapters. In the meantime I will refer here to a text from another teacher at Marischal that followed Turnbull's steps: David Fordyce. He taught moral philosophy in Aberdeen from 1742 until his tragic death in 1750. The reason for relying on Fordyce's *Elements of Moral Philosophy* in our exploration of the third of Turnbull's guiding principles is the fact that the text was used for a long period of time as the standard account of moral philosophy included in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The text illustrates nicely how the experimental method was embedded in the study of moral philosophy:

Moral Philosophy has this in common with *Natural Philosophy*, that it appeals to *Nature* or *Fact*; depends on Observation, and builds its Reasonings on plain uncontroverted Experiments, or upon the fullest Induction of Particulars of which the Subject will admit. We must observe, in both these Sciences, *Quid faciet & ferat Natura*; how Nature is affected, and what her Conduct is in such Circumstances. Or in other words, we must collect the *Phenomena*, or *Appearances of Nature*, in any given Instance; trace this to some *General Principles*, or *Laws of Operation*; and then apply these *Principles* or *Laws* to other *Phenomena*.¹³⁸

The emphasis on facts and observation we saw in MacLaurin resonate here in Fordyce's account of the way to do moral philosophy. We also find the emphasis on the Newtonian method of analysis and synthesis that, as we will see, is present in Turnbull. He was convinced that the method Newton used to discover gravity and establish the motion of the planets should be applied in all of our inquiries, especially in moral philosophy as Newton himself claims. Since human beings are part of nature, we should study them the same way we study the rest of nature: through experiment and observation.

¹³⁷ It is also relevant to mention here that Butler's *Sermons* and *Analogy* were published after Turnbull's graduation theses where he calls for the application of the experimental method in moral philosophy.

¹³⁸ Fordyce, *Elements*, 7-8.

I want to conclude this exposition of the method of experimental philosophy by referring to Butler, who saw himself as using a sort of experimental method. In the preface to his *Sermons*, Butler identifies “two methods of handling morals:”

There are two ways in which the subject of morals may be treated. One begins from inquiring into the abstract relations of things: the other from a matter of fact, namely, what the particular nature of man is, its several parts, their economy or constitution; from whence it proceeds to determine what course of life it is, which is correspondent to this whole nature.¹³⁹

Butler then tells us that his method in the sermons on human nature is the latter one, and presumably this is the same method he uses in his *Analogy*. Bishop Halifax illustrates this in the preface he wrote for Butler's book:

Instead of indulging to idle speculations, how the world might possibly have been better than it is; or, forgetful of the difference between hypothesis and fact, attempting to explain the divine economy with respect to intelligent creatures, from preconceived notions of his own; he [Butler] first inquires what the constitution of nature, as made known to us in the way of experiment, actually is; and from this, now seen and acknowledged, he endeavours to form a judgment of that larger constitution, which religion discovers to us.¹⁴⁰

This opposition between facts and hypotheses in Halifax's passage is also expressed by Butler in the introduction to his *Analogy*, giving us a clear statement of the application of the experimental method in moral philosophy:

Forming our notions of the constitution and government of the world upon reasoning, without foundation for the principles which we assume, whether from the attributes of God, or any thing else, is building a world upon hypothesis, like Descartes. Forming our notions upon reasoning from principles which are certain, but applied to cases to which we have no ground to apply them, (like those who explain the structure of the human body, and the nature of diseases and medicines from mere mathematics without sufficient *data*;) is an error much akin to the former;

¹³⁹ Butler, *Sermons*, 5-6.

¹⁴⁰ Butler, *Analogy*, xxiv, square brackets added.

since what is assumed in order to make the reasoning applicable, is hypothesis. But it must be allowed just, to join abstract reasonings with the observation of facts, and argue from such facts as are known, to others that are like them.¹⁴¹

Butler's rejection of hypotheses is clear in these passages, and though his application of the experimental method closely resembles Turnbull's, there are some differences that will be explored in due course. For the time being we can define Turnbull's third and final guiding principle.

The Experimental Method:

The only way of acquiring any kind of knowledge of nature is to deduce our theories only from facts and the observation of phenomena. Therefore the same method used by natural philosophers must be applied to our inquiries into the moral world. There is no room for mere speculation, hypotheses, or conjectures. Only by applying the experimental method will we be able to acquire knowledge of our human constitution, our particular end, and the divine government of the world.

With this sketch of the principles that guide all of Turnbull's work, it is now time to explore how he relies on them to build his anatomy of the mind, his moral philosophy, and his theories regarding religion, art, education, and law.

¹⁴¹ Butler, *Analogy*, 10-11.

CHAPTER THREE

3 The anatomy of the human mind

At the beginning of *The Principles of Moral Philosophy (Principles 1)* Turnbull claims that the work contains “the substance of several *pneumatological* discourses (as they are called in the school language) read above a dozen years ago to students of Moral Philosophy.”¹⁴² He is referring to the lectures he gave at Marischal College between 1721 and 1727. Turnbull’s two graduation theses, published in 1723 and 1726, reflect the content of his lectures.¹⁴³ *Principles 1* contains an ‘anatomy’ of the human mind in terms of the principles and natural laws that explain the phenomena of human nature. In this chapter I begin by examining Turnbull’s methodological statements at the beginning of *Principles 1*, thus setting the stage for an exploration of the several laws of human nature he identifies: laws of human power and dominion in the world; the law of association; the moral sense; and laws of interest and society. Finally, I examine Turnbull’s ideas regarding the immortality of the soul and his response to some probable objections to the claims argued for in *Principles 1*.

3.1 Turnbull on Natural and Moral Philosophy

The epistle dedicatory, the preface, and the introduction to *Principles 1* give us an insight into Turnbull’s methodology. In these sections Turnbull tries to show that there is continuity between the natural and moral worlds, and this leads us to think that the methodology that has achieved so much success for natural philosophy should also be applied in our inquiries into the moral world. Turnbull needs to assume the continuity of the great chain of being to allow for the union between the two worlds. In the title page of *Principles 1* he uses a quote from the second English edition of Newton’s *Opticks* (1717) which nicely sums up the claim argued for in the initial sections:

And if Natural Philosophy, in all its Parts by pursuing this method, shall at length be perfected, the bounds of moral Philosophy will also be enlarged.¹⁴⁴

Throughout his construction of the anatomy of the human mind Turnbull uses the analogy between the natural and moral worlds to support his claims, so his main concern in the introduction is the establishment of this unity. We have already mentioned that this analogy is

¹⁴² Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 17.

¹⁴³ For an account of the content of Turnbull’s theses see Paul Wood, *The Aberdeen enlightenment: the arts curriculum in the eighteenth century* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1993), 44-45.

¹⁴⁴ Isaac Newton, *Opticks: or, a treatise of the reflections, refractions, inflections and colours of light. The second edition, with additions* (London: W. and J. Innys, 1718), 381.

also used by Butler in his works, and we will explore in more detail the relation between this aspect of Butler's and Turnbull's thought in this chapter. It is important to mention here that even though Turnbull frequently uses the word 'analogy' when he argues from the natural to the moral world, this is just a *façon de parler*. I will show throughout this chapter that the relation between the natural and moral worlds amounts to a lot more than a mere analogy.

Turnbull summarizes in the epistle dedicatory the plan carried out in the *Principles*:

...to account for MORAL, as the great *Newton* has taught us to explain NATURAL appearances, (that is, by reducing them to good general laws).¹⁴⁵

There must be some connection between the natural and moral worlds for this plan to work. Turnbull not only claims the two worlds are analogous; he believes that moral philosophy is actually a part (the most useful) of natural philosophy.¹⁴⁶ If this is the case, then we should apply the same method in both areas of knowledge given that human beings are part of nature. Turnbull says he derived this 'hint' from Newton's passage (quoted above), and he set forth to investigate human nature by using the methodology of natural philosophy. Here he uses the uniformity of all things within the great chain of being to explain that accounting "for moral as for natural things" entails:

That order is kept in man, as well as in the other parts of nature within our observation, constituting the same system...¹⁴⁷

In the beginning of the introduction to *Principles 1* he reinforces this idea that human beings are part of the whole system of nature to motivate the use of the experimental method in moral philosophy:

...an inquiry into human nature is as much an inquiry into fact, as any question about the frame and texture (for instance) of any plant, or the human body.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 5.

¹⁴⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 7. Hume makes a similar claim in his *Treatise*, 4.

¹⁴⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 9.

¹⁴⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 47.

The first aspect we need to clarify is Turnbull's understanding of natural philosophy. He thinks that it consists in the investigation of the laws of the sensible world, i.e. the set of laws to which the natural phenomena can be reduced (Newton's law of gravitation is an example of one of these laws). This account of nature (as we discussed in section 2.2) emphasizes the regularity and order of the universe grounded on general laws. Given that human beings are part of the universe we are also bound by general laws of nature. Before taking the step from natural to moral Turnbull states three principles of natural philosophy:

1. Nature, if we are to understand it, must be governed by natural laws. Without general laws there can be no order and no science
2. General laws are those to which "many effects are conformable" and regularly produce like effects (Gravitation is an example of a general law)
3. All the effects of good general laws are good to the whole system.¹⁴⁹

By 'good' general law Turnbull refers to the laws that contribute to the beauty and perfection of the whole system, like the law of gravitation:

...those laws must be good in a system, which produce in the sum of things, the greater coherence, order, beauty, good, and perfection of that system.¹⁵⁰

It is important to clarify Turnbull's use of 'good' to describe certain laws. We discussed in section 2.1 that 'good' in Shaftesbury and Cicero is used to refer to whatever conduces to the natural end of the object in question. For example, if the ultimate end of bees is to produce honey, then for that species 'good' laws would be those that conduce to that end. Turnbull here uses gravity as an example of a good general law, since it conduces to the particular end of the whole system of the world, which he assumes is order and perfection. This assumption is driven by Turnbull's agenda behind the *Principles 1* and 2, namely, to provide an argument for providential design based on the constitution of human nature. Turnbull states this as his main aim in the preface to *Principles 1*:

¹⁴⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 48-51, my wording.

¹⁵⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 51.

And accordingly what I now publish, is an attempt (in consequence of such observations as I have been able to make, or have been led to by others) *to vindicate human nature, and the ways of GOD to man*, by reducing the more remarkable appearances in the human system to excellent general laws: i.e. to powers and laws of powers, admirably adapted to produce a very noble species of being in the rising scale of life and perfection.¹⁵¹

As we will see, the laws of human nature Turnbull identifies will turn out to be good because they conduce to our particular end, i.e. virtue. From the description of natural philosophy Turnbull moves to his general account of moral philosophy. We can only acquire knowledge of the laws of nature by experiments, facts and observation, as Turnbull will later highlight. We have three maxims of natural philosophy, and since moral philosophy is continuous with it, then the maxims must also apply to our moral enquiries. However, moral philosophy does differ in a sense from natural philosophy. While the latter is based on the experience and observation of the world through our “outward organs of sense,” moral philosophy is concerned with objects that cannot be perceived by them, but rather “by internal feeling or experience.” Turnbull is very careful here and reminds us that this does not mean that we should proceed differently. On the contrary:

...an enquiry about any of them [moral powers and faculties], and the laws and connexions established by the author of nature, with regard to any of them, is as much a question of natural history or fact, as an enquiry about any of our organs of sense, or about the constitution of any material object whatsoever, and the laws relating to it.¹⁵²

This passage closely resembles a comment Butler makes in a footnote in his first sermon on human nature:

Let it be observed, that *whether man be thus, or otherwise constituted, what is the inward frame in this particular*, is a mere question of fact or natural history, not provable by reason. It is therefore to be judged of and determined in the same way other facts or matters

¹⁵¹ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 9.

¹⁵² Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 53, square brackets added.

of natural history are: by appealing to the external senses, or the inward perceptions, respectively, as the matter under consideration is cognizable by one or the other...¹⁵³

Both Butler and Turnbull distinguish the natural and moral investigations by the way we gain access to them: the former by the external senses, the latter by introspection. With this distinction in mind Turnbull constructs three maxims of moral philosophy which are built on the maxims of natural philosophy he previously identified:

1. Our moral nature, if we are to understand it, must be governed by general laws
2. The general laws in our moral nature are those “found by experience to operate uniformly or invariably in that system” (i.e. the law of acquiring habits by repetition of actions)
3. All the effects of good general laws of our moral nature are good to the whole system.¹⁵⁴

Armed with the three maxims Turnbull focuses on explicating the method we must follow in our moral enquiries. The quote below is probably the clearest statement of Turnbull’s methodological commitment to the experimental method of natural philosophy and the rejection of pure speculation:

That as in natural philosophy, though it would be but building a fine visionary theory or Fable, to draw out a system of consequences the most accurately connected from mere hypotheses, or upon supposition of the existence and operation of properties, and their laws, which experience does not show to be really existent; yet the whole of true natural philosophy is not, for that reason, no more than a system of facts discovered by experiment and observation; but it is a mixture of experiments, with reasonings from experiments: so in the same manner, in moral philosophy, it would be but to contrive a beautiful, elegant romance, to deduce the best coupled system of conclusions concerning human nature from imaginary

¹⁵³ Butler, *Sermons*, 37.

¹⁵⁴ Turnbull, *Principles* 1. 55, my wording.

suppositions, that have no foundation in nature, yet the whole of true moral philosophy, will not, for that reason, be no more than a collection of facts discovered by experience; but it likewise will be a mixed science of observations and reasonings from principles known by experience to take place in, or belong to human nature.

In neither case are hypotheses to be further admitted, than as questions, about the truth or reality of which it is worth while to enquire; but in both we may proceed in the double method of analysis and synthesis: by the former endeavouring to deduce from some certain select effects, the simple powers of nature, and their laws and proportions; from which, by the latter method, we may infer or resolve the nature of other effects...¹⁵⁵

This is a clear example of the experimental/speculative divide in moral philosophy. Purely speculative methods are not to be admitted and any kind of knowledge we acquire comes from experience and observation and reasoning upon them. Notice that this description of the experimental method in moral philosophy as a ‘mixed science’ shows the evolution that the method went through in the eighteenth-century. It consisted of more than just the collection of facts and experiments and included reasoning from those experiments. This is the method of analysis and synthesis that moral philosophers like Butler¹⁵⁶ and Turnbull adopted from Newton. Since the objects of the moral realm are not accessible to our external senses, Turnbull relies on introspection to gain access to and observe our moral faculties. Throughout the text Turnbull constantly reminds us of the usefulness of ‘looking inward’ and calls upon the reader to look into her own mind to confirm the claims made in *Principles 1*. In this sense the ‘experiments’ pertaining to moral philosophy consist in this exercise of experiencing the faculties of our mind via introspection.

One of the features of the above passage and of Turnbull’s statements in these pages is his commitment to a more developed (embedding Newton’s methodology) version of the experimental method than the more Baconian method identified with the members of the early Royal Society of London. This is not to say that Turnbull completely disregarded the Baconian method of the collection of natural histories. As we will see in chapters four and five, Turnbull in

¹⁵⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 62-63, underlining added.

¹⁵⁶ “But it must be allowed just, to join abstract reasonings with the observation of facts...” Butler, *Analogy*, 11.

some sense builds a natural history of art and of education in his texts on those topics. The Baconian and Newtonian methods should not be interpreted as two wholly discrete methods; instead, we should view the latter as a more developed version of the former.¹⁵⁷ The more Baconian version of the method consisted in the collection of facts structured in natural histories as a foundation for natural philosophical theory; the more Newtonian version built on the collection of facts and used mathematics as a tool in natural philosophy. In the above passage Turnbull tells us that natural and moral philosophy are more than just a collection of facts; instead, they are a mixture of experiments, observation, and reasoning from those experiments. Hypotheses are rejected when they are not founded on experiments and observation, but the laws of human nature are deduced from principles that have been proven by experience, together with facts and observation.

Gladys Bryson, in a discussion regarding Adam Ferguson, gives us a definition of the term ‘law’ that can be applied here to enrich our understanding of what Turnbull’s laws of human nature amount to. The term, adapted from natural philosophy, usually means “the uniformity of a fact in nature.” This use of the term can also be applied to the operations of the human mind, representing “certain uniformities of man’s intellectual-spiritual nature” that are “analogous to the observable regularities of nature.”¹⁵⁸ Turnbull’s laws illustrate this definition of the term.

Though Bryson’s account is useful for a general description of ‘law’, it is more relevant for our present account to refer to Berkeley’s description of laws of nature in the *Principles*. After a discussion of ideas of sensation Berkeley comments on the importance of these laws. He tells us that the laws of nature are “the set of rules or established methods, wherein the mind we depend on excites in us the ideas of sense”¹⁵⁹ and only through their observation we can acquire knowledge of the world. Later in his text Berkeley gives another description of natural laws and their regularity:

There are certain general laws that run through the whole chain of natural effects: these are learned by the observation and study of Nature, and are by men applied as well to the framing of artificial things for the use and ornament of life, as to the explaining the various phenomena: which explanation consists only in shewing the

¹⁵⁷ Turnbull himself points this out in his *Painting*, 133.

¹⁵⁸ Bryson, *Man and society*, 35.

¹⁵⁹ Berkeley. *Principles*, 53.

conformity any particular phenomenon hath to the general Laws of Nature, or, which is the same thing, in discovering the *uniformity* there is in the production of natural effects...¹⁶⁰

Though Berkeley's description does not say that these laws of nature also apply in the case of the inward constitution of human beings, it should be evident that they do, given that mankind is part of the whole system of nature. This is why Turnbull insists that the same method should be applied in both the natural and moral inquiries, justified by his belief in the great chain of being and the unity of the sciences. Since all of nature is continuous, the moral and natural worlds are linked parts of the same system, and the methods applied to discover laws in the latter must be also applied in the former. In one of the few journal articles on Turnbull, David Fate Norton recognizes some connection between the maxims for moral philosophy and what he calls "a presupposition of the constancy and uniformity of nature."¹⁶¹ However, Norton only relates this presupposition to the first maxim and fails to notice that it is actually the idea of the great chain of being. I will show that this idea amounts to much more than a mere presupposition.

The failure to recognize that Turnbull's belief in the great chain of being is much more than just a presupposition is connected to another flaw in Norton's brief exposition of Turnbull's methodology in *Principles 1*: namely, he misses the importance of the unity of the sciences. Norton tells us that "Turnbull does not see the methods and results of experimental natural science as mere models to be emulated for possible good effect, but as *established* knowledge of truth which serves as a standard or exemplar of all knowledge, and proof that truth and certainty are attainable by human means."¹⁶² Norton interprets Turnbull as arguing by analogy from natural to moral, but fails to recognize that Turnbull believes he can argue by analogy *because* natural and moral are both parts of the same system, both parts of the great chain of being.¹⁶³

The methodology advocated by Turnbull here is not reserved only for *Principles 1*; it is applied in all of his texts. In the particular case of his moral philosophy, he deduces the several laws of human nature from the observations made upon his own mind (via introspection), supported by

¹⁶⁰ Berkeley, *Principles*, 67-68.

¹⁶¹ Norton, "George Turnbull and the Furniture of the Mind," 703.

¹⁶² Ibid, 705.

¹⁶³ Restaino, in a book published a year earlier than Norton's article also commits the same mistake as the latter and focuses on the analogy instead of the unity of natural and moral. Franco Restaino, *Scetticismo e senso comune. La filosofia scozzese da Hume a Reid*. (Roma: Laterza, 1974), 54.

the observation of other human beings. The first two laws he deduces are the law of power and the law of our connection to the sensible world.

3.2 Power and Knowledge

Turnbull's methodological statements in the first sections of *Principles 1* are, in particular, an expression of one of his guiding principles: the commitment to the experimental method of natural philosophy. As we saw, the unity of the sciences that results from the principle of the great chain of being also motivates Turnbull's methodology. Following this method, the first two laws of human nature that Turnbull establishes illustrate in more detail the idea of the great chain of being, especially its progressive feature and the place of human beings within it.

Among the whole chain of nature there is one particular feature of human beings that separates us from all other creatures: our will. Herein lies our power: we have the capacity to control our enjoyment and suffering, since pleasure and pain are consequences of our actions.¹⁶⁴ We find this through experience, and we come to the conclusion that not only our enjoyment depends on our will, but also any progress or improvement we intend to achieve in any of the sciences, arts, or morals. This leads Turnbull to a general law about power: power depends on and is increased by knowledge.

Before showing the obviousness of this law, Turnbull explains Locke's concept of power¹⁶⁵, which our author defines as:

...the dependence of certain effects upon its will as to their existence or non-existence.¹⁶⁶

This definition of power entails that a being capable of virtue must have some "power or dominion." Turnbull illustrates this by referring to the way we can direct our will to obtain pleasure and knowledge. Appealing to introspection he tells us that all this is obvious to

¹⁶⁴ The description of will as a distinguishing feature of human beings is also given by Pufendorf in *Whole duty of Man*, 31-32.

¹⁶⁵ Locke, *Essay* II, xxi.

¹⁶⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 67.

“universal experience” and concludes with a statement that highlights the importance of the will for virtue:

The capacity of attaining to certain goods, by our own powers duly exercised and applied, is the very basis of moral perfection. It is in consequence of our having power to make considerable acquisitions by our industry; or by duly exercising our natural faculties, that man rises in the scale of life and perfection, as a moral agent capable of virtue and merit, praise, or blame, above merely perceptive beings, who never act or acquire, but are in all cases passive and acted upon.¹⁶⁷

After defining the concept of power Turnbull tells us that it must clearly suppose that nature is governed by general laws. If human beings have power to obtain or avoid certain scenarios, then some regularity of cause and effect must be present for our actions to succeed. This points to Turnbull’s particular interpretation of the great chain of being in which the uniformity given by the laws of nature plays an important role.

In his exposition of Turnbull’s law of power, Alexander Broadie comments on this connection between the moral and natural worlds and highlights the importance of knowledge of natural laws for the exercise of power: “It is necessary to know enough about how the world works to know what has to be done in order to secure the end willed.”¹⁶⁸

The basic definition Turnbull has discussed leads him to observe in more detail what the law of power entails. He begins by considering the connection between power and knowledge. The more knowledge we have of the material world, the larger the sphere of things we can exert our power on. The only way we can maximize the use of the objects of the sensible world for our benefit is by acquiring as much knowledge of them as possible. The connection between power and knowledge is given in terms of objects in the sensible world, but the same applies for our moral sphere: the more knowledge we have of our moral faculties the better our management of them will be. The advancement of knowledge in all aspects is necessary for the proper use of our will.

¹⁶⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 69.

¹⁶⁸ Alexander Broadie, *A history of Scottish philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 112.

Since nature is a progressive chain, this feature extends here to knowledge, and hence to power. For Turnbull, knowledge cannot be anything but progressive, since it relies on the study of nature, and as we have seen one of the features of the great chain of being is that it is in fact progressive:

[Knowledge] ...being gradually acquired by our application to study nature, take in ideas and compare them, it not only gives us a succession of growing pleasures: but it cannot but be progressive... Nature itself, the sole object of all real knowledge, is successive or progressive.¹⁶⁹

The only way we can acquire knowledge of nature is from facts and observation, by experimenting (in the sense of experience) more and more with the sensible world. The same goes for 'abstract knowledge' like mathematics: We can only acquire knowledge by progressively experimenting with ideas and relations.¹⁷⁰ However progressive, knowledge can never go beyond experience and the ideas we derive from it. There are two things that are noteworthy from Turnbull's comments on knowledge: (1) the unity of science is the central pillar in his explanation; and (2) following from this unity the experimental method becomes the way to acquire knowledge, even when it comes to abstract and theoretical knowledge.

But not all individuals possess the same amount of knowledge. It depends on particular situations and this is why its level varies among human beings. However, the progressive nature of knowledge allows individuals to improve it as much as they want to, within the bounds of experience. This led Turnbull to a concern which might arise when trying to account for the fact that not all individuals are placed in the same situation: the variety of circumstances among human beings has resulted in the inequity of knowledge and, by consequence, of power. How can this fit within a system of nature that is (a) ordered and perfect, and (b) governed by God? Turnbull's main concern would lay with part (b) of this worry given his main aim in *Principles 1*, namely, to show that the constitution of human beings points to a benevolent God.

Turnbull uses an analogy and relies on his belief in the progressive chain of nature to tackle this worry. Regarding human bodies in the natural world, it is clear that no two bodies can occupy the same space, and therefore each body has its own different point of view. Given this

¹⁶⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 72, square brackets added.

¹⁷⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 72-73.

difference, Turnbull relies on the concept of the great chain of being to introduce the possibility of similarity among members of the same species:

...every embody'd being must have its own particular organization distinguished by peculiar differences from that of every other of the same species, tho' similar to them all, in such a manner, that they all are of the same specific sort. And must it not necessarily follow from this, that the sensible world to each individual of the same species will be just as similar to the sensible world of any other, as their organizations are similar, and just as different as their organizations are different?¹⁷¹

The concept Turnbull is discussing here is one that Hutcheson is most famous for: uniformity amidst variety.¹⁷² The features of the great chain of being — full, continuous, and graded — help explain the difference and similarity regarding the particular experiences of different individuals of the same species. Similarity amidst variety explains the interactions between individuals of the same species in the natural world, and given the unity of the natural and the moral, Turnbull moves from the former to the latter:

The views of every one of the same species will be similar, their fabrick of mind being similar; but their views will likewise be different, every man's complexion, or cast of understanding being different.¹⁷³

This idea of the uniformity and variety of human beings is a feature pointed out by Cicero in *De officiis*. Though he is not answering to the same worry Turnbull is addressing in *Principles 1*, Cicero recognizes the uniformity and variety as a feature of human nature, just as Turnbull does here. Cicero tells us that:

...we are invested by Nature with two characters, as it were, one of these is universal, arising from the fact of our being all alike endowed with reason and with that superiority which lifts us above the brute. From this all morality and propriety are derived, and upon it depends the rational method of ascertaining our duty. The other character is the one that is assigned to individuals in particular. In the matter

¹⁷¹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 74.

¹⁷² Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 28-30.

¹⁷³ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 75.

of physical endowment there are great differences... Diversities of character are greater still... Countless other dissimilarities exist in natures and characters, and they are not in the least to be criticized.¹⁷⁴

Cicero and Turnbull share this view of the uniformity and diversity among mankind as a positive feature. However, Turnbull further accounts for this feature in a way that Cicero does not, namely, by referring to the great chain of being. The concern regarding inequality among human beings would be equivalent to asking: “why all different places in nature are not the same [?]”¹⁷⁵ There is a wide variety of environments and creatures, and they all differ in situation. Species are very different from each other, but even each individual creature varies in some respect from every other. But this is all part of the progressive chain of nature where every species stands in its proper place, and this is what guarantees the proper working of relations between individuals, and between species. Turnbull finds no problem in this inequality since it is a feature of the gradation within the great chain of being.

To recap, Turnbull has established two general laws so far:

1. Power depends on knowledge
2. Knowledge can only be acquired through experience, proportionally to our endeavor, and dependent on particular situations.¹⁷⁶

Having deduced these laws from the observation of nature Turnbull now gives a series of instances that prove that we are naturally suited for the acquisition and progress of knowledge. Nature has given us a set of instincts that aid us in our pursuit of knowledge. The first instance Turnbull discusses is the ability to reason from a very early stage. It seems that nature has provided us with an instinct to reason and to learn such that “it is impossible not to be acquired by us insensibly.”¹⁷⁷ Turnbull, just like Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, is very careful not to classify this instinct as an innate idea but rather as a natural instinct. In the passage Turnbull also acknowledges an influence from his Rankenian days, George Berkeley. Following the *Essay*

¹⁷⁴ Cicero, *De officiis*, 109-113.

¹⁷⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 74, square brackets added.

¹⁷⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 78, my wording.

¹⁷⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 79.

Towards a New Theory of Vision and the *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, Turnbull tells us:

It is indeed with wonderful facility that we learn any language in our tender years: but the most useful of all *languages* for us to know, the *language* of nature, as it may very properly be called, is what we learn soonest, and as it were necessarily and insensibly.¹⁷⁸

This language of nature is mentioned by Berkeley in his *Essay Towards A New Theory of Vision*, where he gives the objects of vision a most important role for human beings: they are the language of God:

Upon the whole, I think we may fairly conclude that the proper objects of vision constitute an universal language of the author of nature, whereby we are instructed how to regulate our actions in order to attain those things that are necessary to the preservation and well-being of our bodies, as also to avoid whatever may be hurtful and destructive of them. It is by their information that we are principally guided in all the transactions and concerns of life.¹⁷⁹

It is only natural that Turnbull would find Berkeley's account appealing, since it constructs the language of nature as the "universal language of the author of nature," providing support for his claim that God has properly furnished our mind for our life in this present stage. Besides the importance of the language of nature, Turnbull also claims that we learn this language by instinct ("necessarily and insensibly"). We need to be careful here: the instinct Turnbull is referring to here is the ability to:

...judge of magnitudes, distances and forms, and of the connexions between the ideas of sight and touch, as far, at least, as the common purposes and conveniences of life require...¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ George Berkeley, *Essay Towards A New Theory of Vision. The Works of George Berkeley, vol. 1*, ed. A.A. Luce. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964) 231.

¹⁸⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 79.

Following Berkeley closely, Turnbull acknowledges here that the connection between the ideas of sight and touch is given by the Author of nature.

Moving on from the first instance, Turnbull next discusses bodily sensations that prompt us to avoid whatever might cause us harm and to search for whatever conduces to our wellbeing. He does not discuss this in detail since it is the topic of his next chapter in *Principles 1*. The moral sense, discussed in a later chapter in the book, is the third instance he mentions that proves that we are naturally built for the acquisition of knowledge. Just as we have an instinct to preserve our bodies, the Author of nature has endowed us with:

...strong affections to be the springs of each virtuous action, and made virtue a lovely form that we might easily distinguish it from its contrary, and be made happy by the pursuit of it.¹⁸¹

In the following sections (3.3 and 3.5) we will discuss in more detail the connection between mind and body and the moral sense. Besides these ‘instincts’ nature has also given us more tools for the exercise of power through the acquisition of knowledge: it has allowed us to use probability to our advantage; it has displayed its laws all around the sensible world; and it has provided us with a thirst for knowledge that allows us to discover them if we attend to experience and observation of the natural world.

Regarding the discussion of probability Turnbull is very careful and recognizes that even though we on many occasions have to “act upon probable evidence,” judgment by analogy or likeness is liable to many mistakes, and we need to be careful when we use it. However, it is another instance of how well nature has taken care of us in order to acquire knowledge. Turnbull tells us that in fact in some cases the only thing we can rely on is likeness or probability. He gives an account of Locke’s theory of demonstration¹⁸² to explain this idea:

When demonstration is said to force our assent, the meaning is, that by it, we have a clear perception of the necessary agreement or disagreement of certain ideas, an

¹⁸¹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 80.

¹⁸² Locke’s theory of demonstration can be found in the *Essay* IV, i and IV, ii. Peter Anstey also discusses Locke’s theory of demonstration in his book *John Locke and natural philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), chapter seven.

agreement or disagreement that cannot but take place. But where such a necessary agreement or disagreement of ideas cannot be perceived, as it cannot be with respect to any connexions of nature of positive institution, of which sort are, for instance, the connexion between the ideas of sight and touch, and almost all, if not all the connexions of the sensible world. In such cases, nothing but various degrees of likelihood or unlikelihood can be perceived; and such perceptions do not so properly operate on our understanding producing assent, as upon our temper producing satisfaction and complacency; the contraries of which are wavering and mistrust, or dissidence.¹⁸³

It is important to notice here that the example Turnbull uses to show the usefulness of judging from likeness refers to the connection between the ideas of touch and sight. As M.A. Stewart comments, this is one of the instances where we can see a relation to Berkeley's ideas. Stewart correctly points out that Turnbull's conception of the connection between ideas of touch and sight is more associationist than Berkeley would have accepted.¹⁸⁴ In fact, the law of association is of major importance for Turnbull's system of philosophy, a topic that we will explore in section 3.4, where we address Stewart's observation in more detail.

Turnbull's account of probability also highlights Butler's influence. In the *Analogy*, Butler begins by giving an account of probable knowledge. Turnbull's definition of probability is taken almost verbatim from Butler:

That which chiefly constitutes it [probability], is expressed in the word likely; that is, like some known truth or true event; like, in itself, in its evidence, in some more or fewer of its circumstances.¹⁸⁵

However the context of the definition is somewhat different. While Butler was giving the account of probable knowledge to set the stage for the analogy he draws between the natural and moral, Turnbull is mainly referring to the advantages we acquire from probable knowledge in order to show that it is a good law of nature. Both Butler and Turnbull recognize the

¹⁸³ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 82.

¹⁸⁴ Stewart, "Berkeley and the Rankeninan Club," 32.

¹⁸⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 81. Square brackets added. See also Butler, *Analogy*, 4.

imperfection of probable knowledge on one hand, but also consider it to be perfectly fitted for the present stage of mankind.

Besides giving us the necessary furniture for knowledge¹⁸⁶, nature has also allowed us to learn from inferior creatures. Turnbull does not discuss this instance but instead quotes a passage from Pope's *Essay on Man* that illustrates human beings learning from nature. I will quote here only the most relevant lines from the passage Turnbull uses:

Thus then to Man the voice of Nature spake—

“Go, from the Creatures thy instructions take;

Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;

Learn from the beasts the physics of the field:

Thy arts of building from the bee receive;

Learn of the mole to plow, the worm to weave;

Learn of the little Nautilus to sail,

Spread the thin oar and catch the driving gale.¹⁸⁷

In order for human beings to be able to learn from nature, it must have displayed its laws fully so we can discover them. This is the sixth and final instance Turnbull reviews to show the proper care nature has taken of human beings, equipping us for the acquisition of knowledge. Turnbull makes clear his commitment to the experimental method and rejects speculation. He tells us that human beings had not been able to gain much understanding of nature and its laws because they:

...have wilfully shut their eyes against nature, and have vainly set themselves to devise or guess its methods of operation, without taking any assistance from nature itself..¹⁸⁸

Experience and observation are the only source of real knowledge, and if we attend to them we can see that nature has displayed its laws open to us.¹⁸⁹ Further, we also have a natural thirst for

¹⁸⁶ ‘Natural furniture’ for knowledge is the term Turnbull introduces at the end of his chapter, which Norton adopts for his article. Norton, “George Turnbull and the Furniture of the Mind,” 706.

¹⁸⁷ Pope, “An Essay on Man,” 110-11.

¹⁸⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 84.

knowledge that fuels our progress in the acquisition of it. This idea is taken from Cicero, as we can see from his account of wisdom in *De officiis*:

For we are all attracted and drawn to a zeal for learning and knowing; and we think it glorious to excel therein, while we count it base and immoral to fall into error, to wander from the truth, to be ignorant, to be led astray.¹⁹⁰

Cicero counted wisdom as one of the four aspects of virtue, and hence the love of knowledge leads us to it. This coincides with Turnbull's account, in which he adds another feature to the natural thirst for knowledge, namely, that the acquiring of knowledge in itself gives us pleasure, and:

...the oftner and more intensely this pleasure has been felt, the desire of knowledge waxes stronger and keener. It grows in proportion as it has been exercised and gratified by study and contemplation. But let us observe how this natural desire of knowledge is excited, supported, gratified and directed.¹⁹¹

Turnbull concludes his chapter by considering the way the natural desire for knowledge works. He focuses on novelty, beauty, imagination, and invention. His description of the appeal of new objects is interesting, since we can see that it clearly stems from his guiding principle of the great chain of being. Nature, by its features of continuity and gradation, is progressive. Since human beings are part of this great chain, we are made:

...not to stand still, but to go forward and proceed; we are made for encrease, and gradual advancement; and therefore variety is naturally so agreeable, that we cannot be easy without making some new acquirements.¹⁹²

Implicit in this description is Turnbull's commitment to an interpretation of the chain of nature that features some kind of hierarchy, highlighting the idea that the present stage of human beings is one of learning and preparation for the next stage.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Cicero, *De officiis*, 19.

¹⁹¹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 86.

¹⁹² Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 88.

The appeal that novelty has can be dangerous if not kept in balance, making us “too rambling and desultory in our quest of knowledge.”¹⁹³ This is one of the features of the law of association and habits that will be discussed in more detail below. Turnbull next examines the usefulness of beauty for the acquisition of knowledge. He refers to an idea he has briefly discussed already which, following Hutcheson, he takes to be the source of beauty: uniformity amidst variety.

Such a concept explains the inequality of knowledge among human beings, as previously discussed, and here it helps explain another feature of knowledge. Uniformity amidst variety makes nature beautiful, and hence it helps us gain delight from the acquisition of knowledge. Quoting Newton, Turnbull tells us that:

Nature is beautiful, because nature “*nihil frustra facit.*”[Does nothing in vain] Nature is simple, and we are most aptly contrived to delight in nature, to find out the proper way of studying and imitating it, by our natural delight in the beauty which results from simplicity and regularity.¹⁹⁴

The delight in our study of the natural world (given the unity of the sciences and the great chain of being) expands to the moral world, where we delight in discovering its laws. The regularity of the laws of human nature gives the moral world a beauty analogous to that of the natural world, both showing the wise government of the Author of nature.

Turnbull goes on to consider two faculties that also aid our quest for knowledge: imagination and invention. Regarding the former Turnbull tells us that it brings two positive consequences:

And here we may observe, 1. That the imagination is a faculty of wonderful use in our frame: it is by this faculty that we have memory and are able to recall absent objects to our mind, set lovely pictures of them before us, and thus contemplate and examine them, as if they were actually present with us. 2. It is this faculty that renders us capable of many delightful imitative arts, which for that reason are called arts of imagination...¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 90, brackets added.

¹⁹⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 93.

Besides these two fruitful consequences of the use of imagination, there is one other that is of remarkable importance for Turnbull's philosophy in general: imagination allows us to make the connection between the natural and moral worlds. This links back to his discussion of probable knowledge. Since we do not have access to our future state in our present one, the only way we can acquire (probable) knowledge of that future state is by taking a step (via analogy and the unity of the chain of nature) from what we can know in this world, to how that future stage most likely is. Without the faculty of imagination we would not be able to go from our knowledge of the natural to the moral realm. Hence nature has provided us with the necessary tool to make the crucial moral-natural connection.

Before Turnbull concludes his discussion of imagination he shows his positive take on that faculty, aided by his belief in the progressive feature of nature. The faculty of imagination, just like all the other faculties, can and must be improved and kept in due balance by the law of association and habits. Imagination can be improved and exercised by making sure that it does not stray far from nature and reality. In turn, the ability to improve our faculties is based on the power of volition:

...the improvement of all our faculties depends on ourselves; and it is the dependence of the improvement of the understanding, reason, imagination, and all our faculties upon our care to improve them, that makes us a species of beings superior to those who have no activity, but only receive sensations from without independently of their own will, choice or foresight.¹⁹⁶

To conclude his chapter Turnbull briefly mentions the faculty of invention as another natural tool in our quest for knowledge. He grounds the faculty in the importance of facts and observation. Even though it might appear that invention is irregular and we cannot find any laws it conforms to, it is always based on the collection of facts and observations and reasoning from them. Through the description of this faculty Turnbull reinforces his commitment to the experimental method and the rejection of hypotheses and mere speculation:

...by the discoveries made in natural philosophy, we know, that no sooner are facts collected, and laid together in proper order, than the true theory of the phenomenon

¹⁹⁶ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 97.

in question presents itself. And hence, we have reason to think, that knowledge of the qualities and operations of bodies, would quickly make very great and profitable advances, far beyond what it has yet arrived to, by pursuing the same method that has brought it to the present degree of perfection. Now when we consider that moral knowledge can only be carried on in the same way, is it any wonder that the human mind is so little known, since men have not studied it with due care, but have rather been more misled in this philosophy, than in natural, by fictitious hypotheses and romantic, visionary theories?¹⁹⁷

Turnbull has given a variety of instances that show the positive effects of our natural desire for knowledge while recognizing the potential danger of this desire going astray from our natural end of virtue. The danger is accounted for by our present stage in the great chain of being: though imperfect in the whole scheme of nature (since there are beings at a higher stage than us), the desire for knowledge and power is perfectly fitted for our current stage of learning and progress, hence rendering the laws of knowledge and power good laws:

That with regard to knowledge, (the foundation of intelligent power, dominion and activity) we are very well constituted; or that all most important circumstances, or laws relative to our understanding, are very fitly chosen, being necessary to very great goods or perfections.¹⁹⁸

Now that Turnbull has shown that we are naturally made for knowledge he explores in the next chapter the connection between body and mind that allows us to gain knowledge from the natural world.

3.3 Body and Mind

In the second chapter of *Principles 1* Turnbull discusses the connection we have to the material world. Though he believes in the immateriality of the mind (following Berkeley), his commitment to the experimental method leads him to leave this issue aside since it is something we cannot access through experience and observation due to our embodied state. Turnbull

¹⁹⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 98.

¹⁹⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 100.

instead focuses on the necessary connection we have to our bodies and the benefits we acquire from it. As it plays out, the progressive chain of nature and the commitment to the experimental method are instrumental in understanding Turnbull's thought on this topic.

As I mentioned earlier, Turnbull was a member of The Rankenian Club, which was known for its discussion of Berkeley's philosophy. Berkeley's influence on Turnbull can be identified in several parts of his work. In this section, in particular, Turnbull tells us that a material world that cannot be perceived "is of no use."¹⁹⁹ He does not go as far as to say that a world that is not perceived would not exist, but rather that without perceiving beings the material world could have no order and beauty. M.A. Stewart and G.E. Davie both comment on Berkelian doctrines in *Principles 1*. While Stewart is more concerned with the mind/body dualism present in Turnbull, Davie focuses, though very briefly, on the perception of the material world.²⁰⁰ The dualism issue I leave for a later section when we discuss the immortality of the soul (section 3.8). Davie recognizes Turnbull's adoption of Berkeley's idea that the material world cannot exist unperceived, but fails to notice that the great chain of being plays an important role in Turnbull's discussion of the body/mind connection. Turnbull explains that without beings like us that perceive the beauty and order in nature there would be a gap in the progressive chain that would render it incomplete and imperfect:

...let it be observed before we proceed, that as a material world cannot be said to have order and beauty; or to be wisely contrived, but with respect to beings, who perceive it, and are affected by it; or cannot indeed be created for any end, but so far as perceptive beings have communication with it: so were there not in nature such a kind of beings as we are, nature could not be full or coherent: there would be a chasm or void in nature which could not but render it deformed and imperfect to the view of any being capable of perceiving it; who hath, like us, any idea of richness, fulness, and perfection in nature.²⁰¹

There seems to be a flaw in Turnbull's argument. He claims that the world can have order and beauty only if there exist beings who perceive it. Without such beings, then the world would seem deformed and imperfect to beings capable of perceiving it. But then if such beings do not

¹⁹⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 102.

²⁰⁰ Stewart, "Berkeley and the Rankenian Club," 32-34; and George Davie, *The Scotch metaphysics: a century of enlightenment in Scotland* (London: Routledge, 2001), 11-14.

²⁰¹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 102.

exist, then the imperfection of the world cannot be perceived anyway. Of course, if we assume the great chain of being the we must also assume that it is quite likely that there are beings higher in the chain that are capable of perception, and they would be the ones who notice the gap in nature created by the absence of human beings.

This might be an unsatisfactory answer to the flaw in Turnbull's argument, but it is important to point out that he is driven here by his want to give human beings a special place within the chain of nature, making us necessary to make it complete and perfect, since nature can only have order and beauty in respect to beings who can perceive such order and beauty. The passage quoted above relies on the fullness, gradation and continuity of the great chain of being. Turnbull then clarifies the special place of human beings within nature:

...man [is] necessary to make the gradation in nature full and complete...²⁰²

But we are not only necessary for the order and perfection of the material world; we are also capable of benefitting from our connection to it. All the sensual pleasures that we can receive through our external senses are evidence of this claim. However, these sensual pleasures are only part of the benefits we receive from our embodied state. Our senses are made for even higher pleasures, and what gives us a special place in nature and separates us from mere brutes is the union of external and internal senses in our minds that converts the purely sensitive senses into rational faculties. This combination is what allows us to perceive beauty and harmony, and be delighted by the study of nature and the discovery of its general laws. The main purpose and advantage of our bodily senses is that:

...they are the means and instruments of sciences and arts; and the means, occasions and subjects of many excellent virtues.²⁰³

We have already explored Turnbull's description of knowledge and the pleasure derived from its acquisition. Knowledge is gained by experiencing and observing nature by using our senses. Turnbull refers to the ancient philosophers, Cicero in particular, and he tells us that:

²⁰² Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 103, brackets added.

²⁰³ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 104.

The study of nature, according to them, is the natural food of the soul. And they indeed justly placed a great part of man's best happiness in contemplating and imitating the regularity, wisdom, goodness and harmony of the sensible world.²⁰⁴

Turnbull wants to prove that our embodied state is necessary and that our connection to the material world is good in the sense that it contributes to our particular end, i.e. virtue. While the study of nature provides pleasure, the exercise of virtue provides us with an even higher degree of pleasure, and our senses can also be of use here; our body allows us to be social and interact with other human beings. This regards our social nature which Turnbull discusses later, so he does not go into much detail here. There is however an interesting aspect of this passage where we can see Turnbull's commitment to the experimental method. One of the features of experimental philosophy, as we have seen, is the emphasis on facts and observation and the care for maintaining our enquiries within the bounds of experience. Turnbull makes this clear when he avoids discussing the interaction between spirits:

How unembodied spirits have intercourse, is a question we cannot possibly solve; but this is certain, that our mutual correspondence is by means of our bodies.²⁰⁵

This leads to the second instance of the connection between the mind and the body, this time concerning our interaction with other human beings. Turnbull focuses on the control and exercise of our sensitive appetites. He explains that through our body we experience sensations of pleasure and pain that guide us toward our preservation and keep us away from harmful situations. Turnbull is drawing heavily on ancient philosophy throughout this discussion, referring to Cicero, Epictetus, and Plutarch among others. Unlike them however, Turnbull explains the usefulness of pleasure and pain through the unity of the natural and moral worlds. Since the internal and external senses are united in our natural frame, these sensations of pain and pleasure extend to the moral realm and help us guide our passions toward virtue:

Thus therefore, in consequence of our having bodies, we are not only capable of contemplating and imitating the sensible world, and of various other pleasures; but our reason hath very proper practical employment. For thus is it that we are capable of all the virtues which are justly divided by the ancient moralists into *Sustenance* and

²⁰⁴ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 104-105.

²⁰⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 106.

Abstinence, or the power of being able to with-hold from the most inviting pleasures, if they be either pernicious in their consequences, or unbecoming our dignity: and the power of suffering any pain with magnanimity, rather than forego our reason, and contradict our moral conscience, by yielding to what these pronounce base and unworthy.²⁰⁶

Turnbull here makes reference to the moral sense which we will discuss in section 3.5. He gives further evidence for the necessity of the connection between mind and body regarding pleasure and pain. He relates pleasure and pain to texture, and argues that, due to the variety of the great chain of being, some pains must come from the natural organization of the bodies:

...it is necessary in the nature of things, that bodies should have each a particular mechanism fitted for a certain end, or for certain enjoyments: and to every material mechanism, as there must be something congruous, in order to the having agreeable sensations; so in a material world, replenished with various animals, in order to make nature as rich and full with good as possible, some things will of necessity be incongruous, and consequently in some manner and degree pernicious to our particular mechanism, by being fitted to different bodies.²⁰⁷

Underlying this description is an argument for the wisdom of the Author of nature. Given that pleasure and pain serve as guides for creatures to pursue their natural end, God has disposed the world with different shapes that cause different sensations depending on the bodily constitution of each creature, endowing them with the perfect means to pursue their particular end. Hence some pains are necessary, but only in consequence of God's wisdom in providing for all creatures so they can attain their end.

The necessary existence of some sensible pains is not a bad thing for Turnbull. On the contrary it helps him show that nature has given us the proper tools for survival, pleasure and pain being "proper monitors." Paraphrasing Hutcheson, Turnbull explains this idea:

Now the method that nature takes is this; "It is generally some pleasant sensation which teaches us what tends to our preservation and well-being; and some painful

²⁰⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 107.

²⁰⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 109.

one which shews us what is pernicious;" "we are directed by uneasy appetites when our bodies stand in need for nourishment;" "and in like manner, it is by a sense of pain excited in us, that we are warned of the dangerous tendency of bruises, wounds, violent labour, and other such hurtful causes."²⁰⁸

This good consequence of pain follows from Turnbull's guiding principle of the great chain of being: since our place in the chain of being is one where we learn to discern between virtue and vice in preparation for a future state, then pain (although uneasy in itself) is not so bad since it directs us towards the proper path to virtue. The progressive feature of nature makes it the case that we get to know the nature of things gradually. Pain and pleasure are nature's guides that allow us to achieve progress in our knowledge. It is this progressive feature which leads to the next instance where Turnbull justifies the necessity of the infant state of our bodies.

The fact that we are part of the progressive chain of nature explains why we come into this world with infant bodies. This point can be understood by appealing to Turnbull's guiding principles: the end of human beings is virtue, but the progressive feature of nature requires that our minds begin our present stage in an infant state. It is only appropriate then that our bodies match the state of our minds and progress along with it.²⁰⁹ It seems that here Turnbull is arguing from the moral to the natural world, the inverse of his usual use of the analogy between the two worlds. This can be considered problematic if we take into account that the analogy works when it goes from natural to moral because it goes from what we know of the natural world to probable knowledge of the moral world. However, Turnbull reaches the conclusion that our mind is in an infant state by the observation of human nature: it is evident that we are not born with knowledge of the world and that we acquire such knowledge through experience in the course of our lives. This shows that our mind is in an infant state, and granting this, Turnbull can reach a conclusion about the state of our bodies by observing the state of our mind.

Another aspect of the connection is that our body affects our mental constitution. Turnbull tells us that it is easily observed that physical causes affect our mental state, and this in turn explains the wide variety of individuals and their minds. In the previous section we saw how Turnbull explained the inequality of knowledge among human beings by appealing to the idea of the great

²⁰⁸Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 110; Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay On The Nature And Conduct Of The Passions And Affections, With Illustrations On The Moral Sense*, ed. Aaron Garrett (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2003), 37-39.

²⁰⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 112-113.

chain of being and the concept of uniformity amidst variety. He expands on this inequality by telling us that a consequence of the body/mind union is:

“The dependence of genius, temper, and mental abilities upon the temperature of the body, air, diet, and other such physical causes.” That a variety of mental temperatures, turns, dispositions and abilities prevail among mankind, will not be called into doubt. And, as it is certain, that different textures of eyes must see differently; or every object must necessarily partake of the colour with which the eye itself is tainted: so variety in temperature, texture and mould, (so to speak) among minds, must necessarily produce great variety of conceptions, sentiments and judgments, and consequently of inclinations, appetites and dispositions...²¹⁰

Turnbull uses the connection between the natural and moral worlds to explain his thoughts:

... For, such as the soil is, such will the flavour of the fruit be in the natural world; and by like necessity in the moral, all the impressions, sentiments, judgments, and passions of a mind will be correspondent to its prevailing humour and character.²¹¹

He quotes from other authors²¹² to show records of this idea of the physical affecting the mental, and then refers to Hutcheson to illustrate the reciprocal effect, the mental affecting the physical:

’Tis only to our purpose, in general, to observe, That probably certain motions of the body do accompany every passion by a fixed law of nature, and alternately, that temperament which is apt to receive or prolong these motions in the body, does influence our passions to heighten or prolong them.²¹³

The job of finding out exactly which bodily motions go with which passions is reserved for the physicians and anatomists.

²¹⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 113.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Turnbull quotes Cicero, John Barclay, Pierre Charron and Abbé Jean-Baptiste Dubos. Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 114 fn.

²¹³ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 115; Hutcheson, *Essay*, 39-41.

One of the interesting features of this chapter is that Turnbull assumes the body and mind to be discrete entities, but he never talks about the nature of the mind or explains how body and mind are connected.²¹⁴ He just believes, from what he has observed, that they must be connected. Here Turnbull's guiding principles can help us understand the argument in this chapter. Given the progressive feature of nature, and his belief in the immortality of the soul (which will be discussed later), the present stage of human beings where the mind is connected to the body must be in a very early stage within the whole chain of nature. The end of this stage is our progress towards virtue, so we enter in an infant state of mind and finish in a more developed state of mind, in order to move to a higher level. However, Turnbull's commitment to the experimental method restricts him to only what can be observed and experienced. We can experience our mind via introspection, and we can experience our bodies and the material world through our external senses, but we cannot experience our mind (spirit) in a disembodied state. Hence Turnbull cannot say anything about the nature of the soul. In his exposition of the immortality of the soul, which we examine in section 3.8, he explores this issue further.

His commitment to experimental philosophy is evident when he discusses the obviousness of the connection between body and mind. All he says is that "probably certain motions of the body do accompany every passion by a fixed law of nature,"²¹⁵ as we can tell by personal experience, but we have not studied this connection closely enough, so we cannot fully establish how it works. This is consistent with his discussion on probable knowledge earlier in the chapter. As "physical philosophy" has progressed, we have learned more about the interdependence of mind and body. But until this aspect is studied fully we cannot draw any conclusions. All that Turnbull can do is infer probable knowledge from what he has already observed.

In the next section we explore a law of human nature that becomes central for Turnbull's system of philosophy: the law of association.

3.4 The Law of Association

The law of association of ideas and law of habits is one of the key features of Turnbull's anatomy of the mind. In his chapter on this topic Turnbull considers two aspects of this law: on one hand

²¹⁴ I expand on Turnbull's ideas on the mind/body connection in section 3.8.

²¹⁵ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 115.

he wants to argue that the law of association is necessary and beneficial for human beings; on the other hand he has to recognize that it can be the source of error if we do not use it properly.

Turnbull starts by pointing out two “remarkable” features of human nature: the association of ideas and the formation of habits. Both of them arise from the one and same principle, and they have a reciprocal effect on each other. I quote Turnbull’s explanation in full:

...they [association of ideas and habits] both include in their nature a certain kind of cohesion with the mind, formed by reiterated conjunction or co-existence between objects really separate and distinct from one another; *i.e.* that do not necessarily co-exist, or are not naturally parts of one whole. And as they are like to one another, so they must go together; or neither of them can take place in a mind without the other. If habits are contracted by repeated acts, ideas will be joined or mixed by repeated occurrence: and reciprocally, if ideas contract a sort of coherence by being often joined, habits must be formed by frequent repetition of acts.²¹⁶

Turnbull here restricts the association of ideas to an ‘unnatural’ connection. The two ideas that are later joined in the mind are “really separate and distinct from one another.” This restriction is reinforced when he tells us that complex ideas are not associated ideas:

Sensible ideas or qualities, which by their co-existence make the same object, (as, for instance, it is a particular shape, size, colour, taste, and other combined qualities in the same subject that make a peach) are not said to be associated, because they naturally and really co-exist, or naturally and really make the same object.²¹⁷

At this point he adds a footnote referring the reader to Locke’s chapter on the association of ideas in the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. This appears to be the source for Turnbull’s restriction, as well as for his thoughts on association of ideas in general. However, it is also useful to examine Berkeley’s thoughts on association to shed light on Turnbull’s own version of this law.

²¹⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 119, square brackets added.

²¹⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 121.

Turnbull begins by explaining that almost all of our ideas have some sort of association in them, including complex ideas. The difference between the ‘natural’ connection and the ‘unnatural’ connection is that in the former the ideas naturally co-exist (like the particular shape, colour, taste, etc. that make an object a peach), and in the latter they are added by the mind. And we will only consider the unnatural ones as ‘associated ideas.’²¹⁸ The following passage from Locke’s *Essay* shows this distinction between natural and unnatural connections of ideas:

Some of our *Ideas* have a natural Correspondence and Connexion with another: It is the Office and Excellency of our Reason to trace these, and hold them together in that Union and Correspondence which is founded on their peculiar Beings. Besides this there is another Connexion of *Ideas* wholly owing to Chance or Custom; *Ideas* that in themselves are not at all of kin, come to be so united in some Men’s Minds, that ’tis very hard to separate them, they always keep in company, and the one no sooner at any time comes into the Understanding but its Associate appears with it;²¹⁹

Turnbull uses a peach as an example to illustrate this point: when we see a peach, and we desire it when we imagine the taste of it, we are making a natural connection (the taste belongs to the peach); when we see the peach, but in our mind we desire it because we associate it with previous situations where we were happy and were eating a peach, we are making an unnatural connection (the happy situation is not constitutive of the peach).

It is useful here to turn to Berkeley’s thought on association since he considers the law of association under a positive light, even though it gives way to unnatural connections. In his *New Theory of Vision* Berkeley refers to the association of ideas to explain our perception of distance. Berkeley asserts that distance is imperceptible, but we still perceive it in some sense. This being the case, we must perceive distance through another idea. He illustrates this by using an example regarding our perceptions of someone else’s feelings:

Thus, for instance, the passions which are in the mind of another are of themselves to me invisible. I may nevertheless perceive them by sight, though not immediately, yet by means of the colours they produce in the countenance. We often see shame

²¹⁸ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 122.

²¹⁹ Locke. *Essay* II. xxxiii. 5.

or fear in the looks of a man, by perceiving the changes of his countenance to red or pale.²²⁰

The same way we associate shame or anger with the red color of a face, the visual perception of distance is associated with sensations of touch. We mentioned earlier that M.A. Stewart comments that Turnbull's associationism is stronger than Berkeley's. I agree with Stewart's assessment. While Turnbull ties the association of the ideas of sight and touch closely together, Berkeley only holds that the idea of distance is *suggested* by ideas of touch. He gives an explanation of the physical movement of the eyes (widening or contracting the pupils) which gives us the sensation we connect through experience with the idea of distance. Berkeley sums up this argument in his *Principles* in a passage where he is defending his immaterialism against an objection regarding the perception of distance. Berkeley explains the possibility of our perception of distance given that objects only exist in the mind:

The consideration of this difficulty it was, that gave birth to my *Essay towards a new Theory of Vision*, which was published not long since. Wherein it is shewn that *distance* or outness is neither immediately of it self perceived by sight, nor yet apprehended or judged by lines and angles, or anything that hath a necessary connexion with it: but that it is only suggested to our thoughts, by certain visible ideas and sensations attending vision, which in their own nature have no manner of similitude or relation, either with distance, or things placed at a distance. But by a connexion taught us by experience, they come to signify and suggest them to us, after the same manner that words of any language suggest the ideas they are made to stand for.²²¹

Berkeley goes on to explain that the ideas of sight and touch are completely distinct, but when we perceive distance “the ideas of sight...only admonish to us what ideas of touch will be imprinted in our minds at such and such distances of time, and in consequence of such and such actions.” So it is not that ideas of touch and sight in our perception of distance are strongly associated, but rather that the latter suggest the former. For Berkeley this unnatural connection is not a negative thing. On the contrary, visual ideas are the language of the Author of nature (as we have already noted), since they “inform us what tangible ideas he is about to imprint upon

²²⁰ Berkeley, *New Theory of Vision*, 173.

²²¹ Berkeley, *Principles*, 58.

us...’’²²² Berkeley’s position parallels Turnbull’s version of association given the latter’s purpose of showing that the laws of human nature point to the wisdom and benevolence of God.

Turnbull goes further than Berkeley in his exposition of the law of association where he considers it to be a necessary process of the human mind. He interprets it as an advantageous process, but reminds us that we need to be very careful about it, and learn to control and separate certain associations:

But, what is the whole frame and course of nature, or what else indeed can it be but a constant occasion to us of association, i.e. of mixture or coherence of ideas? It cannot but be so, because no idea can be presented to the mind singly, that is, without preceeding, concomitant and succeeding circumstances; and in a world governed by uniform laws, and filled with beings of analogous natures and employments, no idea can fail of being often presented to the mind in the same or like circumstances.²²³

Turnbull takes the process of association as necessary given that we perceive nature as a collection of ideas mixed together. Further, he thinks it is advantageous because it allows us to improve our knowledge:

For, what can be more evident, than that were we not so constituted, we could not attain to perfection in any science, art, or virtue? It would not be in our power to join and unite ideas at our pleasure, to recall past ones, or to lay up a stock of knowledge in our minds to which we could have recourse upon any occasion, and bring forth, as it were, ready money for present use. Nor would it be in our power by all our reiterated acts to become more ready, alert, and expeditious in performing any operation than at our first attempt; but, in every thing, and on every emergence, after ever so much past labour, all our work would constantly be to begin again.²²⁴

Turnbull’s definition of knowledge as necessarily progressive requires that human beings be capable of advancing and improving through the study of the natural world. The law of

²²² Berkeley, *Principles*, 59.

²²³ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 123.

²²⁴ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 121.

association is what ultimately allows us to achieve this progress. In fact, the features of our connection with the material world depend on the proper functioning of this law. Turnbull discusses how our body provides us with uneasy sensations to avoid harm, and in turn our moral faculties end up associating sensations of pain and pleasure to actions. The law of association grants this connection in our minds, helping us to achieve progress towards virtue. As we will see in the next section, the association of ideas is also important for the moral sense.

The law of association, being a law of human nature, is not just necessary but also a good law:

Now that the law of association is an excellent law, has already been proved: it is *The law of improvement to perfection*. But its fitness and goodness will yet more fully appear from the following considerations.²²⁵

The considerations show “several good effects of this law.” The first effect he describes regards our knowledge of nature. Turnbull has already mentioned that we perceive nature as nothing but a collection of ideas mixed together, so it is due to the law of association that we are able to acquire knowledge of it:

It is, indeed, in consequence of the law of association, that we learn any of the connexions of nature; or that any appearance with its effects, is not as new to us at all times as at first; that is, as unfamiliar to our mind. It is owing to it that any appearance immediately suggests its concomitants and subsequents to us; and that we thus become acquainted with nature, in proportion to the attention we give to the course of things in it;... But what could we do, how miserable, how ignorant would we be, without this faculty? without it we would plainly continue to be in old age, as great novices to the world as we are in our infancy; as incapable to foresee, and consequently as incapable to direct our conduct.²²⁶

The association of ideas is necessary for our knowledge of nature, but the good consequences of the law go beyond mere necessity. Turnbull claims that the process of association and especially the process of ‘unraveling’ associated ideas are very pleasant, thus causing the pleasure we experience when studying nature. Turnbull here assumes that the pleasure is a necessary

²²⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 126.

²²⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 126-127.

characteristic of the study of nature. Given that such enterprise consists mainly in “separating our ideas received from experience” he concludes that the inverse process (the association of ideas) must be pleasant as well.²²⁷

Turnbull believes that another good consequence of the law of association is that it allows us to “strengthen or diminish our desires; and to encrease our pleasures, or diminish our pains.”²²⁸ Since our affections and desires are always excited by our ideas, we can therefore increase the quantity of agreeableness/disagreeableness that arises from a particular idea by associating it with other pleasures/pains.²²⁹ He lists a number of affections that can be described as the result of a basic desire associated (excited/moderated) with another idea:

For what, on the one hand, are luxurious fancies, excessive love of splendor, voluptuousness, romantic love, and the immoderate lust of power, but extravagant desires, excited by ideas of grandeur and happiness, somehow blended with natural pleasures, and the desires these excite? Or what, on the other hand, are patience, magnanimity, a contented mind, and other such virtues, but affections towards certain natural objects, duly moderated by the consideration of their intrinsic values, and of the strength of desire proportioned to them; by separating from them all ideas that tend to encrease desire beyond that due proportion; and by associating to them all the ideas, opinions and judgments, that tend to maintain and preserve desire in a just tone and ballance, with relation to true happiness?²³⁰

Turnbull draws two conclusions from his law of association: the first one regards the purpose of practical philosophy and the second is a caution related to breaking the link between associated ideas. In his first conclusion he tells us that:

...true practical philosophy consists in what it was placed by the ancients: in the assiduous examination of our fancies, ideas or opinions. For by these our desires are guided or influenced...Now if this be true, our great interest and concern lies in taking care of our opinions, that they be true and just. This ought to be the whole

²²⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 127.

²²⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 127-128.

²²⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 128.

²³⁰ Ibid.

business of our life; our continual, our daily employment: otherwise we cannot be masters of our desires, or keep them in just and proportionate order.²³¹

It is clear from this passage that the law of association takes on a very important role in Turnbull's system of philosophy: (1) It is essential for human knowledge, allowing us to achieve virtue; (2) it will also help control our desires in our quest for virtue; and (3) it allows us to separate the unnatural associations that might be mistaken.

However, the association of ideas is not easily broken, and cannot be broken by "the confutation of false opinions." In his second conclusion Turnbull tells us that the only way to break the link between associated ideas is by contrary practice. He illustrates this with an example of the association between spirits and darkness which is also used by Locke and Hutcheson:²³²

Thus we may observe, that persons who by reasoning have laid aside all opinion of *spirits being in the dark* more than in the light, are still uneasy to be alone in the dark. And it is so in general, with respect to all associations: we must first, indeed, correct the false opinion, from which the unreasonable desire or aversion proceeds: but this is not enough: the association cannot be broken in any case, but, as in that instance just mentioned; by accustoming ourselves to walk in the dark, with the absurdity of the opinion upon which our aversion or fear was formerly founded present to our mind.²³³

Turnbull now shifts from association of ideas to focus on "active habits," though he reminds us that they are really the same thing, the latter being when association ends in action. In what follows he mentions some of the good effects that arise from habits. Turnbull considers four main consequences of the law of association:

1. It allows us to have memory and learn
2. It allows us to render things agreeable that we used to find disagreeable
3. It allows us to strengthen our practical habits

²³¹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 131-132.

²³² Locke, *Essay II*, xxxiii, 10; Hutcheson, *Essay*, 56.

²³³ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 133.

4. It allows us to form temper and character, ultimately rendering us capable of liberty.²³⁴

It is due to the law of association, when it terminates in action (law of habits), that we are able to learn languages, to dance, to appreciate art, etc. We can do this thanks to memory, which is defined as “the power of recalling with facility and quickness ideas and truths we had formerly discovered or perceived.”²³⁵ Memory allows us to improve and exercise all our faculties:

Without memory there can be no invention, judgment, nor wit, because without memory ideas cannot be readily and quickly laid together, in order to be compared, that their agreements and resemblances, or disagreements and differences, may be discerned. And what is taste, but the power of judging truly with quickness acquired by frequent consideration and practice: that is, confirmed into habit by repeated acts?²³⁶

All of the powers of the mind are perfected habits, which we are able to develop through our memory. Turnbull recalls Cicero to show us the method for improving our memory. It consists in two main processes: repeated exercise (practice) and comparison.²³⁷ The way to retain ideas and judgments is to attend to things properly, which is the essence of repeated exercise. In order to help the memory, we must consider the analogies, relations and oppositions to other objects (comparison).²³⁸

The second consequence of the law of habits is divided into three parts. The first part is a brief comment where Turnbull tells us that it is due to the law of habits that we can put to good use our natural disposition to imitate, by turning our imitations into habits. We do have to be extremely careful with what we choose to imitate, in order to prevent the creation of bad habits. Our ability to imitate and learn from example is a key aspect in Turnbull’s ideas on art and education, as we will examine in chapters four and five. Given that this ability is meant to aid us

²³⁴ This list is my paraphrase of Turnbull’s headings for the four consequences.

²³⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 134.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Cicero, *De oratore*, trans. By E.W. Sutton and H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), 350-367. Hume recalls the same two processes for the improvement and development of the delicacy of taste in his *Of the Standard of Taste*. David Hume, *Essays, moral, political, and literary*, ed. Eugene Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), 237-238.

²³⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 135.

in the achievement of our natural end, we must be careful that what we choose to imitate does not lead us astray from the path to virtue.

The second part regards the ability of finding things agreeable that we first thought of as disagreeable. Turnbull considers this as a good effect of the law of habits because it allows us to persevere in business by getting to like what we might at first find aversion to. He uses the words of Plutarch to explain this idea:

To chuse that which is likeliest to be most advantageous to them, provided they have abilities for it, even though they should have preconceived some prejudice against it, or aversion to it, because custom will make it agreeable.²³⁹

The third part explains how habits help balance our desire of novelty. Without habit, our desire for novelty would prevent us from paying due attention to objects, since we would be constantly switching objects looking for the new one, thus being incapable of acquiring full knowledge of any object. Habit balances this desire for novelty by making pleasant the repeated engagement with an object.²⁴⁰

The consequences Turnbull lists are the result of his observation upon his own mind and the natural world. Following the experimental method, when he lists the good effects of his law all he is doing is showing us the phenomena that can be reduced to the law already established by observation.

The third good effect where the law of habits is reflected is in the strengthening of our practical habits. This is something he borrows from Joseph Butler:

And from these two observations together; that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us; it must follow, that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, whilst these motives and excitements themselves are, by proportionable degrees,

²³⁹ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 136. Plutarch, *De sanitate tuenda*, 123C in *Omnia quae extant opera*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1624).

²⁴⁰ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 137.

growing less sensible, i.e. are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen.²⁴¹

The main idea that Butler argues for in his passage is that thoughts by themselves are not enough for the achievement of virtue. Our virtuous thoughts and affections must lead to action and be strengthened by exercise. Turnbull borrows this instance from Butler since it nicely illustrates the fitness of the law of association for the attainment of virtue.

The fourth and final consequence of the law of habits is the formation of temper. This leads Turnbull to a discussion regarding the idea of liberty, even though he had announced in the introduction to *Principles 1* that he would not discuss liberty in detail. He begins by affirming that:

...all the affections of mankind be, and must be originally from nature; and art, or exercise, cannot create, but can only make some change to the better or worse upon what nature hath implanted in our breasts...²⁴²

So we are naturally disposed with certain affections that make up our temper, but we are able to mold our natural temper through repeated acts. In fact we must do so since, as we previously mentioned, thoughts on their own are not enough to form our character: those thoughts need to be put into actions. This being the case, it is in our power to change our temper and form the desired (virtuous) one. Turnbull thinks this is the most relevant consequence of the law of habits, since it allows us to develop a ‘deliberative habit’ before we act:

Whatever metaphysical janglings there have been about the freedom of our will; our moral dominion, liberty, and mastership of ourselves certainly consist in the established habit of thinking well before we act...²⁴³

We can see in this passage Turnbull embracing the anti-speculative attitude, disregarding those ‘metaphysical janglings’ and focusing on what he can learn from experience, namely the habit of deliberating our actions. Besides this aspect, Turnbull gives this deliberative habit a key role for the exercise of our free will. Hence, it should be the main focus of the education of the young,

²⁴¹Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 138; Butler, *Analogy*, 111. The wording in the quote I use is Butler’s.

²⁴² Turnbull, *ibid.*

²⁴³ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 139.

and the daily task of adult individuals to maintain this habit. Through it we can form a good temper, which established and strengthened by habit allows us to gain control over ourselves. This ability is what Turnbull defines as liberty:

...*command* over ourselves is *liberty*, as that being so *enthralled* by any appetite, as not to be able so much as to examine its pretensions before we yield to it; or being so *habituated* to desultoriness and thoughtlessness, and blind rash choice, as not to have it in our power to think or judge before we act, *is vile slavery and impotence*.²⁴⁴

It turns out that liberty is a consequence of the law of association, stemming from its practical aspect embodied in the law of habits. Given that the law of association allows us to exercise our free will he can conclude that it is a good general law of human nature. Turnbull brings the chapter to a close by reminding us of the caution we must have with the law of association, this time phrasing it in the form of a corollary:

That even in an absolutely perfect constitution of things, where the law of habit and association takes place, if knowledge be progressive, and gradually acquireable in proportion to application to improve in it, and consequently minds must be in an infant state at their entrance upon the world; some associations and habits must be early formed by minds in such a state of things, which ought to be broken, and yet which cannot be broken or dissolved by reason without difficulty and struggling. For it is impossible, but some ideas, by being frequently presented to the mind conjointly must associate, which ought not to be associated; or the association of which is contrary to happiness and reason.²⁴⁵

As we can gather from this passage, the progressive feature of nature and knowledge is necessary to understand the important function the law of association has within Turnbull's anatomy of the mind. Knowledge is progressive and the place occupied by human beings in the chain of nature requires that we enter our embodied stage in an infant state of mind. These two features make the law of association the perfect tool for acquiring progress in this stage. Hence, the progressive aspect of nature allows Turnbull to deduce all those good consequences from the law of association.

²⁴⁴ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 139-140.

²⁴⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 140-141.

There is another important aspect of Turnbull's law of association that is better understood by taking into account his commitment to the experimental method. I have mentioned that Turnbull relies on Locke's concept of association of ideas. However, what Locke recognizes as a danger of association Turnbull considers not only necessary but also advantageous for human beings, a positive outlook shared by Berkeley. As we have seen, Turnbull also warns us of the dangers of the wrong association of ideas. If he wants his law of association to be a good general law, but also a law that explains all the phenomena related to it, then he is forced to construct a law of association that can somehow account for Locke's theory, and at the same time show that it is necessary and advantageous for human beings. So how could Turnbull and Locke arrive at two opposite conclusions regarding the same process of association? While Locke thought that the association of ideas is very dangerous and something we should try to prevent, Turnbull instead thinks it is necessary for the progress and advancement of learning!²⁴⁶

Turnbull's positive outlook can be explained by the Berkelian aspect of association previously discussed and his commitment to the experimental method. Turnbull takes Locke's danger of 'associated ideas' into account, but this is just part of the law of association; Turnbull focuses on the other part of the law, the ability of the mind to associate and dissociate ideas in general. This is what will eventually enable him to claim that there is such a thing as a law of association, and that it is a good general law thanks to all the good effects it produces. Turnbull's law of association recognizes Locke's representation of the association of ideas as madness, but it goes beyond the madness to explain how the progress of knowledge and the study of nature are possible, the formation of moral characters is carried out, and how we are capable of liberty. The association of ideas cannot be considered a law of human nature if it is the cause of certain 'madness,' so Turnbull must reduce this to a caution, and show the good effects that the 'law of association' produces.

By exploring Turnbull's association of ideas within the framework of his three guiding principles we are able to explain his positive view of this law while accepting that there is some danger in the wrong association of ideas, as Locke pointed out. However, given the progressive aspect of nature and the idea that our present stage is one of learning and achieving progress towards virtue, sorting out the wrong associations and unraveling them is just a process we are meant to go through in order to advance to the next, more perfect stage. This is why even the danger of making wrong associations ends up being good overall, since it is just part of the progress and it

²⁴⁶ Broadie notices this feature of Turnbull's treatment of the law of association in *A history of Scottish philosophy*, 115.

is outweighed by all the benefits we acquire through it. This way of accounting for the possible mistakes that arise from the law of associations recalls Shaftesbury's definition of good and evil discussed in the previous chapter (section 2.1), where nothing can be an absolute evil if it has positive consequences for the end or purpose of the system as a whole. In the next section I will explore another law of nature that can also be related to Shaftesbury and Hutcheson: the moral sense.

3.5 The Moral Sense

The theory of the moral sense was held by a number of philosophers in the eighteenth century. It is arguably one of the salient concepts within eighteenth-century British moral philosophy. It appears to have its origin in the work of Lord Shaftesbury, but the most developed and popular version is usually identified with that of Francis Hutcheson. Norton claims that Turnbull did more than just borrow the concept from Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. In particular, he mentions that Turnbull appeals more frequently to common sense than his predecessors.²⁴⁷ Turnbull's account of the moral sense varies from that of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson given that he draws from Butler, though the latter uses the term 'conscience' instead of 'moral sense.' We will observe in this section how Turnbull constructs his moral sense by relying on his predecessors and an appeal to common sense through the constant use of introspection.

Although this is the place where Turnbull borrows most heavily from Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, his own approach to the topic calls attention to the importance of introspection as the proper method for performing enquiries into the moral world, specifically those regarding the human mind. It is in this sense that introspection is one of the key features of the eighteenth-century science of man, since it allows for a study of the human mind that, just like natural philosophy, is based on experience and observation.

In his chapter on the moral sense Turnbull uses the rhetoric of experimental philosophy and asserts that we must only argue from facts, observation, and reasoning from such. However, Turnbull here appeals to the reader to look into his own mind to confirm the claims he puts forward. This strategy is not very prominent in the previous laws of human nature we have

²⁴⁷ Norton, "George Turnbull and the Furniture of the Mind," 709.

examined. Turnbull, introducing introspection into the experimental method, describes the nature of the inquiry to find out if human beings are endowed with a moral sense:

This is a question about fact, and consequently it can only be resolved in the same way, that other faculties or powers may be proved to belong to our nature. But I am apt to think, that every one shall immediately perceive, that he has a moral sense inherent in him, and really inseparable from him; if he will reflect, “Whether he is not so constituted as to be necessarily determined by his nature, to approve or disapprove certain affections and actions?”²⁴⁸

Introspection will be an important tool for the discussion regarding the moral sense, as well as for the whole construction of the anatomy of the human mind. It is the only way we can access facts about our own nature:

For the question [regarding the moral sense] is about a fact, a part of our constitution; about something felt and experienced within us, in consequence of our frame; and it cannot possibly be decided, but by consciousness, or by attending to our mind, in order to know how we are affected on certain occasions by certain objects.²⁴⁹

Turnbull defines the moral sense through Hutcheson as a faculty that consists in the approval/disapproval of human actions. He first considers the different actions that might generate a reaction of approval/disapproval. As we discussed while exploring Turnbull’s law of power, our will is what separates us from creatures inferior to us within the great chain of being. In this sense we only approve/disapprove of those actions that depend entirely on will, whether they are our own actions or someone else’s.²⁵⁰ Turnbull’s description of the moral sense closely resembles Butler’s account of a “reflecting principle” or conscience:

There is a principle of reflection in men, by which they distinguish between, approve and disapprove their own actions. We are plainly constituted such sort of creatures as to reflect upon our own nature... This principle in man, by which he approves or

²⁴⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 145-146, underlining added.

²⁴⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 149, square brackets added.

²⁵⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 147.

disapproves his heart, temper, and actions, is conscience... And that this faculty tends to restrain men from doing mischief to each other, and leads them to do good, is too manifest to need being insisted upon.²⁵¹

One main difference between the two accounts is that while Butler sets up his reflective principle only towards one's own actions, Turnbull (following Hutcheson) gives his moral sense the ability to reflect on the actions of others as well. Turnbull specifies further and goes on to consider which specific actions we can approve/disapprove of and he reinforces his commitment to the experimental method and to introspection:

Now, what are those [actions], which move our approbation, and by what characteristic are they distinguished from the others? It is **experience** that must determine that question. And therefore let anyone consider, how benevolent actions; how truth, candour, veracity, benignity, and such like dispositions, with their proper exertions in action affect us, so soon as we reflect upon them, or contemplate them: and what we think, on the other hand, of their contraries, falshood, dissimulation, treachery, instability, narrowness of mind, selfishness, malice, &c.²⁵²

Turnbull does not attempt to prove that we all possess this faculty of the moral sense, since, in a similar vein to Butler, he believes this is too obvious and something that everyone will immediately experience through introspection. Instead, he only comments on three instances that based upon experience show that we must have a moral sense.

In the first instance Turnbull appeals to the reader's power of introspection and the union between the natural and moral worlds. He asks the reader to reflect on the pleasure and pain he feels from the beauties (uniformity amidst variety, etc.) in nature, and compare them with his experience of moral objects (human actions in particular). It will be evident to whoever experiences this reflection upon their own mind that the perception of beauty/deformity in moral objects is analogous to that regarding objects of sense.

Turnbull's argument here relies solely on the connection between the natural and moral realms and the continuous nature of the great chain of being. In previous sections we have discussed

²⁵¹ Butler, *Sermons*, 41-42.

²⁵² Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 147-148, emphasis added, square brackets added.

how Turnbull's second guiding principle gives the moral and natural worlds both union and continuity. Turnbull needs this unity in order to claim that what happens in the natural world must also happen in the moral. Here he calls upon the analogy and appeals to introspection, asking the reader to consider a number of questions:

How can we acknowledge a sense of beauty and deformity with respect to corporeal subjects, and no analogous sense with respect to the mental ones? Can we allow the mind to have an eye or an ear for bodily proportions and harmonies; and yet imagine that it has no eye or ear by which it can distinguish moral appearances and effects? No sense, whereby it can scan thoughts, and sentiments, and affections, or distinguish the beautiful and deformed, the harmonious and dissonant, the agreeable and disagreeable in them...²⁵³

Turnbull adds a few more questions to his list, and leaves it to the reader to prove for himself the obviousness of the claims made. His argument only works if we grant that it is reasonable to assume that we must have a sense of beauty regarding actions, given that we clearly have one regarding the world of objects. Since the moral realm is in some aspects different from the natural (despite its similarities), the key feature that gives support to Turnbull's argument is the union between the two worlds.

In the second instance we can find evidence for Norton's claim concerning Turnbull's appeal to common sense. In this instance in particular, Turnbull appeals to common language and to the uniformity of the terms used to describe our reaction to sensible and moral objects. Since all languages have words that they use to discern between beauty and deformity, then we must assume that such a difference is not just in the terms, but in reality, and this supposes that we have a moral sense to discern such things.²⁵⁴

In the third and final instance Turnbull makes the same claim regarding the commonality of language, but now regarding the arts. Since all cultures react to some form of art and distinguish between beauty and deformity, it is reasonable to suppose that we all have a faculty capable of making such distinctions, i.e. the moral sense.

²⁵³ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 151-152.

²⁵⁴ Hume discusses this issue of disagreement of words vs. disagreements in reality in the context of taste in his essay *Of the Standard of Taste*. Hume, *Essays*, 227-229.

Taking for granted that it is evident we are equipped with a moral sense, Turnbull now turns to a key component in Hutcheson's, Shaftesbury's, and Butler's theories: the aspect of sociability. Turnbull starts to link the moral sense to public and private interest in order to show that human beings are not only made for virtue, but that we must also be naturally sociable beings (*contra* Hobbes). Before going into the topic of interest, Turnbull tackles a few issues that arise from the concept of moral sense.

Even though these objections are also answered by Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, Turnbull's replies are special given that he deals with them through his set of guiding principles. The first issue regards the name given to the moral sense. Turnbull begins by telling us that whatever name we come up with to label the faculty of approving/disapproving is of minor importance. Regardless of the name, the important thing is that we all acknowledge that human beings naturally possess such a faculty. As I mentioned earlier, one of the tenets of experimental philosophy was not to quarrel with words but to focus only on facts. This belief is exemplified here in Turnbull's comments:

Let therefore the capacity or faculty of perceiving moral differences of actions or characters, be called reason, as it is exercised about actions and their moral differences, moral discernment, or moral conscience; we shall not dispute for any word: All we want to establish, is, that as we are capable of distinguishing truth from falsehood, so we are capable of distinguishing good and approvable actions, affections, and characters from bad and disapprovable ones: and that we are not more necessarily determined by our nature, to assent or dissent according to the appearances of things to our understanding, than we are necessarily determined by our make to approve or disapprove affections, actions, and characters, according to their appearances to our understanding.²⁵⁵

However irrelevant the name we give to this faculty may be, Turnbull does acknowledge that we do need a name for it, just like we do with all our other faculties. The moral sense is a special case, since we want to distinguish moral from sensible pleasures. This is why we should give it a proper name, but whatever that name turns out to be is not of much importance as long as the fact that we are naturally endowed with a moral sense is accepted.

²⁵⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 158.

Turnbull, consistent with the experimental method in morals (characterized by the use of introspection), asks the reader to confirm his claims by observing his own mind:

Now in order to be convinced that we have such a sense, let any one but ask himself, (for it is, as hath been often said, a question that depends upon inward experience) whether there be not a very wide, a total difference, between doing a good action because it is good, or from love and affection to good, and a thorow feeling of its excellence, and doing it merely because it will gain him some external advantage or pleasure.²⁵⁶

Turnbull does not expect anyone to take his claims for granted. He rather hopes that they confirm his claims with the facts themselves, which in the case of the faculties of the human mind can only be accessed via introspection.

Turnbull leaves the description of his moral sense aside to briefly discuss an alternative to our natural disposition to approve/disapprove of actions that some philosophers have taken by grounding morality in custom, education, or habits. This is not an option because even though in some circumstances they might be of service:

...they never could have made us apprehend actions as amiable or odious, without any consideration of our own advantage... No end can be intended without desire or affection, and it is nature alone can implant any appetite, any affection or determination in our nature, whether toward private good or publick good, whether toward pleasure of outward sense, or pleasure of inward approbation.²⁵⁷

Turnbull concludes the section by rejecting one last claim against the moral sense, namely that the moral sense presupposes innate ideas. Hutcheson replied to this claim by drawing an analogy between the internal and external senses.²⁵⁸ Turnbull follows a similar path and tells us that the moral sense does not presuppose innate knowledge of any kind, but it is instead some sort of natural disposition, just as our external senses:

²⁵⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 166.

²⁵⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 169.

²⁵⁸ Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, 67.

To assert a determination in our mind to receive the sentiments or simple ideas of approbation or disapprobation from actions so soon as they are presented, antecedent to any opinions of advantage or loss to redound ourselves from them, is not to assert innate ideas, or innate knowledge; it is only to assert an aptitude or determination in our nature to be affected in a certain manner so soon as they occur to the mind.²⁵⁹

Given that the moral sense is conceived as a faculty implanted in us by nature, it follows that we need to take care of and develop our moral sense just like all our other faculties. The progressive feature of the great chain of being underlies Turnbull's exposition here. In particular, it helps Turnbull claim that we must exercise and develop our moral sense. This is achieved through one of the other laws of nature, the law of association and habits, since it allows us to tune our moral sense through practice, the same way we can improve our musical hearing by "instruction and exercise."²⁶⁰

Despite Norton's brief comments²⁶¹ on this topic, Turnbull's version of the moral sense can be considered not very original, since he is basically using the same definition that Shaftesbury and Hutcheson give of the concept, and borrowing aspects from Butler's description of human nature in the *Sermons*. Turnbull himself acknowledges this and tells us that he will not comment too much on the topic since it has "been so fully handled by several excellent writers." However, by appealing to his set of guiding principles we can see that there are some features in Turnbull's description that are not present in Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, or Butler. It is not so much the appeal to common sense that Norton identifies. Turnbull's original contribution lies on the emphasis on introspection and the constant reminder that the only way to ascertain the truth of our faculties is by looking into our own mind. Turnbull's commitment to the experimental method and the insistence on facts and observation drive him to remain within the bounds of what we can experience. Since every individual can only directly experience his own mind, introspection plays the key role of confirming Turnbull's theory through experience and observation.

²⁵⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 169.

²⁶⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 172.

²⁶¹ Norton, "George Turnbull and the Furniture of the Mind," 709.

The belief in the progressive aspect of the chain of being allows Turnbull to justify his claim that we are perfectly made for virtue and that we must develop our moral sense. I have already mentioned that Shaftesbury also talks about the unity and progress of the chain of being. However, the two authors appeal to it for different purposes. While Shaftesbury appeals to it just to show the special place of human beings within nature and the natural sociability of mankind, Turnbull uses it to show that we must attend to the development of our faculties (the moral sense in this case) given the progressive nature of things.

Earlier I mentioned that the aspect of sociability played a key role in the moral theories of the authors Turnbull refers to regarding the moral sense. In the next section we will examine how the moral sense links up with the natural sociability of mankind, as Turnbull builds on Shaftesbury's, Hutcheson's, and Butler's moral theories to complete his own anatomy of the human mind.

3.6 Private and Public Interest

Turnbull joined the rank of thinkers who argued against Hobbes' conception of the human being as naturally selfish. As I mentioned earlier, Mandeville defends Hobbes' position against Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson in turn defends Shaftesbury from Mandeville. Cicero, Butler, and the leading figures of the natural law tradition also draw attention to the sociable aspect of human nature.²⁶² Turnbull joins this group of thinkers who believe that human beings are social creatures by nature. The moral sense plays an important role for living in society, and Turnbull's purpose is to show that what we approve of regarding private good will also result in public good. The important role of introspection and Turnbull's set of guiding principles will help us interpret his thought on society and public and private interest.

The chapter on private and public good begins with two general observations that set the scene: in the first one Turnbull comments on the connection between beauty and utility, and in the second one he connects the former with the anatomy of the human mind.

²⁶² As we noted earlier in section 2.1., there is a key difference between Grotius and Pufendorf regarding sociability. While the former sees it as a natural inclination, the latter thinks of it as a necessary imposition. Both, however, note its importance and consider it a natural law.

Turnbull does not spend much time here discussing the connection between beauty and utility, since this is something he discusses at length in *Painting*, which we will examine in chapter five. In *Principles 1* he only tells us that this connection results in the key feature of his principle of the great chain of being: the unity of the arts and sciences. He gives a series of instances that illustrate the obvious connection between utility and beauty. The first example he uses is the imitative arts in general. He tells us that:

Every one who has any notion of architecture, painting or statuary, will immediately perceive that in all these arts, this connexion is so necessary, so unalterable, that it is not possible to deviate from utility without falling proportionally short of beauty to the sight: or alternately, the rules in architecture which produce beauty are all founded on utility, or necessarily produce it.²⁶³

Turnbull claims that we find beauty in utility in the imitative arts given the continuity from the natural to the moral realm. Since we find utility beautiful in the natural world, the same applies in the moral realm. Turnbull uses an example regarding a healthy body to illustrate the connection between beauty and utility in the natural world:

Health of the body is the just proportion, truth and regular course of things, or the sound balance of the parts in our constitution. The same features which produce deformity, create incommodiousness and disease. And as it is in the human body, so it is everywhere throughout nature. The sound state is the beautiful one.²⁶⁴

Just as in a healthy body, it is order, simplicity, and proportion that we find beautiful in the natural world, and so it must also be the case regarding the moral world. The connection between the two worlds justifies Turnbull's constant move from the natural to the moral:

Now, as it is with regard to the sensible world, and to all arts and sciences, so is it also with respect to our mental fabrick: its health, soundness, and beauty, consists in

²⁶³ *Principles 1*, 176.

²⁶⁴ *Principles 1*, 176-177.

the due balance of all its powers and affections, or in just subordination to a well improved moral sense.²⁶⁵

Turnbull now tries to prove this claim, but his proof relies on quoting extensively from Shaftesbury.²⁶⁶ Though this might raise the thought that he somewhat deviates from the experimental method by relying on another author instead of directly focusing on observation, this is not quite accurate. As we will see, the most interesting aspect of this discussion is Turnbull's interpretation of Shaftesbury as an experimental philosopher. He tells us that he will not repeat Shaftesbury's demonstration of the claim, but rather show the way he argues, since it is "an excellent example of the way in which moral philosophy ought to be carried on, and in which alone indeed it can bring forth solid conclusions."²⁶⁷ Given Turnbull's methodological commitment to experimental philosophy it is interesting to determine the reason he has for this unique interpretation of Shaftesbury.

Turnbull divides Shaftesbury's argument into two stages. The first stage consists in observations of nature to define 'goodness' and 'virtue'.²⁶⁸ While the first term is used for animals, the second is reserved for higher order creatures (human beings). The difference is that though we may qualify a horse as 'good' or 'ill,' we will never qualify him as 'virtuous' or 'vicious,' since it cannot reflect on its own actions:

So that if a creature be generous, kind, constant, compassionate, yet if he cannot reflect on what he himself does, or sees others do, so as to take nothing of what is worthy and honest; and make that notice or conception of worth and honesty to be an object of his affection, he has not the character of being virtuous.²⁶⁹

Shaftesbury further observes, according to Turnbull's interpretation, that the affections in animals must either be aimed toward public good, or self-affections aimed toward private good, or neither. The last option is completely vicious, since it does not lead to good, and the first two can be either virtuous or vicious depending on their degree.²⁷⁰ Shaftesbury concludes that both strong natural affections and strong self-affections are vicious, so neither of them are vicious if

²⁶⁵ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 178.

²⁶⁶ Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, 196.

²⁶⁷ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 179.

²⁶⁸ On Shaftesbury's definitions of these terms see also section 2.1.

²⁶⁹ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 180; Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, 173.

²⁷⁰ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 180-181.

they are in due proportion. Turnbull does not explain Shaftesbury's argument in detail. Instead he tells us:

...all these points he [Shaftesbury] has clearly proved, in the way of moral arithmetic, by a full examination of all our affections, private or public, and their effects and consequences.²⁷¹

Although an examination of Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks* shows that there is not much of the experimental method or, for that matter, of moral arithmetic in his arguments, we can make sense of Turnbull's interpretation by considering his set of guiding principles. Turnbull thinks that Shaftesbury is proceeding from observations of nature to observations about the moral world. This illustrates the same connection between the moral and natural worlds that Turnbull has constantly appealed to. It is this feature (also present in the work of Butler) that Turnbull finds relevant in Shaftesbury's work. This is why he does not give a detailed exposition of the arguments, but rather of the way (Turnbull believes) Shaftesbury proceeds. In fact, he explicitly mentions this:

But for his arguments I must refer the reader to himself. I have only taken notice of his way of proceeding, to shew by his example how enquiries into the human mind ought to be carried on.²⁷²

This is an expression of Turnbull's commitment to introspection in moral philosophy. He does not expect the reader to take his or Shaftesbury's claims for granted, but rather to confirm or disprove them by their own experience. Shaftesbury is not really founding all his claims about virtue on experience and observation rather than on abstract reasoning. However, he does refer to the progressive chain of nature and the virtuous nature of human beings. Turnbull, guided by his set of principles, agrees with Shaftesbury's conclusions and with the way human beings are made part of the progressive chain of nature. This, more than an experimental method, is what Turnbull considers 'an excellent example' of the way of approaching moral philosophy.

Turnbull leaves Shaftesbury aside to give us more arguments that prove that both private and public interest are directed to the same goal, i.e. virtue. This time Turnbull refers to the works of

²⁷¹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 182, square brackets added.

²⁷² Ibid.

Cicero to prove the natural sociability of mankind. Turnbull uses Cicero because they both reach the same conclusions from the observation of the faculties of the human mind. Cicero observes that we are naturally endowed with the desire of self-preservation, the desire for power, the desire for knowledge, a social disposition, and the sense of beauty:

There are, says he [Cicero], in our constitution, together with the desire of self-preservation, common to all perceptive beings, four distinguishing principles which render man capable of a peculiar dignity, perfection and happiness, superior to what merely perceptive beings can attain to. "The desire of knowledge, or the love of truth, and the capacity of attaining to it; a social disposition, or the love of public good, and the capacity of intending and pursuing it." The desire of power and dominion...and lastly, the sense and love of harmony, order, beauty, and consistency in our behaviour.²⁷³

These faculties establish our place in the progressive chain of nature, and the fact that we possess them by nature entails that we are perfectly fit for the pursuit of virtue. Turnbull uses here a common analogy of the time to illustrate his claim:

It cannot be more true, that the perfection of clockwork consists in its aptitude to measure time regularly, than that the perfection of a being, endowed with the powers and dispositions fitted for acquiring knowledge, perceiving public good with delight and complacency, and for regulating all its appetites and affections, according to a sense of order, fitness, decency, and greatness, must lie in exercising all those powers and dispositions. To acquire these virtues and exercise them is therefore, with regard to man, to follow nature, and live agreeably to it; for it is to follow and live agreeably to his constitution. Virtue is therefore man's natural end or excellence, in any sense that any thing can be said to have a natural end or excellence.²⁷⁴

Turnbull here follows the watch analogy presented by Butler in the preface to his *Sermons*. Butler argues that those who argue that human beings are selfish by nature mistakenly arrive at their conclusion by only considering one part of human nature instead of all the parts that make up our constitution. Just as when examining one part of a watch in isolation we cannot know

²⁷³ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 186. Turnbull refers here to Cicero's *De officiis*, 13-17.

²⁷⁴ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 187.

anything about the watch, so we only get to truly know the inward frame of man when we examine all its parts together and the relation they have to each other.²⁷⁵

When we consider all the faculties nature has given us we see that we are made for more than mere sensual pleasures; rather, we are perfectly fit for moral pleasures:

The happiness of an insect or brute can only make an insect or brute happy. A nature with further powers must have further enjoyments. The happiness of a being must be of a kind with its faculties, powers and disposition; or, in one word, with its constitution, because it must result from it. Man therefore, considering the powers and dispositions he is endowed with, must have another happiness, another set of enjoyments in order to be satisfied, than a being merely consisting of senses, without reason, conscience of merit, a public sense and generous affections.²⁷⁶

This is where private interest coincides with virtue:²⁷⁷ even the inclination toward self-interest shows that we are perfectly fit for the pursuit of virtue. Given that such is the purpose or particular end of each individual, it is in each one of them their interest to progress toward virtue. Since every individual is part of the system of our species, and this in turn is part of the bigger system of nature, the private interest ends up being public interest, as long as the natural end is always the goal. Central to this idea is Turnbull's guiding principle of the great chain of being. As I mentioned in chapter two, all of Turnbull's guiding principles work together as a set. The place of human beings in the great chain of being establishes virtue as the end and purpose of our stage within the chain. In the case of private and public interest, Turnbull is using the idea that we are part of a continuous, gradual, and complete system to show that public and private interest coincide.

Turnbull further expands on the topic of public and private interest in chapter six of *Principles 1* where he deals with the laws of society. This set of three chapters regarding the moral sense, interest, and society is where Turnbull quotes more often from other authors. Even though this shows that Turnbull does borrow extensively, there are still some aspects of his discussion that show originality. In particular, his appeal to introspection, which highlights his commitment to

²⁷⁵ Butler, *Sermons*, 8-9.

²⁷⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 189.

²⁷⁷ See also Butler, *Sermons*, 75.

the experimental method, seems to be a feature that is unique to Turnbull and not found in the writings of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, or Butler.

3.7 Society

In this section we examine Turnbull's attempt to establish the natural social aspect of human beings. As we mentioned in section 2.1, this is a feature that is present in the work of almost all the figures that Turnbull drew from. He begins by telling us that any sort of pleasure, bodily or moral, presupposes this social aspect. He gives a description of the sociable affections that points to Cicero's ideas on human nature:²⁷⁸

We have all the affections that are necessary to the maintenance of society, and to receiving happiness by social correspondence and participation: an inclination to propagate our kind; natural affection to our offspring and our parents; disposition to friendship; tenderness to the sex; regard to reputation, or desire of fame and esteem; gratitude, sympathy and compassion; delight in the happiness of others, in that particularly which is of our own giving or procuring to them; satisfaction in whatever presents us with the agreeable idea of the power, improvement and perfection belonging to our nature.²⁷⁹

Regarding such affections Turnbull tells us that we can "be sure, or rather surer by experience, than we can be of any properties belonging to external objects of sense."²⁸⁰ All the affections listed will become evident upon introspection. To reinforce the idea that all these natural affections are directed towards society, Turnbull refers to the analogy with a watch that closely resembles Butler's use of the analogy.²⁸¹

We cannot more certainly pronounce, that a watch or any other machine is formed for a certain end from the consideration of the parts of which it is formed; than we

²⁷⁸ See Cicero, *De officiis*, 13-15.

²⁷⁹ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 205.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Butler, *Sermons*, 8-9.

may conclude from all the parts of our constitution, and their mutual references to one another, that we are formed for society and for social happiness.²⁸²

This claim introduces a discussion regarding the view ascribed to Hobbes that human beings are not naturally sociable, but instead selfish by nature. Turnbull characterizes the Hobbesian position:

...society is not natural but adventitious, the meer consequence of direful necessity; men being naturally to one another wolves; that is, not as wolves to wolves, for there a kind of union takes place, but as wolves to sheep, and devourers and destroyers.²⁸³

Turnbull believes that Hobbes' mistake lies precisely in not observing properly the natural constitution of human beings. This position is "repugnant to feeling and experience." It might be true that we are naturally endowed with a desire for power, but this is not the only affection we naturally possess. Cicero and Butler, for example, grant that we have an instinct of self-preservation but, beside it we have a number of other faculties or instincts that balance it.²⁸⁴ The mistake then is to consider this affection separately from all the others already listed by Turnbull. The order and perfection in human beings consists in the proper balance of all the natural affections, and Hobbes is going against experience and observation by excluding all but our desire for power. Turnbull has expressed this thought in his exposition of the other laws of nature, and here he relies on the connection of the moral with the natural world to prove the importance of the balance of our affections.

The watch analogy from the mechanical philosophy is given in more detail here to illustrate the claim about balance. Machines work properly when all the springs, wheels, and gears are in a proportionate balance: if one of them is too strong or too weak, the whole mechanism will fail. The same is the case in natural philosophy and the human body. There are "antagonist muscles"²⁸⁵ in the body that by themselves might not be advantageous, but as a part of the whole system work perfectly.

²⁸² Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 206.

²⁸³ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 206-207.

²⁸⁴ See Cicero, *De officiis*, 13-15; and Butler, *Sermons*, 12-14, 34-35.

²⁸⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 210.

From the mechanical and natural world Turnbull moves on to the moral, where our reason and passions must also be kept in proportion for the proper functioning of the system. He refers to the law of power discussed earlier to show that such law has many good consequences when it is balanced by another law of human nature:

Without such a principle [law of power], man would indeed be a low, timid, unambitious creature, incapable of fortitude and magnanimity: incapable of ruling his sensitive appetites; incapable of great attempts and of despising dangers for the sake of virtue. But then, on the other hand, were not this loftiness of mind, the desire of power and rule checked by the love of society; by generous public affections, and by a sense of beauty in good affections and actions, it would indeed make every man naturally a tyrant.²⁸⁶

Through this example Turnbull channels Butler telling us that “It is impossible to have a just idea of any whole by considering any part of it singly or abstractedly from all the other parts.”²⁸⁷

Regarding society, the public and private affections balance each other for the proper functioning of the system. Turnbull goes on to give a set of observations that justify the sociable nature of human beings. The interesting aspect is that Turnbull proves his observation by relying on the link between the natural and moral worlds. The constant use of this strategy stems from the interaction between his guiding principles.

In the first instance Turnbull considers the diversity of individuals. We have already examined this claim when we explored Turnbull’s law regarding the connection between mind and body. This time Turnbull illustrates the claim with an analogy with light and textures:

Now different textures of bodies are not more necessary to the various reflexions, refractions, and transmissions of light, which constitute all the visible beauty of the corporeal world, than different structures and modifications of human minds are to

²⁸⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 208.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

the various reflexions and refractions, so to speak, of social happiness, which are requisite to the beauty and happiness of society.²⁸⁸

The diversity is a result of the nature of the chain of being, as we have already discussed in section 3.3. From diversity Turnbull next examines the “just proportion” of our natural sociability, and explains it by analogy to ‘attraction’ in the natural world:

It is indeed moral or social attraction, and operates like the other [in the natural world] proportionally, as best suits to the upholding of the whole fabric, in perfect order: it is strongest and most sensible when close cohesion is absolutely necessary, as betwixt parents and offspring: and it diminishes in proportion as we are removed from one another.²⁸⁹

Here Turnbull adds a caution to the connection he has so strongly relied on for most of his claims. The law of attraction (gravity) in the natural world is confirmed by and applicable to all phenomena in the natural world. It does not change. But the law of social (moral) attraction might change due to the influence and balancing quality the other laws of our nature have on each other.

Let it be however remarked, that the analogy between moral and natural gravitation must fail in this respect, that whereas the latter is only a mechanical principle which we cannot change; the former is a moral principle, and therefore subject to diversities superinduceable by ourselves, in consequence particularly of the law of habits and associations of ideas already mentioned.²⁹⁰

Although all human beings are naturally endowed with this law of social attraction, it varies in degree among individuals mainly because of the influence of the law of habits and association. In some individuals, if they lose themselves in wrong association and habits, their social attraction must be diminished. Also, as it is the case with all the faculties of the human mind, it is part of

²⁸⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 215.

²⁸⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 218. Turnbull here refers the reader to essay number 126 of *The Guardian* where the author argues for the natural social inclination of human beings through the union between the natural and moral worlds. As it turns out, the author of this paper was Berkeley, highlighting the influence this author had on Turnbull. The essay can be found in George Berkeley, “The Bond of Society,” in *The Works of George Berkeley*, vol. 7, ed. by A.A. Luce. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1955), 225-228.

²⁹⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 223.

the progressive feature of nature that we take due care in improving and developing them towards virtue. In this sense then, the law of social attraction cannot resemble the law of gravitation in the natural world.

We need to deal with this issue that arises from the unity of the moral and natural worlds in more detail. On the one hand Turnbull constantly relies on the continuity between the two worlds to construct his anatomy of the human mind. Things are a certain way in the moral world because they are in such way in the natural. On the other hand Turnbull here acknowledges a difference between the two worlds. In what sense then can Turnbull claim that the law of social attraction is like the law of gravity?

The particular features of the chain of being can shed light on this issue. As we have seen, human beings occupy a place within the chain of nature that is special, but still not the highest, most perfect link in the chain (this would presumably be God). Nature itself, being God's creation, is perfect in the sense that all the links of the chain are perfectly fitted for the place they occupy. This feature allows for the difference between the law of gravity and the law of social gravitation; they both share the fact that they exhibit the perfection of the system, but they may differ in other aspects, given that they apply to different (though united) links of the chain.

Another aspect that highlights the difference between the two worlds is the fact that moral agents have choice and will, hence allowing us to influence and balance the laws of our nature as Turnbull comments in the passage quoted above. We will examine this difference in more detail in section 3.9 and 7.1.

Turnbull winds up his discussion of our social nature, and he reinforces the experimental nature of this inquiry:

How the mind is differently affected by any ideas or objects, is matter of experience, and therefore the fact rests upon the same indubitable evidence which ascertains other facts, that is, experience. But in accounting for this fact, it is necessary to resolve it ultimately into our being originally so framed as to be affected...²⁹¹

²⁹¹ Turnbull, *Principles* 1, 224.

The only way we are able to ascertain our social nature is by observing the constitution of our mind. Once we discover our nature and true end we can set forth to achieve such an end and progress. The history of mankind confirms this idea: Turnbull mentions the remarkable flourishing of humanity of ancient Athens, due to the government of the city that established the fitness of its laws in accordance to our natural constitution. Turnbull does not go into the discussion of which form of government is the appropriate one, but only remarks that whichever it is will be deduced from the observation of human nature. Politics becomes a science:

...the science of politics consists in judging of the propriety and fitness, moral and political, of means to bring about and promote the sole end of government, the happiness of the subjects.²⁹²

Politics, just like all the other sciences of man (education, art, religion) will depend on understanding and acknowledging the place of human beings in the chain of nature and our natural end, virtue. We will examine Turnbull's thought on law in more detail in chapter seven.

3.8 The Immortality of the Soul

In the three final chapters of the first part of *Principles 1* Turnbull discusses the laws of human nature related to religion, he gives a summary of the laws of human nature, and he argues for the immortality of the soul. The chapter on religion is very brief, but it contains the clearest expression of one of the purposes in both *Principles 1* and *Principles 2*, namely, to show that our natural constitution points to the wisdom and benevolence of God. Turnbull's goal here is to show that we are naturally prone to religion. These considerations, as well as those regarding the immortality of the soul, are guided by Turnbull's principle of the progressive chain of nature and the place and purpose of human beings in it.

It is important to note here that the attempt to argue for a natural disposition towards religion is a reaction against the claims made by figures like Matthew Tindal and Anthony Collins, who argued that there is no need for revealed religion or Christianity. Turnbull joins Butler and Berkeley in the attempt to reply to the freethinkers and Deists. We will explore this in more detail when we examine *Principles 2* in chapter six.

²⁹² Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 228.

Strikingly, Turnbull begins his discussion on religion telling us that the idea of a governing power is an “innate idea.” In the usual sense of the concept, there is no place for innate ideas within the experimental method, but some experimental philosophers would use the term in a special way. Turnbull here is not trying to say that the idea of an all-powerful creator is in the mind before birth, but rather that it “offers itself to the mind as soon as it reflects.”²⁹³ In particular, Turnbull sides here with Shaftesbury and Hutcheson and opposes Locke by claiming that principles can be assented to as soon as we acquire the use of reason.

This sense of the innateness of religion is taken from Cicero. In *De natura deorum* he explains that the idea of a creating power immediately follows from our observation of nature:

For when we gaze upward to the sky and contemplate the heavenly bodies, what can be so obvious and so manifest as that there must exist some power possessing transcendent intelligence by whom these things are ruled?... Nothing but the presence in our minds of a firmly grasped concept of the deity could account for the stability and permanence of our belief in him, a belief which is strengthened by the passage of the ages and grows more deeply rooted with each successive generation of mankind... Hence both in our nation and among all others reverence for the gods and respect for religion now grow continually stronger and more profound.²⁹⁴

Turnbull follows Cicero’s observation regarding the reverence of God in all nations and takes this as proof of the universality of the thought of a governing power.

That it [the ‘innate idea’ of a governing power] is so is plain from universal experience; for no fact is more certain, than that no nation ever was so barbarous, but that it acknowledged a supreme, independent, creating power, the father of the world and of mankind.²⁹⁵

Like with all the other faculties, the observation of the furniture of the mind via introspection can confirm that we are disposed for religious thought. In fact, this natural idea of the governing power stems from the considerations of our moral sense. It seems that Turnbull here is

²⁹³ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 235.

²⁹⁴ Cicero, *De natura deorum*, trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, 1933), 125-127.

²⁹⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 235, brackets added.

proposing a form of theistic proof based on the moral sense. He first tells us that when the moral sense finds delight in virtue and the sensible pleasures, the thought of a designer instantly and naturally follows:

Our sense of natural and moral beauty necessarily leads us to enquire into and admire the order, beauty, grandeur, wise and good oeconomy of the world; and to apprehend that our disposition to understand and love order and goodness cannot but proceed from an Author whose mind is perfect order and goodness.²⁹⁶

The great chain of being is crucial for Turnbull's argument. Nature is complete, continuous, and graded, showing order and perfection. Once we realize this, we must conclude that its creator must also be perfect. Turnbull has argued that the moral sense is a good general law of human nature. If religion is a necessary effect of the moral sense, then it must necessarily also be a good law:

Where there is a moral sense, reflexion must soon lead to apprehend an infinitely good mind, the cause of all things. And where there is a moral sense, an infinitely good mind cannot be apprehended, without the highest love and apprehension; without supreme complacency and delight...²⁹⁷

Turnbull concludes his discussion on religion by answering possible objections against his theory. If it is true that religious thought stems from the moral sense, then why have there been some forms of religion that are opposed to it? Turnbull accounts for this by blaming superstition and the wrong association of ideas. As we have already discussed, the fact that our stage within the great chain of being is a progressive state requires that we overcome such difficulties. Further, the progressive feature of nature also entails that this natural disposition for religious thought must also be taken care of, exercised, and balanced with all our other natural faculties.

Having completed the examination of the laws of human nature Turnbull concludes the first part of *Principles 1* by considering the relation between our natural composition and the immortality of the soul.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 237.

Turnbull's discussion regarding the immortality of the soul is guided by the interaction between mind and body, and the place of human beings in the progressive chain of being. All along Turnbull has argued from the natural to the moral world, but in this final chapter of part one of *Principles 1* he focuses on the differences between the sensible and the moral realm to deduce the immortality of the soul.

Consistent with the experimental method, Turnbull reminds us that there is nothing we can know about the future, since we can only be certain of what is available to experience and observation. However, as he claimed before while examining the connection between mind and body, there are some aspects we can infer from our present experience and observation about the future state, though only in the negative (see section 3.3) He reformulates this idea at the beginning of his discussion:

But tho' our future state cannot be fully foreseen by us, because such knowledge would neither be agreeable nor convenient for us; yet from the present state, we may infer very probably that death is not a total dissolution of our moral powers and their acquirements, but that these do survive our bodies.²⁹⁸

This account, where all we can know about the immortality of our soul is only probable knowledge, is developed by Butler in the first chapter of his *Analogy*:

...let us consider what the analogy of nature, and the several changes which we have undergone, and those which we know we may undergo without being destroyed, suggest, as to the effect which death may, or may not, have upon us; and whether it be not from thence probable, that we may survive this change, and exist in a future state of life and perception.²⁹⁹

Butler argues for the probability of a future state through an analogy with the natural and sensible worlds. Turnbull follows Butler, but grounds his exposition in the account he has given of the anatomy of the human mind and the fact that the place we occupy in the chain of nature is one where we are meant to progress towards our natural end. Turnbull, like Butler, deduces that there is no reason to believe that the death of the body entails the end of our moral selves.

²⁹⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 256-257.

²⁹⁹ Butler, *Analogy*, 20-21.

Turnbull does not affirm the certainty of this claim, but rather tells us that it is more likely that it is the case that our soul (mind) lives on after the death of the body. Turnbull expresses his account of the probability of a future life in the same way natural philosophers posit queries for further discussion:

Whether it be more probable, that is, more analogous and consistent with the preceeding account of our make to imagine that we are made with moral powers, merely for the entertainments and exercises which we are capable of receiving from a sensible world by our bodies for the short while they only can last; or that it is but our first state of trial, and to be succeeded by another such existence as good order and wisdom in the whole requires?³⁰⁰

All that Turnbull is telling us in this chapter is that the continuation of our soul onto a further stage after the death of the body is consistent with his anatomy of the human mind. Since all the faculties and laws Turnbull deduces from experience and observation are directed towards our natural end, i.e. virtue, the severing of the connection between mind and body can only mean the end of this stage, but not the death of the mind. This seems to show that Turnbull adopted some form of dualism, most likely a result of his early interest in Berkeley's ideas. As M.A. Stewart claims, Turnbull's adoption of Berkeley's immaterialism of the soul is primarily a teleological thesis rather than an ontological one³⁰¹, as we will see by examining Turnbull's argument.

He begins by referring to the fact that matter cannot be destroyed. In the case of perceiving beings:

When matter therefore is said to be destroyed, all that can be said to be done is, that perceiving beings have lost a class of perceptions, conveyed unto them from without, according to certain laws, which now no longer take place.³⁰²

Though he does not refer to Berkeley at all in this discussion, it is clear that Turnbull is channeling Berkeley's theory of immaterialism. In his *Principles*, Berkeley argues that matter does not exist; instead all we perceive are ideas and sequences of ideas. Physical objects are "the things

³⁰⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 257, underlining added.

³⁰¹ Stewart, "Berkeley and the Rankenian Club," 34.

³⁰² Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 261.

we perceive by sense, and what do we perceive besides our own ideas or sensations...”³⁰³ So the physical is just a collection of ideas that ceases to exist when it is not perceived:

...all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any subsistence without a mind, that their being is to be perceived or known; that consequently so long as they are not actually perceived by me, or do not exist in my mind or that of any other created spirit, they must either have no existence at all, or else subsist in the mind of some eternal spirit...³⁰⁴

Turnbull adopts this description regarding the human body to argue for the following claim: when our material body perishes, the perceptions acquired through it cease to take place. However, this does not entail that our perceiving spirit also ends. All that happens with the death of the body then is just the dissolution of the union between mind and body, and Turnbull now explores why this dissolution cannot entail the destruction of our moral part. He appeals to situations where the external senses do not function but the moral powers, like reason, memory and imagination still do, as in dreams.³⁰⁵ Butler follows a similar path in his *Analogy* where he argues for the continuation of the soul onto a future state. He tells us that human beings are in a composite state of (1) sensation, and (2) reflection.³⁰⁶ These two states are different, and hence the destruction of the former does not entail the destruction of the latter, even though the two states are connected:

For, though, from our present constitution and condition of being, our external organs of sense are necessary for conveying in ideas to our reflecting powers, as carriages, and levers, and scaffolds are in architecture: yet when these ideas are brought in, we are capable of reflecting in the most intense degree, and of enjoying the greatest pleasure, and feeling the greatest pain, by means of that reflection, without any assistance from our senses; and without any at all, which we know of, from that body which will be dissolved by death. It does not appear then, that the relation of this gross body to the reflecting being is, in any degree, necessary to thinking; to our intellectual enjoyments or sufferings: nor, consequently, that the

³⁰³ Berkeley, *Principles*, 42.

³⁰⁴ Berkeley, *Principles*, 43.

³⁰⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 262.

³⁰⁶ Butler, *Analogy*, 39.

dissolution or alienation of the former by death, will be the destruction of those present powers, which render us capable of this state of reflection.³⁰⁷

Turnbull follows Butler, but instead of taking the argument for granted he appeals to introspection and asks the reader to look into his mind to confirm his remarks. If we admit that our mind ends with the death of our bodies, we are admitting that there is nothing more to our mind than our sensible perceptions. Anyone who looks into his own mind will easily find out that is not the case, and therefore the death of the body cannot entail the death of the mind.

He leaves considerations of the nature of the mind aside and focuses on what we can establish about the future state based on our experience of the present state and his anatomy of the mind. The rest of the discussion in the chapter has as its major theme the features of the great chain of being. In general, given the progressive nature of everything, and our present stage being an infant one of learning and progress it naturally follows that there must be a further stage to which our minds move on.

One of the features that we mentioned is that the chain of being is complete. Turnbull argues that if there was no future state, then there would be a gap in the chain; it would be incomplete. However, we have no grounds to think that nature would be incomplete, since experience proves the contrary, showing that:

...there be no reason to think that there ever can be any void in nature; it must likewise be true, that no perceiving being shall ever cease to exist, but shall continue to be, and to pass through the gradations suited to its kind, and consequently to the riches and fullness which makes the perfection of nature.³⁰⁸

So far, all that these remarks about the future state show is that nature is perfect and that we are perfectly fitted for the pursuit of virtue, our end in this stage of the great chain of being. But Turnbull goes further and wants to show that his construction of the anatomy of the mind leads to the conclusion that the Author of nature is good and wise. Turnbull recapitulates his considerations in the previous chapters of *Principles 1*, and relying on the fullness, continuity, and gradation of the great chain of being concludes that:

³⁰⁷ Butler, *Analogy*, 39-40.

³⁰⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 271.

...in whatever light we consider our present state, there is good reason to think it our first state only, and a very proper one as our first state: our moral seed-time to which our after-harvest shall be proportioned.³⁰⁹

Through the analogy with harvesting quoted above Turnbull introduces the biblical passage that serves as the central theme of *Principles 2*: “as we shall sow, so we shall reap.”³¹⁰

Given Turnbull’s strong commitment to the experimental method it is somewhat surprising that he would consider giving any sort of detail about the future state and the soul. However, on a more detailed inspection, and by taking into account his set of guiding principles, we can see that he is led to the discussion about the future state. He does not speculate about the future state; in fact, he does not say anything about the nature of that state. In a similar vein to Butler he is only trying to show that it follows from our nature that such a state most likely exists. His belief in the progressive chain of nature and the fact that human beings, though perfectly fit for this stage, are not in the ultimate stage of perfection lead him to argue for the existence of a future state.

This is the last feature of human nature Turnbull discusses and he moves on to discuss objections against his claims in part two of *Principles 1*, the topic of our next section.

3.9 Human Nature and the Problem of Evil

Turnbull reserves the second part of *Principles 1* to deal with a number of objections against his account of the anatomy of the mind. Though Turnbull deals with the objections in four separate instances, they all amount to a discussion of the problem of evil. Turnbull’s replies consist mainly in referring back to the claims he believes he has established in part one of *Principles 1* and reinforcing them. As we will see, Turnbull insists that any objections against the anatomy of the mind he has established end in absurdity, mostly because they go against what experience and observation tell us.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 293.

³¹⁰ Galatians, 6:7.

³¹¹ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 300-302.

The first objection Turnbull deals with has already been treated in *Principles 1*. It could be thought that some of our natural faculties, such as the desire for power, are actually evil. Turnbull reminds us that this is a mistake that stems from considering the faculties separately from all the others, which is contrary to experience. If we observe our own mind, we find not only that we naturally have the desire for power, but also a natural sociability, a desire for knowledge, a moral sense, and so on, all of which work together in balance for the pursuit of virtue.

This objection against the desire for power as a source of evil can be expressed in a more general form, namely a complaint against the imperfection of our nature. If we were actually made for virtue, then our maker would have made us perfect instead of letting us start in an infant state where we have to develop our faculties. Turnbull relies on his belief in the progressive chain of nature to dissolve this objection into absurdity. Given that nature is progressive, and we have a set place in the chain of being, it is absurd to complain against our imperfect state. As I commented earlier, for Turnbull perfection lies in being fit for the natural end; in the case of human beings Turnbull has shown that all our natural faculties are directed toward virtue. Turnbull illustrates the absurdity of this objection:

The demands made when man is objected against because he is not a complication of all perfections, are as absurd, as to demand why a fly is not made a swallow, every swallow an eagle, and every eagle an angel; because an angel is better than any of the other creatures named.³¹²

Turnbull further explains the idea that human beings are ‘perfectly fitted’ rather than just perfect in the ordinary sense of the word. He first refers to the composition and structure of bodies in the natural world, and explains that they are perfect in the sense that they are made for the achievement of the natural end; i.e. the fins in a fish are perfectly fit for swimming, the wings in a bird are perfectly fit for flying, though not for swimming, etc. The same is the case in the moral: we might not have all perfections, which would be inconsistent with the nature of our stage, but we are perfectly fitted for the pursuit of virtue which is the end of our present stage in the progressive chain of nature:

³¹² Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 306.

Now from this it plainly follows, that the only intelligible question, with regard to any constitution or fabric, must be, to what end it is adapted, and whether that end be worth while; could it be better adjusted to its end, or ought the end to which it is adjusted, to have place in nature? So that all the objections made against man must vanish, if it appears that he is made for a very noble end. For (though there are, no doubt, higher orders of beings in nature than man) yet if he be so made, he well deserves his place in a gradation which could not exist without him; but, did he not exist, would necessarily be interrupted and incoherent.³¹³

The whole aim of this part of Turnbull's text is not to deny the existence of evil, but rather to show that those 'evil' actions are not absolutely evil, but rather when considered in the light of the purpose of human beings and the end of the whole system they end up being good. Turnbull argues for the fitness of human nature for our present stage by constructing six maxims that show that there can be no objections against our constitution. He begins by setting out his methodology:

But, having but just suggested this general observation [the necessity of 'evils'], I shall now go on to shew, from particular instances, that many of the evils complained of in human life, moral as well as natural, are, in the nature of things, necessary, absolutely necessary to many goods, without which human life could have no distinguishing excellence, nor indeed any considerable happiness; which instances will confirm a posteriori, our arguing, as we have just done, abstractedly, from the nature of things, for the necessity of evil in general.³¹⁴

The above statement shows Turnbull's true commitment to the experimental method: although he admits that some considerations have been deduced from abstraction, his claims are only proven when they are deduced *a posteriori* from particular instances. From the observation of the natural and moral worlds Turnbull deduces six maxims that prove the necessity of evil which I now summarize:

³¹³ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 308.

³¹⁴ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 348, underlining added, brackets added.

1. When wealth, power, and greatness are attained, they give more opportunities to focus the affections towards “external gratifications.” Therefore, the affections toward external gratifications in powerful states must be prevalent.
2. Turnbull defines the state (government) as the sum of the individuals. If this is so, then such a state can only function through the pursuit of individuals. But it is very difficult for them to highly value and pursue wealth while keeping their private affections in control, unless they are “restrained to a certain degree by right policy.”
3. Riches can only be obtained through industry; and industry only works where there is consumption. The higher the consumption, the higher the industry; the higher the affection towards sensual gratification, the higher the consumption, and therefore the higher the industry.
4. Wealth and greatness can only be obtained by a state if they are pursued. But once achieved, human beings tend to avoid the hardships necessary to obtain wealth and greatness. They cannot be maintained unless the spirit of industry is also maintained.
5. From this it follows that for a society to achieve and maintain greatness it must be a composition of contrary qualities (Maxim 1 is contrary to maxim 2, and maxim 3 is contrary to maxim 4).
6. Our own constitution is proof that this way of running society can be obtained. Only a few changes need to be made. Not that vices would be abolished, but they would be “duly curbed and restrained,” and out of them “would be educed great goods by the virtues to which such a constitution would naturally give due vigour and force.”³¹⁵

Turnbull constructs the maxims to show that those vices used by the opposition against the fitness of our natural constitution (i.e. love of power) also give rise to many good effects. The key element in Turnbull’s argument is the fact that we are endowed with more than one principle or law that allows the proper balancing of their consequences so we can focus them all towards

³¹⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 354-357. This list is my paraphrase of Turnbull’s six maxims (summarized).

virtue. Turnbull concludes the second chapter of part two of *Principles 1* with another argument where he relies on the natural to explain the moral:

Private vices are therefore really to society, what ordure and filth is to land; they are equally abominable and nauseous in themselves; and, like it, are only made useful by skilful, sagacious and industrious management. They are the excrements of what is really useful, and can only be turned into use as natural ones are. Excrements of the one kind as well as of the other, will abound most in opulent places where there is plentiful consumption; and in this also are they both alike, that they are in themselves of a poisonous, pestilential nature, and tend to produce plagues, which would soon destroy mankind, or make them very miserable: In great quantities they are pernicious to good soil, and choak the good seeds thrown into it, bringing forth nauseous weeds in greater plenty than useful grains: without skilful tillage and husbandry, and sound wholesome seed, they would never produce any good at all... such is the constitution of the material world, that the excrements which are unavoidably necessary or mechanically so, that would poison or corrupt the air, and produce diseases were they not carried off, may by skill be rendered useful at manuring the ground; so such is the constitution of the moral world, that the evils which are absolutely unavoidable in consequence of the human make, that are in themselves plagues and miseries, may be converted by skill and good management into goods.³¹⁶

Turnbull is careful with this analogy and reminds us that although the connection between the natural and moral worlds is strong, there is one aspect of the moral world that it is not a feature of the natural: choice. While the mechanics of the digestive system cannot be controlled, the natural faculties of the human mind can be, in order to avoid the excess of vices. We mentioned earlier that Turnbull relies on the union of the natural and moral realms all throughout his construction of human nature, but at certain points he points out that there is some essential difference between the two worlds. In this particular passage he points out that the difference between moral and material objects is that the former have choice. This falls back on Turnbull's discussion at the beginning of the book where he posits that the distinguishing feature between human beings and other creatures is that we are endowed with will.³¹⁷ It is what makes us moral

³¹⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 363-365.

³¹⁷ The difference between moral and natural objects is also discussed in sections 3.7 and 7.1 of this thesis.

agents and allows us to pursue our natural end. The dual nature of human beings highlights the union of the moral and the natural. While we share with brutes and other creatures a connection to the material world through our bodies, we also share with creatures of the more advanced stage the faculties of our mind.

It is important to recall here that the unity of the worlds (and of the whole chain of being) does not entail that the laws of one link must apply in others. Given the feature of gradation all that matters is that the laws relevant to a particular link contribute to the perfection of the whole system. It is in this sense that the faculty of power or will makes a difference. Both material and moral objects are subject to laws of nature, but while it is in accordance with the former's natural end that they behave with regularity according to the natural laws (where the only will is God's), the latter, participating partly in a higher stage, behave according to the laws pertaining to that stage (where they are endowed with will).

Turnbull realizes that all the objections end up in absurdity given that they all stem from an inaccurate observation of human nature, so he reinforces all the laws of nature he has established in part one of *Principles 1* to show that the objections do not stand their ground. Moving on to the conclusion of his book, he gives a recap of the construction of the anatomy of the mind and concludes that this is sufficient proof that human beings are perfectly fit for the pursuit of virtue, and in Newtonian style adds some corollaries. The corollaries serve as the conclusions Turnbull draws from his inquiry:

1. ...physiology and moral philosophy are...in the nature of things, quite inseparable...
- 2....we may justly be said to be a kind of being constituted by a certain blending and intermingling, or mutual dependence of moral powers and laws of matter and motion...
3. It is therefore very much to be desired, that philosophers would carry on their researches into human nature, as a being composed by the mutual respects of moral and material parts...
- 4...mere instruction of the best kind is not sufficient to effectuate the great end of education; but together with it, early and uninterrupted, right usage or accustomance is absolutely necessary...
- 5...If our happiness chiefly depends upon our opinions of things, and the association of ideas which excite our affections, it must be of the last importance to accustom youth by right education and discipline, often to examine the opinion of things, and call their associations of ideas to a strict account...
6. But more particularly with regard to the

instruction of the science of man, it is evident from the preceeding introduction to moral philosophy, that it may proceed in two ways. Either by laying open to view the powers belonging to human nature, and the laws relative to these powers in our present situation, or by tracing effects to these powers and laws of powers, as their sources, and shewing their good final causes... 7. An ethical system...would not only be exceedingly embellished, but greatly enforced by pointing out the various devices of ingenious arts, in order to point out, and recommend with force to the mind, moral truths, or all the discoveries of reason concerning human duties, the beauty and advantages of every virtue, and the deformity and evil consequences of every vice; and the wise and good order observed by the Author of nature in all his works... 8. ...right instruction in the foundations and rules of these [imitative] arts, and the proper ends they ought to pursue, and cannot arrive to their beauty and perfection without pursuing, must really terminate in a very full examination or analysis of human nature... 9. In explaining moral duties...the necessity of bringing examples from history, or probable fictions, in which actions and characters are naturally represented, from the former more especially, will be readily acknowledged by all who have duly attended to the power and efficacy of example upon the human mind, or our natural strong disposition toward imitation... 10. As moral instruction ought to be carried on very gradually, by proceeding from simpler to more and more complex cases; so certainly, in the education of those of the higher ranks in life more especially, it ought to advance to the most complex and difficult of sciences, politicks... 11...one of the properest means of improving both these faculties [moral sense and delight in analogy], or rather determinations of our nature, is very early to convey into young minds the more simple and obvious moral truths, by apposite fables and allegories... 12. From this specimen of moral philosophy, and the preceeding corollaries, it is visible, that the ancients had very good reason to say, that all the sciences are one, even as nature is one, and that they ought not to be violently torn asunder from one another in education; but ought, on the contrary, to be united together in it agreeably to their natural connexion and one common end.³¹⁸

A closer look at the twelve corollaries highlights how important the concept of the unity of the sciences is for Turnbull's system. More importantly, these corollaries and the unity of the

³¹⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 440-462.

sciences point to the main ideas he discusses in *Education* and *Painting*: the proper education of human beings for our progress towards virtue.

As we have observed in the account I have given of Turnbull's *Principles 1*, his set of guiding principles is the recurrent and guiding theme throughout the whole text. Guided by his belief in the progressive chain of nature and virtue as the end of human beings, Turnbull applies the experimental method via introspection, and from the experience and observations of his own faculties deduces the laws of human nature. I have explained the anatomy of the human mind constructed in *Principles 1* in considerably more detail than Turnbull's other texts, because, as will be evident from the following chapters, he develops his theories of education, religion, and painting from the anatomy of the mind argued for in *Principles*. We will see the proper way to interpret Turnbull's texts is to see them as a unified system of philosophy guided by his set of core beliefs.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 Education

In this chapter I explore Turnbull's 1742 *Observations upon Liberal Education*. My main aim in this chapter is to show that Turnbull's text on education is best interpreted as a developmental stage within his whole system of philosophy. In particular, we will see that the theory of education he develops here is dependent on the anatomy of the human mind constructed in *Principles 1*. Turnbull uses the laws of human nature to establish the proper end of education, and to figure out the best way to achieve such end. Besides the connection to *Principles 1*, we will see that his guiding principles (especially the unity of nature) help us understand Turnbull's overall argument in *Education*.

Out of all his publications *Education* is the one that received the most attention in the eighteenth century. Gladys Bryson mentions that, along with a book on education by John Gregory, *Education* was "considerably quoted;"³¹⁹ Paul Wood argues that Turnbull's thought on education was most likely a major inspiration for the educational reform in the Aberdeen colleges in the mid 1750's.³²⁰ Perhaps the most relevant reference to Turnbull's text is in Benjamin Franklin's plan to establish a college in Philadelphia. Franklin published in 1749 a pamphlet entitled *Proposals Relating to the Education of the Youth in Pennsylvania* where he draws from several authors to propose his preferred system for liberal education. He mentions John Locke, Charles Rollin, David Fordyce, and in numerous instances he refers to George Turnbull.³²¹

In *Education* Turnbull supplies the reader with a compilation of the main ideas Roman and Greek philosophers had on education, and to this history he adds some ideas developed by modern thinkers and some contributions of his own. A special feature of *Education* is that a large part of the text is presented in dialogue form. Turnbull chose this writing style presumably because he found great value in conveying ideas through dialogue. This and the other ideas he picks up from the ancients fit in with the theory he has developed in *Principles 1*, where he established that we are naturally equipped for the pursuit of virtue. As we go through the text we will see how his ideas relate to his anatomy of the human mind and his guiding principles provide us with an adequate framework to understand Turnbull's thought on education.

³¹⁹ Bryson, *Man and society*, 186.

³²⁰ Wood, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment*, 46-47.

³²¹ Benjamin Franklin, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, Vol. 3: January 1, 1745 Through June 30, 1750*. ed. L.W. Labaree and J. Whitfield (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 397-420; Terrence Moore briefly mentions this anecdote in his introduction to *Education*, xvii.

4.1 Education for Virtue

As in *Principles 1*, the initial sections of *Education* have explicit statements about Turnbull's commitment to the experimental method. Just a few lines into the dedication he clarifies his method and rejects pure speculation:

And the thoughts which I have here laid together upon this subject, in the best order I was able, not being advent'rous conjectures, hazarded into the world upon no better authority than a presumptuous confidence of my own opinion, but observations transmitted to us from the more thinking and wiser part of mankind in almost all ages and nations of the world, as Truths or Facts confirmed in their experience.³²²

Turnbull reinforces this commitment to the application of the experimental method in moral philosophy by highlighting the unity between the natural and moral worlds:

...whatever I have been able to learn from the experience of others, or my own, concerning this matter, is now offered to the publick, because the subject is of publick, or universal concern.—I say from experience, because, as with regard to the culture of plants or flowers, sure rules can only be drawn from experiment; so, for the same reason, there can be no sure rules concerning education but those which are founded on the experimental knowledge of human nature. —And here every conclusion is deduced from internal principles and dispositions of the human mind, and their operations, which are well known to all who have carefully studied mankind; and is therefore confirmed by experience, in the same manner that natural philosophers establish their physical doctrines, upon observations evincing certain properties of bodies and laws of motion.³²³

We can see then that Turnbull follows in *Education* the same methodology he followed in *Principles 1*. Besides the methodological statements he also wants to be clear about the main

³²² Turnbull, *Education*, 3, underlining added.

³²³ Turnbull, *Education*, 23, underlining added.

purpose of education, which refers to his belief in the progressive feature of nature and to the idea that virtue is the proper and natural end of human beings:

The design of this Treatise, to give a general idea of it in the fewest words I can, is to shew, “How greatly private and public happiness depend upon the right education of the youth: And that human nature is so far from being incapable of arriving very timeously at a considerable degree of perfection in wisdom and virtue, that young minds, by a suitable method of education, may indeed be very early formed to the sincere love of virtue: and may make great improvements in the more useful arts and sciences, as well as in languages, with much less difficulty, and in much less time, than is commonly imagined; And to delineate and recommend these methods of instructing and forming youth.”³²⁴

Turnbull constructs his anatomy of the human mind in *Principles 1* according to the belief in the natural goodness of human beings and the implication that virtue is our proper end. The first step he takes in constructing his theory of education is precisely discovering what we are and what our end is. Once this goal is achieved we can then start developing our knowledge in every other field in order to bring us closer to our particular end.

Before pointing out the chief end of education Turnbull begins his first dialogue with a discussion regarding public and private education. This was a debate present in most of the educational texts of the eighteenth-century, with Locke and Rousseau preferring private education and most of the other French writer’s advocating for public education. However, Turnbull has been neglected by the great majority of scholars working on the history of education, most of them giving their studies a French-centered focus.³²⁵ Most of the recent accounts of education in the enlightenment highlight the relevance of Locke’s work and Rousseau’s *Emile*, but there is hardly any mention of Turnbull or Fordyce, whose thought on education arguably influenced at least some of the important educational texts of the second half of the eighteenth century. Further, considering Turnbull’s work can enrich studies of Locke’s impact on education, and of many of the pedagogical debates of the time. For example, Sophia

³²⁴ Turnbull, *Education*, 24.

³²⁵ See for example J.D. Browning (Ed.), *Education in the eighteenth century* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979), and Willis Rudy, *The universities of Europe, 1100-1914* (London: Associated University Press, 1984). It is difficult to find accounts of education in the enlightenment that are not restricted to the French context, but for a recent study on the latter see Natasha Gill, *Educational Philosophy in the French Enlightenment* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010)

Woodley³²⁶ discusses Locke's preference of private over public education, and she mentions that Locke's ideas, "due to their continuing relevance...were discussed and debated actively for the better part of the century."³²⁷ She points out that Locke preferred private education because he believed that the main purpose of education was the achievement of virtue. From Locke she jumps to her analysis of Rousseau's *Emile*. Given that Turnbull holds the same belief as Locke that education's main purpose is the teaching of virtue, but he abstains from recommending private over public education, it is unfortunate that Woodley misses Turnbull's *Education* in her discussion.

For his part, Turnbull seems to prefer private education in his initial passage, but this is not the case: as it will be clear from our examination of *Education* and *Painting*, he actually advocates for a middle ground between public and private education. In this early passage he makes it clear that whether public or private, the underlying consideration regarding education is that it should always aim towards the achievement of virtue. Turnbull explains this through the character of Socrates:

'Tis virtue, Callias, direct virtue, which is the valuable but the hard part to be aimed at in education; and not a forward pertness, or any little arts of shifting. All other, even good accomplishments, should give place and be postponed to this. This is the solid and substantial good which tutors should not only talk of, but which the labour and art of education should replenish the mind with, and deeply root there: nay never cease inculcating, and fixing by all proper methods, till the young man, having a deep and abiding sense and relish of its excellence, places his strength, his glory, his pleasure in it.³²⁸

He borrows this passage from Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*³²⁹, a text that Turnbull frequently draws upon. Here Turnbull uses Locke's text to claim that the final and most important purpose of education is virtue. If our goal in this present stage is to follow the path to virtue then it is reasonable to argue that the main of education is to help us reach our natural

³²⁶ Sophia Woodley, "‘Oh Miserable and Most Ruinous Measure’: the Debate between Private and Public Education in Britain, 1760-1800" in *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain*, eds. Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) 21-40.

³²⁷ Woodley, "‘Oh miserable and Most Ruinous Measure,'" 22-24.

³²⁸ Turnbull, *Education*, 37-38.

³²⁹ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, eds. John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

end. Now there are certain ways education can teach us to follow the virtuous path, but not all of them teach us truly to love virtue for its own sake.

In the next few pages of the dialogue Turnbull discusses the role of corporal punishment in education. Drawing on two of the laws of nature established in *Principles 1* he argues against the use of this type of punishment. In his discussion of the law of the moral sense Turnbull tells us that the only actions that we approve or disapprove of are those that are motivated by the will (law of power).³³⁰ If corporal punishments are used to instruct, through the law of association the child will not learn to love virtue for its own sake, but will rather act by fear of pain, which cannot truly count as virtue.³³¹

The way the ancient philosophers taught virtue, Turnbull tells us, was by letting the children exercise their natural faculties from very early on, and guiding them through example:

Their masters, whose examples were ever in their eyes, were patterns to them of every virtue, of temperance, of fortitude, and of vigilant active benevolence. And no day passed in which some new example of some one or other eminent moral excellency was not set before them from history, to add new spurs to their noble ambition.—But this was not all. Hardly did any day go over their heads, in which some opportunity was not found out to try and exercise their virtue, that one, at least, which is the foundation, and may justly be called the mother of all the virtues, self-command, and the habit of duly consulting reason what ought or ought not to be done.³³²

Turnbull borrows this idea of teaching by example from Plutarch's work on education.³³³ We can see from the passage that the teaching of history is also relevant for the education of virtue. The importance of history in education is one of the key aspects that Turnbull incorporates in his own theory. He continues summarizing Plutarch's theory of education, and in passing he refers to the unity of the great chain of being in order to justify the beauty of virtue. We have already discussed that the continuous feature of the great chain of being entails that there can be no gaps. This seems to be the foundation for Plutarch's definition of beauty:

³³⁰ See section 3.5 of this thesis.

³³¹ Turnbull, *Education*, 42-47.

³³² Turnbull, *Education*, 52.

³³³ Plutarch, *Plutarch's Moralia*, vol.1, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, (London: William Heinemann, 1949).

For as whatever is beautiful is such, by a strict coherence and dependence of various parts uniting in one end, so that the smallest alteration or diminution would render it deform'd; in the same manner is all life directed by a principle of virtue, always consonant and harmonious: All its different parts and several offices flow from the same motive, conspire to the same end, and mutually illustrate and set off one another: Being fitly measured and appportioned; having a close and intimate connexion with one another, and with one common scope; bearing a proper relation to times and circumstances, the whole piece is beautiful to behold. But whatever is contrary to virtue is disorder and dissonance. And a vitious course of life is a continued train of irregularities, contrarieties and discords.³³⁴

The above passage might well stand as a summary of Turnbull's argument throughout *Principles 1*. In the previous chapter we saw how Turnbull constantly reminds us that the natural faculties of human beings all balance each other and work together to progress toward virtue, which is our natural end. So just as beauty in the natural world is the result of the relation between the parts and of these to the whole, virtue is the end that all our faculties aim towards, and vice disrupts the order and harmony given by virtue. This is why virtue should be the chief purpose of education.

The main idea Turnbull has been exploring in this part of the dialogue is the priority of learning the love of virtue. He borrows some ideas from Plutarch, Quintilian, and Locke, and presents them through the voice of Socrates. Turnbull puts forward here the idea that virtue is not only the first thing children should learn, but also that the whole of education must be grounded on the love of virtue.

There are two main reasons that justify this claim: Turnbull's belief in the natural goodness of mankind and the law of power established in *Principles 1*. We are born into this world in an infant state of mind and the end of our stage in this progressive chain of nature is to follow virtue. The sooner the love of virtue is inculcated, the sooner we will be on the right track to achieve our end before moving onto the next stage. Regarding the law of power, in *Principles 1* Turnbull tells us that by this law we are capable of exercising our will and acquiring pleasures from the material world. This is a good law, but he recognizes that this power, when disproportionate, can be disadvantageous. By itself, the law of power does not result in evil; it is the unguided power that

³³⁴ Turnbull, *Education*, 54-55.

is dangerous. By instructing children as soon as possible, power can be properly exercised towards the love of virtue and hence towards our natural end.

Turnbull goes on to clarify that instructing the love of virtue is not the only lesson to be taught, but all the other sciences are united in it. We will explore this feature of the unity of all the sciences later on in the last section of this chapter. For now, it is enough to illustrate the idea with a quote from the dialogue:

I must give you, my friend, a whole course of lectures, if I would shew you fully, that without deserting my one subject, I must naturally be led to discourse of every part of nature, i.e. to unfold the chief principles and truths in every science. For every science has it not some part of nature for its object; and are not all parts of nature closely linked together? Is not nature one?³³⁵

Turnbull's argument here is that given the unity of the sciences, you can teach "natural and moral philosophy with one breath."³³⁶ All the sciences point to the same feature: the wisdom and benevolence of the Author of nature. It does not matter that we are studying natural philosophy, art or moral philosophy; all of them lead to the order and perfection of God's work. Turnbull's explanation here shows that the unity of the sciences points to the overarching agenda in all his texts, namely, to show through reason that the Author of nature is infinitely wise and infinitely good.

Besides the unity of the sciences there is another important feature highlighted in this dialogue. After telling us that part of education is to illustrate not just the virtues but also the vices so the youth can learn to avoid them,³³⁷ Turnbull gives us a clear statement of the method to follow in education:

This skill [discerning between virtues and vices] in men and manners, is not the product of a few superficial thoughts, or even of much reading, but is the effect of experience and observation, in a man who has lived in the world with his eyes open, and conversed with men of all sorts: And to instill this knowledge into young minds

³³⁵ Turnbull, *Education*, 59.

³³⁶ Turnbull, *Education*, 60.

³³⁷ Turnbull, *Education*, 64-65.

with due precaution, to open this scene to them gradually, with a gentle and wary hand, and thus conduct them, as it were by the arm, into a world of dangers, by proper degrees, or step by step, requires great prudence, great dexterity. But he who thinks not this knowledge of mankind of more moment to his son than abstract speculations about the essences and modes of spirit and matter, than all the languages and all the learned sciences, forgets that the art of living right with men, and of managing one's affairs with prudence, is the most necessary of all arts and sciences.³³⁸

Here we can see the interaction between Turnbull's guiding principles that supplies him with the salient features of his theory: the natural end of men is virtue, and this is determined by our place in the great chain of nature. We should endeavor to progress towards that end, and the only proper way we can achieve it is by following the experimental method founded on facts and observation. This is why we need to make virtue the first step in the education of children.

4.2 The Association of Ideas and Education

The second main idea that is discussed at length in his dialogue is related to another of the laws of human nature: the law of association. In the discussion Turnbull argues that the law of association and habits plays an important role in the education of children in two different ways: a good education must be based on good habits, and on the other hand wrong associations must be prevented.

Turnbull first considers the thought that we can trace all vices to bad habits that are adopted at an early stage, instead of blaming them on nature. To illustrate this point he gives a couple of examples. The first one has to do with corporal punishment: when parents beat their children, they are unknowingly encouraging violence:

"Give me a blow that I may beat him," is a lesson repeated to children every day. And it is thought nothing, because their little hands can do no hurt. But let me ask you, must not this lesson corrupt their minds? Is not this not only recommending the way of force and violence to them, but actually setting them into it, and practising them

³³⁸ Turnbull, *Education*, 66, brackets added, underlining added.

in it? Reflect a little how habits are contracted, how temper is formed, and then tell me whether it be strange that those who have been thus taught, practised and applauded when little, for striking and hurting others by proxy, and thus encouraged to take delight in doing harm and making others suffer, are prepared and prone to do it when they are strong enough to make their own weight felt, and to deal blows to some purpose.³³⁹

The association of ideas in this case leads children to believe that there is some purpose in hurting others with physical violence. Similarly, Turnbull tells us that vanity and false ambition can be traced back to mothers complimenting their children on their clothes, thereby creating a habit where material rewards are greater goods than wisdom and virtue.³⁴⁰ Given that the danger of the association of ideas that Turnbull adopts from Locke can lead to such damaging habits and beliefs, it needs to be properly monitored, especially in the education of children:

Take my parting advice, which is, to watch over the associations of ideas (I may speak to you in this philosophical stile) which form, which the occurrences in childhood must form in every young one's mind; lest by this means any thing become a more honourable, pleasant, attractive idea than virtue and honesty. This is the sum of wisdom, and the sum of education.³⁴¹

For Turnbull the association of ideas is a good law, but we need to be wary of the damage of wrong associations and correct them as soon as possible. In education we need to take due care that children form good habits, and prevent them from coming into bad ones by wrong associations. One of the characters in this part of the dialogue, Strephon, asks Damocles (the interlocutor who portrays Turnbull's position) how to proceed in this matter and by which method to instruct their children into forming good habits. The first step is to distinguish between natural and unnatural associations:

There is a great difference, Strephon, between the cravings of nature and those of fancy. And therefore parents ought to distinguish between them. There are wants, which reason alone, without some other help, is not able to keep from disturbing us.

³³⁹ Turnbull, *Education*, 71-72.

³⁴⁰ Turnbull, *Education*. 73.

³⁴¹ Turnbull, *Education*, 73-74.

The pains excited in us by the necessary demands of nature, are designed to be monitors to us of the mischiefs of which they are fore-runners. And therefore they must not be totally neglected, or even suffered unnecessarily to give us too great uneasiness, or to put us in imminent peril.³⁴²

The character then explains how to distinguish between the two types of cravings, highlighting Turnbull's commitment to the experimental method: the advice given through the voice of Damocles is that children can only learn good habits from **experience**, so it is the parent's duty to, through repeated acts, ensure that good habits are formed. The example Turnbull uses is that, by experience, the parents need to form in their children the ability to control their desires; this is achieved, not by denying their natural cravings, like hunger, but rather by denying the cravings of fancy.³⁴³

The danger of the wrong association of ideas is also at the crux of Turnbull's refusal to use rewards and punishments in education. By rewarding good behavior with 'bodily gratifications' and punishing bad actions with punishments the children learn virtue not for what it really is, not for the love of it, but rather for the association that has been created between virtue and the lower sensual pleasure or even just the approval of others:

Damocles: What motives do you think consistent with virtue?

Strephon: He alone is truly virtuous, who sincerely abhors moral evil as such, and places his supreme satisfaction in acting conformably to his reason and moral conscience.

Damocles: Are there no other motives, which may concur with this principle, that is indeed the genuine spring of truly virtuous deeds?

Strephon: I know but one, and that is the desire of the esteem and love of wise and good men.

Damocles: Well then, Strephon, only consider what must be the natural effects of the rewards and punishments we use with children, and you will easily discover what they ought to be. Will not what is used as a reward be esteemed a greater good, and what is used as a punishment be esteemed a greater evil?

³⁴² Turnbull, *Education*, 76.

³⁴³ Turnbull, *Education*, 75-77.

Strephon: They will, and therefore we are to employ no rewards which are not to be considered as goods, and no punishments which ought not to be considered as evils, and be motives.

Damocles: What then are we to make use of as motives to excite children to virtue, besides the excellence of virtue and the deformity of vice?

Strephon: None other but what I named as the only other motive consistent with virtue, viz. good reputation and disgrace.³⁴⁴

I have quoted this part of the dialogue in full to give the flavor of Turnbull's use of dialogue to express his main ideas. As we can see in this passage, Turnbull reinforces his idea that the only truly virtuous actions are those motivated by its own excellence. By good example and from experience children must learn that virtue in itself is not only our end, but also the highest kind of pleasure that can be achieved.

Turnbull's first dialogue ends with a discussion regarding the connection between mind and body discussed in *Principles 1*. This connection plays an important role in Turnbull's theory of education. In a couple of pages Turnbull argues that the care of the body should be taken into account in education. Due to the necessary connection Turnbull has established between body and mind, the mind works better when the body is in a healthy state. Given our connection to the natural world, illnesses and general unhealthiness restrict the way we interact with the material world, preventing us from acquiring knowledge and impeding the proper functioning of the mind:

Indeed so equally are these two [body and mind] yoked by nature, that they do not require two different regimens, but one and the same course is best for both. As the mind is in a bad state, when its wanton, petulant and luxurious imaginations irritate the body, and make it feel wants, which, when left to itself, it would not feel, or as often as it so feels them, might easily be supplied: So the body is then in its soundness and pleasantest temperature, when it most easily and readily obeys the commands of a well-regulated mind.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ Turnbull, *Education*, 80.

³⁴⁵ Turnbull, *Education*, 82, square brackets added.

The body-mind connection highlights the unity between the natural and moral worlds, and the particular double nature of human beings. It is this unity that leads to the thought that a healthy body has its effect on the health of the mind. This aspect of taking care of the health of the body is further developed in his plan of education. In the next set of dialogues Turnbull discusses in particular the general connection between education and human nature.

4.3 Progress, Education, and Learning

The second part of the dialogue begins with a general discussion regarding the objection that nature is not perfect (and neither is the work of the Author of nature) since adversity and learning are necessary features of our life. If God is perfect, omnipotent and omnibenevolent, then why would he create us so that we have to go through this stage of learning and trial? In his answer Turnbull goes over most of the aspects he developed in *Principles 1*, guided by his belief in the progressive chain of nature and the natural goodness of mankind (virtue is our end).

Supported by his guiding principles, Turnbull uses here the same argument he used in *Principles 1* to dismiss any objection against the suitability (perfection) of the constitution of human beings:

And indeed all the objections against man, into however many classes they are divided, ultimately terminate in this one, “Why is not man more perfect?” To which the only answer that can be given is, that such a species as man well deserves his place in the rising scale of created life, since he is naturally furnished with powers, capacities, and affections capable of perpetual improvement, by due culture and diligence. All the objections against man, or rather against the ways of providence towards man, are reducible to one, to which this is a sufficient reply.³⁴⁶

Knowledge and nature cannot be but progressive, so this demands that we enter our embodied stage in an infant state, and the nature of virtue being progressive requires that we advance towards it in our present stage, since we are naturally built for improving towards virtue. We are perfect then in the sense that we are perfectly fitted for our place in the chain of being, and in this way Turnbull gets rid of the objection against the imperfect state of mankind.

³⁴⁶ Turnbull, *Education*, 100-101.

The next dialogue highlights the importance of the connection between the natural and moral worlds in Turnbull's thought. The discussion between Palemon and Simias aims to establish that the beauty and harmony we find in the natural world can also be found if we examine our moral world. The first line in the dialogue introduces the unity of natural and moral philosophy, and in particular the usefulness of the former for the latter, a topic Turnbull explored in his 1723 graduation thesis. In this dialogue Palemon voices Turnbull's opinion:

...I find, my good friend Simias, that I have been in a mistake about natural enquiries, and have unjustly looked upon them as mere amusements, that what you admire, and what gives you most satisfaction in your researches into nature, is the wisdom and goodness you there perceive in every fabric, in every constitution and oeconomy; so that the wisdom and virtue men ought to adore and imitate is never out of your sight.³⁴⁷

Simias replies that he focuses on natural philosophy because everything else is "enwrapped in such thick darkness." Palemon appears confused by this statement and in passing highlights the importance of introspection for our knowledge of the moral world. Palemon asks Simias to clarify what he means by darkness:

Sure you cannot mean that moral things are more remote from our investigation, or more difficult to be understood than natural things. For is it not as easy to turn your eyes inward, and contemplate the structure and operations of our mind, as to inspect and anatomize vegetables with the help of microscopes: nothing that passes in our breast can escape our close introspection, if we are attentive, but the naked unassisted eye can make but little progress in the other research.³⁴⁸

The central argument of this dialogue begins here: Palemon tries to convince Simias that the order and perfection he finds in the natural world can also be found in the moral world. Turnbull focuses on the union between the moral and natural worlds to support his claim: if we find beauty and order in nature, then we must also find it in human beings since we are part of the whole system of nature, part of the great chain of being. The dialogue is a summary of the ideas he argued for in *Principles 1*, and since we have already explained them in detail, I will not

³⁴⁷ Turnbull, *Education*, 109.

³⁴⁸ Turnbull, *Education*, 109-110.

spend long in the exposition of Turnbull's dialogues. I will only add a few more remarks before exploring the part of *Education* where Turnbull proposes his own theory.

It might seem that Turnbull is merely repeating the argument he has already explained at length in *Principles 1*, but this is not quite accurate. Turnbull gives a reason for going through the laws of human nature. If we want to find out the main purpose of education we must first know the particular end of human beings, and we can only find this out by examining our nature:

This conversation I have repeated, in order to render justice to the human mind and its Author, by pointing out the noble end for which we are made; or the excellent faculties with which we are endued, that are susceptible of such high improvements by due culture. Nature hath not given us virtue: nay, nature cannot give us virtue, because virtue means an acquisition made by a moral agent himself: But nature hath made us capable of attaining to great virtue, great moral perfection, by adorning us with the capacities requisite to such attainments. And from the same discourse it is easy to collect what ought to be the lesson in liberal education.³⁴⁹

By observing our natural constitution we can discover the true aim of education and the way we must carry out the education of our children. The furniture of the mind established in *Principles 1* demonstrates that human beings are perfectly fitted for virtue, so our education should be concerned with helping us achieve such an end:

All we have to observe is, that if the power or habit of bringing our fancies and affections to a fair trial, by some accurately considered and improved standard, in consequence of the right institution and discipline, be firmly established in the mind, the chief point of education is gained...the right discipline of the passions.³⁵⁰

Turnbull concludes this first part of *Education* with a conversation between Socrates, Demodocus, and his son Theages, in which the priority of instructing virtue before any other topic is reinforced. Turnbull expresses what he believes is the main task of education:

³⁴⁹ Turnbull, *Education*, 127.

³⁵⁰ Turnbull, *Education*, 144.

...all I pretend to is, to instil into young minds the love of justice, of truth, of mankind, and to raise their abhorrence and aversion against every vice. I shew them the beauty of virtuous actions in real characters, and paint out to them the strength of mind, and quiet, the self-satisfactions, and undisturbable happiness which virtue and virtue only can give.³⁵¹

I have not spent long on the dialogue Turnbull constructs in *Education*, since we are interested in constructing and understanding his system of philosophy. Besides the features we have examined, the dialogue mainly gives a general overview of the ideas of other writers with the purpose of setting the stage for Turnbull's own theory of education. He presents a summary of the ideas argued for in *Principles 1* in the more popular dialogue form so he can construct his theory on the foundation of his anatomy of the human mind in the remaining part of *Education*. By referring to other authors Turnbull is able to show that his thoughts on education are not just a matter of his own opinion, but founded on experience and confirmed in the work of others. In the following section we examine Turnbull's own proposal for the education of children.

4.4 How to Educate for Virtue

The whole of the text is composed of a two-part dialogue and *An Essay on Liberal Education*. In the latter Turnbull argues for what he believes is the correct method of education. As I mentioned earlier, the first stage in the search for knowledge is discovering who we are and what our end is, since the only way we can assess the fitness of things is by relating it to ends:

The way therefore to judge whether education be upon a right footing or not, is to compare it with this end; or to consider what it does in order to accomplish youth for choosing and behaving well in the various conditions, relations, and incidents of life. If education be calculated and adapted to furnish young minds betimes with proper knowledge for their guidance and direction in the chief affairs of the world, and in the principal vicissitudes to which human concerns are subject, then is it indeed proper or right education.³⁵²

³⁵¹ Turnbull, *Education*, 166.

³⁵² Turnbull, *Education*, 171-172.

The only way we can figure out the proper system of education is by determining how fit it is for our end, and as we know from the dialogues and from *Principles 1*, this end is virtue. Turnbull's belief in the natural goodness of mankind is crucial for his thoughts on education, and since this belief is confirmed in the study of our faculties, Turnbull alludes to a line by Pope to comment that "the proper study of mankind is man."³⁵³

And sure we need not stay any longer to prove, that man is the properest study of man: And therefore that it ought to be the chief scope of education to teach man what he is, or rather what he is intended to be and may become, by proper application and culture; or what is his chief business, duty and good.³⁵⁴

The initial and most important task of education is to find out the purpose of human beings, which is dependent on the end he is naturally made for. Turnbull here uses the connection between the natural and moral worlds to show that whatever is fit is determined by particular ends:

Youth may easily be led to observe, that there is a perfection to which plants and flowers may be improved; or that there is a perfection to which horses and other animals may be formed. And hence they may very naturally be led to enquire what is the perfection to which man may be cultivated, and what is the culture and what the means for accomplishing this noble end.³⁵⁵

Discovering the end we are naturally made for is only the first stage: education should be concerned not only with telling us what our end is, with the study of man, but also with the way to achieve such an end. This supports the priority of teaching virtues that Turnbull has already discussed. In a few pages he tells us that the method to achieve this is by example and experience. Turnbull illustrates a few passages in this section with lines from Horace's *Satires*. He tells us that the method which Horace's father used is the proper one for the education of children:

³⁵³ Pope, *An Essay on Man*, 53.

³⁵⁴ Turnbull, *Education*, 174.

³⁵⁵ Turnbull, *Education*, 174-175.

His father's method of instructing him in virtue by examples, naturally led him to the practice, and formed in him the habit of self-conversation or self-examination, and of often reflecting with himself upon his conduct, and upon what is fair and laudable in conduct, and what the reverse, without which one cannot make progress in virtue, or even maintain acquaintance with himself.³⁵⁶

Turnbull further clarifies this method:

For 'tis by examples that good and bad conduct, with their various effects and consequences, the strength and grace to which men, by proper diligence, may arrive, and the baseness and misery into which vice plunges, most strongly appear.³⁵⁷

Here Turnbull is expressing the importance of learning from example in our moral education. The reference to Horace shows that teachers and tutors serve as models for moral instruction, but they are not the only sources for us to learn by example; we can also learn from the life of characters throughout history, since they can also show that vices lead to suffering and that virtue leads to beauty:

This, indeed, is the moral lesson every more exalted example in the records of human affairs presents to us in the most striking light, and to which cannot be too early or too forcibly inculcated from fact and experience..³⁵⁸

And for this lesson historical characters are of great use:

The characters of the more considerable personages of moral history, will afford, to a judicious instructor, excellent opportunities of enforcing, of deeply riveting this important lesson upon young minds.³⁵⁹

Turnbull explains in some detail this idea that we can learn from the life of historical characters in another of his texts. He added *A Prefatory Discourse* to his translation of Justin's *History of the*

³⁵⁶ Turnbull, *Education*, 179.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Turnbull, *Education*, 180, underlining added.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

World, where he discusses the usefulness of history for the education of children. He tells us there that history shows characters how they really were, pointing out that virtue leads to happiness and vice to misery. In particular, Turnbull argues that it is useful for the education of “the great and powerful,” since history shows characters, whether kings or common folk, for what they really are:

...if all be not founded upon truth and justice, history will treat them [kings] as they deserve, and set them forth to show in their genuine colours. And how doth it regard the greater part of renowned conquerors, but as public scourges, enemies of mankind, destroyers of nations; who, pushed by blind and restless ambition, carried desolation through the world, like a fire, or an inundation? It exhibits a Philip, an Alexander the Great, a Caligula, a Nero, a Domitian, who were so loaded with flattering praises in their lives, as become, after their death, the horror and execration of mankind: whereas we find by it, that an Epaminondas, a Pelopidas, a Titus, a Antonin, are yet mention'd in the world with pleasure and delight, because they never employ'd their power, but in doing good.³⁶⁰

Turnbull considers history as a highly important source for education, given that it teaches through facts and observation. In the present discussion the importance of history lies in the fact that it teaches by example. This way of teaching also relates to an aspect of the law of power described in *Principles 1*. Turnbull claims that an aspect of this law is based on knowledge, and that in fact we are naturally endowed with a thirst for knowledge from the earliest stages of our life. It is of importance then that children are presented with the most proper examples, since it is one of the first sources they acquire knowledge from. There is one aspect in particular that parents and teachers must take due care with when leading their children through example:

Above all, let them early be led to observe that knowledge of nature is not only in itself pleasant, exceedingly pleasant, and the proper perfection of the intellectual faculties, with which kind nature hath furnished and adorned us: but that knowledge is power....³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ Turnbull, *History*, vii.

³⁶¹ Turnbull, *Education*, 182.

The love of power and the natural desire for knowledge are the main topics in the first chapter of Turnbull's essay. Since power depends entirely on knowledge, it is important that children learn virtue first and from there expand to other sciences. The one that follows virtue in importance is the knowledge of nature. In order to give his hierarchy of subjects Turnbull relies on the idea of the progressiveness of nature and the law of power. He explains that we move from teaching what knowledge is and how perfectly fitted we are for it, to the knowledge of nature because it is this knowledge which will expand our dominion. Turnbull complains about the neglect of instructing the love of natural knowledge at an early stage, and tells us that:

...they must not know what natural knowledge means, or to what we owe all the advantages of life, and to what alone we can owe the exercise of our power and dominion in our habitation, earth, who do not consider it as the study that hath the nearest connexion with our interest and dignity, and which ought therefore to be principally encouraged by society...³⁶²

Once we have acquired knowledge of the natural world we can exercise our power over it, and then we can focus on what we can create: we move to the arts, commerce, industry and politics that arise from our law of power and dominion with the chief aim of contributing to the progress of human beings. Once all of these are learnt:

...they [the youth] will then understand what is the proper study of man, what knowledge in general, and what the perfection and culture of human understanding towards its perfection, signify and comprehend.³⁶³

All of this discussion is directed by the fact that knowledge entails power, so it should be the chief aim of education to direct the acquisition of knowledge towards the proper end of human beings, directing our power towards virtue. Turnbull then explains how to achieve this, and here he highlights the importance of the experimental method, not only for instructing the virtues: for *any* lesson, experience and examples are the proper method for the instruction of children. Turnbull explains this by drawing on the connection between the natural and moral worlds. He begins by explaining what we can learn from nature:

³⁶² Turnbull, *Education*, 184.

³⁶³ Turnbull, *Education*, 186, underlining added.

They may be easily led to observe, that we cannot alter the gravity and springiness of the air, nor the law of gravity in water, but we can render both air and water, in many instances, serviceable to us, in consequence of these immutable properties...and when a few such truths have been explained and confirmed by proper experiments, youth will learn from such lessons what is meant by properties of bodies, and by general fixed laws of motion, and what human art may do, how it must go to work, and what it is absurd for it to attempt.³⁶⁴

Just as we learn the laws of motion from experiments, we can learn about the moral world in the same way:

...general unalterable laws should be uniformly observed by nature in its operations, in order to our being capable of knowing or imitating nature, or rendering material things subservient to any useful end with respect to ourselves...From this observation which results from, and therefore ought to be inculcated from every experiment about whatever corporeal object, it will be a very natural transition to pass to the consideration of our moral power, and of what moral effects are not within our power.³⁶⁵

Turnbull comments that this unity between the natural and moral worlds will be explained in more detail later in his text. He concludes the first chapter of his essay reminding us that the subject of all our enquiries is the observation of nature:

... the great secret of education lies in finding out proper means of making young minds fall in love with useful researches, the enquiries that best become man, because they are of the highest importance to him, viz. researches into the order of the universe, and the good order of the human mind. For besides this one science, there is no true, no solid, no useful knowledge.³⁶⁶

It is interesting to note that Turnbull joins the order of the universe with the order of the human mind in one science: both point to the perfection of the Author of nature, and this is why they

³⁶⁴ Turnbull, *Education*, 188-189.

³⁶⁵ Turnbull, *Education*, 189.

³⁶⁶ Turnbull, *Education*, 199.

can be considered as the one, and most useful science. Leaving this discussion aside for later, Turnbull moves on to discuss the formation of good habits in children. The whole chapter is guided by the law of association he established in *Principles 1*. Turnbull begins by quoting an extensive passage from Locke's text on education where the latter comments that, even though it is commonly acknowledged that the source of many vices can be found in the early formation of habits, yet somehow this issue has not been paid its due attention.³⁶⁷ A large part of this chapter is a mixture of quotes and paraphrases from Locke's text, giving some credit to the claim that Turnbull was not contributing an original theory, since all he does is borrow from what other authors said. However, I argue here that Turnbull quotes extensively from Locke and other authors because he is constructing a natural history of education that will serve as a foundation for his own theory. In this particular section Turnbull quotes from Locke to confirm the claims made in the first chapter of *Education*:

Our author [Locke] goes on in the same manner, shewing how civility, deference, liberality, fortitude, and every virtue may early be formed in young minds. What I have quoted from him will send those who are in earnest about the education of their children to his excellent work itself, and lead the thinking into a very useful train of reflections on this important subject. And his observations on this more essential part of education are compleat; nothing can be added to them.³⁶⁸

Despite this last disclaimer, Turnbull does add some considerations of his own regarding the method of educating children. He begins by referring to the connection between natural and moral worlds by drawing upon a passage from the Bible which features in *Principles 1* and is discussed at length in *Principles 2*: “what you reap is what you sow.”³⁶⁹

When the precepts of virtue, for these are the good seed he came to sow, are heard carelessly and without regard, so that at the first idle fancy or wanton appetite quickly drives them out of the mind, they are as seed that falls upon the beaten road, and never entering at all into the ground is picked up by the birds... But if the mind be over-run with carnal desires, instruction is then like seed that falls among the weeds and thorns, which springing up with it, overgrow and kill it.—Finally, a well-

³⁶⁷ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, 103-107.

³⁶⁸ Turnbull, *Education*, 220-221, square brackets added.

³⁶⁹ Mathew 13:3-9.

disposed mind, and not disturbed by irregular passions, but deeply impregnated with the love of truth, knowledge and virtue, firmly and warmly embraces good precepts and institutions; and there the seed dies not but is fruitful, and like corn that falls into a good, well manured, clean soil, bringeth forth a plentiful, a beautiful, an useful harvest.³⁷⁰

The education of children is analogous to the preparation of soil for a fruitful harvest. Turnbull uses this analogy because he wants to highlight the importance of educating children from a young age. If the farmer does not prepare the soil well, his harvest will not be as good; if parents do not prepare their children at a young age, the harder it will be to instruct them later on to follow the path to virtue. In particular, since it is early in their youth that the association of ideas forms in the mind, it is important that parents and teachers make sure that wrong associations are averted and weeded out.

In the next chapter Turnbull continues to rely on Locke's thoughts on education, although not to the extent he did in the previous chapter. He instead quotes extensively from other authors, in particular Charles Rollin and Quintillan. On a superficial examination it might seem that the common claim that Turnbull's work is rambling and repetitive has great force with respect to these sections of *Education*. However, if we take into account his guiding principles, we can gain a deeper understanding of Turnbull's theory of education. In particular what stands out from all the extensive borrowing is that it is justified by the importance placed on the role of natural histories for knowledge; Turnbull's text itself is actually a natural history of education.

There is nothing in chapters two and three of *Education* that Turnbull has not already explained at great length. The aim of both chapters seems to be instead to confirm all his claims with observations that show that the chief end of education is the progress of virtue, and that this is observed in those cultures and times that have contributed most to the progress of human beings. It is in this sense that these two chapters comprise a natural history of education, since they amount to a collection of facts and observations. It is not that Turnbull is mainly repeating claims he has already made, but rather he is giving a proper confirmation of the theory he holds.

³⁷⁰ Turnbull, *Education*, 221-222.

As we will see when we explore chapter four of *Education*, Turnbull places great importance on the history of man for moral education. As Gladys Bryson phrases it, Turnbull:

...had said that the application of the moral law could proceed solidly only on historical example, and that no one could be prepared for such application unless he had read carefully the histories of different nations.³⁷¹

Since education is a part of moral philosophy, it is only fit that Turnbull applied his own method in his treatise on the topic and dedicated some chapters to the construction of a natural history of education. As we examined in chapter two, the Baconian method of the collection of natural histories was one of the features constantly applied by those who committed themselves to the experimental method. In *Education* Turnbull applies this method and constructs a natural history of education to identify certain features he believes must guide the path we need to take to instruct students in their quest for virtue. These features are the practical emphasis of education, the priority of virtue and values, and the proper care of the body.

Turnbull introduces the practicality issue with a discussion regarding the education of language taken from Locke. The passage illustrates Turnbull's aversion to the scholastic system of education that in the first years focused on the teaching of Latin and Greek. Turnbull borrows from Locke three main reasons why human beings learn languages:

1. Men learn Languages for the ordinary intercourse of Society and Communication of thoughts in common Life without any farther design in their use of them... 2. Others there are the greatest part of whose Business in this World, is to be done with their Tongues and with their Pens... 3. There is a third sort of Men, who apply themselves to two or three Foreign, Dead, and (which amongst us are called the) learned Languages...³⁷²

It is clear that all three reasons are practical considerations, and in none of the three cases the instruction of grammar should come first: for the first reason, knowledge of grammatical rules is not necessary; for the second, grammar is relevant, but it should be the one regarding the writer's native language instead of Latin or Greek; lastly, for the third reason, more can be learnt from

³⁷¹ Bryson, *Man and society*, 84.

³⁷² Turnbull, *Education*, 241-242; Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, 225-226.

actually reading the books of Greek and Roman writers than by learning by heart the rules of grammar.³⁷³ Turnbull explains this by referring to the similarity between the internal and external faculties or senses. His example summarizes this idea of the practical emphasis that education should have:

As one may not only have a very good ear for music, but even be able to play very well upon some musical instrument, tho' he does not understand the principles and foundations of combination in music; so is it with respect to grammar and languages, in a great measure. In teaching music, care is taken first to form the ear, and then, and not till then, is it thought expedient to teach the scholar the maxims or rules of composition. And for the same reasons, the like method ought to be pursued in teaching grammar and rhetoric, that the feelings of the ear may, by these arts, be enabled to justify themselves to the understanding.³⁷⁴

The thought here is that a thorough knowledge of grammar is not necessary for using language, just like the ability to read a musical score is not necessary for playing a piece. Turnbull is not arguing that grammar is of no use, but rather that it is secondary to the practical aspect of language. He relates this emphasis of the practicality of language to Charles Rollin's thought on the topic. It seems, however, that the quote used addresses not only the practicality of language, but also the practicality of education in general for the benefit of human beings. Turnbull finds Rollin's thought relevant "because his rules are drawn from his own experience, or such as he could equally found upon:"

The education of youth hath ever been regarded by the best philosophers and the wisest legislators as the most certain source of happiness, not only to families, but to states or kingdoms. In effect, what is a republic or kingdom but a vast body, whose vigour and health depends upon that of the families, which are, as it were, its parts and members none of which can fail in its functions without detriment to the whole?... Laws, in truth, are the foundation of states; and by maintaining regularity and good order in them, support public peace and tranquility. But whence do the

³⁷³ Turnbull, *Education*, 242.

³⁷⁴ Turnbull, *Education*, 245.

laws derive their force and vigour, if not from good education, accustoming the minds of subjects to approve and submit to them?³⁷⁵

Turnbull moves from the practicality of language to a characterization of education as the foundation for any society, whether formed by a family or a kingdom. Education in general must be guided by a practical focus, and so the subjects that must be taught earlier are those that will be more useful for the power of human beings in the world and the pursuit of virtue. In a recent article,³⁷⁶ Tal Gilead considers this practical feature of education, which leads to the improvement of society as a whole. In his paper, Gilead argues that French and British figures writing on education in the eighteenth century adopted a Baconian conception of the study of nature, which led them to argue that “the teaching of science should be oriented towards generating future scientific progress.”³⁷⁷ Gilead dedicates a section³⁷⁸ to Turnbull’s *Education* where he acknowledges that Turnbull had “many innovative ideas,” and that his theory of education places the progress of science, and of society as a whole, as the chief purpose.

Despite the recognition of Turnbull’s importance, Gilead’s account misses two important aspects. Firstly, he mentions in passing that Turnbull “still considered the progress of virtue to be the most vital part of promoting happiness, he also attached a major importance to the study of nature.”³⁷⁹ This claim is misleading since it makes it appear that virtue and the study of nature are two different things, when for Turnbull the study of nature actually leads to the progress virtue. Though Gilead hints at the connection between the study of nature, virtue, and knowledge of God, he misses the fact that this is an extremely important connection, guaranteed by the belief in the unity of all the sciences and the natural and moral realms. This is the second aspect that Gilead misses. As we have seen in this chapter, the unity of the natural and moral realms plays a prominent role in Turnbull’s theory of education. Together with the belief that the proper end of human beings is virtue, the unity of the two realms allows him to construct a theory of education that promotes the study of both natural and moral philosophy, as we will see

³⁷⁵ Turnbull, *Education*, 249-250; Charles Rollin, *The method of teaching and studying the belles lettres, or an introduction to languages, poetry, rhetoric, history, moral philosophy, physicks, &c*, vol. 4 (London: A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, 1734), 254-255.

³⁷⁶ Tal Gilead, “The Role of Education Redefined: 18th century British and French educational thought and the rise of the Baconian conception of the study of nature,” in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, vol. 43, no. 10 (2011), 1020-1034.

³⁷⁷ Gilead, “The Role of Education Redefined,” 1020.

³⁷⁸ Gilead, “The Role of Education Redefined,” 1026.

³⁷⁹ Gilead, “The Role of Education Redefined,” 1027.

shortly. In particular, the study of both natural and moral philosophy leads us to recognize the wisdom and greatness of the Author of Nature.

With this practical aim in mind, Turnbull goes on to confirm that the teacher's main duty is to instruct in virtue and values. Turnbull confirms this in his natural history of education. He finds a first instance of this idea that education goes beyond instruction of the sciences in Quintilian:

...the scope of masters ought to be something more yet, which is to form their hearts and inclinations; to inspire into them good principles, the principles of honour and probity, and to train up in their minds good habits; to correct and amend in them by soft and sweet methods, any bad dispositions they may have discovered, such as pride, insolence, self-conceit, selfishness, and a spirit of railery, that delights in irritating and insulting, or a habit of laziness and indolence, which would render the best accomplishments profitless.³⁸⁰

Turnbull is reinforcing here the thought that learning from models and examples is important in education, and therefore if the aim is to instruct virtue teachers must also be virtuous. Turnbull borrows this description of the qualities a tutor must possess from Quintilian:

1...a master should put on the sentiments and feelings, the bowels of a parent for his charge... 2....He should indulge in no vices in himself, and suffer none in others... 3. That he be not choleric or passionate... 4. That his manner of teaching be simple, calm, patient, and correct... 5. That he do not grudge them the praise they have merited in due place and time, but that he be not too lavish of it... 6. When he is obliged to reprove let it be done without bitterness or irritation... 7. That he speak often to them of virtue, and always with high relish, delight and commendation.³⁸¹

Notice that there is not one quality that relates to the skill or knowledge of the tutor in any of the sciences. The emphasis is made on the character and moral values instead. The practicality feature, the importance of teaching by example, and the priority of virtue that Turnbull highly

³⁸⁰ Turnbull, *Education*, 255.

³⁸¹ Turnbull, *Education*, 264-265.

values, are nicely summarized and linked together in a passage he borrows from Seneca where a good teacher is described:

When he set himself to describe the advantages of poverty; and to prove that all above a moderate competency ought to be regarded as useless, a troublesome burden, he made me in love with poverty. If he decried vicious pleasures and praised chastity, frugality, sobriety, and purity of soul, I found myself heartily disposed to renounce all pleasures, even the most innocent and legitimate. But there is a shorter and surer way yet of conducting the young to the love of virtue, and that is by good example. For the language of actions is much stronger and more persuasive than words... 'Tis a great happiness when youth meet with masters whose whole lives are one continued lesson: Masters whose actions never belie their instructions, but who do what they advise, and avoid what they blame, and who are yet more admired for their conduct than for their learning or eloquence.³⁸²

The most important feature of a teacher lies in his character: he must be virtuous so he can lead and teach by example. But besides a virtuous conduct there is another feature that teachers and parents must pay attention to, namely, the importance of due care of the body in education. The general idea is guided by the law of the connection between body and mind established in *Principles 1*:

...that certain exercises, tending at once to give health and vigour to the body, and strength and intrepidity to the mind, ought to be united in the institution of youth, with philosophy, rhetoric, and the sciences, and not severed the one from the other, as they too generally are, as if mind and body had no dependance...³⁸³

Given the dual nature of mankind and the connection between our two parts we must make sure that both body and mind are taken care of. Turnbull turns to his natural history of education to show that due care of the exercise of the body in ancient Greece and Rome was important, and this feature is also confirmed by modern authors:

³⁸² Turnbull, *Education*, 273.

³⁸³ Turnbull, *Education*, 294.

...the fitness of some such exercises to all youth is strongly recommended by our own *Milton*, and all our best writers on education, on the same account; for reasons, which the least experience or reflection will immediately suggest, namely, for mutually and equally fortifying body and mind.³⁸⁴

Turnbull relies on history to show that there needs to be balance in the education of the mind and that of the body, either of the extremes being dangerous. He illustrates this idea with a reference to Plato: a complete focus on the instruction of the mind can never produce fortitude of the mind and intrepidity; on the other hand:

...constant practice in the rough, austere, bold exercises, were no methods used to prevent the effect, would render the minds of men too savage and ferocious, and their manners quite rude, harsh and disagreeable, as we find from the character of the Spartans, in whose education the polite arts and sciences had no place, being quite excluded by their legislator.³⁸⁵

Just as the exercise of the body should not be neglected, but rather mixed with the instruction of the mind, it is also important that there is room to let the children delight in recreation. This allows them to exercise their will and freedom, and provides parents and teachers with two advantages:

...this freedom will discover their natural tempers, inclinations and aptitudes, and be thereby a proper means of directing wise parents in the choice of the business and employment of life they shall design them for; and of suggesting fit remedies to them in the mean time, for redressing any wrong bent of nature whatsoever they may observe their children to be in most danger from.³⁸⁶

This analysis of chapters two and three of Turnbull's essay in *Education* shows that there is some truth to the claims of Turnbull's work lacking originality and being repetitive, but only on a surface level. Once we take into account his guiding principles, in particular the commitment to the experimental method, we can make more sense of it. Turnbull is not merely repeating what

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Turnbull, *Education*, 295.

³⁸⁶ Turnbull, *Education*, 298.

others have said regarding education. Rather, he is presenting the reader with a natural history of education that supports the claims he makes within his own theory. We can examine this claim in more detail while examining the final two chapters of *Education*.

Turnbull discusses in chapter four the proper method to carry out the education of children, guided by his belief in the natural goodness of mankind. He discusses what true philosophy is and the proper methods of teaching:

True philosophy teaches the order of nature, and the order of human life. And therefore tho' languages ought not to be neglected, this philosophy ought to be the chief employment of youth every day from their earliest years, that they may timeously learn to delight in searching into the wisdom and goodness of nature, and to love and imitate its all-perfect former and ruler.³⁸⁷

The study of natural and moral philosophy results in the discovery of order and harmony in all of nature, which in turn points to a higher power. This is what education should be about, coinciding with the aim of *Principles 1*, namely, to “vindicate the ways of God to man.” Regarding method, Turnbull first focuses on natural philosophy, and then, through the connection between the natural and moral worlds, moves on to the latter:

...teach them to observe how nature can only be understood or unfolded, and how general properties or powers, and laws of powers are inferred from particular experiences by induction... 'Tis strange that any should imagine that enquiries into the structure of the mind, or its powers, and their laws and connexions, are to be carried on in any other way than researches into the qualities of bodies and their laws, i.e. by careful attention to what experience teaches, and just reasoning from experience; or that these enquiries should be imagined to have no affinity or relation the one to the other. How can facts be known but by experience; external facts but by the testimony of our senses. Or internal ones but by inward sensation or consciousness?³⁸⁸

³⁸⁷ Turnbull, *Education*, 319.

³⁸⁸ Turnbull, *Education*, 320- 321, underlining added.

True philosophy is that which points towards the beauty and perfection in nature and in our minds, and it proceeds by following the experimental method, founding all knowledge on facts and observation, and reasoning from them. Turnbull then recommends that education focus both on natural and moral philosophy, always with the thought that they are only useful insofar as they allow us to advance towards virtue. Turnbull's comment here is driven by the unity of the sciences:

Moral and natural philosophy, sciences, which tho' distinguished by different names, are indeed, in their nature, as nearly allied as their objects, soul and body, ought therefore chiefly to enhance the time of youth, whom we would prepare for living either agreeably or usefully in the world, either for solitude or for active life.³⁸⁹

The unity of moral and natural philosophy is a salient feature in the whole of Turnbull's system of philosophy. In education in particular, teaching both moral and natural philosophy can be aided by referring to history:

But in order to carry on moral philosophy to its perfection, together with natural philosophy instead of stated lectures upon the faculties and affections of the human mind, and the virtues belonging to them, a better method is to read daily with them some piece of history.³⁹⁰

We saw in our examination of chapters two and three of Turnbull's essay in *Education* that history is a key component of moral education because it teaches by example, providing facts and observations that are necessary for any kind of knowledge. Turnbull refers to Rollin to provide the reader with a proper example of the way history is essential for education:

But in truth, not to mention any of the ancient historians, one need only to look carefully into Mr. Rollin's abridgment of ancient history, to see that the records of human affairs which are transmitted to us, however defective they may be in several respects, will, however, afford sufficient opportunities of discoursing upon, and explaining at great length, of pointing out in examples, as in a glass, all the passions of the human heart, and all their various workings in different circumstances, all the

³⁸⁹ Turnbull, *Education*, 323.

³⁹⁰ Turnbull, *Education*, 331.

virtues, and all the vices human nature is capable of, all the snares, all the temptations, all the vicissitudes and incidents of human life.³⁹¹

Besides commenting on the importance of history for education, Turnbull provides an example of how history can help instruct the students for virtue. The example is Scipio's account of the defeat of Carthage. This city had flourished for many years, and was considered great due to "its dominions on both sea and land, its mighty armies, its fleets, elephants, and riches." However, on its fall, Scipio recognized where their weakness lay, and realized that Rome would suffer the same fate:

He foresaw what must be the inevitable fate of Rome, if wealth should beget impatience of discipline, and in the room of ancient virtue introduce corruption, venality and dissoluteness of manners.³⁹²

Turnbull goes on to give an account of the life of Scipio, showing that his education was always directed by virtue and balanced the instruction of the mind and the body. Virtue was regarded as the chief aim of any endeavour, and it was this education that molded him into a remarkable character:

It was instruction in human affairs, knowledge of mankind, deep insight into all the movements of the human breast, and all operations of moral causes, gathered from facts, that qualified Scipio very timeously for serving his country with such prudence and dignity, whether as a statesman or a general.³⁹³

The story is meant to show how a valuable character can be shaped by education, and this can help students recognize that virtue is the correct path to take. At this point Turnbull devotes a few pages to promoting the experimental method and dismissing the scholastic way of educating. He begins by justifying the necessity of history for the study of government and its interactions:

And that very considerable acquaintance with history, and practice in drawing moral or political inferences from history is necessary to qualify for this study, seems to be

³⁹¹ Turnbull, *Education*, 339.

³⁹² Turnbull, *Education*, 341.

³⁹³ Turnbull, *Education*, 345, underlining added.

indisputable, seeing it is from facts or experiments that moral doctrines must be deduced, as well as physiological truth. Every one is ready, now at last, to own that physical explications or rules, not founded upon and inferred from real facts in nature, are mere romance. But certainly it must be no less true with regards to morals and politics, that explication of effects, or rules for private or public conduct, not founded in and deduced from real truths or facts relative to mankind and human societies, are also mere vision.³⁹⁴

He further clarifies the method to be applied in moral and all sciences, reminding us that it is not just a collection of facts:

...moral philosophy duly prosecuted, must be a mixed science, consisting of facts, and reasonings from facts, and abstract truths of the nature above [analogous to mathematics] mentioned conjointly, in like manner as physiology is a science mixed of observations or experiments, and reasonings from them, and mathematical truths conjointly. But having no orderly systems of these moral abstract universal truths for our assistance in moral enquiries, as we have of mathematical ones, to help us in physical researches, it cannot be introduced into the schools formally. The science we are now speaking of is widely different from that wild, pedantic jargon that hath long had too great a share in some schools and universities, under the name of metaphysic or ontology.³⁹⁵

Notice that even though he recognizes that there might be some abstract truths in moral philosophy, the fact that we cannot grasp them through experiment and observation leads Turnbull to exclude them from education. Turnbull goes on to discuss the teaching of other subjects, highlighting the prevalence of the idea of the unity of the sciences. He tells us that mathematics should be taught in order to understand nature; in particular, “for the investigation of unknown natural causes, or the resolution of effects into known causes.”³⁹⁶ Of religion he tells

³⁹⁴ Turnbull, *Education*, 346, underlining added.

³⁹⁵ Turnbull, *Education*, 347, brackets added.

³⁹⁶ Turnbull, *Education*, 349.

us that it has also been included, since from natural and moral philosophy students learn the order and perfection of the world that inevitably leads them to think of the Author of nature.³⁹⁷

From here on Turnbull reminds us of the importance of including history in the teaching of all the sciences, and constantly remarks that what underlies any discussion on education is the fact that its true and proper aim is virtue:

Let me therefore only add once more, That the first and last, the great point to be aimed at from reading history with youth, is to fix upon their minds just notions of true worth, true greatness, and solid happiness... The great lesson in life is, that virtue alone is true honour and solid durable happiness. It is not till this persuasion is deeply rooted in the heart, that one can be said to be well instructed, educated or formed.³⁹⁸

In his preliminary discourse in *History* Turnbull explains the moral dimension of teaching history in more detail, where he describes it as a “school of morality:”

History therefore, when it is well taught, becomes a school of morality to mankind, of all conditions and ranks. It discovers the deformity and fatal consequences of vices, and unmask false virtues; it disabuses men of their popular errors and prejudices; and despoiling riches of all its enchanting and dazzling pomp and magnificence, demonstrates by a thousand examples, which are more persuasive than reasonings, that there is nothing truly great or praise-worthy, but untainted honour and probity.³⁹⁹

The fact that Turnbull viewed history in this light can help us understand the structure of *Education* and it allows us to interpret the text as the construction of a natural history. Turnbull believed that the best way to teach is through example, since they “are more persuasive than reasonings.” In order to show the purpose of education and the proper method to carry it out Turnbull collects examples of the thought of a number of writers on the topic, and from this natural history he then constructs his own theory. Turnbull borrows from other authors not

³⁹⁷ Turnbull, *Education*, 350-351.

³⁹⁸ Turnbull, *Education*, 362-363.

³⁹⁹ Turnbull, *History*, viii.

because he has nothing original to say; he borrows because just as experiments in natural philosophy confirm a law, so the thought of other authors on education provide examples that confirm his theory.

The final pages of chapter four and the whole of chapter five of Turnbull's essay are dedicated to the usefulness of the arts for education. Since what he presents there is a summary of the ideas developed in *Painting*, I will not go over them here, reserving that discussion for the next chapter when we examine Turnbull's book on painting.

Within Turnbull's theory of education lie the three guiding principles we have identified, and only by having them as our framework can we better understand what Turnbull has to say about education. His theory is rooted in the pursuit of virtue, which is our end according to our place in the great chain of nature; he also relies on experience and observation as the proper method of instruction; further, the text itself is a natural history of education.

We also need to consider *Education* as a part of Turnbull's whole system of philosophy to understand it properly. All of the ideas he explores rely on the construction of the human mind given in *Principles 1*. As his own theory of education proposes, the first stage is to find out what we are and what our end is (the purpose of *Principles 1*), and then we can find out the proper means to achieve our end. His texts on education, religion, and painting can be best interpreted by connecting them with *Principles 1* and with each other.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 Art, Virtue and Education

Turnbull's *Painting* was published in 1740, the same year as *Principles 1* and *Principles 2*. As we pointed out in the biographical sketch in chapter one, the book was planned during his years in Europe as a tutor. It is structured in two main parts: a historical account of the thoughts of the ancients on painting, and Turnbull's theory of the usefulness of art, where he argues that painting and the other arts are excellent tools for the education of children. Just like his *Education*, this book can be viewed as an exercise in experimental moral philosophy, in which Turnbull constructs a natural history of painting and from it builds his own theory. Besides this similarity the two texts are closely linked, since Turnbull's argument in *Painting* points to his theory of education. In this chapter we will explore his text on painting and see the connection with Turnbull's other texts and the role played by the guiding principles.

We saw in the last chapter that Turnbull devotes the final section of his *Education* to the arts. There he gives a summary of the main ideas to be explored in *Painting*. We also mentioned earlier that the two texts have a similar structure: Turnbull begins by giving a historical account of the topic and then proceeds to propose his theory based on the ideas of the ancients he examined. Besides the connection with *Education*, the text also relies on the anatomy of the human mind from *Principles 1*. This connection between his texts is noted by Vincent Bevilacqua in his excellent introduction to the only modern edition of *Painting*:

Indeed, his *Treatise on Ancient Painting*, his *Liberal Education*, and his *Moral Philosophy* all bear such an underlying philosophical affinity as rightly to be taken as reflecting a single unified view of human nature arising from Turnbull's own particular interpretation of established assumptions about the affective nature of man and his native moral, artistic, and intellectual inclinations.⁴⁰⁰

Bevilacqua also alludes to the unity of the sciences as a central theme in *Painting*, but even though he recognizes the connection between all of Turnbull's work, his treatment is not very detailed, and in consequence the importance of the connection is downplayed. My aim in this chapter is to explore the importance of this connection for interpreting *Painting*, in particular to show that Turnbull relies on the natural end of human beings, our faculties and the unity of the sciences to

⁴⁰⁰ George Turnbull, *A treatise on ancient painting*, ed. Vincent Bevilacqua (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1971), p.VII. I only use Bevilacqua's edition of *Painting* for references to his introduction. All other references to *Painting* are from the 1740 edition.

argue that art, virtue and learning all work together in order to contribute to the progress of humanity.

5.1 Painting, Morality, and Truth

Turnbull expresses in the initial sections his methodological commitment to experimental philosophy, just like he did in his other texts. In the “Epistle on Education” Turnbull briefly goes through one of the laws of nature established in *Principles 1*: the law of association and habits. This law plays a central role in his thoughts on education and here Turnbull uses it to direct the discussion specifically towards its use in education. After his summary of the law he comments on the method we should try to follow for the formation of habits (which is what education is based on):

Now in forming this Habit, which not only constitutes the wise but the free Man, there are two things to be taken care of. One is to inure Youth to reason, or compute from Experience only; that is, from Facts ascertained by Observation, and not from abstract, imaginary Theories and Hypotheses. The other is to inure them to imploy their Reason chiefly about those Objects and Connexions in Nature, which have the nearest relation to human Life and Happiness. In order to both which 'tis manifest, that they ought to be taught to take a just View of human Nature, and to consider Man as he really is, neither as a merely sensitive Being, nor as a merely moral one; but as a compound of moral and sensitive Powers and Affections.⁴⁰¹

There are many interesting aspects of this passage as Turnbull puts to work his set of guiding principles. The experimental/speculative methodologies are described by opposing facts and observation to theories and hypotheses. Turnbull seems to be assigning here priority to the experimental method more than anywhere else, given that it now plays a central role in the formation of habits and it should be the task of parents and teachers to ensure that in the education of our children habits are formed according to it. Rather than merely the method we should use in our inquiries, the experimental method is instead a necessary component for proper education. The second aspect of the passage relates to another of his guiding principles: virtue as the end of human beings. Whatever we can ascertain from experience should be aimed

⁴⁰¹ Turnbull, *Painting*, vii, underlining added.

at our natural end, on which our happiness depends. This is why the most important study for human beings is our natural constitution.

Just as in *Education*, Turnbull's use of the experimental method is grounded in his belief in the unity of the sciences that results from the features of the great chain of being. In *Painting* Turnbull expresses his discontent at the bad state of education, and he traces its root to ignoring this unity of the sciences:

If to separate the instructing or moving Arts from Philosophy be a very detrimental mistake in Education, since it divides Languages from Things; must it not be yet a more pernicious one to sever moral from natural Philosophy; or not to carry out our enquiries about Man and his Relations and Connexions in Nature (which is moral Philosophy) in the same manner, and conjunctly with our Enquiries into the Laws and Connexions of the sensible World, (the Knowledge of which is called natural Philosophy) as one continued Research into Fact and Truth, or into real Connexions in the same united system.⁴⁰²

Given the unity of the worlds the proper methods to acquire knowledge in one should be applied in the other, and since Turnbull treats paintings as samples in moral philosophy⁴⁰³, then his insistence in the application of the experimental method is not a surprise. In the preface we find a clearer statement of the experimental/speculative distinction that highlights the commitment Turnbull had to the experimental philosophy, this time in relation to the usefulness of travel:

The Ancients travelled to see different Countries, and to have thereby Opportunities of making solid Reflexions upon various Governments, Laws, Customs and Policies, and their Effects and consequences with regard to the Happiness or Misery of States, in order to import with them into their own Country, Knowledge founded on Fact and Observation, from which, as from a Treasure of Things new and old, sure and solid Rules and Maxims might be brought forth for their Country's Benefit on every Emergency. For this is certain, that the real Knowledge of Mankind can no more be acquired by abstract Speculation without studying human Nature itself in its

⁴⁰² Turnbull, *Painting*, x, underlining added

⁴⁰³ We will examine Turnbull's connection between paintings and experiments in section 5.5.

many various Forms and Appearances, than the real Knowledge of the material World by framing imaginary Hypotheses and Theories, without looking into Nature itself.⁴⁰⁴

Notice that there is always a connection between the method and the happiness of human beings. Turnbull believes that experience, observations and reasoning from these facts are both the only path to knowledge and the path to happiness. For this claim Turnbull refers to Bacon, Addison, and Lord Molesworth, who, as we have seen, briefly corresponded with Turnbull. In those letters Turnbull asked (unsuccessfully) Molesworth to procure him a job as a travelling tutor and he shared his thoughts on the bad state of education in Scotland. Though Turnbull argues for the use of travel in education in general, it is of particular importance regarding the arts since it allows access to the original samples. The preface goes on to give an outline of the structure of the text and after the table of contents Turnbull begins his historical account of painting. This account occupies most of the text, with only one chapter containing the core of his thoughts on painting. As we have already commented while exploring *Education*, the collection of natural histories plays a key role in the acquisition of knowledge. In *Education* Turnbull gave a natural history of education in order to support his own theory; in *Painting* Turnbull offers a natural history of the arts (focusing on painting) to support his argument. Turnbull's natural history of painting highlights how he was always driven by his set of guiding principles and the relevance of *Principles 1* and *Education* for the interpretation of his text on painting.

His goal in the first chapter is to show the ancients' thought regarding the usefulness of painting. Turnbull gives a number of descriptions of paintings and sculptures in the work of Homer and Virgil as evidence for the main claim he argues for:

Those Descriptions of Paintings and Sculptures shew us, that the Arts of Design ought not to be considered merely as ornamental: There is hardly any useful Truth, or important Lesson in Philosophy, which may not be most agreeably insinuated into young and tender minds by good Pictures.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁴ Turnbull, *Painting*, xvii, underlining added.

⁴⁰⁵ Turnbull, *Painting*, 13.

Since Turnbull insists on the importance of natural histories and examples it is only fitting that I give an instance of the examples he refers to here in order to illustrate his claims. Regarding the works of Homer, Turnbull quotes from Alexander Pope's account of the Shield of Achilles. Turnbull uses the example of a shield since it illustrates the purposes of design that go beyond mere decoration. Pope tries to show that Homer's Shield of Achilles stands the test of what critics call the three unities of a picture: "each should have only one principal Action, one Instant of Time, and one Point of View."⁴⁰⁶ He analyses the 12 compartments of the shield according to these three aspects and shows that the shield passes the test, and, more importantly for Turnbull's purposes, Pope highlights how characters and passions are beautifully represented. For example, the second compartment shows a number of people at a market place with the occasion of someone paying a fine for a murder. Pope tells us:

Here is a fine plan for a Masterpiece of expression; any Judge of Painting will see our Author has chosen that Cause, which, of all others, would give occasion to the greatest variety of Expression: The Father, the Murderer, the Witness, and the different Passions of the Assembly, would afford an ample field for this Talent even to Raphael himself.⁴⁰⁷

To further illustrate what Turnbull wants to achieve by quoting Pope's description let us look at another example. The fourth compartment shows a town in war with two deities in the scene, of which Pope gives the following account:

Homer here gives a clear instance of what the Ancients always practised: the distinguishing the Gods and Goddesses by characters of Majesty and Beauty somewhat superior to Nature: we constantly find this in their statues, and to this the modern Masters owe their grand Taste in the Perfection of their Figures.⁴⁰⁸

In both descriptions we can see that the main goal of the scenes depicted in the shield seems to be mirroring the real world with a particular focus on showing expressions and characters. Deriving pleasure from the design of the shield in this instance takes a secondary role while it is

⁴⁰⁶ Turnbull, *Painting*, 6. These are the three classical unities, taken from Aristotle's *Poetics*, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. II, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1450b-1452a; Alexander Pope, *Translations of Homer: The Iliad*, *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. Maynard Mack, (London: Methuen co. Ltd., 1967), 365.

⁴⁰⁷ Turnbull, *Painting*, 7; Pope, *The Iliad*, 367.

⁴⁰⁸ Turnbull, *Painting*, 8; Pope, *Ibid*.

emphasized that we can learn something about humanity and culture from the shield, and in consequence our education can be enhanced by using the arts of design in the instruction of several subjects. Turnbull then gives an example of modern painting to convince the reader of the claim he is making:

But let any one, who doubts of the Power of those Arts [of design] to instruct and move, or to awaken pleasing and useful Reflections in the Mind, make the Experiment on himself at *Hampton-Court*; let him but give that attention to *Raphael's* Cartons, which it is hardly possible to with-hold, if one chances to cast his Eye on them: for however unacquainted he may be with Pictures, if he is not an utter stranger to Nature, to Humanity, he shall soon feel such noble and virtuous Sentiments arise in his Mind, as may fully convince him of the Aptitude of this powerful Art to tell an instructive or moving Story, in the most agreeable and lively manner, and to inspire Men with the best Ideas and Dispositions.⁴⁰⁹

In this passage we see the emphasis on experiment and the importance of introspection for moral philosophy. Turnbull, consistent with his commitment to the experimental method, does not expect the readers to take his words for granted. He rather calls on them to experience by themselves what happens in their minds when they are exposed to a good painting. Further, the virtuous notions that are expressed in Raphael's tapestries are not only reserved for those who are acquainted with the arts but to anyone who is "not a stranger to humanity." This part of the claim points to Turnbull's belief in virtue as the end of human beings. Since virtue is what we are naturally made for, then anyone who recognizes this would be able to be moved by Raphael's cartoons.

After this description of the usefulness of paintings in our quest for virtue, Turnbull concludes the chapter remarking that the great error in modern education was to separate the arts and the sciences. Paraphrasing two passages from Francis Bacon's *The advancement of learning* Turnbull appeals to the unity of the arts and sciences to justify the usefulness of the arts and describes the mistake of separating them:

⁴⁰⁹ Turnbull, *Painting*, 14.

After the distribution of particular Arts and Sciences Men have abandoned Universality: They forgot the natural and necessary Coherence of all the Portions of knowledge; the intimate Relation and Dependence of all Truths. But let this be a general Rule, and let it be always remembered, that all Partitions of knowledge be accepted rather as Lines and Veins, than for Sections and Separations; and that the Continuance and Entireness of Knowledge be perceived.⁴¹⁰

The underlying theme of the unity of the sciences and the continuity of the great chain of being keep gaining strength as the guiding principles in Turnbull's philosophy. In *Painting* Turnbull develops his idea of the unity of everything in a later chapter. For now, he refers to that idea because the aims and methods of education are defined by it, since all knowledge is about nature (whether sensible or moral). If this is the case, then art and science are both united by their objects of inquiry and by their common purpose of helping human beings progress towards virtue.

5.2 The Life of Painters

In chapter two Turnbull draws a parallel between ancient Greece and the Raphaelite period to show the reasons why painting was highly improved in both periods. He gives a brief account of the characters of different painters, and though most of the chapter consists in biographical information, there are some passages that are relevant for understanding Turnbull's own attitude towards the arts. He gives us a brief account of Apelles, Raphael, Da Vinci, Pamphilus, Zeuxis, Apollodorus and Titian, from which he gathers reasons for the improvement of painting in their time: one of the chief reasons why the work of these artists is highly regarded is their accuracy in the imitation of nature. Raphael's and Apelles' representations of the human body are praised on their accuracy, which presupposes knowledge of the natural world. In the particular cases of Da Vinci and Pamphilus, they were both well versed in natural philosophy, which allowed them to create truly beautiful works of art. It is this knowledge of the natural world and their excellent depiction of it that contributed to the improvement of painting.

⁴¹⁰ Turnbull, *Painting*, 15. Francis Bacon, *The Oxford Francis Bacon, Vol. IV, The advancement of learning*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 17-18 and 93-94.

Turnbull's effort to describe the character of the painters links back to two of his texts, namely *Education* and *Characters*. Regarding the former, we examined in chapter four of this thesis Turnbull's insistence in learning from example as one of the most important features of his theory of education. The description of the characters of certain painters here serves that purpose, i.e. to show examples of the virtuous character that enabled them to create a proper mirror of humanity. The second text, *Characters*, is a collection of three dissertations⁴¹¹ that Turnbull translated, and an essay by Lord Shaftesbury. In his preface to that text Turnbull expresses the importance of learning from proper examples from history and the usefulness of uniting the arts and the sciences. From the life of the most important figures of history we can learn about human nature, whether from written or pictorial descriptions. In fact, Turnbull included two prints with the text to complement two of the dissertations. Since Turnbull does not fully develop the argument in full in *Characters*, we must return to his account of the life of painters in *Painting*.

The first parallel is drawn between the lives of Apelles and Raphael. Of the former, Turnbull gives a description that shows the virtuous human being he was:

...we may form a just Notion of his Temper and Genius, from the Ingenuity and Greatness of Mind, which appear'd equally in doing justice to himself, and to his Rivals; in acknowledging his own Defects, and in censuring others. He treated all his Competitors with great Candour, Modesty, and Good-humour; he was exceedingly communicative; never found a fault without a reason...⁴¹²

Apelles' good character is paralleled by that of Raphael in the modern period:

...Raphael is praised for the same Courteousness to his Rivals, Affability and Communicativeness to all, the same readiness to commend whatever is excellent,

⁴¹¹ The first dissertation is *On the characters of Augustus, Horace and Agrippa*, by the Abbe de Vertot; Turnbull added to this text Shaftesbury's *Some Reflection on the characters of Augustus Maecenas and Horace, and on the works of Horace*; the second is by the Abbe Fraguier, *On the Gallery of Verres*; and finally *On the Nature, Origin and Use of Masks*, by Nicolas Boindin. To this last dissertation Turnbull added an excerpt from the Abbe du Bos' *Reflections on poetry and painting* on the topic of masks.

⁴¹² Turnbull, *Painting*, 19.

and to learn from every one; the same Ambition to be ever improving, without which any degree of Self-confidence is insufferable Arrogance.⁴¹³

Turnbull wants to draw attention to the thought that the good characters of the painters allowed them to get acquainted with the excellences of the real world. This was part of the reason for their success in their art. But a good character by itself is not their only feature: besides a virtuous character the great artists also show a proper knowledge of the natural world. Pamphilus, teacher of Apelles, and Leonardo da Vinci are excellent examples of this.

Turnbull tells us that the excellence of these painters lies in the fact that they had a good understanding of the natural world from studying the sciences:

...as *Pamphilus* studied under *Eupompus*, who valued himself upon studying Nature, the great Mistress of Painters, imitating her with Taste and Judgment, and not servilely following any Artist; so *Leonardo da Vinci*, who hath very strongly recommended by his Writings the Study of Nature's Laws and Beauties to all who would arrive at any Perfection in Painting, had a Master (*Andrea Verrochio*) who was very well skill'd in Opticks and several other Sciences, and a very assiduous Student and Immitator of Nature. Thus it was by similar Talents of its Professors, that the Art was brought to equal Perfection in those two ages...⁴¹⁴

Given Turnbull's view that art is meant to imitate nature it follows that knowledge of the natural world could only help improve the quality of the artworks. This view of the purpose of art stems from the unity of the sciences. The next parallel Turnbull draws shows this unity clearly, since the artists he refers to excelled in a particular technique (the use of colour) that was improved by their knowledge of other sciences. It is this unity that explains the excellence of such artists. This is the case with Zeuxis, Apollodorus and Titian: these three artists were recognized for their excellent use of colour. Turnbull says of Titian what he believes can also be said of Zeuxis and Apollodorus:

⁴¹³ Turnbull, *Painting*, 20.

⁴¹⁴ Turnbull, *Painting*, 21-22.

His [Titian's] Colouring is wonderfully glowing, sweet and delicate; it is real Life; but Life seldom seen: for in such great Masters [Titian, Zeuxis, and Apollodorus] Art really excels Nature; or at least Nature in her most common Effects.⁴¹⁵

Turnbull argues that it was their use of colour that allowed them to paint with great dexterity. However, it was only because they improved what their masters had developed that they could create painting that “excelled nature.” Artists improved their technique by the advancement of other sciences, such as the new theories of optics and light, for example. Zeuxis learnt and built upon the improvements achieved by Apollodorus the same way Titian did with his Master Bellini. Turnbull mentions here that this shows that Art is just like all other things in Nature:

Here again we see Art advancing to Perfection by gradual steps, as all things in Nature do, from Infancy to Vigour and Ripeness.⁴¹⁶

The gradation of the great chain of being is also witnessed in the way the arts develop. If the knowledge the artists had of natural philosophy helped them improve in their art, then through the unity of the sciences knowledge of moral philosophy also contributed to their success in art:

If we look at the Lives of *Raphael*, *Leonardo da Vinci*, of the *Carraches*, *Dominichin*, and all the painters who excelled in representing the Passions and Manners, we shall find them all to have been no less obliged to the Instructions and Conversation of Philosophers, than *Parrhasius* was to *Socrates*; Being persuaded that the grand usefulness of Painting consisted in that Art, they took all necessary pains to understand human Nature, and to be able, by a skillful imitation of its Workings and Motions, to touch the Heart, and make instructive Impressions upon it.⁴¹⁷

The priority of the study of man explored in *Education* makes an appearance here, where the arts take on the role of accurately depicting human nature. It is implied here that art is useful only insofar as it represents our nature, but this will be explored in more detail when we examine chapter seven of *Painting*.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Turnbull, *Painting*, 26, underlining added.

The remaining sketches of Turnbull's natural history or collection of facts and observations of the life of painters serve as more evidence for the claims made regarding the first couple of artists we have examined here. The account he gives of Nicolas Poussin stands out, since it shows that Turnbull thought that artistic skill is secondary to knowledge of human nature. Poussin was not the greatest and in fact not very good with the use of colours. However, he:

...was so great a Master of Expression, that he is justly reckoned among the chief, if not the greatest, for Painting the inward Sentiments, Affections, and Movements of the human Heart.⁴¹⁸

The reason for the greatness of his work was not grounded in his use of colours, but rather in his ability to depict human passions. It is the latter that Turnbull believes qualifies Poussin as one of the greatest:

...nothing affects the Heart like that which is purely from itself and of its own growth. The most delightful, the most engaging, and pathetick of all Subjects which Poets sing or Artists form, is that which is drawn from moral Life or from the Affections and Passions. Other imitations may please, but these interest us.⁴¹⁹

Since Turnbull is constructing his natural history of painting, he goes on to show another example to support his claim that it is the representation of morality that makes art great. He refers to the work of Nicophanes:

He thought Painting was capable of being really useful to Mankind, and of something more than merely innocent Amusement: And therefore he employed his talents in painting historical Subjects, tragical ones chiefly; so that he deserved to be called the Tragedian in Painting.⁴²⁰

Turnbull provides a number of examples from painters of both Ancient and Raphaelite periods to reinforce the claim that the purpose of art is to imitate nature. It is this feature that makes it very useful for the progress of human beings. As was the case in *Education*, the historical account

⁴¹⁸ Turnbull, *Painting*, 27.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Turnbull, *Painting*, 29.

that Turnbull gives serves the purpose of confirming his main claims, just the way experiments confirm theories in the natural sciences. The main goal of this natural history of painting is to allow Turnbull to construct his own proposal on a sure footing provided by the facts he has collected from history. This shows that beyond advocating for the use of the experimental method in moral philosophy, Turnbull in fact carries out this procedure himself in *Education* and *Painting*.

We have seen in this section that the main reason for the progress and excellence of painting in those two periods, ancient and Raphaelite, is that the artists then considered the imitation and accurate representation of nature (primarily human, but also otherwise) as the proper purpose of art. In order to excel in painting proper knowledge of nature is required, and all of the artists mentioned rely on this for the greatness of their paintings. With some of the sketches Turnbull gives he even tells us that although some artists might have technical weaknesses they can still be praised for their representation of characters and manners in nature. This necessary connection between philosophy and the arts is explored in more detail in the next chapter in *Painting*.

5.3 The Unity of Art and Science

In the first two chapters Turnbull focuses on artworks and their artists to begin the construction of his natural history of painting. In chapter three he shifts this focus and concentrates on what the critics and authors of the time thought about art. In order to interpret Turnbull's ideas in his chapter it is important that we call upon some specific points regarding his anatomy of the human mind and his guiding principles: the commitment to the experimental method, virtue as the end of human beings, and the necessary connection between mind and body.

Turnbull continues to collect more facts and observations from the thought of the ancients to support his overall claim that the arts are remarkably useful for the moral education of human beings. One of the salient aspects of this chapter is that it illustrates nicely the application of the experimental method. As we have insisted upon, the experimental method rejected building up knowledge from abstract speculation; it rather called for the construction of theories solely based on facts and observations. We have seen throughout the examination of *Principles 1*, *Education*, and *Painting* that Turnbull constantly relies on the connection between the moral and natural worlds. We saw while examining his anatomy of the human mind that even though the moral

realm is part of the natural world, the method needs some adjustment since the former has for objects of observation things that cannot be experienced through the external senses.⁴²¹ This leads Turnbull to rely on introspection and on the personal experience of others to acquire the facts and observations to build up his theory.

We know from the title of the chapter⁴²² that Turnbull will be looking into the connection between painting, poetry, and philosophy. Consistent with the experimental method, Turnbull does not begin the chapter by giving us a hypothesis and then confirming it. He begins with several examples of poetry and painting, and only after exploring them he deduces the connection between the arts and philosophy from such examples and observations. Since for the moment Turnbull is only concerned with the thought of the Ancients, he relies on the accounts of others for facts and observations, highlighting the importance of natural histories for moral philosophy. Following Turnbull, I show some of the examples he uses so we can then see how he constructs his theory from them.

Zeuxis is one of the artists Turnbull referred to earlier in his natural history of painting. Of one of his paintings (which Turnbull labels the Centaur-piece) we have an account by Lucian. The painting shows a centaur family. Making his critical assessment of the work he comments:

The Lights and Shadows are finely distributed, and a great many Drolleries very proper to the Subject and finely imagined make the Picture exceedingly gay. But what I principally admired, was the Richness of Imagination, and the Variety of Art that appeared in the Execution of this whimsical Subject: For the Male is exceeding rustick, and quite horrible; he is covered with Hair, and has vast large Shoulders; smiles, but in a savage, ghastly manner. One half of the Female is like one of the most beautiful, young, unbroken *Thessalian* Mares: and indeed the other half is of exquisite Beauty; a completely fine Woman, the Ears only excepted, which he hath made to resemble those of a Horse. And so dextrously are these different Parts

⁴²¹ I examine various aspects regarding the difference between moral and natural objects in sections 3.7, 3.9, 6.1, 6.4 and 7.1 of this thesis.

⁴²² The title is "Observations of some Pictures described by ancient Authors; on the just Notions the Ancients had of the Art, and of its connection with Poetry and Philosophy."

joined, that it is almost impossible to express, how the Commixtion eludes the sight.⁴²³

The above description highlights the ability of the artist to represent some qualities of human beings by mixing them with the body of animals, and blending them so well that the creatures appear as one rather than a mixture of two. Turnbull uses this example to show that it is important that the artwork represents the sentiments of human nature in some form: it is not the representation of the human body that stands out in this painting, but rather how the moral part is exalted.

A second example is a painting by Parrhasius that is meant to represent the people of Athens. Turnbull's account highlights the representation of sentiments and affections as the salient feature of the painting:

In it he had painted to the Life all the Vicissitudes of Temper to which jealous, spirituous People were liable. They were represented as of a fluctuating inconstant Humour; apt to be provoked and angry, yet very exorable; cruel, yet compassionate and clement; unjust and outrageous, yet mild and tender, smooth and equitable; haughty, vain-glorious, and fierce, yet at other times timid and submissive. All these Varieties of Temper and Genius were nobly and perspicuously expressed; so that the *Athenians* might see their own Image in it as in a Mirror.⁴²⁴

These two examples show how the body–mind connection he established in *Principles 1* determines Turnbull's aesthetic theory. In the previous chapter he gave us the character of some artists from ancient and modern times, showing in some cases that the reason for the greatness of the artists lay to some degree in their dexterity and skill. This is illustrated in the example regarding Zeuxis' painting, where the dexterity of the author is exalted. However, important as this is for the arts, skill by itself will not result in a great painting; the painting is truly good and useful only when the content of the work relates to virtue and man. The description of the painting of the people of Athens shows this. We examined earlier that for Turnbull human beings are a compound of moral and natural. Painting and the arts in general have to appeal to

⁴²³ Turnbull, *Painting*, 50.

⁴²⁴ Turnbull, *Painting*, 52.

this nature: the skill and dexterity appeal to our sensible pleasure, and the moral content appeals to our higher moral pleasure.

One last example will help make Turnbull's claim in this section clear, besides allowing us to identify a pattern in all of his examples in his chapter. Turnbull explores different paintings by different artists, and his description always contains two parts: very briefly he tells us that they were skilled, that they "painted beautifully," but the core of his description focuses on how aptly they represent moral sentiments. Of Timanthes' *Iphigenia* Turnbull tells us that it was praised by the great minds of his time:

...for the Judgment he showed in it. Having expressed a great variety of Grief and Affliction in the Countenances and Gestures of the Priest, her Brother, Friends, Relations and Admirers, he veiled the Father's Face, thus leaving the Spectators to measure his inexplicable Anguish and Misery, by the effect this Confession of the difficulty of expressing it must naturally have upon their minds.⁴²⁵

What makes Timanthes' painting great is not so much the particular technical skill of his work but the manner in which he expresses the several passions. We do not need to spend longer in the examination of Turnbull's examples in this chapter to grasp the claim he makes. As I mentioned earlier, Turnbull constructs a natural history of painting with all his examples, and at the end of the chapter deduces a claim from the examples. Following his collection of facts and observation Turnbull offers his conclusion:

And here we have a plain proof of the Instruction that may be given by the Pencil, and the excellent Use that might be made of the Art in Education, or in reading moral Lessons, rendring them more insinuating or expressive, as it would make them more pleasing and entertaining. All the Virtues and Vices, with their Effects and Consequences, were painted and carved by the Ancients with proper Symbols.⁴²⁶

In the natural history of painting he constructs here, the numerous examples of descriptions of painting stand as the facts Turnbull uses to show that the ancients found value in the way these arts accurately express and appeal to the passions and the moral part of human beings. This

⁴²⁵ Turnbull, *Painting*, 51.

⁴²⁶ Turnbull, *Painting*, 58.

claim is the inspiration for one of the aspects of his theory, namely that paintings count as experiments for moral and natural philosophy. We will explore this in more detail when we analyze chapter seven of *Painting* (Section 5.5).

5.4 The Rise and Fall of Ancient Society

While Turnbull has been referring to paintings and critical assessments of them, in chapter four he focuses on writings of the Ancients on art theory, continuing his construction of a natural history of painting. He summarizes a definition ascribed to Socrates by Xenophon in his *Memorabilia*,⁴²⁷ and proposes it as a general statement of the thought of the time regarding the purpose of painting:

...Painting in general proposes to give a true Image or Likeness of every visible Object: In the next place, that even with regard to merely sensible Forms, 'tis necessary that the Painter should have a just Notion and Taste of Beauty. And last of all, the chief Design of it is to teach that Painting may be rendered serviceable in Morality, in shewing the Deformity of Vice, and the Beauties of Virtue.⁴²⁸

The dual nature of art is present here, appealing to both the sensible and moral parts of human nature. We should remember that Turnbull makes sense of the unity of the dual nature of human beings and of the sciences in general by appealing to the features of the great chain of being. Even though the sensible and moral pleasures are both important in the arts, the moral, being higher in the chain, has priority over the sensible. The reason why the arts are 'better' when they are representing human morality is explained some pages later:

The End of Description is certainly to convey a true and lively Idea into the Mind, by Words; And this is likewise the Design of Painting. Both therefore must be clear and intelligible; and are excellent in proportion to the Clearness, the Truth and Liveliness of the Images they excite in the Mind. But every Description, however

⁴²⁷ Xenophon, *Memorabilia*. The Works of Xenophon, vol. III, part 1, trans. H.G. Dakyns (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1897), 113-117.

⁴²⁸ Turnbull, *Painting*, 69.

true, and clear, or strong it may be, is not equally pleasing and acceptable to the Mind, because all Objects are not equally so.⁴²⁹

But there is yet another Circumstance which will be owned to recommend a Description more than the rest; and that is, if it represents such Objects as are apt to raise a secret Ferment in the Mind, and to work strongly on the Passions... Accordingly, let any one make the Experiment, and he must unavoidably observe upon the first trial, that, in Painting, it is pleasant to look on the Picture of any face, when the Resemblance is hit; but the pleasure increases, if it be the Picture of a Face that is beautiful; and is still greater if the beauty be soften'd by an Air of Melancholy and Sorrow.⁴³⁰

Since moral objects give rise to a higher form of pleasure, then artworks that express and describe them will be preferred to those that only appeal to objects that are distanced from human morality. In this passage Turnbull reminds us of the importance of introspection for moral knowledge, asking the reader to perform the experiment of engaging with a painting that depicts a face and confirm the higher pleasure derived when passions and affections are properly represented.

Turnbull calls upon the unity of the sciences, one of the main themes of *Painting*, but this time he refers to this unity within the arts. He draws a parallel between poetry, oratory, and painting, with the intention of showing that the end of any art should be the same: the beautiful representation of moral situations. Turnbull introduces the topic by drawing an analogy with the writings of ancient moralists:

Is it not the chief End of their [the ancient moralists] excellent Writings, to correct and improve our Taste of Happiness and moral Beauty? And in like manner do not those Authors, who tell us, that good Taste in any of the fine Arts cannot be acquired by mere Instruction, but must be fundamentally from Nature, shew us, how good Taste in the Arts may be cultivated, and brought to Perfection; and point out the Perfections and Imperfections, or, to speak in their own Stile, the Virtues and Vices belonging to these Arts? All that is meant by them is indeed self-evident;

⁴²⁹ Turnbull, *Painting*, 73.

⁴³⁰ Turnbull, *Painting*, 74.

namely, that Morality or right and wrong conduct in Life, presupposes a natural Taste of moral Beauty and fitness in Actions, And in the like manner all the Arts presuppose a natural Sense of Harmony, Beauty, Proportion, greatness and Truth; and that as necessary, in both cases, as Tastes and Smells presuppose Faculties or Senses fitted to receive these sensations.⁴³¹

Since Turnbull holds the idea that the perfection of something is determined by how well fitted it is for its natural end, the several Arts should be driven by the achievement of our natural end. It is only when aiding our quest for virtue that the arts will appear good and useful. More than the particular technical skills, it was this feature of painting and poetry in Ancient times that brought about the great improvement of the arts.

In constructing his natural history of painting in this chapter Turnbull draws mainly upon the thought of Xenophon's Socrates and Aristotle. Regarding the latter, Turnbull believes he is claiming that the chief end of art is the representation of truth and beauty through the imitation of nature:

...it is the principal end of both [poetry and painting] to express Manners and to touch the Mind. But whatever these Arts propose to imitate, 'tis Truth and Nature must be their guide... Nature is the Standard of the imitative Arts.⁴³²

The idea explored in earlier sections of *Painting* that the purpose of art is to mirror nature is reinforced here. Turnbull wants to deduce from this conception of art that its purpose must be to represent moral truths, since they can be observed in nature (human nature in particular):

...from what hath been said, it manifestly appears; in what they placed the chief Excellence of Painting. A Picture must be a true Imitation, a true Likeness; not only the Carnation must appear real, but even the Stuffs, Silks, and other Ornaments in the Draperies. Without truth no imitation can please. But the great Merit of Painting consists, in making a fine and judicious Choice of Nature; in exhibiting great, rare surprizing, and beautiful Objects in a lively manner; and thus conveying great and pleasing Ideas into the Mind. But because rational is the highest Order of Life, the

⁴³¹ Turnbull, *Painting*, 76, square brackets added.

⁴³² Turnbull, *Painting*, 77-78.

Source whence the greatest, the loftiest, as well as the most instructive and touching Sentiments are derived; the highest Merit and Excellence of Painting must consist in a fine Taste of moral Truth: in exciting in our Minds great and noble Ideas of the moral Kind, and in moving out the Passions in a sound and wholesome way: For such is our Frame and Constitution, that what hath a virtuous Effect is at the same time most pleasant and agreeable.⁴³³

It is this feature of art that explains the great progress the Ancient Greek and Romans achieved in it. Turnbull believes that the Ancients directed their artworks to this end, aiding in the instruction of virtue. However, after them there was a period of decline in the arts, in particular a decline of painting. Turnbull explores the reasons for this decline in the next chapter of *Painting*. His whole discussion aims at blaming the dissolution of the unity of the arts and sciences for the decline, and he illustrates this with examples, further furnishing his natural history of painting.

The first step in Turnbull's argument is to point out that the unity of all fields of knowledge is a feature of the most successful periods in history. He observes that those times in which the Arts flourished so did all the sciences:

... 'tis observed by several Authors, that all the great Men for Science or Art, in *Greece* or *Rome*, were nearly contemporary; and that all the polite Arts flourish'd and perish'd together... At the same time that *Greece* produced an *Apelles*, it not only produced a *Praxiteles* and *Lysippus*; but it was then that its greatest Philosophers, Poets, and Orators flourish'd. *Socrates, Plato Aristotle, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Xenophon, Thucydides, Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Meander*, and several others were of the same Age.⁴³⁴

Turnbull believes that if this unity is a condition of growth, then it can also explain the decline of the arts and sciences. When one or the other is not flourishing, particularly because they are not directed to their common end, none can progress:

⁴³³ Turnbull, *Painting*, 81.

⁴³⁴ Turnbull, *Painting*, 98.

...They have one common genuine Scope and End, which is to promote Virtue and polish Mankind: and they have therefore but one common Enemy, Luxury or false Pleasure, the mother of all those noxious Weeds.⁴³⁵

It was this distancing from the end of our human nature that brought about the decline of the arts and sciences. Turnbull tells us that this is shown by the difference between the philosophy that was dominant in the stage of growth, and the one dominant in the stage of decline:

...the Philosophy which prevailed in *Greece*, while the arts were in their highest Glory, the Philosophy of *Socrates*, is the only Philosophy that can inspire publick Spirit, or support Virtue and Liberty, produce Heroes, Patriots, brave and worthy Men, and Authors and Artists of a sublime daring Genius. On the other hand, the Philosophy which came afterwards to gain a great Ascendant in *Greece*, and was almost universally received at Rome, so soon as the *Grecian* Arts and Sciences were admitted amongst them, was of a quite contrary Nature and Tendency: A Philosophy, which represented an interested selfish Temper as Wisdom, and taught Men to listen to the soft effeminating Language of Pleasure; instead of that which calls upon us to consider the Dignity of Human Nature, to keep it always before our Eyes, and to accustom ourselves to ask our own Hearts; What is great and good, whatever it may cost; or what is base and unworthy, whatever Pleasures it may bring.⁴³⁶

According to Turnbull, it was the separation between the arts and the sciences that led to a detachment from the natural end of human beings, and this in turn resulted in the decline of the arts. He has already mentioned in *Painting* that he believes that the biggest mistake of the education of his time was keeping the arts separate from the sciences, and losing sight of the fact that the natural end of human beings is virtue:

Thus, according to the best Authors of Antiquity, 'tis only when the Muses or ingenious Arts are directed by true Wisdom, Virtue, and a sound publick spirited Philosophy, that they can attain to their natural worthy End, or display their real Beauty and genuine charms...'Tis the generous Mind enlarging and greatening

⁴³⁵ Turnbull, *Painting*, 99.

⁴³⁶ Turnbull, *Painting*, 102-103.

Philosophy which raises to the Love of Society and Mankind, and infuses just Notions of rational Happiness and Grandeur, aided, strengthened, and sweetened, or embelish'd, by the fine Arts, that alone can early fire the Youth with a truly laudable ambition; inspire with noble Sentiments and Dispositions, and fit them for publick Service.⁴³⁷

Turnbull argued in *Principles 1* that all of knowledge is connected and it all points towards the progress of virtue. The arts and the sciences build on each other for the advancement of virtue and our progress in the chain of nature. As we have discussed, things are deemed perfect and fitting according to the particular natural end they have. Art, science, and education are determined by the end of human beings, and from this it follows that their end is the instruction of virtue and happiness.

Before Turnbull proposes his own theory in chapter seven of *Painting*, he considers one remaining aspect in his natural history of painting. The discussion in chapter six revolves around the way the Ancients used the arts to promote virtue and society. Once again Turnbull follows the experimental method. He begins by giving us a number of examples of observations on the way paintings depicted different characters, which show that:

...every Person was exhibited with such Symbols as were most significant of that in which he excelled; whether Fortitude, or Science. Particular care was taken that the Images should be expressive of their Characters and Dispositions.⁴³⁸

Since the Ancients used to decorate all of the public buildings with paintings and sculptures of this kind, everyone was constantly exposed to the virtues and moral situations there described. One of the examples he uses can shed some light on Turnbull's argument as well as illustrate his application of the experimental method, deducing his claim from examples.

In the first chapters of *Painting* Turnbull quotes at length Pope's detailed description of the Shield of Achilles described in Homer's *Iliad*. Here Turnbull refers to shields in general and tells us that there was a further purpose for decorating the shields besides mere ornament. The scenes depicted in the shields were all acts of great courage and bravery, with the purpose of inspiring

⁴³⁷ Turnbull, *Painting*, 105.

⁴³⁸ Turnbull, *Painting*, 113.

those soldiers carrying the shields. Turnbull supports his claim by pointing to an account of this inspiring quality of shields from the time of Philopaeon:

The young Men in his time being excessively effeminate, and fond to extravagance of rich Apparel, sumptuous Furniture, curious Services at the Table, and delicate Dishes; this brave and publick-spirited *Achaian*, in order to give this their Love of finery in all superfluous unnecessary things a good turn, and bring them to like things that were manly and profitable, endeavour'd to make them think of shining in the Field, and coming out for the Defence of their Country with magnificent Armour: And it had the designed effect. For the sight of finely adorned Arms breathed a new Spirit into them, and fired them with Emulation of trying who should most distinguish himself in Service of his Country.⁴³⁹

This feature was not only restricted to shields and armour; it extended to the construction of statues, temples, poems, and paintings depicting virtuous and great men and glorious events meant to inspire the public and representing virtue. Continuing with the application of the experimental method, he draws a conclusion from the examples that furnish his natural history of painting:

...great care was taken, among the *Greeks* in particular, to preserve the Memory of great Men and their Virtues, and thereby to promote, and maintain the Love of true Glory. 'Twas to this excellent use that the designing arts were chiefly employed by them.⁴⁴⁰

Turnbull highlights the fact that art in ancient Greece was used to illustrate and accurately represent human virtue. By adorning all the public spaces with such pictures they were aiding the moral education of the nation. This final consideration concludes his historical exposition of the thought of the ancients on painting and prepares the stage for Turnbull's own theory, supported by the remarks he has gathered throughout *Painting*. The natural history of painting given so far has shown that the true end of art is to imitate nature and represent virtue, so in the last chapters of *Painting* Turnbull proposes his theory, focusing mostly on the remarkable usefulness of the arts for the education of virtue:

⁴³⁹ Turnbull, *Painting*, 115.

⁴⁴⁰ Turnbull, *Painting*, 120.

Thus we have seen to what generous and noble Uses the fine Arts are fitted to serve; and in pursuance of what Design it is that they ought to be employed agreeably to their Nature and Genius; as well as for the Interest and Honour of Society. But let us inquire more particularly whence it is that they are capable of yielding such delight; of what kind the Pleasure is which they afford; or to whom it is that they give the highest Satisfaction and Entertainment, and how that Taste must be cultivated and improved, upon which a just and thorough Relish of them depends.⁴⁴¹

5.5 Bringing Art Back

Turnbull's main goal in the final chapter of *Painting* is to propose that the arts are very useful for education, given the fact that they can play the role in moral philosophy that experiments play in natural philosophy. Turnbull first summarizes the thought of the ancients he explored throughout the previous chapters of his book:

If therefore it be the great Business of Education, to improve the Capacity and Taste of those Employments and Satisfactions, which are the remotest from all Grossness and Disgust, and yield the highest and most lasting delight; Education ought, by consequence, to aim chiefly at improving those natural Powers, Capacities, Affections, and Senses, by which we are capable of contemplating and imitating Nature; that is, at bringing to perfection that Sense of Beauty, Order, Harmony, Goodness and Greatness, by which alone we can enjoy Nature in contemplation; and which alone fits for imitating it in Arts and Manners; or for receiving Satisfaction from conformity with it in Speculations and Imitations of whatever kind.⁴⁴²

We have argued that Turnbull is committed to the experimental method, so it is important to make a clarification regarding the passage above: by the term 'Speculations' he is not referring to the abstract method of acquiring knowledge without regard to experience and observation, but he is using it instead in its colloquial sense meaning 'reasonings,' which must be founded on facts and experience. His belief in virtue as the end of human beings and the anatomy of the mind

⁴⁴¹ Turnbull, *Painting*, 128.

⁴⁴² Turnbull, *Painting*, 130.

established in *Principles 1* can help us interpret the above passage. Education must be tailored to our particular end, which is virtue, as the natural furniture of the mind argued for in *Principles 1* shows; the Ancients agree that virtue is the natural end of human beings, as Turnbull has shown in his historical survey given in *Painting* and *Education*. It is this focus on virtue that leads to the progress science and art.

Turnbull proceeds to give a brief summary of the laws of nature established in *Principles 1*, and then comments on method. If the goal of education is to improve the natural faculties which Turnbull summarizes here, we also need to establish the proper method for achieving this end. The experimental method fills this role, as Turnbull shows by referring to Bacon and Newton to explain the true way of philosophizing:

My Lord *Verulam* tells us, that true Philosophy consists in gathering the Knowledge of Nature's Laws from Experience and Observation. And *Sir Isaac Newton* hath indeed carried that true Science of Nature to a great height of perfection.⁴⁴³

Turnbull illustrates what this science of nature amounts to by quoting from Newton's *Opticks*. The quote describes the way of acquiring knowledge in natural philosophy, where "the main business...is to argue from Phenomena without feigning Hypotheses..."⁴⁴⁴ From this description Turnbull moves from the natural to the moral world:

...if this be the right Method of improving and pursuing natural Philosophy, it must necessarily follow, that the Knowledge of the moral World ought likewise to be cultivated in the same manner, and can only be attain'd to by the like Method of enquiry: By investigating the general Laws, to which, if there is any Order in the moral World, or if it can be the Object of Knowledge, its Effects and Appearances must in like manner be reducible, as those in the corporeal World to theirs; and the moral fitness of these general Laws, or their Tendency to the greater Good of the whole System to which they belong.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴³ Turnbull, *Painting*, 133.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid; Newton, *Opticks*, Book 3, 344.

⁴⁴⁵ Turnbull, *Painting*, 134.

After reinforcing his commitment to the experimental method Turnbull continues with his summary of the anatomy of the mind he established in *Principles 1*, in order to then show that the arts are of great use for our progress towards virtue. Of particular interest in Turnbull's exposition is the claim that human beings have a natural disposition to imitate nature. This claim is grounded in his guiding principle of the great chain of being and our place within nature:

Man is impelled to imitate Nature in the Regulation of his Affections and Actions, and fitted for it by his Sense of beauty and Regularity; his publick Sense, or Delight in publick Good, and in the Affections and Actions that pursue it; and his Magnanimity, or Sense of Greatness.⁴⁴⁶

We have discussed that Turnbull uses a particular version of the great chain of being that is continuous, full, graded and ordered by natural laws. By regulating our actions and affections we are imitating nature in the sense that we contribute to the order and perfection of the whole system when we direct ourselves towards our natural end. Besides our disposition to imitate nature through the exercise of our virtues, we also have been endowed with another faculty that conduces to the imitative arts: the power of invention. In the passage where Turnbull discusses invention and the arts he highlights his belief in the unity and continuity of nature and, by consequence, of all the arts and sciences:

...if the Perfection of Nature consists in working unerringly towards the Beauty and Good of the Whole by simple consistent Laws; and the Perfection of Life and Manners consists in acting in concert with Nature, and in pursuing steadily the Good of Mankind by well-poised, regular and generous affections; then must the Perfection of the imitative Arts consist in like manner in making regular and beautiful systems, in which every part being duly adapted and submitted to what is principal, the Whole hath a great, noble, and virtuous Effect upon the Mind.⁴⁴⁷

Through the connection between the moral and natural worlds Turnbull justifies his idea of the suitability of the arts for instructing virtue. From the thought of the ancients Turnbull has shown that art imitates nature. We also know that he holds the belief that nature is a progressive,

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ Turnbull, *Painting*, 137.

complete, and perfect chain, which is beautiful and excellent. Given that we recognize beauty and excellence in nature, we must be able to also recognize these features in the imitative arts.⁴⁴⁸

Further, the relation between parts and whole is also relevant when perceiving the beauty of art, just as we do in nature. Turnbull relies on the connection of the natural and moral worlds to show that the artist is meant to represent the beauty of the whole of nature:

Every Picture ought to be a perfect Whole by itself, and its Beauty ought to Result from the whole Composition; not from the Perfection of single Parts, but from the Subserviency of all the Parts to one main beautiful and great End. The Artist cannot bring all nature into his Piece; he must therefore imitate the Whole of Nature in his Work, by chusing a noble, a great, or beautiful Plan, and by adapting and disposing every particular part of his Piece in the manner that may best suit to the main End of the Whole. He therefore ought not to paint Deformity; but as Nature in the Whole is beautiful, so ought his Works to be; and the Deformities in single Parts, ought, as in Nature, to serve as Foils or Contrasts to set off some principal Beauty to the greater advantage.⁴⁴⁹

This connection leads Turnbull to the final feature of his theory. The first step in this last argument is to comment that there is a unity between all the arts and sciences. This time Turnbull tells us that the Ancients based their system of education on this unity:

The Ancients considered Education in a very extensive View, as comprehending all the Arts and Sciences, and employing them all to this one End; to form, at the same time, the Head and the Heart, the Senses, the Imagination, Reason, and the Temper, that the whole Man might be made truly virtuous and rational.⁴⁵⁰

In this passage we can see two of Turnbull's guiding principles working together. The continuity of the great chain of being provides the unity of the arts and sciences, as we have already discussed. However, besides being united, the arts and sciences must also be used towards the natural end of human beings. This end is what establishes the true purpose and means of

⁴⁴⁸ Turnbull, *Painting*, 138-139.

⁴⁴⁹ Turnbull, *Painting*, 140.

⁴⁵⁰ Turnbull, *Painting*, 144.

education. Given this claim, Turnbull now needs to discuss the proper method of education, and this is where his other guiding principle fits in to construct his theory.

The unity of the sciences justifies the usefulness of the arts for moral instruction, so now Turnbull shows how paintings can be used to teach virtue. If the experimental method is applied in moral philosophy, then Turnbull needs to find something that plays an equivalent role to that played by experiments in natural philosophy. In *Principles 1* we saw that introspection provided facts and experience for our inquiries into the moral world. The arts will also help provide facts and observations. Let us remember here that Turnbull has assigned an imitative role to the arts, where the goal is to describe nature as it truly is; and according to this role, the beauty of the arts consists in the proper imitation of nature. Paintings, as mirrors of nature, can contribute facts for our moral knowledge:

Philosophy is rightly divided in natural and moral; and in like manner, Pictures are of two Sorts, natural and moral: The former belong to natural, and the other to moral Philosophy. For if we reflect upon the End and Use of Samples or Experiments in Philosophy, it will immediately appear that Pictures are such, or that they must have the same Effect. What are Landscapes and views of Nature, but Samples of Nature's visible Beauties, and for that Reason Samples and Experiments in natural Philosophy; And moral Pictures, or such as represent Parts of human Life, Men, Manners, Affections and Characters; are they not Samples of moral Nature, or the Laws and Connexions of the moral World, and therefore Samples and Experiments in moral Philosophy? In examining the one, we act the Part of natural Philosopher; and in examining the other, our Employment is truly moral; because it is impossible to judge of the one, or of the other, without comparing them with the Original from which they were taken, that is, with Nature: Now what is Philosophy but the Study of Nature?⁴⁵¹

This argument will only work insofar as art imitates nature, but Turnbull has argued for this in his natural history of painting, as we examined in the previous sections. Consequently, moral pictures must be of great use for education since they can, according to Turnbull's definition, count as proper experiments for moral philosophy.

⁴⁵¹ Turnbull, *Painting*, 145.

First Turnbull tells us that paintings and drawings of landscapes and “exact copies of particular parts of Nature” can play the role of samples or experiments. He tells us that such paintings can be properly called “a register of nature.” As long as they follow nature and its laws, “they serve to fix before our Eyes beautiful Effects of Nature’s Laws, till we have fully admired them, and accurately considered the Laws from which such visible Beauties and Harmonies result.”⁴⁵²

If paintings in natural philosophy serve as samples that show the order and regularity of the laws of nature, then this must also be the case with what Turnbull calls “historical or moral pictures:”

But moral Pictures must be for the same Reason proper Samples in the School of Morals: For what Passions or Actions may not be represented by Pictures; what Degrees, Tones, or Blendings of Affections; what Frailties, what Pennances, what Emotions in our Hearts; what Manners, or what characters, cannot the Pencil exhibit to the Life? Moral Pictures, as well as moral Poems, are indeed Mirrours in which we may view our inward Features and Complexions, our Tempers and Dispositions, and the various Workings of our Affections. ’Tis true, the painter only represents outward Features, Gestures, Airs, and Attitudes; but do not these, by an universal Language, mark the different Affections and Dispositions of the mind?... The design of moral Pictures is, therefore, by that Means, to shew us ourselves; to reflect our image upon us, in order to attract our Attention the more closely to it, and to engage us in Conversation with ourselves, and an accurate Consideration of our Make and Frame.⁴⁵³

Turnbull does not expect the reader to take his claims and descriptions for granted. He invites them to take a look at the paintings and confirm for themselves the claims made in *Painting*. In fact, he annexed to the book a set of fifty copper plates illustrated by Camilo Paderni to give us examples of paintings that truly express the human virtue and are therefore useful for education. By “comparing to the original” in moral philosophy Turnbull is not saying that the paintings must depict some real event or person, but rather that those events and persons must reflect human nature as it is. The scene can be fictitious as long as it accurately depicts the proper virtues of humanity.

⁴⁵² Turnbull, *Painting*, 145-146.

⁴⁵³ Turnbull, *Painting*, 147.

In the last chapter of *Painting* Turnbull completes his natural history of painting with an account of the life and characters of a number of modern painters. The biographical accounts he gave in chapter two served the purpose of showing by examples the reason why the arts progressed notably in Ancient Greece and in the Raphaelite period. This time the biographical accounts serve a different purpose. After establishing his theory of painting and showing that imitative arts can be of particular use for moral education, Turnbull wants to give some examples of what students should look for while carrying out his proposal:

Whether these Observations [biographical sketches] are just or not, must be left to the Judgment of those who are acquainted with the Works of those Painters who have been mentioned: They are merely intended by way of Specimen to shew what it is that Students of Painting ought chiefly to look for in Pictures; or to point out the Marks and Characteristicks, by which they ought to endeavour to be able to distinguish the works of different Masters.⁴⁵⁴

Turnbull's remarks regarding the life and works of modern painters can be seen as an application of the theory he proposed in the previous chapter of *Painting*. Given that he has argued through his natural history of painting that works of art are great and useful when they mirror human nature and show the path to virtue, Turnbull gives a guide for the students to critically assess paintings on those grounds. Though the examples he refers to suggest which modern painters are good and which paintings are great, ultimately Turnbull only wants to give a framework for the students to make the value judgments themselves.

I conclude this chapter by looking at the main claim Turnbull argues for in the conclusion. This claim reinforces his belief in the unity of the sciences and the important role it plays in his theory. We have seen in a number of passages already that all the arts and sciences are united because they are all inquiries into nature:

All the Sciences must be one, or very strictly connected and allied, because Nature, their Object, is one. What doth any science natural or moral, or however it may be denominated, inquire into? Is it not into some part of Nature, some Establishment or Connexion in Nature; or, in other Words, is it not into the Frame and

⁴⁵⁴ Turnbull, *Painting*, 166.

Constitution, the Connexions and Dependencies of some particular Object in Nature?... To make this sufficiently clear, we need only to observe, that Man himself is the properest Object of human Inquiries, But Man being evidently related to Nature as a Part, inquiries about Man must mean Inquiries about Man's Connexions and Dependencies; for how else can his Rank and Situation be known, or how else can we form a true Judgment of his Relation to the Whole, and to the Author of the Whole, and of his natural End, Duty, and Dignity?⁴⁵⁵

From this unity of the great chain of being Turnbull believes that separating the arts and the sciences in our education is a mistake: it not only goes against our own nature but against the whole of nature. We must therefore include all arts and sciences in education, and since they all inquire into nature, the method should also be the same for all. This method is that of experimental philosophy:

The fitness of teaching Physics by a Course of Experiments, is readily acknowledged; but so far as any Arts copy Nature, so far do they furnish us with Experiments; and for the same Reason that Experiments are useful, or have a good Effect in teaching any Part of Nature, or inforcing any Piece of Knowledge upon the Mind, all Imitations of Nature being Experiments, must have the same Effect with Regard to that Part of Knowledge of which they are Specimens or Experiments: And consequently, in general, the best Way of teaching Nature, physical or moral Nature, must be by calling all good Imitations of Nature, or all Experiments to our Assistance.⁴⁵⁶

Turnbull's main claim in *Painting* is best interpreted as a development of the theory established in *Principles 1*. From the anatomy of the human mind we deduce the true and proper end of human beings: virtue. With the arts in particular it is this virtue that has to be represented in order to fulfill its purpose of imitating nature (human nature in this case). The connection with *Education* is also of importance, since paintings, in order to be useful in education, must point towards the same end: the progress of virtue. The same way that the theory proposed in *Education* is illuminated by Turnbull's guiding principles, the role of paintings as experiments for moral philosophy is best interpreted with the proposed framework. The commitment to the

⁴⁵⁵ Turnbull, *Painting*, 179.

⁴⁵⁶ Turnbull, *Painting*, 182.

experimental method and the idea that the purpose of art is to imitate nature allow Turnbull to accept moral paintings as proper experiments, and since the theory proposed regarding education claims that the experimental method is the way to proceed, paintings and the arts are justified as proper and useful tools for the education of human beings.

CHAPTER SIX

6 Religion and the Scriptures

Principles 2, Turnbull's main text on Christian Philosophy, was published shortly after *Principles 1* in 1740. Alexander Broadie comments in his introduction to *Principles 1* that the two books appeared as volumes I and II of *The Principles of Moral and Christian Philosophy*, but it seems that Turnbull did not have the intention of publishing the books as two volumes of a single series, but rather as two separate texts. Presumably, the editor thought that *Principles 2* would have a better chance of success if it was presented in conjunction with *Principles 1*.⁴⁵⁷ Even if Turnbull planned the texts to be published separately, this does not entail that there is no connection between them. On the contrary, as we will see in this chapter, the anatomy of the human mind that Turnbull presents in *Principles 1* plays a crucial role for the argument regarding Christianity and revelation put forward in *Principles 2*.

The main purpose of *Principles 2* is to show that Christian religion and the Scriptures confirm the anatomy of the human mind that Turnbull argues for in *Principles 1*. In this sense, *Principles 2* is different from *Education* and *Painting*, given the relation it holds to *Principles 1*. While the works on painting and education are developments on Turnbull's anatomy of the human mind, *Principles 2* rather confirms Turnbull's theory by examining the Christian doctrines and the Scriptures. It is also a special text because it completes the agenda put forward in *Principles 1*, namely, "to vindicate human nature and the ways of GOD to man." We have already examined in chapter three how Turnbull's anatomy of the human mind points to the benevolence and intelligence of the Author of nature. In *Principles 2* Turnbull finds evidence in the Scriptures for the laws of human nature he has deduced by the use of reason in *Principles 1*. Since it seems that revelation is subsumed to reason, it is in this sense that Broadie correctly points out that Turnbull's text is "an exercise in natural, not revealed, theology."⁴⁵⁸ As we will see in this chapter, Turnbull seems to hold a middle-ground position regarding the natural vs. revealed religion debate: he argues against the Deists and freethinkers by vindicating revelation, but he still holds that revelation cannot be of any use without the light of reason. In order to sketch out Turnbull's position we will also look at Turnbull's religious pamphlets published in the 1730s and their connection to *Principles 2*.

⁴⁵⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, xi.

⁴⁵⁸ Broadie, *A history of Scottish Philosophy*, 119.

6.1 Natural and Christian Religion

In the preface to *Principles 2* Turnbull sums up the content of his book and presents its important connection to *Principles 1*:

The scripture doctrine upon these momentous articles [those proven in *Principles 1*] is here compared with what experience and reason teach, in order to render justice, at one and the same time, both to reason and to revelation...all the truths, in one word, which are explained in the *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, are here reviewed, in order to shew them to be either direct doctrines of revelation, or to be deducible from such by necessary consequence: for that effect, without repeating any of the reasonings in that treatise, they are here set in various new lights.⁴⁵⁹

Turnbull's goal is to show that the Scriptures are not incompatible with what has been established from the experience of the natural world along with reasoning from those experiences. An examination of the natural world points to the Author of nature, as Turnbull argues in *Principles 1*. Since Turnbull wants to show that natural and revealed religion agree, he follows Butler and argues for a connection between the natural and moral worlds. Butler is usually recognized as one of the figures in the eighteenth-century debate regarding natural and revealed religion, commonly referred to as 'The Deist Controversy' in Britain.⁴⁶⁰ Turnbull's religious pamphlets and *Principles 2* fit within this debate, and even though scholars highlight Clarke, Berkeley, and Butler as the main defenders of revealed religion, we will see throughout this chapter that Turnbull's work is as important as that of the three figures mentioned above.

In his *Analogy*, Butler mentions that he follows the methodology of natural philosophy where the laws of nature are collected from experiment.⁴⁶¹ Turnbull commits himself to experimental philosophy as well, but he is more vocal than Butler in his stand against speculation:

⁴⁵⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 471, brackets added.

⁴⁶⁰ For an excellent overview of the religious debate in the eighteenth-century see B.A. Gerrish, "Natural and Revealed Religion," in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy*, vol. 2, edited by Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 639-665. For details of the British debate see M.A. Stewart, "Revealed Religion: The British Debate," in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy*, vol. 2, edited by Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 683-709.

⁴⁶¹ Butler, *Analogy*, 15.

The question [regarding the Scriptures and human nature] is question of fact. And every one who is acquainted with the philosophers (if they may be called such) who have taken delight in perplexing and inveigling, knows what wordy mazes have been contrived by them to confound the plainest facts (such as the reality of motion, for example) and to bewilder the understanding in sophistical intricacies, out of which is not easy for one to extricate himself, however sure he may be of the truth that is beset and puzzled with studied subtleties. Moral as well as natural philosophy, is an enquiry into fact: let us therefore keep in the former, as natural philosophers now at last do in the latter, to experiment and fact; and after their example, shake our selves loose of, and despise all verbal wranglings.⁴⁶²

Besides the preface where we find his methodological statements, *Principles 2* has four sections. In the first two Turnbull argues for the existence of God and his perfection regarding the Scriptures. In section three he compares what is said in the Scriptures regarding virtue and vice, and what we have gathered from reason and experience about them. In a similar vein, in section four he compares the Scriptures and what we know through experience, this time regarding the future state (afterlife) of human beings. We will examine Turnbull's argument throughout this chapter and we will complement the exposition by referring to his religious pamphlets.

When we examined *Principles 1*, we saw that Turnbull winds up his construction of the anatomy of the human mind by pointing out that the present stage of mankind is one of learning and progress towards virtue. There he refers to a biblical passage, the parable of the sower where we find the famous saying "we reap what we sow". Turnbull uses this parable, taken from the letter of St. Paul to Galatians from the New Testament, to introduce his main argument in *Principles 2*:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.⁴⁶³

Turnbull believes that this is the law of divine government: "what you reap is what you sow." He first discusses what this law entails in relation to our nature and the nature of God. Turnbull admits that he takes the explanation of the biblical parable of the sower from a sermon by

⁴⁶² Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 472, underlining added, brackets added.

⁴⁶³ Galatians. 6: 7-8.

Samuel Clarke, one of the figures involved in the Deist controversy. Shedding some light on the context of the religious dispute at the time can help us locate Turnbull's discussion in its proper context before we continue the exposition of his theory. Broadie mentions in his introduction to *Principles* 2 a series of texts from the 1730s that give us some idea of the debate that was taking place.⁴⁶⁴ As we saw in the biographical sketch presented in the first chapter, Turnbull published *Doctrines* in 1731, *Christianity* in 1732, and *Inquiry* in 1739. These pamphlets are all reactions to the arguments put forward by Deists and freethinkers against revelation, miracles, and Christian doctrine. Samuel Clarke gave two Boyle Lectures, one in 1704 and the other a year later. In the first lecture he argued against Hobbes and Spinoza regarding the nature of God and natural religion; in the second lecture he argues for the usefulness of Christian revelation.⁴⁶⁵ Against Clarke's defense of Christianity, Matthew Tindal argued against revealed religion in his *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, published in 1730.⁴⁶⁶ Turnbull's *Christianity* is one of the many texts written in reply to Tindal's text:

The design of this Essay is to do justice to *Dr. Clarke*: and to shew that he has clearly proved the truth of certain principles diametrically opposite to those of the author of *Christianity as old as the Creation*; and to excite impartial enquirers to compare the Doctor's reasonings with these of that author.⁴⁶⁷

Turnbull defends Clarke against Tindal's attack on Christian doctrine and miracles. But *Christianity* is not the first text in which Turnbull defends the appeal to miracles within Christian religion. In 1726 he had written *Doctrines*, published in 1731, with second and third editions appearing in 1732 and 1739 respectively. In that text Turnbull offers a defense of miracles which we will examine in detail in section 6.4. Turnbull's pamphlet is a reply to thinkers like Tindal, Anthony Collins⁴⁶⁸, and in particular Thomas Morgan, as we can gather from the advertisement to the third edition:

This ENQUIRY, with the APPENDIX, is offered by the Author to the consideration of some late writers against Christianity, to the *Moral Philosopher* in

⁴⁶⁴ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, xii.

⁴⁶⁵ Samuel Clarke, *A demonstration of the being and attributes of God: more particularly in answer to Mr. Hobbs, Spinoza, and their followers* (London: printed by Will Botham, for James Knapton, 1705).

⁴⁶⁶ Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as old as the creation: or, the gospel, a republication of the religion of nature*. (London: 1730).

⁴⁶⁷ Turnbull, *Christianity*, v.

⁴⁶⁸ Anthony Collins, *A discourse of free-thinking, occasion'd by the rise and growth of a sect call'd Free-Thinkers*. (London: 1713).

particular; for he thinks it contains a satisfying answer to all that Author has said about miracles, after many others.⁴⁶⁹

Thomas Morgan, Turnbull's chief target in the third edition of *Doctrines*, follows the work of Tindal and Collins and argues against Christianity and revealed religion in his 1737 *The Moral Philosopher*.⁴⁷⁰ Turnbull continued his defense of Christianity in the *Enquiry* where he examines the moral character of Jesus Christ. All these themes are revised in *Principles 2* which, even though it is not explicitly setup by Turnbull as a contribution to the debate, we must acknowledge needs to be examined within this context. As we will see in the next sections, Turnbull constructs a defense of Christianity and revelation, siding with Clarke, Berkeley, and Butler against the arguments of Deists and freethinkers like Tindal, Collins and Morgan.

A key element in Turnbull's argument in *Principles 2* is the unity of the natural and moral worlds. Turnbull wants to show that revelation confirms what the light of reason has already shown us, so the connection between the two worlds makes his task easier: if the observation of nature points to the intelligence of the Author of nature, then this must also be the case in the moral world:

In the natural and material world, the *more observations* men make, and the *greater accuracy* they arrive at, and the *longer periods* of time they are able to take in the *more clearly and distinctly* do they discern, that in that innumerable variety of the works of GOD, all things conspire uniformly, with the most exquisite exactness, to produce (and that sometimes out of the greatest seeming confusion) the properest and most regular effects. The moral world is of infinitely greater importance: it is that, for the sake of which this beautiful and stupendous fabric of the inanimate universe is created, and without which it is nothing. It cannot be doubted then by any reasonable person, but that the same wisdom, which in the *unintelligent works of nature*, has shown itself in the contrivance of such inexpressible aptness and proportions of things; will *much more* in the government of *rational beings* (which are in a far *nobler* and *more proper* sense, the subject's of GOD's power and kingdom) shew forth itself finally, in making every event, through a wonderful variety of different

⁴⁶⁹ Turnbull, *Doctrines*, Advertisement to the third edition.

⁴⁷⁰ Thomas Morgan, *The moral philosopher. In a dialogue between Philaethes a Christian Deist, and Theophanes a Christian Jew...the second edition* (London: 1738).

dispensations, terminate at length in most evident and illustrious manifestations of perfect justice, goodness, and truth.⁴⁷¹

Notice that Turnbull points out a difference between the natural and moral worlds in terms of their importance: the latter is closer to God's nature. This difference between the two worlds leads to two comments: (a) the connection between the moral and natural worlds cannot be just an analogy, since the difference between them would prevent Turnbull from arguing from the former to the latter. However, if the connection between the two worlds is one of unity of two linked stages within the chain of being, then Turnbull has better grounds to argue that whatever holds in the natural world will also hold in the moral, with the difference that things are of a more perfect nature in the latter. (b) We saw that Turnbull holds an interesting version of the great chain of being in the sense that it combines two interpretations of nature. This is clear from the passage quoted above, where Turnbull highlights the order and perfection of the universe regulated by general laws and at the same time points to a hierarchy in nature, where the world of rational beings is more important than that of unintelligent ones.

The unity and continuity of the great chain of being also plays a role in Turnbull's analysis of the passage from Galatians. The passage sets up a parallel between the two worlds: "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall reap of the Spirit life everlasting."⁴⁷² Turnbull recognizes in this passage the united duality of human nature in accordance to the great chain of being:

For man, as he is now constituted and placed, in order to make nature full and coherent, is neither a merely sensitive, nor a purely rational being; but a compound of these two natures, strictly bound and united together. From which constitution it plainly follows, if the end and purpose of a being may be inferred from its frame and make, that man is made to govern his sensitive appetites by reason, and to attain to a confirmed love of rational pleasure above merely sensitive gratification.⁴⁷³

Human beings participate in both the moral and material realms, but given that the former is a more advanced stage than the latter, then Turnbull infers that we must give priority to the moral

⁴⁷¹ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 511.

⁴⁷² Galatians 6:8.

⁴⁷³ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 514.

over the material. Though this is implied in the biblical passage, Turnbull seems to give a more moderate interpretation than the passage calls for. He admits that the pleasures of the spirit are more important than the sensitive ones, but he leaves out the part where the sensitive pleasures reap corruption. While Turnbull focuses on the compound nature of human beings, the passage seems to find no value at all in the sensitive or material part. This is an instance where Turnbull accommodates the biblical passage to suit his anatomy of the human mind from *Principles 1*. We must not forget that Turnbull is also concerned in *Principles 2* with the future state of human beings and its connection to our present stage in the great chain of being. Turnbull sees in the Parable of the Sower a confirmation that this is a stage of preparation for a future, more perfect stage. This is why we must give priority to the moral over the mere sensitive.

Turnbull finishes the introduction with this analysis of the parable, and moves on to the first section of *Principles 2*, where he focuses on the existence and nature of God. Imitating the methodology of natural philosophy, he structures *Principles 2* in a similar way to Newton's *Opticks*, dividing each section into a number of 'propositions' and 'corollaries.' Turnbull tells us that such propositions are:

...either demonstratively certain from the nature and course of things, and the perfections of God; or, at least, highly probable.⁴⁷⁴

As we have already examined in chapter three, Turnbull, like Butler, is very clear in admitting that when it comes to knowledge of a future state, all we can do is argue for probable knowledge of it based on what we can know of our present stage. Turnbull will go through a number of propositions that must be presupposed in Revelation.

The first proposition illustrates Turnbull's ideas regarding the relation between natural and revealed religion. He thought that revelation was of no use without natural religion. Knowledge of the moral perfection of God and the natural world must first be acquired through reason, and only then can revelation be properly understood. In fact, this highlights the relation between *Principles 1* and *Principles 2*: in the former Turnbull relies on the observation of nature and our human mind to prove the perfection of God; only after this has been established we can turn to

⁴⁷⁴ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 517, underlining added.

the Scriptures, as Turnbull does in the latter, to support with revelation what has already been established by reason.

Turnbull begins by arguing that if a divine messenger was to convince anyone about the nature of God,

...he must first open their reason, and lead them gradually, by rational instruction suited to their capacity, to the knowledge of God, before he can deliver his message to them, and reason with them about it.⁴⁷⁵

Turnbull explains in more detail what he means by rational instruction, and refers to Sir Isaac Newton and his method of giving proofs to show the motion of the bodies and the law of gravitation. In order to accept that the law of gravitation applies to all bodies we do not need to go through all of Newton's experiments. It is enough that he has proven his skill as a natural philosopher by performing some experiments to accept his conclusions. However, we would not admit the same conclusion if it is argued by someone of whom we have no proof of skill and achievements. If we admit this in natural philosophy, then we can use the same criterion in moral philosophy and religion:

And indeed, such reasoning, as it cannot be admitted in one case, and rejected in another, without very unaccountable partiality; so it must be universally received, or we must absurdly say, that there can be no such thing as reasoning from samples, specimens or experiments; which philosophers at least, must immediately see to be giving up with all real knowledge.⁴⁷⁶

The parallel here is that revelation, which is communicated by God's messenger (Jesus), must be examined in the same way we assess Newton's claims. We believe that the law of gravitation applies to all bodies even though we do not fully understand how it works; whatever Jesus tells us about revelation might not be fully understood by us, but we should believe him since he has shown to have knowledge of God and the future state through his works and experiments (miracles). (We will examine this description of Jesus in more detail in section 6.4.) Even so, God's messenger cannot reason about God and his attributes with those that have no idea at all

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 519.

of God's nature, in the same way that it is of no use explaining Newton's movement of celestial bodies to one who has no knowledge of the nature of these bodies. It is in this sense that revelation presupposes the existence and nature of God.

Turnbull argues here that natural religion is a necessary presupposition for Christianity. In fact, he shows this by referring to passages from the Bible that show that Jesus and his disciples recognize that revelation presupposes knowledge of the nature of God. For example, this passage from St. John: "No man can come unto me, unless the Father who sent me draw him."⁴⁷⁷ Turnbull believes that this shows the priority of natural over revealed religion:

The meaning is, no man can effectually believe in Christ, or become a good christian, except he first believes in God. Natural religion is a necessary preparative for the reception of the christian.⁴⁷⁸

If we must have knowledge of God in order to understand revelation, then Turnbull needs to explain how the nature and existence of God can be deduced from nature; this is the topic of the second proposition. He begins by telling us that the existence of God is obvious as we "immediately feel and experience" in nature. Turnbull has a particular way of arguing throughout *Principles 2*: he first gives a summary of the claims he argues for in *Principles 1*, and then refers to biblical passages that confirm those claims.

The first instance of his argument for natural religion concerns the law of power. Human beings very early on become aware that they have will and power, but they also recognize that this power is very limited, and therefore it must be derived from somewhere, since it is impossible that something derived comes from nothing. Our power therefore must come from an underived source of power. We come to this conclusion by observing the constitution of our mind, through introspection:

There is therefore, in nature, some one underived, unlimited, independent source of the derived powers in nature, which operate and produce by an established appointed connexion, independent of them.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁷ John, 6: 44.

⁴⁷⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 521.

In *Principles 1* introspection played an important role: it provided the experience and observation of the constitution of the human mind. However, though Turnbull occasionally refers to it, introspection does not play a prominent role in *Principles 2*, given that the main purpose of the text is different: Turnbull wants to show that the Scriptures not only agree with what can be inferred from nature, but actually presuppose it. The evidence Turnbull gives in *Principles 2* is all in the form of commentaries of biblical passages. Regarding the law of power, Turnbull refers to St Paul's first letter to the Romans:

That which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal power and God-head...⁴⁸⁰

In this passage St. Paul is arguing against the heathens, saying that there is no excuse for them not recognizing the one and true God, since his existence and nature can be inferred from his work, namely, nature itself. Turnbull explains that this confirms the fact that we can infer the existence and perfection of God from the order and perfection of nature, as he showed in *Principles 1*, and that thought is further reinforced by a number of passages from the Scriptures. Just like with the other main defenders of revealed religion, Turnbull's strategy against the so called 'Deists' consists in arguing that if natural religion is accepted, then there is no reason to doubt revelation, since the doctrines promoted by both camps coincide.⁴⁸¹

Turnbull moves on to the third proposition of this section where he deals with the problem of Evil. Here he tells us that this problem has already been treated at length in *Principles 1*, where he concludes that there are no absolute evils in the world. The argument there relies on the progressive feature of nature and the fact that human beings are in a learning stage where they progress towards virtue. Since our present stage is one of trials, those evils are good consequences of good laws of nature, laws which in themselves are good for the whole of the system. The minor evils allow us to choose the correct path towards virtue. Turnbull now wants to show that the Scriptures confirm this. This time he refers to a couple of biblical passages that

⁴⁷⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 525.

⁴⁸⁰ Romans 1: 19-20.

⁴⁸¹ For a brief account of defences of revelation Gerrish, "Natural and Revealed Religion," 652-654.

describe our stage as one of learning, like the following line from the first epistle to the Corinthians:

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part;
but then shall I know even as also I am known.⁴⁸²

For his analysis of this passage Turnbull relies first on an analogy with natural philosophy, and then on Clarke's sermons to answer an objection that argues that God's power is limited, since he cannot do evil. For the first part of his analysis, Turnbull argues that human beings were in a state of darkness regarding our understanding of nature, but as the developments in natural philosophy in Turnbull's time have shown, the more we understand nature, the more evidence we have for the perfection of God. Given the union of natural and moral, Turnbull concludes that it must be the same in both stages, and this agrees with what is said in the Scriptures. For the second stage, Turnbull discusses one of the horns of the Euthyphro dilemma, relying on Clarke to answer the objection that whatever is right, is right just because God established it so. Clarke's answer, paraphrased by Turnbull, is that whatever God commands or wills is right, not because He wills it so, but rather because of His extreme wisdom and goodness we can be sure that he would only command what is right. Turnbull regards this as a sufficient answer to the dilemma, and goes on to conclude the discussion:

The constant language of the scriptures is, that God delighteth in good, and hateth evil, and that he makes all things work together in his creation for good...the system of which God is the author, is chosen by him, because it is the best of all possible systems, and there is no absolute evil in it.⁴⁸³

We saw in chapter three that Turnbull adopts a sort of teleological argument to prove the existence and wisdom of God. He follows Berkeley's idea that nature is the language of the Author of nature and here Turnbull finds support for this claim in the Scriptures. He also reinforces the thought that there is no such thing as absolute evil: given the progressive feature of nature, the wisdom and goodness of God, and the fact that our current stage is one of learning, those evils turn out to be conducive to the perfection of the whole system of nature.

⁴⁸² 1 Corinthians 13: 12.

⁴⁸³ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 544.

In the next proposition Turnbull discusses the moral sense he describes in *Principles 1*. We have already examined this faculty in chapter three, where we saw that Turnbull builds on the work of Hutcheson, Shaftesbury and Butler. Turnbull's moral sense is better described as a natural disposition to discern between right and wrong.

Turnbull leads into his discussion of the moral sense by giving an account of nature as it is described in the Scriptures, which illustrates nicely Turnbull's own version of the great chain of being:

The sacred writings represent God as having filled the heavens with celestial inhabitants, ascending above one another by certain degrees, the lowest of which are as superior to man as he is to the highest rank of animals. He hath created angels, seraphims, cherubims, and archangels, and they are all ministring spirits to God. But at the same time, he who hath created beings, that approach much nearer to him than man in the noblest powers; those rational powers, which by the different degrees in which they are bestowed, each order of them being placed in circumstances proportioned to their end, distinguish moral beings into different orders, ranks, and classes, is far from being unmindful of man: he hath made him after his own image, so as to render him able to perfect himself after that pattern of compleat perfection; having induced him with the senses of discerning good and evil, moral rectitude, and its contrary.⁴⁸⁴

Turnbull gives this description of a continuous and graded nature because he wants to argue that God has furnished us with everything we need to fulfill our end in the present stage. The moral sense shows that this is the case. Since we are in a stage of learning, we are put to trial and are meant to discern between right and wrong, and learn to pursue the former and avoid the latter. Turnbull cites biblical passages to answer an objection he already treated in *Principles 1*: if God is indeed benevolent, why does he make us go through trials instead of creating us such that we would always do the right thing? This is a sign of imperfection in God's creation, and hence an imperfection in his own nature. Turnbull answers by saying that God has made us perfectly fit for our place in the chain of nature, and many biblical passages support this reply. In particular, Turnbull explains a passage from the epistle to the Ephesians where we are instructed to use our rational powers and the moral sense for the pursuit of virtue:

⁴⁸⁴ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 547.

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.⁴⁸⁵

Turnbull replaces the word ‘wise’ in the passage with ‘rational beings’, and explains that passages such as this show that our purpose in this stage is to follow the path towards virtue, and God has provided us with all the powers and faculties to fulfill this end.

In the last three propositions of the first section of *Principles 2*, Turnbull discusses the divine law he began his book with: we reap what we sow. He wants to argue that this law must also be a law of human nature. He begins his argument by referring to the progressive feature in nature and the stage of human beings within the chain. The divine law must suppose that moral beings are endowed with rational or moral faculties and that our stage in nature requires the exercise of those moral powers.⁴⁸⁶ Turnbull believes that this is evident from the observation of human nature. If this law holds in the present stage of mankind, then we can infer that it is a universal rule. He draws on the connection between the moral and natural worlds to justify this claim. In this passage we can see that the relation between the two worlds is more than just an analogy; the analogy is possible *because* both moral and natural are connected parts of the great chain of being:

And therefore it is sufficient at present to observe, that as in the natural, so much more in the moral world, it is reasonable to conclude, nay it is a necessary consequence from the infinite perfection of the Creator and Governor of the universe, that as there can be no general laws established which are not contributive in the whole to the greater good; so there can be no limitations, restrictions, or oppositions to any one good law, but from another equally good law... Now as it is in nature, so may it be in the moral world: there is such an analogy between these two parts of the same system conspiring to the same end, that it is not unlikely to presume, it may be found to be so.⁴⁸⁷

Turnbull seems to be arguing here that if the law applies in this stage, then with more reason it will apply in the next. We saw that in *Principles 1* Turnbull admits that all we can know about a

⁴⁸⁵ Ephesians 5:15-17.

⁴⁸⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 555.

⁴⁸⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 559.

future stage can only be probable knowledge. However here he claims that it is a necessary consequence of God's nature that the laws of this stage apply in the next. This, as we examined in chapter three, gets Turnbull in trouble: he requires the moral and natural realms to be connected, but at the same time there has to be a difference between them, the former being a more perfect stage. Turnbull seems to be aware of this and claims that he will not discuss this "hypothetick proposition"⁴⁸⁸ any longer. It is enough for him to state that it is probable that the law is universal, given the wisdom of God and our natural constitution.

The final proposition of this section relates back to Turnbull's commitment to the experimental method. In *Principles 2* there is an important addition to the method: the same criteria we apply to experiments in moral and natural philosophy should be used to admit or refuse of accounts from testimony in the Scriptures:

The same rules which, being observed in making experiments in natural philosophy, render them a sure foundation to build upon, must, if observed in moral philosophy, render experiences in it equally certain, an equally solid foundation to build moral conclusions upon. Which rules may be reduced to these two; namely, to take care "1. That the experiments be analogous in kind;" and "2. That they be proportioned in extent and moment of the inferences deduced from them. And experiences taken upon testimony, must all of them, whether concerning objects of the outward senses, or inward sentiments, operations, and affections of the mind, be tried, examined, and admitted, or repelled by the very same *criteria*, or rules of moral evidence."⁴⁸⁹

If we examine the Scriptures with the same criteria we use to scrutinize experiments in natural philosophy, then there should not be any reason to deny the truth and usefulness of revelation. In his *Enquiry* the same idea is reinforced: just as we acquire knowledge of nature by observing it, the doctrines of Christianity must be taken from its proper proofs:

Yet it is not more certain, that philosophers cannot spin the knowledge of nature out of their brains, or get at it any other way than by studying nature herself, than it is, that if Divines do not fetch both the doctrine of Christ, and its proofs, from Christ

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 563.

himself, *i.e.* from those who have given us the history of his life, doctrine and works, it is by mere chance, if they hit either upon the true doctrine, or the real evidence that was given its truth.⁴⁹⁰

By describing the Scriptures as the history of Jesus Christ Turnbull brings them to the same level of histories in natural philosophy, thus providing a solid foundation for the truth of Christianity.⁴⁹¹ Turnbull's view of the Scriptures might raise a question regarding the credibility of the accounts given of the life of Christ, but he has an answer: if we can show that Jesus did not deceive his followers, then we should have no reason to believe that accounts of his life are false.

Turnbull concludes the first section with two corollaries regarding the nature of a future state that will be discussed in more detail in section 6.4. For now it suffices to say that the corollaries seem to be plausible inferences from the argument given so far: the first corollary states that the law considered also applies in our future state; the second one tells us that such future state must necessarily exist.

We have seen that the propositions of section one relate to the laws of human nature Turnbull established in *Principles 1*. However, instead of referring to introspection and the observation of nature to prove them, he quotes from several passages from the Bible to confirm his theory. The difference between Turnbull's argument in the two texts is that in *Principles 2* Turnbull is not trying to establish the laws of human nature from Scripture, but rather he wants to show that revelation presupposes these laws, and therefore can only be properly understood once we have established the laws of human nature and the ways of God through reason and experience. This shows that Turnbull is arguing for a position that gives priority to natural religion while still finding revelation useful. The fact that this is Turnbull's agenda will be clearer as we examine the rest of *Principles 2*.

6.2 The Unity of Natural, Moral, and God

Turnbull begins the second section by reaffirming the argument from design he sketches in section one and in *Principles 1*. We deduce the existence and perfection of God from the several

⁴⁹⁰ Turnbull, *Enquiry*, 3.

⁴⁹¹ We examine Turnbull's view on the Scriptures as an accurate historical record in sections 6.3 and 6.4 of this thesis.

proper samples of his work we have access to. In this sense, and this is something that also takes place in *Doctrines* and *Enquiry*, he interprets the Bible as a historical account of events related by those who experienced them at the time. I will explore the argument of these two religious pamphlets later in this chapter. We saw in the previous section that Turnbull regards testimony as a proper source of knowledge, as long as it stands the same tests that experiments in natural and moral philosophy have to endure. In itself, this testimonial account from revelation cannot be very helpful, but if it follows the knowledge we have acquired by reason and experience, it can serve to further confirm such knowledge:

So with respect to the works of God, if we can nowhere see any vestiges of good order and contrivance, then are they wholly incomprehensible to us, and we can make no conclusion from them: but, on the other hand, if, as far we have advanced by the study of them, we still found more clear evidences of excellent general laws, and of good and wise administration; then we have excellent reason from such samples to judge well of the whole, or to conclude, that all is perfectly good, tho' we know but a part, and can indeed see but a very small part of the scheme which is carrying on to perfection, even so far as it is advanced, in our narrow and limited situation.⁴⁹²

The connection between natural and moral is put to work here. Just as we do in nature, we deduce laws from observations and experiments. Once we attend to nature in enough detail, we can clearly deduce from all the phenomena that God the creator must exist. Nature is God's work and only by examining it can we gather anything about its author. Even though we do not have access to the whole of nature, we have good reason to infer that the whole system is perfect and good from what we know of this stage.

In this section Turnbull argues for divine providence and the attributes of God. As we will see, he continues to appeal to the laws established in *Principles 1* to construct his argument and confirm such laws with passages from the Scriptures. He begins by considering the inconsistency between divine providence and freewill. Turnbull explains that the problem asks:

⁴⁹² Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 611.

...whether or no, and how that freedom of action, which makes a moral agent such, and men to be men, can be consistent with fore-knowledge of such actions.⁴⁹³

Turnbull relies on texts by Samuel Clarke and William Wollaston to argue against this inconsistency.⁴⁹⁴ The main argument Turnbull borrows from these writers is that freewill and the omniscience of the author of nature are compatible, because unlike knowledge, the will can create. Knowledge is only passive, and therefore cannot affect or produce anything that happens.⁴⁹⁵ Given this difference then the fact that God has foreknowledge of effects is not incompatible with the liberty of human beings. This issue was hotly debated by deists and dissenters⁴⁹⁶ alike, since it relates to the feature of pre-destination held officially by most of the churches and sects in Britain. Often associated with Calvinism, the doctrine of predestination posed a problem for those who wanted to defend the claim that salvation depended on our own free-will without giving up the omniscient feature of God. Figures like Clarke, Wollaston, and Turnbull defended the claim by arguing that there was no inconsistency.

Turnbull, without much analysis summarizes Clarke's and Wollaston's arguments and considers the objection sufficiently answered. He leaves this issue aside and spends the remainder of the section showing how in the Scriptures divine providence is universal and necessary. Unlike other instances, Turnbull does not explain this issue with freedom of action in much detail, presumably because Clarke and Wollaston had treated it fully. Furthermore, the existence of free will is already entailed by the rule that appears throughout the whole of *Principles 2*: you reap what you sow. However, it is not clear that Turnbull has solved the issue by summarizing the argument given by other authors and he appears to follow them blindly. One of the biblical passages Turnbull gives to show evidence for divine providence highlights the inconsistency between omniscience and freewill:

⁴⁹³ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 617.

⁴⁹⁴ Samuel Clarke, *A demonstration*; William Wollaston, *The religion of nature delineated*. (London: re-printed by Sam. Palmer, 1724)

⁴⁹⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 617-618.

⁴⁹⁶ For the distinction between deists and dissenters see S.J. Barnett, *The Enlightenment and Religion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 87-94. Even though I agree that there is a distinction between the two camps, Barnett's discussion need to be taken carefully, given that the distinction is set with the aim of showing that there was no such thing as a Deist movement in England.

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.⁴⁹⁷

So we are predestined according to the will of God, but somehow we still have freedom of action. How does Turnbull account for this? It seems that the key is in his adoption of the distinction between knowledge and will. The fact that God knows what will happen in the future does not entail that this knowledge affects the free actions of human beings. Turnbull follows Clarke and Wollaston and claims that God's foreseeing of necessary things (like material effects) is different from his foreseeing human actions. The latter is just described as barely being aware of what will happen, but without affecting it. In this sense, Turnbull thinks, the Author of nature can be omniscient and we can hold on to our freewill.

In the second proposition Turnbull discusses the evidence found in the Scriptures regarding our natural tendency to find delight in beauty, order, and perfection in order to show that the Author of nature must also possess this faculty, with the difference that He holds it in a perfect degree that human beings lack. Our place within the great chain of being shows that we are not the most perfect link in it. However, all the powers and faculties God has given us must be possessed by him in the highest perfection since, Turnbull believes, it is absurd that we possess something the perfect being does not:

This being our constitution...the Author of our nature must have in him a perfect love and approbation of natural and moral beauty, he must delight in it with a delight of approbation, and therefore must steadily pursue it in all his operations and works.⁴⁹⁸

Turnbull clarifies that this does not mean that he is anthropomorphizing God by giving Him senses we possess to perceive beauty. What we mean when we say that God has eyes and senses like us is that He knows his own work perfectly, and designed it this way; not that He literally has a human form. The main claim Turnbull wants to make here is that from all the laws and faculties of human nature it follows that God must be perfect. By examining our natural faculties we discover that the sense of beauty that causes delight from the order and perfection of the natural world must presuppose wisdom or knowledge. If we deduce God's nature by looking at

⁴⁹⁷ Ephesians 1:11.

⁴⁹⁸ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 627.

ours, then He must be infinitely wise. And if He is infinitely wise, then He must also be infinitely good.⁴⁹⁹ Turnbull finds that the Scriptures support this claim, like the following passage from Job:

Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?⁵⁰⁰

Turnbull is arguing here that the infinite goodness of God can be derived from our own nature, and this is confirmed in the Scriptures. He considers the objection that we cannot know God's attributes from His work, to which he answers by reinforcing that we do acquire probable knowledge: given our present stage and our nature, it is more probable that God is perfectly wise and good, rather than evil and imperfect. Turnbull clarifies that wisdom and goodness are not the only attributes of God. There are many that follow from these two, like purity, justice, truthfulness, etc. He gives a general description of these attributes and comments that God created us so that we find those attributes and virtues amiable. Turnbull considers that there are only two ways this could be so: either God made us so because He finds something amiable in the nature of those virtues, or though not amiable themselves, they are perfectly fit for the present stage of human beings, highlighting the goodness of our Author.⁵⁰¹ Any other explanation is either absurd or a "perplexing hypothesis." This leads to an interesting discussion regarding the use of hypotheses. I have characterized Turnbull as an experimental philosopher, and we have seen instances where he condemns the use of pure speculation and hypotheses.⁵⁰² However, here he seems to allow some use of hypotheses. Justifying the explanation we have just gone through, Turnbull tells us that we are disposed to always choose the simplest hypothesis:

Now truth and simplicity are in all instances so inseparable, that we may safely prefer the more simple hypothesis to all others. And indeed we are naturally framed to do so; and while we are influenced by this disposition to look out for the simplest hypotheses, where looking out for any is either necessary to assist and direct in our choice with regard to action; or to quiet our minds, by taking off uneasy and perplexing difficulties and doubts, we never have in the event reason to repent doing

⁴⁹⁹ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 631-632.

⁵⁰⁰ Job 4:17

⁵⁰¹ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 640-641.

⁵⁰² For example, see sections 3.1 and 5.1 of this thesis.

so. The physician, the naturalist, will always before experiment presume the truth of the simplest hypothesis; for experiments always turn out in its favours; and thus shew, that our determination by nature to embrace the most simple hypotheses, is by no means a deceit...⁵⁰³

Turnbull's comments are puzzling given that he has claimed in *Principles 1* that regarding moral or natural philosophy:

...In neither case are hypotheses to be further admitted, than as questions, about the truth or reality of which it is worth while to enquire...⁵⁰⁴

Perhaps the most puzzling thing about the passage is that Turnbull refers to the physician and naturalist as examples of this method where a hypothesis is posited and then confirmed by experiments. So how are we to explain Turnbull's attitude regarding hypotheses? The answer to this question lies in analyzing the passage within the context of *Principles 2*. As we have already mentioned, Turnbull believes that all we can know about the future state and the nature of God is restricted to probable knowledge deduced from knowledge of the present state. In this sense, any explanation we give of a future state and other things that we cannot possibly know in this stage, are mere hypotheses, in the sense that they cannot be confirmed. Notice that Turnbull mentions in the passage that we look for the simplest hypothesis when it is necessary to guide our actions, or when we need to quiet our minds. I do not think this entails that Turnbull is advocating the use of hypotheses *simpliciter*, but only when we have no other choice, as in the case of things unknowable to us in our present stage. Even if we grant this, how do we explain the reference to the physician and the naturalist? Well, as the quote from *Principles 1* above shows, there is a role for hypotheses in Turnbull's experimental methodology, but it is a secondary role subservient to experiment. Given that the context of *Principles 2* is one where Turnbull is arguing mostly for probable knowledge, we need to take his comments on hypotheses with caution.

Continuing his description of God's attributes, Turnbull next considers mercy, and he refers to a passage from the Gospel of Luke that he also uses in his religious pamphlets to the same effect:

⁵⁰³ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 641-642.

⁵⁰⁴ Turnbull, *Principles 1*, 63.

What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.⁵⁰⁵

This and other biblical passages show that God is merciful even to sinners, forgiving them and rejoicing when they rejoin his flock. Turnbull concludes his discussion of this proposition regarding the attributes of God by reinforcing the thought that the divine law "you reap what you sow" follows from his attributes and holds universally.

In the third proposition Turnbull discusses miracles and their consistency with a government of the world based on general laws. We will discuss this issue in more detail and its connection to *Doctrines* in section 6.4. In the meantime, there are a few ideas from this section that are worth mentioning. Turnbull sets up his argument by showing the connection between the moral and natural worlds and their respective laws:

And indeed, as, seeing we can trace government by general laws in very many instances in nature, we have hence reason to presume, that the government of the moral world is analogous to it, and likewise by general laws; so were we strangers to the material world, if we can trace the observance of those general laws which have been mentioned in the moral world, we would have in like manner good ground to infer, that the material part must likewise be governed by general laws analogously to the moral; and that from this single consideration, which is evident at first sight, that the material and moral do make one system, or are intimately and closely blended together, and have but one Author, and one end or scope.⁵⁰⁶

I want to insist upon this point since it confirms the claim that the relation between the natural and moral worlds is more than just an analogy, and it is this connection that does a lot of the

⁵⁰⁵ Luke 15:4-7; See Turnbull, *Enquiry*, 41-42.

⁵⁰⁶ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 650, underlining added.

work in many of his arguments. Turnbull himself sums up this connection between the two worlds nicely:

We shall only observe, that tho' *moral philosophy* be distinguished from natural, and the moral from the natural world for several good reasons; yet it would be a very great mistake, if any one should be led by that distinction to consider them as two distinct or separate worlds, or two distinct spheres of action...when we speak of arguing from the material world to the moral, it sounds at first like arguing from conduct in one sphere to conduct in an absolutely different one. But it is not really so; for it is only arguing from some parts of one and the same sphere to other parts of it.⁵⁰⁷

This unity of the moral and natural worlds, very important for understanding Turnbull's thought, is used here to discuss the case of miracles. The problem Turnbull needs to tackle here is that of accounting for miracles in a world that is governed by general laws. The issue is that miracles pose a threat to the conception of the universe ordered and regulated by general laws that Turnbull himself subscribes to, given that miracles do not follow those natural laws. The debate regarding miracles is another of the salient topics of discussion in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. British figures defending revealed religion usually saw their accounts of miracles as responses to Spinoza's denial of the possibility of miracles. Of those who rejected miracles in Britain, Hume stands out as the one who gave the most compelling argument.⁵⁰⁸ As we will see when we examine this issue in more detail in section 6.4, Turnbull's discussion of miracles offers an original and interesting argument for miracles, which highlights his relevance for understanding religious debate in eighteenth-century Britain.

Turnbull does not want to give up general laws, so he turns his mind to accommodating miracles within his interpretation of nature. The first reply he gives is based on an analogy to natural philosophy, where there are many laws that are unknown to us. However, this does not entail that there are some events that cannot be reduced to general laws. Just as the law of gravity was unknown to us until Newton, it might be the case that at some point miracles will be explained

⁵⁰⁷ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 652, underlining added.

⁵⁰⁸ Spinoza's argument against miracles can be found in chapter 6 of the *TTP*, and Hume's account in section X of the *Enquiry*. I will refer to their account when we examine Turnbull's account of miracles in section 6.4 of this thesis. Baruch Spinoza, *Spinoza Complete Works*, trans. Samuel Shirley and ed. Michael L. Morgan (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 444-456. David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

by a general law that is at the moment unknown to us. This consideration can be explained by appealing to the progressive and graded feature of the great chain of being. Turnbull paraphrases a passage from Butler's *Analogy*⁵⁰⁹ to reinforce his claim that miracles are not incompatible with the laws of nature, and goes on to consider another reply.

Given the different ranks and order of things in nature, it is quite probable that there are creatures in a higher stage than man, and if there are such creatures, then their laws and sphere of activity cannot be known by creatures inferior to them, since every sphere is limited by its own laws. This might very well be the case with miracles, as Turnbull explains by drawing an analogy to gravity:

...though the law of gravity prevail universally through the natural world, insomuch that all the appearances of planets are reducible into it, together with that centrifugal force, which is the result of the inertnes of matter; and that we cannot suspend or change it, but must act and work conformably to it; yet very consistently with this order of nature it may be in the power of beings, superior to us, to act contrary to this property which is to us a rule and boundary of power, so as to be able to walk upon the water, and to suspend heavy bodies in the air, &c. In like manner, though it be not in our power to cure any diseases but gradually, and by certain methods discovered to us by experience; yet it may be in the power of beings of a superior sphere of activity immediately or instantaneously to cure or remove certain diseases by methods altogether unconceivable by us.⁵¹⁰

Turnbull explains in more detail the issue of miracles later in *Principles 2*. At this stage he is just trying to show that their existence is not inconsistent with divine providence. This leads him to the last proposition in this section, which deals briefly with a topic he has already discussed: the consistency of divine providence with the liberty of moral beings. Since he has already discussed this issue both in *Principles 1* and at the beginning of this section of *Principles 2*, he now focuses on passages from the Scriptures that show that divine providence is compatible with liberty in moral agents.

⁵⁰⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 656-657; Butler, *Analogy*, 247-248.

⁵¹⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 659-660.

Following Clarke's thought on the issue⁵¹¹, Turnbull explains that liberty or freedom consists in following reason and controlling our passions. Scripture confirms that it is our duty to take reason as our guide, as the following passage from the Gospel of Matthew shows:

The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.⁵¹²

The light in the passage refers to our reason, so Turnbull infers that the Scriptures are confirming the claim that it is our duty to balance our passions by letting reason be our guide. Turnbull goes on to summarize the discussion of liberty given in *Principles 1*, which we already examined in chapter three. The only detail that requires our attention here is the conclusion he gives before listing two corollaries to this fourth proposition, where he sums up the purpose of this section of *Principles 2*: to show that the Scriptures confirm what experience has proven:

Let us keep to experience in all natural and moral enquiries, which are all of them equally about matters of fact. And if we do so in this question, it must soon be determined, for we all know, we all feel, we are free agents... This is matter of experience. And the scripture treats us as such free beings, with a certain moral sphere of activity, and tells us, that our happiness for ever depends on our conduct; for every one shall reap the fruit of his doings.⁵¹³

This description of the agreement between experience and the Scriptures leads to his first corollary, in which Turnbull explains why the present stage of man is “a perfectly good part of providence.”⁵¹⁴ There is an interesting discussion regarding the agreement of *a priori* and *a posteriori* arguments. Both kinds of argument lead to the same conclusion: that the present stage of man is only a part of the whole system. This debate between *a priori* and *a posteriori* arguments in religion goes back to a discussion between Clarke and Butler in the second decade of the eighteenth century.⁵¹⁵ While the former constructed *a priori* arguments for God's attributes, the latter claims in his *Sermons* that even though there is some value in the type of arguments Clarke

⁵¹¹ See Clarke, *One hundred and seventy three sermons on several subjects and occasions... Vol 1*, (Dublin: printed by S. Powell, 1738), 229-230.

⁵¹² Matthew 6:22-23

⁵¹³ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 676.

⁵¹⁴ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 679.

⁵¹⁵ The correspondence is available in Joseph Butler and Samuel Clarke, *Correspondence between Dr. Butler and Dr. Clarke*, in *The Works of Joseph Butler*, vol. 1, ed. W.E. Gladstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896).

constructs, Butler prefers the *a posteriori* method since it is “more easily applicable to the several particular relations and circumstances in life.”⁵¹⁶

Following Butler, Turnbull leaves *a priori* arguments aside and focuses on *a posteriori* arguments to show the perfection of the whole system:

...so if we abstract from all those [*a priori*] arguments, and confine ourselves merely to what we see of things, and argue only *a posteriori*, it is plain, that our present state hath no appearance of a whole, but, on the contrary, hath all the appearances or signs of its being but a part; and if we consider it as a part, it hath all the evidences and signs of a well administered part, so far especially as virtue, or the improvement of moral beings, are concerned.⁵¹⁷

Turnbull here goes through a reply he gives to an objection we have already examined, one regarding the perfection of our state, and hence the perfection of the author of nature. This passage helps clarify Turnbull’s thought regarding this issue. He thinks our state is still a perfect one despite the fact that we are not the most perfect beings, given that our constitution is perfectly fitted for our place in the whole chain of nature. This points to the infinite wisdom of God, and hence the perfection and order in all the system.

Now that he has argued for the perfection of God, Turnbull introduces a second corollary that follows from it: we ought to praise God. This obligation to praise the Author of nature is summarized in the Lord’s Prayer. Turnbull explains the prayer line by line, showing how it illustrates the perfection of God and our commitment to follow his will, and hence the path to virtue.

After examining this section we can see that *Principles 2* cannot be properly understood as an isolated text. Turnbull is mainly summarizing or rephrasing the several laws of nature he established in *Principles 1* to then provide confirmation of them from a source other than nature, namely, the Scriptures. Without the explanation of the anatomy of the mind from *Principles 1* the argument of the second book is not of much use. This highlights Turnbull’s agenda and his desire to argue for a form of religion that is based on the use of reason while securing a role for

⁵¹⁶ Butler, *Sermons*, 5.

⁵¹⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 678, square brackets added.

revelation. We have seen in the first two sections of this chapter Turnbull's reply to those that find no use in revelation: there is no need to cast the Scriptures away, since what is said in them agrees with what reason has already proven. In fact, this actually points out that revelation is of use to reinforce and confirm the wisdom and benevolence of the Author of nature and establish virtue as our purpose. But Scripture's role in confirming what we have discovered through reason, is not its only role. As we will see in the following two sections, revelation can be a great aid in our quest for virtue.

6.3 Virtue, Vice, and the Scriptures

In section three Turnbull continues to argue that the Scriptures agree with what reason and experience have proven. This time he focuses on his account of virtue and vice. We will see that Turnbull here confirms the thought that the perfection of human beings lies in following our natural end, and such end is virtue. Just as in *Principles 1*, the belief that perfection always depends on the end of the object in question plays a key role for understanding Turnbull's idea that we are perfectly fitted for virtue. Turnbull introduces the section with a discussion regarding the idea of perfection. We define the perfect or imperfect state of something by reflecting on the particular end of the object in question. So human beings have a perfect state and an imperfect one defined by our end. We already know from *Principles 1* that Turnbull believes that virtue is our end, and hence vice is an imperfection. Turnbull wants now to show that the Scriptures confirm this thought.

He begins by commenting on a passage from the Gospel of Luke which (in a similar vein to a passage we examined in the last section) refers to light:

The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body is also full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, then the whole will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.⁵¹⁸

Immediately after quoting the passage, Turnbull gives his interpretation:

⁵¹⁸ Luke 11:34-36.

His meaning is: what the eye is to the body: that very same thing in proportion, the moral judgment and understanding, the directing principle, is to a man's mind...⁵¹⁹

Turnbull had already discussed the analogy between the eye and the understanding to show that God has given us the faculties required to procure our end. Here the emphasis is different, since Turnbull wants to show that our moral perfection is virtue and that vice is imperfection. If the eye is defined as good when it lets light in, then it must also be the case with the eye of the mind or understanding. If this is true, then the perfect state of human beings is one of light and not of darkness. But it is clear that this state must be pursued and acquired, so Turnbull introduces a discussion in which he goes over the importance of the improvement of both knowledge and the human faculties for the pursuit of virtue. Much of the discussion is a recap of the claims he already made in *Principles 1*.

There is, however, something of interest in his exposition. We have seen that Turnbull quoted extensively from Locke in *Education* and, even though he did not quote or paraphrase extensively from him in *Principles 1*, he does adopt some of Locke's ideas. In *Principles 2* Turnbull also refers to and quotes constantly from Locke's *Of the conduct of the understanding*, in particular to support his claim regarding the importance of education for moral teaching and the pursuit of virtue. The details of the extensive quote from Locke need not concern us here, but we do need to examine what Turnbull extracts from Locke's text. He describes the work as an "excellent piece of experimental reasoning" which he refers to for three purposes:

1. To give strength to what I had before said, that though society requires diversity of gifts, talents, tempers, or in one word, genius's; and though such diversity may be in some measure natural, yet for the greater part it is owing to different kinds and degrees of exercise or want of exercise, in consequence of the law of habits... 2. But chiefly to shew, on this occasion, in what sense it may be justly said to be in every man's power to improve his understanding to a very great pitch of perfection. And in this sense it plainly is so, that generally defect in knowledge is not from want of natural parts; but from want of proper exercise to cultivate natural parts. 3. And in the next place, to give me an opportunity for remarking, how much the

⁵¹⁹ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 690.

improvement of our understanding depends on education, and consequently upon the care, not only of our parents, but upon the care of society about education.⁵²⁰

In *Principles 2*, Turnbull combines the crucial role of education covered in *Education* with the importance of the acquisition of knowledge described in *Principles 1* to show that we are perfectly fitted for virtue. Turnbull summarizes the importance of education expounded in his other texts and then refers to biblical passages to show that the Scriptures recognize that we have a natural disposition to approve of virtue and avoid vice and that this is “sufficient guide”⁵²¹ as the following passage from the first book of John illustrates:

And herby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure ourselves before God. For if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then we have confidence towards God.⁵²²

Turnbull believes that the passage shows that the law of God is already in our hearts, thus confirming that God has furnished us with the required powers and faculties to achieve virtue. But possessing the faculties is not enough; we need to exercise them and put them to work to direct ourselves and our actions towards virtue. Turnbull refers to a couple of passages from the epistle to the Romans and the epistle to the Ephesians to show that this is the case.

Let us consider some of the passages Turnbull uses to illustrate virtuous and vicious characters in the Scriptures and our duty to follow virtue. He begins by referring to a distinction that is included in the passage of the Parable of the Sower: flesh and spirit. While those of vicious character live for the former, the virtuous concentrate on the latter:

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from

⁵²⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 697.

⁵²¹ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 704.

⁵²² 1 John 3:19-21

above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.⁵²³

The biblical passage shows that the Scriptures not only relate vice with the earthly and virtue with the heavens; they also recognize that virtue is the path to follow. We can also see that Turnbull finds in the Scriptures support for his interpretation of the dual nature of human beings, which allows us to participate in both the natural and moral realms. However, since the moral world is a more perfect stage, we should prepare for it and leave natural and sensual concerns aside.

Turnbull reminds us that prior to the lessons of the Scriptures we must deduce our proper end from the constitution of our nature, which shows that our end is virtue:

If therefore it be true in general, that the proper happiness of a being can be nothing else but the result of the just and proportionate exercises of its powers and affections about their proper objects; it must be true with respect to man, that his proper happiness can consist in nothing else but the exercises of his reason in regulating the pursuits of his affections and appetites.⁵²⁴

The anatomy of the human mind from *Principles 1* shows that we are required to control our passions and subsume them to reason, and this is where our happiness lies. The Scriptures confirm this obligation to control our passions, as the following biblical passage shows:

Blessed is the man who endures temptation: for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him.⁵²⁵

Turnbull selects this kind of passage because it easily confirms his thought on human nature and the current stage of mankind. As we can see in the verse quoted above, it is clear that out of the two aspects of human nature, the moral one is more important. This is why we need to avoid temptation, and if we succeed, we will be rewarded in the future state we are preparing for. With

⁵²³ James 3:13-17

⁵²⁴ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 723-724.

⁵²⁵ James 1:12

this thought Turnbull winds down his discussion of this second proposition and puts forward three corollaries that he believes follow from the ongoing discussion:

1. Human beings must control their bodily appetites, given our natural end of virtue and the higher pleasure we derive from it.
2. This feature of learning to control ourselves shows that our present stage within the great chain of being is one of progress and education.
3. This need to control our bodily appetites is not a bad consequence of our nature, since it points out that virtue is more pleasurable and rewarding.⁵²⁶

We now move to the last proposition of section three where Turnbull wants to show that the morality promoted by the Christian doctrine points to the end deduced from our natural constitution. He argues for three claims that will prove the usefulness of Christianity:

- I. Scripture nowhere sets a mark before man too high above him...
- II. Scripture's doctrine of virtue nowhere sinks too low...
- III. In Christian morality no duty or virtue is overlooked...⁵²⁷

Turnbull proves the first proposition by referring to passages that call for human beings to imitate the moral perfection of God:

But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. Because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."⁵²⁸

Turnbull relates this idea to the progressive feature of the great chain of being. Since our stage is one of learning and improvement in virtue, the best way to achieve such progress surely must be

⁵²⁶ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 735-742. This list is my paraphrase of Turnbull's corollaries (summarized).

⁵²⁷ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 750.

⁵²⁸ 1 Peter 1:15-16.

by imitating or copying the values of whatever is the most perfect in virtue. He also clarifies that, while encouraging us to imitate God in the Scriptures, we are not being asked to be as holy as Him, since this is impossible; what we are being asked is to imitate his love for virtue and rejection of all vice, which is something we are certainly capable of doing.

If we accept Turnbull's proof of the first proposition, he must now prove that Scripture does not depict human beings too low. His proof relies on the thought that our stage in the great chain of being shows that we are in a stage of trial and education where our main end is to improve and follow virtue:

In fine, if we keep in mind, that the scripture represents this life as a state of preparation and probation for another; and consequently all the various circumstances of the present state of mankind, prosperous or adverse, as means of trial; as calls to the study and exercise of particular virtues, each condition of life having virtues more properly belonging to it, it will be very easy to conceive what it is to be *poor in spirit*, and *rich towards God*; to lay up *treasures not in earth, but in heaven*.⁵²⁹

We might find descriptions of vices and unworthy acts that human beings engage in, but this is only to show the dangers of falling astray from the path to virtue and not to show that such is our nature. On the contrary it shows that we are capable of overcoming temptation and that by following the path to virtue we shall attain happiness.

Lastly, Turnbull wants to show that the doctrine of Christianity does not leave any of the virtues out. Instead of his own, Turnbull presents the argument of another author to prove this point. The text he uses is a sermon by James Foster. Turnbull abridges the sermon highlighting Foster's account of friendship and benevolence, and his description of the life of Jesus Christ as a perfect example of all the virtues.⁵³⁰ This account of the moral character of Christ is given by Turnbull himself in his *Enquiry*. It is useful here to examine some passages of this text in order to understand Turnbull's belief that the Scriptures give a proper account of virtue through the example of Jesus Christ.

⁵²⁹ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 771.

⁵³⁰ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 806-812. James Foster, *Sermons on the following subjects, viz. Of the universal sense of good and evil. The characters of the righteous and good man compared; or benevolence the noblest branch of social virtue. The perfection of the Christian scheme of benevolence* (London: printed for J. Noon, 1733).

In the *Enquiry* Turnbull is constantly comparing Jesus to Socrates to show that if we consider the latter to be a good man, then we must consider the former even with higher regard. In order to illustrate this claim, Turnbull examines the life of Jesus the man:

Let us therefore, first of all, consider Christ merely as a man, or enquire into his moral character, and consider his works, which are called miracles, barely as acts of ordinary skill and power, to cure diseases, and perform other such good offices to mankind.⁵³¹

Since we will examine Turnbull's thought on miracles in more detail in the next section, we shall only focus here briefly on his description of the moral character of Jesus. Turnbull begins by considering Christ's honesty. He tells us that even though he was declared by many an impostor, Jesus always advocated honesty, and called to discern of false prophets by their works and not be fooled by their words alone, as the following passage from the gospel of Matthew illustrates:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.⁵³²

Turnbull believes that Jesus' moral character is highlighted because even he submitted himself to these criteria, and asked to be judged by his works. Turnbull refers to a passage from the Gospel of John⁵³³ where Jesus, about to be stoned, asks for the reason behind the stoning, given that he had cured the diseases, given sight to the blind, and preformed such benevolent acts. If we judge him by his works, then we can see the goodness of his character.

Turnbull points out that Jesus also promoted virtue, teaching us to be benevolent and charitable. He refers to a passage from the Gospel of Luke, but instead of quoting it directly, he gives

⁵³¹ Turnbull, *Enquiry*, 5.

⁵³² Matthew 7:15-21.

⁵³³ John 10:25-42.

Samuel Clarke's expanded version of such passage, which adds to the biblical passages in order to highlight the promotion of benevolence and the love of mankind:

Look not upon those only to be your neighbours who dwell near you, or are of the same nation, religion, or sect; but think every one such who stands in any need of your relief and assistance, however otherwise he may be a stranger to you; and so extend your charity to all mankind.⁵³⁴

This account from Turnbull's *Enquiry* gives us an expanded version of the argument given in *Principles 2*, which we have been examining in this section. By giving a description of Jesus Christ as a virtuous man the Scriptures teach us to follow the same path to virtue we have deduced from the observation of our nature.

Turnbull concludes the section with four corollaries. The first three summarize the discussion of the propositions we have examined in detail above; the last one introduces the topic of the next section, namely, the existence and nature of a future state. Turnbull has reinforced in the propositions in this section his claim that the present stage of human beings is one of learning and preparation. Given that this follows from the account he has given of virtue, then the existence of a future state is already entailed. We examine Turnbull's account of this future state in the next section.

6.4 The Future State

Turnbull introduces the fourth and final section of *Principles 2* with a preliminary notice where he discusses the limits of reasoning from facts and observation. While explaining the connection between the natural and moral worlds in *Principles 1*, Turnbull tells us that the main difference between the worlds is that, while the objects of the former are experienced by the external senses, the objects of the latter cannot be. We have already discussed in section 3.9 that the main difference between moral and material objects is that the former have will, which allows them to choose what they do. The difference between the two realms motivates Turnbull's discussion here, since he is aware that he cannot argue for the nature of God and a future state with the

⁵³⁴ Turnbull, *Enquiry*, 37; Samuel Clarke, *A paraphrase on the four Evangelists... Volume 2*, seventh edition (London: printed by W.B. for James, John and Paul Knapton, 1736), 114.

same certainty he argues for his anatomy of the mind. If experience and observation are the only way to access knowledge then it is going to be difficult to know anything about a state that we have not yet experienced. However, following Butler, Turnbull argues that it is possible to acquire probable knowledge of a future state based on what we know of our present stage:

Hence it is plain, that a future state, being a new one, or a very different one from the present, which can only be similar or like to it in a few general respects, it can only be positively revealed, *i.e.* discovered or made known to us here in the few general respects, in which it is analogous to the present state of mankind. If we are to have there new ideas, new materials of knowledge, a new sphere of activity; if we are to have new experience; or in other words, if there are to be any absolute differences between our future and present state, these differences, or what ever is absolutely new in it, cannot be now discover'd to us in a positive manner; no more than the ideas of light and colours can be to a blind man.⁵³⁵

If we can only argue from what we know of our present stage, then Turnbull adds that any claim we make about the future state must be made in the negative:

...in a negative strain, or be merely negative propositions. A positive account of a state different from our present situation and circumstances can only be given us, so far as it is not different; so far as it is not absolutely new.⁵³⁶

The fact that Turnbull introduces this section with this disclaimer sheds light on his commitment to the experimental method and the tension it creates with his desire to argue for the goodness of our Author and a future state. On one hand, Turnbull is constantly reminding us that the only way to acquire any kind of knowledge, whether natural or moral, is through experience and observation; on the other hand, his commitment to Christianity leads him to argue for the existence of something that we cannot confirm by direct experience. Turnbull defuses the tension by compromising between the two positions: he will say something about the nature of a future state, but he will only discuss what he can infer from our experience of nature in our present state. Here Turnbull can appeal to the great chain of being and its feature of continuity.

⁵³⁵ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 827.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

The continuity of the chain implies that the present and the future state are linked together, and hence it is possible to argue from one to the other.

In chapter three, we examined Turnbull's belief in the immortality of the soul and the existence of a future state in relation to his anatomy of the mind. Here in *Principles 2* Turnbull expands his thoughts on this topic in relation to the Scriptures. He examines six propositions regarding the future state that can be divided in three groups: (1) that our mind lives on after the death of the body, the topic of proposition one; (2) that the future state must be one of rewards and punishments based on our actions in the embodied life, discussed in proposition two; and (3) that such a future state is just, according to the Scriptures, which is considered at length over propositions three to six.

He begins his explanation of the first proposition by admitting that there is no passage in the Scriptures that explicitly refers to the immortality of the soul. However, there are many passages regarding the existence of a future state, and this must entail that we possess an immortal soul. He makes reference to a couple of passages to illustrate the doctrine of a future state in the Bible:

Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing his Reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.⁵³⁷

This and other passages suggest that there is a future state that we are preparing for. Turnbull does not analyze the passages in any detail, and he goes on to say that he will not discuss the immortality of the soul in any more depth, given that he has already treated it in *Principles 1*. He briefly summarizes the argument we examined in section 3.8: the anatomy of the mind shows that the present stage of human beings is one of learning and progress; if the whole of nature is full, and continuous, then there must be a future state in which the moral part of the compound between mind and body that constitutes the human being moves on. Assuming that the argument has been established, he moves on to the second proposition

The topic is now the particular nature of the future state as one of rewards and punishments. Let us remember here that throughout the whole of *Principles 2* Turnbull has in mind the Parable of

⁵³⁷ Hebrews 13:13-14.

the Sower, which as we examined, he classifies as a law of nature. This law, as we have mentioned, must presuppose the existence of a future state. Since this is what Turnbull has been proving in all the previous sections he only tells us that both our observations of human nature and the Scriptures show that our present stage is one of learning where we are meant to progress towards virtue in preparation for the next state. He tells us that the underlying thought behind the Parable of the Sower and similar passages is:

...that the present state is our state of education, trial and discipline, to which our succeeding state shall be exactly proportioned and correspondent: Or that as this is the state in which we have opportunity of forming our minds to knowledge and love of virtue, or moral perfection, so our future state shall be correspondent to the state of mind formed and acquired in this our present school of discipline and improvement.⁵³⁸

Turnbull does not dwell too long in his explanation of this claim, since all the previous sections show that the future state must be one where the virtuous are rewarded and the vicious punished.

Taking for granted that the future state is one of rewards and punishments, Turnbull considers in more detail four specific aspects: the just nature of that state (proposition three), the separation between the virtuous and the vicious (proposition four), the description of the future state for the virtuous and that for the vicious (proposition five) and the requirements or necessary qualifications to access the future state of happiness (proposition six).

Regarding the just nature of the future state, Turnbull first refers to a number of Biblical passages that describe the future state as a just one, like the following line from the book of Jeremiah that praises God:

You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to the fruit of his doings.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁸ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 835.

⁵³⁹ Jeremiah 32:19.

This and all the other passages he mentions describe the Author of nature as perfectly just. Since he governs the whole chain of nature, then it follows that in a future state creatures will also get what they are due. Turnbull explains the way this just government of God works by discussing three main aspects: justice, virtue, and vice. He begins by giving a vague definition of justice:

Justice involves in its idea a regard to a rule in the distribution of things, or in appointing and adjusting its consequences.⁵⁴⁰

This rule requires a difference between virtue and vice in order to function properly. Since the difference between virtue and vice is evident, it follows that the rule adjusts the consequences according to their excellence: happiness for the former and misery for the latter:

It cannot be the general law in the government of moral beings, that virtue shall make happy, without being the general law, that vice shall make miserable.⁵⁴¹

This law of distributive justice is a restatement of one of the consequences of the anatomy of the mind presented in *Principles 1*. It is in our nature to be virtuous, and therefore if we work towards it, we will achieve the end we are perfectly fitted for, and we will therefore be happier. But just as the virtuous are rewarded, the vicious are punished. This might lead some to think that the Author of nature might enjoy punishing the vicious, showing that He is not so perfect after all. Turnbull anticipates them and goes on to clarify the way punishments work in the Kingdom of God. He mentions that it is not said in the Scriptures that God enjoys punishing, but as matter of fact it is described as an obligation He carries out due to His love of virtue.⁵⁴² Further, punishments are necessary, and for this Turnbull refers to a passage from Plato's *Gorgias* where Socrates explains that punishments are necessary since they help not only the vicious, but even if the vicious are not reformed, they help keep the virtuous on the correct path.⁵⁴³

There is another aspect of distributive justice in God and the future state which Turnbull highlights. God is righteous regardless of particular persons or societies, contrary to what some

⁵⁴⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 838.

⁵⁴¹ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 839.

⁵⁴² Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 839-840.

⁵⁴³ Plato, *Gorgias*, Plato: Complete Works, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997), 525c.

might interpret from accounts of God having a chosen people. Turnbull refers to a passage from the Acts of the Apostles to show that this is not the case:

In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.⁵⁴⁴

Turnbull explains that the Scriptures mention that the Jews are his chosen people, but this is not because he had a preference for them; rather he singled them out of “universal benevolence” for the good of all mankind.⁵⁴⁵ It seems that Turnbull’s interpretation of the Scriptures here is that the Jewish people are a great example that shows that the hardships of the current state can be overcome if we follow the path to virtue, and then receive our reward in the future state. In addition to his argument here, Turnbull has already shown in *Principles 1* that the inequality among men in terms of virtue and knowledge is not due to our nature, but rather to our bad habits and our deviating from the proper end of human beings; therefore the inequality does not stem from God.

Though Turnbull mentions that the issue is obvious and it does not need much illustration, he spends the next few of pages confirming that God is not partial to any and judges only based on virtue. The interesting aspect of Turnbull’s extended discussion is that he singles out virtue as *the* deciding factor in distributive justice:

God is no respecter of persons, but will render to every one according to his works, whether they be good or bad; according to the character of his mind: that is, it is virtue and vice that shall then only make the distinction or difference among men...⁵⁴⁶

So virtue is the chief object of justice, both in this and the future state. Given that Turnbull sees the moral and natural realms as continuous, our trial begins in this stage and will continue in the future state where we will be judged by our actions in the former. This conclusion, Turnbull tells us, he has deduced from the observation of our nature, so he believes there should not be any

⁵⁴⁴ Acts 10:34-35.

⁵⁴⁵ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 844.

⁵⁴⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 846.

doubt in accepting the foregoing argument. But if some still doubt, in a fashion similar to texts in natural philosophy like Newton's *Optics*, Turnbull concludes the section with:

...the few following queries, to such as may happen to doubt of the fundamental point I have been endeavouring to prove: queries, which I think studiers of nature will own to be proposed in the proper way of stating questions about the government of the world; questions about fact, as all questions about the government of the world, natural and moral, are in the nature of things, and ever ought to be.⁵⁴⁷

The queries are meant to persuade the reader that the most probable conclusion we can reach regarding the future state is that there is distributive justice in it. There is nothing new in the queries themselves: they are mainly summaries of the laws of human nature from *Principles 1*, this time phrased in question form. Reminding us that all he can say about the future state is only, at best, highly probable he concludes his analysis of the third proposition:

Thus then, whatever view we take of things, the scripture doctrine of a state succeeding after death to the present, in which distributive justice shall have its compleat accomplishment, is the most natural, consistent, and probable opinion. This sure is saying the least of it...⁵⁴⁸

The last three propositions Turnbull considers in this section discuss the representation in the Scriptures of the future state of the virtuous and that of the vicious. The fourth proposition just sets the stage, so Turnbull goes through it quickly. He paraphrases the Scriptures by combining a number of passages to show that the future state of the virtuous is different from that of the vicious:

The virtuous are said to enter into a "kingdom, the kingdom of their father, a kingdom prepared for them, into which no wicked or unclean person can enter, a kingdom of the just, a society of the pure in heart, and of the spirits of just men made perfect: And the wicked are said to be refused admittance into this kingdom or state; to be cast out from it into a state of darkness and misery; it is said they cannot

⁵⁴⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 858-859.

⁵⁴⁸ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 865.

inherit it; they cannot enter into it; their state is represented to be a state of fallen, degenerated, corrupted, impure beings.”⁵⁴⁹

Turnbull explains this description from the Scriptures by referring to the stage of learning of human beings. The fact that our present stage is one of preparation implies that it must have virtue and vice mixed in it, and it is our task to separate them and follow whatever is fitted for our natural end.⁵⁵⁰ I must mention here that Turnbull, in his discussion of these final propositions, changes the tone and seems to be giving a sermon instead of confirming in the Scriptures what has been established first by the observation of nature as he has done throughout *Principles 2*. This can be explained by the fact that the subject matter is not one that we can yet experience, so Turnbull must change his strategy. It is interesting to note, however, that throughout his discussion Turnbull keeps referring to the present stage of moral agents as one of learning. As we examined while exploring *Principles 1*, this idea is brought about by the interaction between two of Turnbull’s guiding principles: the natural end of virtue and the principle of the great chain of being. If this is a stage of learning, then we must infer that there must be a future stage we are preparing for. Since we cannot experience this stage yet, Turnbull finds confirmation of such future state in the Scriptures. We examined at the beginning of this chapter Turnbull’s claim that revelation by itself is not convincing: The order and perfection of the world and the existence of the author of nature must first be discovered from facts and observation. This might also explain why Turnbull appears to be preaching in these final propositions: it is because he is speaking to those already convinced of the wisdom and goodness of the Author of nature from the observation of his work.

Returning to our examination of the final propositions, we now consider the fifth proposition where Turnbull considers the description given in the Scriptures of the future state of the virtuous as one of happiness, and that of the vicious as one of misery. He wants to show that even though we might have to endure some pains in the present stage, if we remain in the path to virtue we shall be rewarded with happiness in the future state. Turnbull finds this claim confirmed in the Scriptures:

⁵⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 866-867.

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.⁵⁵¹

If we follow the path to virtue, which is our natural end, we shall gain entrance to the Kingdom of God and then we will be in a state of extreme happiness. Turnbull believes that this is the message from the Scriptures, so in the sixth and final proposition he gives the details of the requirements to enter the Kingdom of God. Plainly, virtue is the necessary requirement for entering the future state of happiness. Since this simply follows from all the previous sections of *Principles 2*, Turnbull only briefly sketches his argument.⁵⁵² In summary, virtue is our natural end, and our current stage is one of preparation for the future state, so the only thing that will grant us entrance to the latter stage is the achievement of virtue. Turnbull then goes through the “exercises” the Scriptures tell us the supreme happiness of the future state comes from.⁵⁵³ The discussion of these exercises is a repetition of the main claims of both *Principles 1* and *Principles 2*. The happiness of the future state depends on praising God on the one hand, and most importantly on the active exercise of virtue, i.e. on following the law of nature implanted in us.

Turnbull concludes *Principles 2* with a discussion of the usefulness of revelation, which we have pointed out is the underlying agenda of all his religious texts. In the conclusion to this book Turnbull mentions that he wants to show that:

...the christian revelation gives a very proper, full, and truly philosophical evidence for the truth of that doctrine concerning God, providence, virtue, and a future state, we have found to be the joint doctrine of reason and the christian revelation.⁵⁵⁴

To achieve his aim, Turnbull focuses mostly on reinforcing the argument he gave in *Doctrines*. There he argues that we should examine the work of Jesus Christ as evidence for the doctrines he professes. Earlier we discussed Turnbull’s argument for miracles being consistent with a world regulated by general laws. We also briefly referred to Spinoza and Hume, but we didn’t go into much detail. In order to see the originality of Turnbull’s argument on this topic, it is useful to briefly describe the particular context where his argument is set.

⁵⁵¹ Isaiah 25:8.

⁵⁵² Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 872-873.

⁵⁵³ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 876.

⁵⁵⁴ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 895-896.

In chapter 6 of his *TTP*, Spinoza sets out to show that miracles cannot occur. His attack is not directed against miracles in general, but rather against a specific and popular definition of the term. If a miracle is “an event that cannot be explained through a cause, that is, an event that surpasses human understanding,”⁵⁵⁵ or, an event that does not follow from the laws of nature, then this event cannot even happen and, further, even if it did, it could not give us knowledge of God. Of course, given that for Spinoza God *is* Nature, anything that goes contrary to the latter would also be contrary to the former, so miracles would be contrary to God. On this same account, if we suppose a miracle to be the work of God, but God is Nature, so it turns out that miracles, as events that contravene the laws of nature, cannot possibly occur.⁵⁵⁶

Hume takes a different approach. By defining a miracle as “a violation of the law of nature,” Hume does not want to argue that miracles cannot occur, but rather that it is highly unlikely that they have occurred, given that the evidence we have is not reliable. When, on one hand we have experience as evidence against the occurrence of miracles, and on the other all the evidence we have for the occurrence of a miraculous event is testimony, it turns out that we should also side with that which we have stronger evidence for. As Steven Nadler points out, while Spinoza’s argument against miracles is metaphysical, Hume’s is epistemological,⁵⁵⁷ since it relies on the claim that testimony will never be enough to support the occurrence of a miracle. As Hume states, “no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous, than the fact, which it endeavours to establish.”⁵⁵⁸

Hume’s argument against miracles was published after Turnbull’s religious pamphlets and *Principles* 2, but from his claims about miracles and the scripture we can see a possible answer to Hume’s claims. As we saw in section 3.8, Turnbull’s conception of the great chain of being allows him to defy Hume’s definition of miracles, since those events are not violations of the law of nature, but rather an event subject to natural laws of a higher stage in the chain. Though this might slightly discredit Hume’s definition, but the latter’s objection regarding evidence still stands: we will always have more evidence for events that follow the laws of nature of our present stage, than evidence for events that follow laws of nature of a more advanced stage, laws unknown to us.

⁵⁵⁵ Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, (*TTP*) in Spinoza Complete Works, 447.

⁵⁵⁶ Spinoza, *TTP*, 445-448.

⁵⁵⁷ Steven Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 90-91.

⁵⁵⁸ Hume, *Enquiry*, 87.

Spinoza, on the other hand, is a direct target of Turnbull in his defense of miracles. As we will see, Turnbull argues against Spinoza's claim that even if miracles occurred, they cannot give us any knowledge of God or the doctrines of Christianity. Turnbull joins the ranks of other British figures, like Samuel Clarke, that singled out Spinoza in their defense of miracles. However, none of them approached the topic the way Turnbull does. In what follows, we will examine Turnbull's evaluation of miracles, which revolves around the character of Jesus Christ.

Turnbull begins by reminding us of three principles to setup his argument

1. That one who hath larger insight into or knowledge of nature and the connexions of things, *i.e.* of the government of the world, is qualified to instruct those who have not so large an insight to, or knowledge of the government of the world... 2. That samples of knowledge are proper proofs of knowledge, and samples of power are proper proofs of power... 3. That there can be no reason to doubt the truth of the assertions of one concerning certain truths or facts with relation to the government of the world, who gives samples of very large and extensive knowledge of nature, and very large and extensive command in nature, if there be no contradiction or absurdity in such assertions...⁵⁵⁹

The first and third principles seem to be set up already having the character of Jesus Christ in mind. We know that Turnbull gives an account of the moral character of Christ in his *Enquiry* as we have seen before. The second one is just an expression of the experimental method. It is also present in *Doctrines*, where Turnbull uses the connection between natural and moral worlds to justify the way of examining the character of Jesus:

It is by experiment, that the natural philosopher shews the properties of the air, for example, or any other body...the same way, if a philosopher, a physician, an architect, a painter, or any artist, pretends to a certain degree of skill or power; he must prove his claim by giving proper samples of that very degree of skill or power he professes... It is in one word, from one's works only that we can infer his ability,

⁵⁵⁹ Turnbull, *Principles* 2, 897.

skill, or power, of any kind or degree, as from proper samples or experiments of that power of quality.⁵⁶⁰

The main argument here is that it is possible to evaluate the doctrines from a philosophical point of view, just as we approach natural philosophy. Turnbull's innovative approach to miracles is guided by his desire to construct a form of religion based on reason. The explanation of miracles given in *Doctrines* and *Principles 2* is an instance of his attempt to give Christianity a rational footing without getting rid of revelation. His thought is that we should interpret the miracles and teachings of Jesus Christ as proper samples or experiments that confirm his doctrines, the same way experiments and samples confirm theories in natural philosophy. The following passage from *Principles 2* reinforces the claim from *Doctrines* quoted above:

For what larger power or knowledge can we conceive, (creating power excepted) than universal knowledge of, and command over men's minds, and bodies, earth, sea, air, every element, and even death itself, of which Christ's works were specimens, in the same sense that samples of skill among men to build, paint, cure diseases, move the passions, &c. are samples of skill to do these things?⁵⁶¹

The works of Jesus Christ accounted for in the Bible should be considered in the same way we consider experiments performed by natural philosophers. The works and miracles are the evidence that confirms that Christ has the power to resurrect the dead, to absolve sins, etc. Since this section of *Principles 2* is a summary of the argument from *Doctrines*, I will refer first to Turnbull's argument in the latter and then link it to our present discussion of the former.

In *Doctrines* Turnbull wants to show, via experimental reasoning, that Jesus Christ provided proper evidence through his works for three doctrines:

1. The doctrine of future rewards and punishments
2. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead

⁵⁶⁰ Turnbull, *Doctrines*, 11-12.

⁵⁶¹ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 898.

3. The doctrine of the forgiveness of sins.⁵⁶²

If we follow the experimental method, then in order to confirm that Jesus possessed the three powers stated above we must examine any samples or experiments that serve as evidence for his powers. We examined before that Turnbull describes the Scriptures as a historical text that tells the history of Christ. Granting its reliability as a source of the life of Jesus, Turnbull begins by mentioning a number of Biblical passages that give an account of Jesus' ability to raise the dead.⁵⁶³ Not only did he show that he could bring back others from death, but he also came back from the dead himself.

Regarding the power to forgive sins, Turnbull refers to Biblical passages that show that

Accordingly he asserted his power to forgive sins: but that all men might know he had indeed that power: he ordered the lame, whose sins he pronounced remitted and forgiven, to arise take up the couch and walk. The dumb spoke, the deaf heard; the lame walked strait and firmly; he cured all diseases; and bestowed health, strength, and all sorts of blessings: at his command also the dead arose; to prove that he could forgive sins, or deliver the penitent from all the pains and miseries his sinful life had righteously deserved.⁵⁶⁴

Similarly, Jesus showed his power to give rewards and punishments:

All his works, in one word, were one continued series of proper and analogous experiments, to prove his power to cure or bless; banish diseases and infirmities; bestow blessings of every kind, moral or corporeal: make happy, compleatly happy, or compleatly wretched.⁵⁶⁵

Turnbull wants to show that the works and miracles of Jesus prove the doctrines of Christianity in a way that conforms to experimental philosophy by deducing truths and knowledge from facts and observation. We saw that Turnbull is answering those authors who argued against miracles

⁵⁶² Turnbull, *Doctrines*, 13.

⁵⁶³ Turnbull, *Doctrines*, 15-16.

⁵⁶⁴ Turnbull, *Doctrines*, 18-19.

⁵⁶⁵ Turnbull, *Doctrines*, 18.

like Tindal and Thomas Morgan. Spinoza joins Turnbull's list of targets: both in *Doctrines* and *Principles 2* Turnbull argues specifically against a claim made by Spinoza that there can be no connection between doctrines and works:

It is ridiculous to say, in general, that facts and doctrines have no relation one to another; and, therefore, that no works of whatever kind can prove the truth of doctrines. For all true doctrines or assertions concerning the state and government of the world are facts: every assertion concerning the nature or connexion of things is an assertion of a fact; it is saying such or such thing is a fact. In one word, all truths are facts; and all facts are truths. What is any mathematical proposition concerning a circle, for instance, but a proposition affirming, that if there be in nature a circle it must have such property, or such a property in fact belongs to it? What is any doctrine or proposition in natural philosophy, but an assertion of a certain fact; as for example, that the air is elastic? And what is any moral truth, doctrine, or proposition, but an assertion of a fact in the moral world; as for instance, that the law of habits works so and so in circumstances.⁵⁶⁶

Turnbull's treatment of miracles in the conclusion to *Principles 2* highlights his commitment to the experimental method more than in any of the other sections of the book. Throughout his book, Turnbull has been giving evidence from Scripture to support the theory he has expounded in *Principles 2*. In the conclusion he adopts a different approach and applies the experimental method to the study of the works and miracles of Christ, in order to provide evidence for the truth of the Christian doctrines. Turnbull tells us that natural philosophy (or any science for that matter) consists in doctrines (laws) that are proved by induction from samples or experiments. The connection between laws and works is observed in science in general, and so it must be in the present case, where we should apply the same reasoning.

In both *Education* and *Painting* Turnbull relies on historical accounts as evidence for his claims. His interpretation of the Bible as a historical account discussed earlier is reinforced once more at the end of *Principles 2*:

⁵⁶⁶ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 903.

The truth of the history of Jesus Christ and his apostles stands upon an evidence which must be admitted while moral or historical evidence is admitted. And therefore the enemies of Christianity have in no age ever attacked the evidence. But the truth of history being yielded, the evidence of Christianity must be indisputable, if samples of power or knowledge are proper evidences of power or knowledge.⁵⁶⁷

Turnbull believes that if we cast doubt on the truthfulness of the account given in the Scriptures, we shall also cast doubt on the truthfulness of any historical account. What we have in the New Testament is a collection of testimonies of the works of Christ. They serve as proof that Christ actually preformed those miracles which in turn are evidence for the truth of the doctrines of Christianity, as we discussed in section 6.2.

From the exposition we have given in this chapter regarding *Principles 2*, we can see that Turnbull's commitment to experimental philosophy plays a crucial role for understanding his claims. Without the connection between the natural and moral worlds and the method of experimental philosophy we would miss the guiding force behind Turnbull's theory and dismiss it for appearing too repetitive. More importantly, his commitment to these two principles is explained by his overall agenda: his desire for a natural and rational form of Christianity that could include revelation could only be achieved through this experimental approach and the belief in the union of the natural and moral realms.

⁵⁶⁷ Turnbull, *Principles 2*, 907.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7 Law

In this chapter we examine a text that, for the most part, is the work of an author other than Turnbull. It is the latter's translation of Johann Gottlieb Heineccius' *Elementa iuris naturae et gentium*, published in 1741. Turnbull added substantive notes to Heineccius' text and two supplements: *Concerning the Duties of Subjects and Magistrates*, and *A Discourse upon the Nature of Moral and Civil Laws* (hereafter *Discourse*). As we commented in the introduction to this thesis, Turnbull was very interested in law: he received two Law degrees (from Marischal and Edinburgh), and in the year he was absent from Aberdeen he enrolled his students in Barbeyrac's courses at Groningen. Turnbull's translation and the two supplements shed light on his thought on law and politics. Throughout his notes and supplements, Turnbull connects law and politics to the theory he constructed in *Principles 1* and reinforces his preference and adoption of the experimental method. From an examination of the text we can also witness the influence the natural law tradition had in Turnbull's thought. In particular, we will highlight the specific features of the natural law tradition that Turnbull found most valuable, and this in turn will help us see the way his three guiding principles play a role in his thought on law and politics. I begin by examining Turnbull's thought in his remarks and notes to Heineccius' text in the first two sections, and then I deal with the content of the *Discourse* in section 7.3.

7.1 Heineccius' System: law of nature

Since our purpose is to shed light on Turnbull's thought and his system of philosophy, I will not go into much detail regarding Heineccius' text itself. Even though the original system is a work worth examining on its own, my thesis is not about Heineccius or the natural law tradition, but about Turnbull's system of philosophy. In particular, I am interested in showing how Turnbull constructs his own thought on law and politics from his remarks in *System*. Turnbull chose to translate and comment Heineccius' book because he considered it a very good introduction to law, and in turn he found it of particular use to students. Further, Turnbull has a special reason for carrying out the task of translating a book about natural law: he believed that the study of rights and duties was extremely important:

Man, and the rights and duties of man, are certainly the most proper objects of human study in general...this treatise at least well deserves to be called an excellent introduction to the science of laws.⁵⁶⁸

There is no doubt that Turnbull sees each of his texts as offering a study of mankind. Even though he only briefly discusses rights and duties throughout them, we can construct his thought on such topic from his remarks and supplements in his edition of the *System*.

The *System* is divided in two books: ‘Of the Law of Nature’ and ‘Of the Law of Nations.’ The first chapter of the first book begins with a discussion regarding the origin of both the law of nature and of nations. Heineccius begins by clarifying the meaning of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ in relation to mankind, the former being defined as whatever conduces to our preservation. Since we have free will to choose our actions, we need a rule to help us direct them, and such rule must be obligatory.⁵⁶⁹ At this point Heineccius makes a distinction between internal and external obligation, a distinction that Turnbull disagrees with:

Obligation is a connection between motives and free actions, and motives must consist either in the intrinsic goodness and pravity of actions themselves, or arise from the will of some Being whose authority we acknowledge, commanding and forbidding certain actions under a penalty. And therefore the former species of *obligation* is called *internal*; the latter is called *external*. The first excites to *good actions*, the other to *just actions*.⁵⁷⁰

From this distinction Heineccius goes on to say that internal obligation is not enough for a rule, hence “there is need of one which may produce an external obligation arising from the will of some Being whose authority we acknowledge.”⁵⁷¹ Turnbull dedicates his first set of remarks to sorting out this issue. Turnbull argues that Heineccius reasoning is absurd, given that we can only know what God commands us to do from the commanded actions themselves. As we examined in section 6.1, Turnbull argues (following Clarke) that God commands us to do the right action because, given His infinite wisdom, He knows and loves the right action. From this it follows that the *right* character of the action comes from itself, and not from the will of God.

⁵⁶⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 5.

⁵⁶⁹ Turnbull, *System*, 11-14.

⁵⁷⁰ Turnbull, *System*, 14-15.

⁵⁷¹ Turnbull, *System*, 15.

Turnbull presents this claim as an amendment to Heineccius' theory. He begins by setting out four main propositions:

1. If there be such a thing as good or evil belonging to, or arising from actions, there is an internal obligation or a sufficient reason to choose the one and abhor the other... 2. If there be a God, he must will that we should regulate our actions by, and act conformably to the internal obligation of actions. But that there be a God is the universal plain language of nature. 3. Wherefore wherever there is internal obligation to act in such or such a manner, there is likewise an external obligation to act in the same manner, *i.e.* there is an extrinsic reason for acting so, arising from the will of God... 4. Whatever therefore in respect of its internal obligation may be called a proper rule of conduct, is at the same time, a *law*, in the proper and strict sense of the word, *i.e.* it is the will, the command of a superior who hath the right to command... And therefore the whole enquiry into rules of moral conduct, may be called an inquiry into the natural laws of God governing our conduct.⁵⁷²

Turnbull is saying here that Heineccius' mistake lies in not making the proper distinction between rule and law: the internal obligation is enough for us to follow the rule, but this does not make it a law. It is through the external obligation imposed by the will of God that the rule becomes a law. This points to Turnbull's overarching agenda and highlights a link between the *System* and *Principles* 2. By overriding Heineccius' distinction Turnbull manages to link the rules of action deduced by reason (or from internal obligation) to the government of the Author of nature. Duncan Forbes briefly refers to Turnbull's take on the distinction between internal and external obligation in his *Hume's Philosophical Politics*.⁵⁷³ He points out that Turnbull "puts forward a kind of pre-established harmony: our internal obligation...is at the same time our external obligation."⁵⁷⁴ Even though there is some truth to Forbes' claim, he misses the distinction between rule and law we just discussed. Internal and external obligation might coincide in the end, but this is a result of Turnbull's agenda. Forbes does not take notice of this, and fails to point out that Turnbull's main point against Heineccius is that, even though we still require external obligation to convert the rule into a law, internal obligation alone is enough to follow such rule.

⁵⁷² Turnbull, *System*, 26-27.

⁵⁷³ Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 44.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Turnbull has no further disagreement, given that the claims in rest of the chapter agree with his own. The law of nature is described as discoverable by reason and given by God, inscribed in our nature, and the source of both civil law and the law of nations. The remaining chapters of the first book of the *System* set out what this law of nature amounts to. In the second chapter Heinnecius gives a description of human actions, beginning with a brief taxonomy of them.⁵⁷⁵ He then clarifies that the actions that concern of the law of nature are those human actions that are free, i.e. those product of our will and our understanding, and regulated by our conscience.⁵⁷⁶ The will is the faculty that allows us to choose our actions freely⁵⁷⁷, which is the central topic in Turnbull's remarks. He mentions that Heineccius does not discuss liberty at length, and that even though he has already considered the issue in *Principles 1* and *Principles 2*, he can clear any issue regarding the freedom of human action with a few remarks. Turnbull argues mainly that it is contrary to experience to say that we are not free:

To say that we are not free, but necessary, must be to assert either that we are not conscious, which is contrary to experience; or that we never will, which is also contrary to experience; or that our will never is effective, which is equally so...⁵⁷⁸

Turnbull believes experience is enough to dismiss any doubts concerning our liberty, and in fact he asserts that being free is exactly what grants us the status of agents. We have already discussed in chapters three and six that for Turnbull the main difference between moral and material objects is that the former have will and choice. This claim is confirmed here. However, I want to expand on the distinction between moral and material objects, since it was a topic considered within the natural law tradition. Pufendorf's discussion in *Of the Law of Nature and Nations*⁵⁷⁹ can help us understand the details of the distinction Turnbull makes.

Pufendorf gives a detailed discussion of the nature of moral objects and how they differ from material objects in the initial chapters of his text. Presumably, his motivation is to setup an account of natural law at the same level of a scientific investigation. In fact, the second chapter is titled "Of the Certainty of Moral Science." We shall examine it shortly. In the first chapter, Pufendorf begins by setting up human beings as the most special creatures, given the faculties of

⁵⁷⁵ Turnbull, *System*, 30-32.

⁵⁷⁶ Turnbull, *System*, 33-34, 40-41.

⁵⁷⁷ Turnbull, *System*, 43-44.

⁵⁷⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 49.

⁵⁷⁹ Samuel von Pufendorf, *Of the Law of Nature and Nations*, trans. Basil Kennet, with notes by Jean Barbeyrac. 3rd edition (London, 1717).

will and understanding, which are possessed only by us. His aim is to examine a “kind of attributes” that set us above other creatures:

...And these Attributes are called *Moral Entities*, because the *Manners* and the *Actions* of Men are judg’d and temper’d with reason to them; and do hence assume a Face and Habit different from the horrid Stupidity of the dumb Creation.⁵⁸⁰

The moral entities Pufendorf mentions are added to natural things by God and are not self-subsistent. The specific details of such entities need not detain us here. Our interest lies in the way Pufendorf draws the distinction between moral and natural objects. He continues to argue in the second chapter that the moral entities he has described are worthy of being examined with a level of certainty very similar to that of the natural sciences and mathematics. Pufendorf argues that while things in the material world are necessary, which gives them certainty, things in the moral world are free; however, this does not entail that the latter cannot be equally demonstrated:

...Human Actions are chiefly on this account call’d *Moral*, because they are not *necessary* but *free*...While we deliberate, we are properly said to be *free* and the Effects which are to proceed from our Actions are, with respect to the *Freedom*, rightly term’d Contingent: but when we have determin’d which way to act, the connection between our Actions and the depending Effects is necessary and natural, and consequently capable of Demonstration.⁵⁸¹

Barbeyrac adds a note to this passage where he explains that the fact that we are dealing with free actions makes it impossible that an investigation into morality will achieve the same degree of certainty that we have in our scientific investigations. However, this does not mean that we must give up a scientific study of morals. Just like the difficulty in making perfect straight lines or perfect circles in geometrical demonstrations does not render the principles of geometry false and useless, the lack of certainty regarding the outcomes of our free actions should not stop us from a scientific study of them:

⁵⁸⁰ Pufendorf, *Of the Law of Nature and Nations*, 2.

⁵⁸¹ Pufendorf, *Of the Law of Nature and Nations*, 16-17.

It is sufficient that they come so very near Exactness, that nothing considerable can be desired to make them useful to us; and so we may arrive at our Ends as well by the Principles of Morality, as by those of Geometry... Moral conclusions can't be so perfectly known. But as to the Method, Rules of Demonstration, and inferring one Thing from another, they are still exactly the same in Geometry and Morality.⁵⁸²

Barbeyrac's note points to the account of probable knowledge that Turnbull gives when he is discussing the future state which we discussed in sections 3.8 and 6.4. Though there is no explicit account of probable knowledge in the passages we are examining, Pufendorf does hint at the different degrees of certainty in the last sections of his second chapter. He explains why we cannot have the same level of certainty associated with material things in our examination of moral things:

...Mathematical Knowledge is esteem'd to have so much higher Degrees of Nicety and Exactness than Moral. The Reason of this depends on the different Constitution of Natural and Moral Quantity. For Natural or Physical Quantities may be accurately compared, and measured, and divided into the most equal Parts; because they are represented as the Affections of Material Things, which are the Objects of our Senses... On the other hand, Moral Quantities proceed from the Impositions and the Estimation of intelligent and free Agents, whose Judgment and Pleasure not falling under natural Dimensions, the Quantities which they thus conceive and determine, cannot be circumscribed by any such Measure, but retain, as it were, somewhat of the Looseness and Liberty of their Original.⁵⁸³

From the above passages, it is clear that the main difference between material and moral objects is that the latter have free will, which is the same claim Turnbull argues for in *Principles 1* and *Principles 2*. Since we have already examined in detail Turnbull's discussion of this issue, there is no need to dwell on it here any longer. We can now return to our examination of the *System*.

Setting aside the initial definitions of the law of nature, obligation, and actions, the third chapter of the *System* contains a discussion regarding the rule for human actions. Heineccius begins by differentiating it from natural law:

⁵⁸² Pufendorf, *Of the Law of Nature and Nations*, 17, n2.

⁵⁸³ Pufendorf, *Of the Law of Nature and Nations*, 22-23.

The former [rule] is what philosophers call the (*principium essendi*) because it constitutes the principle or source of obligation to us. By the latter [law] we understand *principium cognoscendi*, *i.e.* the principle, the truth or proposition from which our obligation to any action appears or may be deduced.⁵⁸⁴

I quote Heineccius' explanation because Turnbull's remarks on this chapter revolve around the issues that arise from the implications of this distinction. In order to explore Turnbull's argument we must first briefly go through Heineccius' exposition. The rule of human action is not within us, but rather without us, in the will of God.⁵⁸⁵ Heineccius goes on to characterize the rule of human action as a divine law, with the particular difference that it carries with it an external obligation. After considering different possibilities for the source of this rule (among them the sanctity of God, sociability, reason, human consent and actions themselves)⁵⁸⁶ and dismissing them, he tells us that since the will of God is "that man should aim at and pursue true happiness,"⁵⁸⁷ God's will becomes the rule of human action. Heineccius further reduces happiness to love, and as a result love becomes the principle of the law of nature.⁵⁸⁸

In his remarks, Turnbull argues that Heineccius is contradicting himself, since he had affirmed earlier in the *System* that the law of nature is known by reason, which is the true principle of the former:

For if the law of nature is discoverable by reason, conformity to reason, to the reason of God, and the reason of man, must be the *Principle* of knowledge with regard to the law of nature.⁵⁸⁹

Turnbull is not disagreeing with Heineccius' claim that the will of God relates to the happiness of human beings. The problem lies in the way Heineccius does not recognize here that conformity to reason is necessary and includes knowledge of what makes up human happiness. It is this conformity to reason that underlies the options Heineccius dismisses, and Turnbull is at pains to understand why he dismissed them, since he believes that Heineccius had already asserted the priority of reason for the knowledge of natural law. In his excellent but brief account

⁵⁸⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 51 fn. Brackets added.

⁵⁸⁵ Turnbull, *System*, 52.

⁵⁸⁶ Turnbull, *System*, 57-61.

⁵⁸⁷ Turnbull, *System*, 62.

⁵⁸⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 63.

⁵⁸⁹ Turnbull, *System*, 71.

of Turnbull in *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy*, Knud Haakonssen refers to the above discussion. He correctly points out that for Turnbull the love that is the principle of the law of nature comes not from God directly, as external obligation, but is instead deduced by reason from the observation of God's work (nature).⁵⁹⁰ To Haakonssen's insightful comment we can add here that this highlights Turnbull's attempt in all his texts to defend a rational form of Christianity, always pointing out that whatever we deduce by reason ends up establishing the wisdom and benevolence of God.

Turnbull sums up his thought on this chapter of the *System* in a couple of propositions:

1. That it is impossible to make a step in moral reasonings, without owning a difference between conformity and disagreeableness to reason...2. That conformity to reason, to a reasonable nature, to moral rectitude, to a divine nature...have and must all have the same meaning, or terminate in the same thing. 3. That to ask why a reasonable being ought to act agreeable to reason, is to ask why it is reasonable to act reasonably; or why reasonable is reasonable.⁵⁹¹

Turnbull has no doubt that God wills our happiness and perfection, but unlike Heineccius he believes that this is knowable through reason. This is in fact the conclusion he reaches at the end of *Principles 1*: God is infinitely wise and powerful, and has made us perfectly fit for our life in this stage, and for our quest for virtue or happiness. In his remarks here in the *System* Turnbull makes the same claim, with the difference that this time Turnbull relates virtue and happiness to love:

For if there be any such thing as obligation upon a rational agent, external or internal, it can be nothing else, but obligation to love: internal obligation can belong to nothing else but the dictates and offices of reasonable love; and therefore external obligation can belong to nothing else.⁵⁹²

⁵⁹⁰ Knud Haakonssen, *Natural law and moral philosophy: from Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 92-93.

⁵⁹¹ Turnbull, *System*, 72.

⁵⁹² Turnbull, *System*, 73.

Turnbull agrees with Heineccius on the importance of love for obligation; the difference between them lies in the former's belief that this can be deduced from the nature of human beings. The remaining chapters of the *System* describe what this obligation to love amounts to.

In chapter four of the *System* Heineccius now applies the rule, i.e. the principle of the law of nature (love), to free human actions. He uses Seneca's term 'imputation' to describe "the application of a law to a fact" and then examines how the rule is applied to actions. Heineccius goes on to describe how the process of imputation works out in relation to different kinds of actions, but the details need not concern us here since Turnbull does not consider them in his remarks. Instead, Turnbull uses Heineccius' description to reinforce claims made in *Principles 1*.

Turnbull begins by clarifying that he agrees with everything Heineccius described, but wishes to add a couple of remarks:

1. It must be as true in morals as it is confessed to be in mechanics, that deviation from truth will lead into a wrong manner of acting; and all action must be liable to all consequences of the laws of nature... 2. Since all the interests of intelligent agents require government by general laws, or fixed connections which operate invariably, the government of the world will be perfectly good, if the connexions or general laws which constitute it are the best adapted that may be, to promote the greater good of rational agents in the sum of things... 3. Our great business therefore is to endeavor to acquire just notions and connections of things; or the good and bad consequences of actions, in order to act agreeably to them... 4. False judgments, which tend to direct into a wrong course of action, or to introduce a wrong temper into the mind, must, (as hath been said) be hurtful...⁵⁹³

Turnbull's take on Heineccius' description of the application of laws to actions is directly connected to his arguments in *Principles 1*, to which he refers the reader. The argument he is sketching out is aimed at showing the wisdom and benevolence of God. He begins by drawing an analogy between the natural and moral worlds: just like in the former actions contrary to the natural law are 'wrong,' in the latter our actions should not deviate from the rule. Following this claim, Turnbull explains that we would render a world perfect if the laws that regulate it and its

⁵⁹³ Turnbull, *System*, 90.

creatures “promote the good of rational beings.” This claim he takes to be quite evident, and he directs the reader to *Principles 1* and *Principles 2*. Since this is the way the world works, Turnbull points out in his third claim that we must dedicate ourselves to finding out about the relations and laws in the world, so that we can direct our actions towards our natural end. Finally, Turnbull’s last claim relates back to his treatment of the problem of evil in *Principles 1*. There is a danger of diverting from the path of virtue and end up suffering in this world. However, this (a) does not show that the Author of nature is imperfect, since He is not the source of evil and He has endowed us with all the faculties and circumstances needed for our present stage of learning; and (b) the possibility of evil and suffering make it even more important that we take due care in learning to discern between virtue and vice, from the observation of nature (especially our own) and apply ourselves to our natural end.

The next three chapters of Heineccius’ *System* deal, respectively, with the duties of man to God, to himself, and to others. He begins by defining duty as “an action conformable to the laws,”⁵⁹⁴ and law as “the rule of duties.”⁵⁹⁵ According to this new definition of law, a set of duties arises depending on the kind of law: natural duties arise from divine natural law; Christian duties from divine positive law; and civil duties from human law.⁵⁹⁶ Further, duties are categorized according to their object, resulting in duties to God, to ourselves, and to others.⁵⁹⁷ The first set of duties is deduced from God’s attributes: we are obliged to know God and his perfections,⁵⁹⁸ to promote the glory of God,⁵⁹⁹ to love and obey God,⁶⁰⁰ to avoid superstition,⁶⁰¹ and to trust and worship God.⁶⁰²

Turnbull agrees with all of Heineccius’ claims in this chapter, so in the remarks he only comments on our natural disposition to religion, linking back to both *Principles 1* and *Principles 2*. He begins by referring to an author that he often turns to when discussing politics, James Harrington. In these remarks he refers specifically to a set of aphorisms to affirm that, given our natural disposition to religion “man may therefore be rather defined a religious than a rational

⁵⁹⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 94.

⁵⁹⁵ Turnbull, *System*, 95.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 96-97.

⁵⁹⁹ Turnbull, *System*, 98-99.

⁶⁰⁰ Turnbull, *System*, 99-100.

⁶⁰¹ Turnbull, *System*, 100.

⁶⁰² Turnbull, *System*, 102-103.

creature.”⁶⁰³ Following this quote, Turnbull says that he argues for this same claim in chapter seven of *Principles 1*, but, more importantly, he gives an interesting account of the purpose of both *Principles 1* and *Principles 2*. He sees his work in those two books as an *a posteriori* demonstration of the wise Government of God (*Principles 1*) complemented by an *a priori* demonstration (*Principles 2*).⁶⁰⁴ This confirms that the agenda underlying his whole system of philosophy is to construct a rational proof of God in which Christian religion still has an important place. His preference for the experimental method is also present in this passage: Turnbull affirms that the *a posteriori* arguments are a proper proof for the wisdom and perfection of God, deduced from the observation of nature. The *a priori* arguments are not as strong as the *a posteriori*, but through them we reach the same conclusion, as we saw in our examination of *Principles 2*.

Turnbull then gives a brief summary of all the laws of human nature from *Principles 1* to reinforce the claim made there, namely, that from our natural constitution we can deduce the infinite wisdom and perfection of God. Since he has examined this deduction at length in his other texts, he concludes his remarks with three brief comments:

1. That Polybius, Cicero, and almost all the ancients, have acknowledged that a public sense of religion is necessary to the well-being and support of society...
2. That with regard to private persons, he who does not often employ his mind in reviewing the perfections of the Deity...deprives himself of the greatest joy, the noblest exercise and entertainment the human mind is capable of...
3. I would remark, that the being and providence of an universal, all-perfect mind, being once established, it plainly follows from hence, by necessary consequence, that all duties of rational creatures may be reduced to this one... “to act as becomes an intelligent active part of a good whole, and conformably to the temper and character of the all-governing mind.”⁶⁰⁵

Turnbull has argued for these three claims in *Principles 2*, and since we have already examined them I will not comment any further on them here. It is enough to point out that, as it will become clearer throughout our examination of the *System* and the supplements, Turnbull’s

⁶⁰³ James Harrington, *Aphorisms Political*, 30-35 in *Political Works*, 765-766

⁶⁰⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 104.

⁶⁰⁵ Turnbull, *System*, 105-106.

thought on law and politics is motivated and guided by his overall agenda, which is in turn grounded on his guiding principles.

The next set of duties in Heineccius' *System* is the one regarding obligations to ourselves. In particular, Heineccius considers those obligations stemming from love to ourselves, or self-love.⁶⁰⁶ Like Turnbull, Heineccius recognizes the dual nature of human beings and, given that the duties arise from the object (in this case the human being), we will have obligations to both our body and our mind, and neither should be neglected.⁶⁰⁷ However, if at any instance we are required to choose, the most perfect aspect has priority, namely, the obligations to our mind. From the nature of human beings Heineccius deduces a number of obligations, among them a duty to preserve our life, to cultivate and improve our understanding, and to perfect our will.⁶⁰⁸

Heineccius then adds a comment regarding the danger of excessive self-love: all the duties that arise from self-love are just, as long as they are subordinated to the love of God.⁶⁰⁹ However, there might be some situations where we can be exempted from such duties: "By *necessity* we understand such a situation of a person, in which he cannot obey a law without incurring in danger."⁶¹⁰ But not all duties admit this exception of necessity: those duties that when not followed dishonor God cannot be exempt; when it comes to duties regarding ourselves, the general rule to follow in those cases is to choose the lesser of two evils.⁶¹¹

Turnbull finds Heineccius' exposition of these duties more than sufficient, and only adds a few remarks regarding the issue of necessity. In his discussion Turnbull refers to Cicero, Pufendorf, Grotius, and Butler, highlighting the major influence these authors had on his thought. In particular, Turnbull refers to them here to reinforce a claim made in *Principles 1* regarding self-love, namely that though it is one of the features of human nature, it must be considered along with all the other features it works with. This idea points to his belief in the general goodness of mankind.

⁶⁰⁶ Turnbull, *System*, 107.

⁶⁰⁷ Turnbull, *System*, 108.

⁶⁰⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 109-116.

⁶⁰⁹ Turnbull, *System*, 117.

⁶¹⁰ Turnbull, *System*, 118.

⁶¹¹ Turnbull, *System*, 120-121.

To begin with, Turnbull refers to Barbeyrac's notes to Pufendorf's *Law of nature and nations* where the latter refers to Cicero regarding the concept of necessity. Turnbull complains that Heineccius should at least have referred to Cicero in his discussion of the concept, in order to show:

...that the duties of the law of nature are discoverable by reason, and were actually known in all ages to thinking persons...⁶¹²

Turnbull fills this gap by summarizing Cicero's argument regarding necessity in *De officiis*. In that book, Cicero discusses the possibility of having competing interests (honesty and profit). Turnbull considers that Cicero's discussion would be enough to confirm the claims made in the *System* and he goes on to quote from *De officiis*. Cicero's discussion is meant to show that interest (expediency) and honesty (moral rectitude) coincide in virtue, and the conflict between them arises only when expediency is not real expediency; if the expediency is real, then it aims toward virtue and moral rectitude, and the apparent conflict disappears.⁶¹³ However, Turnbull uses Cicero's passage to show that honesty must be preferred over interest:

Certainly greatness and elevation of soul, as also the virtues of justice and liberality, are much more agreeable to nature and right reason than pleasure, than riches, than even life itself: to despise all which, and regard them as just nothing, when they come to be compared with the public interest, is the duty of a brave and exalted spirit: whereas to rob another for one's own advantage, is more contrary to nature than death, than pain, or any other evil whatever of that kind.⁶¹⁴

Though the passage serves to show that in case of conflict between the virtues and self-love the former should be chosen, Turnbull comments that this issue will become clearer as he continues to examine Heineccius' text. Turnbull concludes his remarks by referring to two sermons by Butler on the love of the neighbor that contain a similar argument to the one Turnbull gives in *Principles 1* against Hobbes' conception of human nature. As we examined in section 3.6, a proper examination of human nature needs to consider self-love along with all the other faculties of the mind:

⁶¹² Turnbull, *System*, 127.

⁶¹³ Expediency and moral rectitude are the English terms in the Loeb edition of *De officiis* that the translator uses for, respectively, the latin terms *utilitas* and *honestum*.

⁶¹⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 128; Cicero, *De officiis*, 291.

The end of our frame therefore, and by consequence of the will of our Maker with regard to conduct, can only be inferred from the nature of our frame, or the end to which it is adapted: but if we are to infer our end from our frame, no part of this frame ought to be left out in the consideration. Wherefore tho' self-love ought to be taken into the account, yet several particular affections must also be taken into the account, benevolence must likewise be taken into the account, if it really belongs to our nature; a sense of right and wrong, and reason must also be taken into the account; and whatever is taken into the account must be taken into it as it really is, *i.e.* affections must be considered as subjects of government, and reason must be considered as a governing principle, for such they are in their natures.⁶¹⁵

Heineccius examines benevolence and natural sociability throughout the next three chapters. Regarding the duties to others, he gives a more detailed explanation in comparison to what he has said about the duties to God and to ourselves. He first gives a general account of duties to others in chapter seven, and then considers imperfect and hypothetical duties towards others in chapters eight and nine, respectively. We will examine each of them in turn.

Of particular interest for our investigation are Turnbull's remarks regarding the general account of duties to others, since 'Turnbull distances himself from Heineccius' (and by extension of Pufendorf's) account of the state of nature. Heineccius begins his account with a taxonomy of our duties to others: perfect and imperfect, and the former is divided into absolute and hypothetical.⁶¹⁶ Perfect duties are those "that he may be forced to perform them," while imperfect are those to which we "are only bound by the intrinsic goodness of the actions themselves." Of the former class, absolute duties are those regarding the "obligation not to injure anyone," and hypothetical the "obligation to render everyone his due."⁶¹⁷

Heineccius first deals with absolute duties: since human beings are equal in nature, men have the duty to treat each other as equal and not to injure or kill others. To this absolute duty there is the exception of self-defense: injuring or even killing another is lawful only when our own life is in danger, and in turn this varies depending on the state (natural or civil).⁶¹⁸ Given this qualification Heineccius goes on to say that self-defence in a civil state is restricted only to the period of time

⁶¹⁵ Turnbull, *System*, 130.

⁶¹⁶ Turnbull, *System*, 131-132.

⁶¹⁷ Turnbull, *System*, 132.

⁶¹⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 136.

when we find ourselves in danger, and examines the different situations where self-defense is lawful and to which extent.⁶¹⁹

We will not explore the details of the different cases of lawful self-defence given that Turnbull directs his remarks towards the conception of the state of nature presented above. He begins by clarifying the claim he argues against:

...it is at least an improper way of speaking against moralists to say, “That all men are naturally equal in this respect, that antecedently to any deed or compact amongst them [the civil state], no one hath power over another, but each is master of his own actions and abilities; and that none are subjected to others by nature.”⁶²⁰

Turnbull believes that this statement is false, since even before the civil state we are naturally subjected to others, given our constitution. The first step in his argument relates to his experimental method and he asserts that, just as in physics, we reach our conclusions from the observation of the nature of things, and so from the observation of human nature a number of propositions follow:

1. That men are born naturally and necessarily subject to the power and will of their parents... 2...men are made to acquire prudence by experience and culture; and therefore naturally and necessarily those of less experience and less prudence, are subjected to those of great experience and prudence... 3....the Author of nature (as Mr. Harrington says in his *Oceana*) hath diffused a natural aristocracy over mankind, or a natural inequality with respect to the goods of the mind... 4. Industry...acquires property, and every consequence of property made by industry is natural, or the intention of nature. But superiority in property purchased by industry, will make dependence, *hanging*, as that author [Harrington] calls it, *by the teeth*.⁶²¹

Each of the propositions Turnbull lists is taken from *Principles 1* and we have examined them at length. The point he is trying to make here is that human beings are naturally sociable, and it is not the case that we only become sociable once we enter the civil state:

⁶¹⁹ Turnbull, *System*, 138-154.

⁶²⁰ Turnbull, *System*, 155, brackets added.

⁶²¹ Turnbull, *System*, 155-156, brackets added.

...it as plainly appears from our constitution, to be the will and intention of our Author, that we should love one another, act benevolently towards one another, and never exercise our power to do hurt, but on the contrary, always exercise it or increase in it, in order to do good.⁶²²

Turnbull argues for this natural benevolence of mankind in both *Principles 1* and *Principles 2*, and as we saw in chapters three and six, this idea stems from his belief in the natural goodness of mankind. In his remarks Turnbull mentions other authors that have reached the same conclusion, among them Butler in his sermons, Socrates, and Barbeyrac. However, Turnbull tells us that his original contribution lies in the way he has argued for natural benevolence:

But I choose to reason in this manner, that we may see how reasonings about duties may proceed in the same manner as physical reasonings about the uses of parts in any bodily frame, or the final cause of any particular bodily whole. For if it be good reasoning to say, any member in a certain bodily organization is intended for such an end in that composition, it must be equally good reasoning to say, a moral constitution, in which there is a social and benevolent principle, compassion, and many public affections, and no hatred or aversion or resentment, but against injustice, together with reason capable of discerning public good, and delighting in it, is intended by its Author for the exercises of social affections; for justice; nay, for benevolence, and for commiserating even the injurious, as far as public good admits that tenderness to take place.⁶²³

The above quote shows how Turnbull's arguments in *Principles 1* and *Principles 2* are present in his thought on law and politics. Further, the passage highlights all three guiding principles: the experimental method, the natural goodness of mankind, and the features of the great chain of being that allow him to (a) apply the method from the natural sciences in morals, and (b) emphasize the regularity and order of the whole of nature that point to the perfection of God.

In his next chapter, Heineccius explores imperfect duties to others. In his remarks, Turnbull continues to distance himself from some ideas held by authors in the natural law tradition (Heineccius and Pufendorf in particular), as we will examine shortly. Heineccius begins by

⁶²² Turnbull, *System*, 156.

⁶²³ Turnbull, *System*, 158.

dividing imperfect duties into two kinds: those of humanity and those of benevolence; the former “commands us to be as good to others as we can be without detriment to ourselves, while the latter “commands us to do good to others even with detriment to ourselves.”⁶²⁴ Heineccius exposition is pretty straightforward: the general rule to follow when it comes to imperfect duties is the so-called golden rule: “not to do to any other what he would think inexcusable if done to himself...but, on the contrary, to do to others what he would desire others to do to him.”⁶²⁵

Turnbull adds a number of observations where he explains the imperfect duties in relation to the claims argued for in *Principles 1* and *Principles 2*. The first observation he makes is about the distinction between perfect and imperfect duties. In Turnbull’s view, the distinction between them is a matter of degree:

...some precepts of God give a right to all mankind to exact certain offices or duties from every one. But other precepts do not give any such right.⁶²⁶

From this definition he goes on to say that using the terms ‘perfect’ and ‘imperfect’ is ambiguous, and that it might be better to divide duties instead into greater and lesser.⁶²⁷ However, this is a minor issue, since Turnbull clarifies that this is actually what Heineccius means by his terms. His other two observations have more substance. In the first place, since Heineccius’ description is based on the golden rule, Turnbull believes that it is fitting to illustrate the “reasonableness of this maxim,”⁶²⁸ which Heineccius has not done.

Turnbull refers to Pufendorf to illustrate that the golden rule is based on the fact that all human beings are by nature equal:

Since then every man is well acquainted with his own nature, and as well, at least, as to general inclinations, with the nature of other men, it follows, that he who concludes one way as to his own right, and another way as to the same right of his neighbour, is guilty of a contradiction in the plainest matter: an argument of a mind

⁶²⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 159.

⁶²⁵ Turnbull, *System*, 160.

⁶²⁶ Turnbull, *System*, 169.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 170.

unsound in no ordinary degree. For no good reason can be given, why what I esteem just for myself, I should reckon unjust for another in the same circumstances.⁶²⁹

Turnbull also holds this rule, but he differs from Pufendorf and Heineccius in the sense that he thinks it is a fundamental principle of the law of nature and not just a corollary that follows from it:

But both he [Pufendorf] and our Author [Heineccius] seem to consider it not as a fundamental or primary principle of the law of nature, but rather as a Corollary of that law, which obliges us, *To hold all men equal with ourselves*. But it cannot be so properly said to be a Corollary from that principle, as to be the principle itself in other words. For what is the meaning of this rule, *To hold all men equal with ourselves*, but to hold ourselves obliged to treat all men as we think they are obliged to treat us?⁶³⁰

While Heineccius and Pufendorf think that the rule follows from the love we have for ourselves, Turnbull argues that the rule is as much part of our nature as self-love is. This links back to his remarks on the previous chapter of the *System* where he distances himself from the interpretation of the state of nature given by Pufendorf and Heineccius. Turnbull further reinforces the idea that this rule is natural by linking it to his third and final remark, in which he explores his belief in the natural goodness of mankind:

...that...we are made and intended for benevolence, is as evident as that a clock is made to measure time, and in consequence of the same way of reasoning, viz. the way we reason about nay constitution, or any final cause.⁶³¹

Turnbull refers to Butler and Cicero to support his claim and concludes by ascertaining that the golden rule is found within our constitution, and that our natural goodness shows that God has furnished us with all that is necessary for the pursuit of virtue. Turnbull's strategy so far seems to be to accommodate Heineccius' arguments according to his own anatomy of the human mind, his defence of Christianity, and his guiding principles. However, the several points where he

⁶²⁹ Ibid; Pufendorf, *Law of nature and nations*, 227.

⁶³⁰ Turnbull, *System*, 171.

⁶³¹ Turnbull, *System*, 172.

distances himself from Heineccius and Pufendorf are interesting given the influence of the natural law tradition in his thought. The main distinction so far relies on the different accounts of natural sociability: Turnbull disagrees with the account those writers give of the state of nature and believes that both the golden rule and benevolence can be deduced solely from our constitution.

The next duties discussed are the hypothetical duties to others, i.e. to render to everyone their due. Heineccius introduces a topic that will occupy the following three chapters: property. He begins by setting out key definitions: dominion is “the right or faculty of excluding all others from the use of a thing. The actual detension of a thing, by which we exclude others from the use of it, is called possession.”⁶³² There are two kinds of exclusion: when we exclude everyone else, it is called property, and when we exclude all but a few, it is called positive communion. The latter can be perfect, “when every one has a perfect right to the common thing,” or imperfect, “when none hath a perfect right to it...”⁶³³

Having clarified the meaning of his terms, Heineccius prefaces his discussion of property by asserting that it is God’s will that we enjoy and procure those things that contribute to our happiness.⁶³⁴ In the state of nature, none had dominion (negative communion), since God treats all human beings equally. However, we departed from the state of nature because the circumstances called for the introduction of dominion, due to the increase of population and the lack of resources for a proper living for all.⁶³⁵

Heineccius goes on to give instances of the different ways of acquiring property of things, but we will not examine these in detail, given that Turnbull in his remarks considers that although Heineccius’ exposition is better than other authors, it is still insufficient, and therefore he sets out to complete the account with ideas taken from Locke, Harrington, and his own work in *Principles 1*.

⁶³² Turnbull, *System*, 175.

⁶³³ Turnbull, *System*, 176.

⁶³⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 176-177.

⁶³⁵ Turnbull, *System*, 178-179.

He begins by commenting that he agrees with Barbeyrac that Locke⁶³⁶ dealt with the topic better than Grotius or Pufendorf and he refers the reader to Locke's book, which he summarizes with a quote from Quintilian:

What is common to all by nature, is the purchase, the reward of industry, and is justly appropriated by it.⁶³⁷

Turnbull then refers to Harrington to reinforce the sentiment of the above quote, namely, that property is acquired through industry. This is the main claim added by Turnbull to Heineccius' exposition, which links back to the law of industry discussed in *Principles 1*. He makes six main observations:

1. That man is made to purchase every thing by industry, and industry only, every good, internal or external, of the body or mind... 2...this fact contains a solid refutation of that objection against providence [the promiscuous distribution of the goods of fortune]... 3...Mr. Harrington is the first who hath taken notice, or at least fully cleared up the consequences of this general law of industry with respect to politics... 4...It must necessarily have happened soon after the world was peopled that all was, must have been appropriated by possession and industry... 5. It is in consequence of this principle, that it is lawful to have dependents or servants, and that it is lawful to raise ourselves, or to exert ourselves to increase our power and authority... 6.If the preceeding principles be true, due attention to them will lead us through most of our Author's succeeding questions about derivative acquisitions and succession.⁶³⁸

Let us flesh out Turnbull's remarks. From the first proposition, a restatement of the law of power and industry we explored in section 3.2, he deduces the following five propositions. Granting the first proposition, Turnbull believes that he can answer an objection regarding the uneven distribution of goods, objection that entails that God is not perfect. He reminds us of the claim made when he dealt with this objection in *Principles 1*. His answer relies on the fact that if

⁶³⁶ John Locke, *Two treatises of government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

⁶³⁷ Turnbull, *System*, 200.

⁶³⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 200-205.

the law of industry contributes to the order and perfection of the whole system, then it cannot be a bad law, and hence it shows the infinite perfection of God:

There is no possibility of reconciling bad government with wisdom and goodness; or irregularity and disorder with wisdom and good intelligent design, by any future reparation. But the alledgeance is false; for in fact, the universe is governed by excellent general laws, among which this is one, “That industry shall be the purchaser of goods, and shall be generally successful.”⁶³⁹

After clearing the objection Turnbull can now turn to the application of the law of industry in politics, and for this he relies on Harrington. As Thomas Ahnert points out⁶⁴⁰, Turnbull’s interest in property is that, through its connection to the law of power and industry, he can deploy his agenda (to vindicate the ways of God to man) in the world of politics and government. This can be seen in his remarks here:

And hence it must always hold as a general law, That dominion will follow property, or that changes in property will beget certain proportional changes in government: and this consequently is the natural seed, principle cause or procreation and vicissitude in government, as Mr. Harrington has demonstrated fully and accurately.⁶⁴¹

Turnbull’s law of power allows us to exercise our will and dominion over the natural world to procure whatever is necessary for our life in the present state. This leads him to believe that government, which regulates the dealings of human beings in a civil state for the good of the whole, is a consequence of the law of power. Turnbull mentions here that he will examine the topic of government later, and so shall we.

In his fourth observation Turnbull clarifies that whether in a state of nature or in a civil state, the law of industry is still part of our constitution, and this time he unites this law with our other faculties to show the results of their mutual interaction:

⁶³⁹ Turnbull, *System*, 201.

⁶⁴⁰ Thomas Ahnert, “The ‘Science of Man’ in the Moral and Political Philosophy of George Turnbull (1698-1748),” in *Human Nature as the Basis of Morality and Society in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Juhana Lemetti and Eva Piirimäe. (Helsinki: the Philosophical Society of Finland, 2007).

⁶⁴¹ Turnbull, *System*, 202.

And if we attend to our frame, and reason from it to final causes, as we do in other cases, it is plain, that there is in our constitution naturally, together with a principle of benevolence, and of sense of public good a love of power (of *principatus* as Cicero calls it in the beginning of his first book of offices) without which our benevolence could not produce magnanimity and greatness of mind, as that desire of power would, without benevolence and a sense of public good, produce a tyrannical, overbearing and arrogant temper.⁶⁴²

This claim follows from Turnbull's argument against Hobbes in *Principles 1* where he argues that a proper examination of human nature must consider all of our faculties and powers together, as well as the relation between them. This is further explored in his fifth observation, where Turnbull comments that whatever we gain from the law of power and industry is lawful, as long as it is kept in due balance by our sense of benevolence and public good.

Finally, Turnbull announces that his remarks here are sufficient to answer any question that arises from Heineccius' exposition in the following two chapters of the *System*, and for this reason he abstains from adding remarks to them.

In the next two brief chapters Heineccius considers the ways human beings can come to property of things already in possession of another, either by acquisition while the owner is still alive (chapter ten of the *System*) or acquisition after the owner's death (chapter eleven). The specific details need not detain us here, and since Turnbull does not add anything to these chapters we can move on to chapter twelve of the *System*, where Heineccius deals with the duties related to property. Of interest for our present investigation are those duties related to the change of ownership due to time.⁶⁴³ Heineccius does not examine this issue in enough detail, so Turnbull targets it in his remarks. Turnbull comments that he chose to translate the *System* because it is such an excellent text that little needs to be added. He does not discuss any of the cases Heineccius describes and instead decides to expand on an issue that the latter mentions in a footnote to the last obligation mentioned above: the difference between usucapion and prescription. Turnbull divides his argument in five propositions which I list below and will examine in detail shortly:

⁶⁴² Turnbull, *System*, 204.

⁶⁴³ Turnbull, *System*, 242.

1. First of all, it is proper to observe the difference which the Roman law makes between *prescription* in general, and that kind of it which they distinguished by the name of *usucapio*... 2. The chief reasons assigned by the Roman law for the first introducing of property by prescription, are... 3. Now from the nature of property acquired by prescription...it is plain on the one hand, that whatever is not subject of commerce, cannot be the object of prescription, such as liberty...on the other hand, whatever is the object of commerce may be the object of prescription... 4. Whatever distinctions moral writers have made about belonging or being reducible to the law of nature...this is plain, that to determine what the law of nature or right reason says about a case, the circumstances of the case must be put... 5. There is no difficulty with regard to the following general maxims about it [prescription]...⁶⁴⁴

The first proposition in Turnbull's argument is an exposition of the distinction as it appears in Roman law:

By *usucapio* they meant the manner of acquiring the property of things by the effect of time. And prescription had also the same meaning, but it signified moreover the manner of acquiring and losing all sorts of rights and actions, by the same effect of time regulated by law.⁶⁴⁵

Turnbull mentions that authors that deal with the law of nature have collapsed the distinction and use the term 'prescription' for both acquiring property of things and acquiring rights. Since usucapion was a special case of prescription, he goes on to give the reasons why the Romans introduced a type of prescription about property in the first place, and for this exposition he quotes from Pufendorf's *Law of nature and nations*.⁶⁴⁶ The passage Turnbull quotes explains how the Romans introduced the acquisition of property through time to avoid quarrels and disputes. Possession must be for a fixed time, otherwise new owners would fear losing their possessions if "perpetual indulgence be allowed to the negligence of former owners."⁶⁴⁷ Further, if possession was not assigned a fixed time, then neither commerce nor trade would be possible, and this is the central topic of Turnbull's next proposition. As I quoted above, he begins by defining that the only objects that can be acquired through prescription are those that can be used to commerce.

⁶⁴⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 243-249, brackets added.

⁶⁴⁵ Turnbull, *System*, 243-244.

⁶⁴⁶ Pufendorf, *Law of nature and nations*, 443-444; Turnbull, *System*, 244-245.

⁶⁴⁷ Pufendorf, *Law of nature and nations*, 443; Turnbull, *System*, 244.

He clarifies that it is not that immovable things cannot be acquired by prescription, but since they are assigned a higher worth than movable things, cases when they are acquired by prescription rarely take place.⁶⁴⁸ After this description Turnbull discusses the relation between prescription and natural law, since he wants to argue against other authors who claim that prescription is of the law of nature. First he explains that though prescription might be about property, there are certain rights that can be lost through prescription due to the connection they have to property, as in the case of a debtor whose debt is lifted because the collector did not claim it in the time assigned by the law.⁶⁴⁹ It seems that Turnbull emphasizes this connection between rights and property because if prescription concerns only property then it is more difficult to show how it could be of the law of nature. Turnbull goes on to argue that, in fact, prescription is of the law of nature:

No one ever pretended, that the law of nature fixed a time which gave a title by prescription with regard to things corporeal or incorporeal. But if security of property and commerce require, that such a time should be fixed, where there is property and commerce, then the law of nature or right reason requires that a time be fixed so far as security of property and commerce, and quiet possession by honest industry require it, whether with respect to corporeal or incorporeal things.⁶⁵⁰

To confirm this claim, Turnbull leads into his fourth proposition where he presents his case by following the experimental method:

For in the science of the law of nature, as well as other sciences, however general the rules or canons may be, yet in this sense they are particular, that they only extend to such and such cases, such or such circumstances. Now if we apply this general position to the present question, it will appear that prescription is of the law of nature, in the same sense that testament succession, or succession to intestates is of the law of nature.⁶⁵¹

Regarding both testaments and prescription Turnbull argues that they are of the law of nature if we consider the end of civil society. Accounting for the end and nature of civil government is a

⁶⁴⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 245.

⁶⁴⁹ Turnbull, *System*, 246.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁵¹ Turnbull, *System*, 247.

twofold task: first we must figure out “what that particular constitution requires,” and then whether its end is good. He goes on to say that if we consider prescription in the case of Jewish law, and we take into account its requirements, we will see that it does not condemn prescription.⁶⁵² Turnbull’s exposition of this proposition is convoluted and it seems that, instead of giving a proper argument, Turnbull is just stating that it is evident that prescription is of the law of nature. His main claim seems to be that if reason can deduce that there is a need to give possession a fixed time, then it follows that prescription is of the law of nature. This becomes clearer at the end of his remarks. His final proposition contains four maxims regarding prescription, all of which are paraphrases or quotes taken from Pufendorf’s text and Barbeyrac’s notes to the *Law of nature and nations*. They give details of how prescription works: it is necessary that it functions under good faith; it must be “founded on constant possession;” the previous owner’s time of possession should be taken into account for the benefit of his successor, as long as both parts came into possession honestly; and it does not apply to minors.⁶⁵³

He concludes with a clearer statement regarding his claim that prescription is of the law of nature, given that whatever reason deduces from the nature of things is of the law of nature:

Whatever reason finds to be the best general rule in this case is a law of nature; and in this sense, prescription is of the law of nature, *i.e.* reason is able to settle several general rules about it in consequence of what commerce, the security of property, and the encouragement of industry make necessary...it is an impropriety to say, that thing is not of the law of nature, because some forms and modes relative to it must be determined and settled by convention, or by civil constitution...⁶⁵⁴

Why does Turnbull go to so much trouble to show that prescription is of the law of nature? We have seen in our examination of all his texts that he guarantees that all the claims he makes can be deduced from the observation of human nature (from our natural constitution). If prescription stems from civil government, then it seems that here we have something that does not come from the work of God but is instead created by human beings once they enter civil society. Turnbull’s worry is not with prescription *per se*, but with the possibility that some things might not be of the law of nature, and hence not from the law of God. Let us remember here

⁶⁵² Turnbull, *System*, 248-249.

⁶⁵³ Turnbull, *System*, 249-251; Pufendorf, *Law of nature and nations*, 441-442, 449.

⁶⁵⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 251.

that Turnbull believes that the law of nature *is* the law of God. By claiming that whatever reason finds necessary for our end (from the observation of cases and circumstances) is of the law of nature, Turnbull believes he can avoid the danger of admitting a duty or obligation that arises from the circumstances of man and not from our own nature. However, it seems that he has not clearly achieved what he claims.

Heineccius now turns to commerce in chapter thirteen of the *System*. He begins by showing that commerce necessarily arose from the circumstances of human beings. Once dominion was introduced, different individuals had possession over diverse things that were required for the proper living of themselves and others, and so they began to exchange goods they had procured for others they wanted. Since it is not the case that all men are virtuous, it is not possible to have a benevolent exchange of goods, for there is the necessity of some way of guaranteeing that the exchange will be just for all parties. He defines commerce as “the exchange of useful things and labour, not from mere benevolence, but founded on perfect obligation.”⁶⁵⁵ Since for a just exchange the consent of both parties is required, the only way commerce can function is through contracts, which Heineccius defines as “the consent of two persons concerning the exchange of necessary work, or things which is not of humanity and beneficence.”⁶⁵⁶

He then begins to go through the specific details of the features which are necessary for contracts to work, and then he gives an overview of different types of contracts. Of all these details Turnbull focuses only on a specific aspect of contracts of loan, namely, interest. According to Heineccius’ exposition, usury or interest applies to contracts of loan. It is simply when creditors give “a reward to themselves for what they lend to their debtors.”⁶⁵⁷ Heineccius goes on to consider whether this aspect is agreeable to the law of nature or not. The issue seems to be that since interest arises from the human practice it might be contrary to the law of nature. However, Heineccius asserts that this is not the case, given that: (a) it is just to give goods to others for a price, (b) the creditor might suffer some inconvenience from loaning, and (c) the creditor runs a risk. This situation makes it reasonable that the creditor gains something from the loan contract, and since this is just, then it is not contrary to the law of nature.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁵ Turnbull, *System*, 253.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷ Turnbull, *System*, 280.

⁶⁵⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 281.

Turnbull complements Heineccius' discussion on interest to reinforce the claim that it is agreeable to the law of nature, but instead of constructing his own argument he quotes at length from Harrington, mainly to show "how civil laws may confine and alter natural rights, consistently with the law of nature."⁶⁵⁹ The passage from Harrington shows that property does not arise from the imposition of government but rather precludes it. Harrington gives a number of examples of the dependence of government on property, an idea Turnbull had already discussed in his remarks. Harrington argues that the property people have must be either in land, or the product of the land, or the product of industry. This property can be dependent or independent; in the former people must give part of their property (money or clothes) to the landlord or landlords, while in the latter they do not. The consequence of this is that it affects the balance of land, which in the first case is in the landlords and in the latter is in the people. It is this balance of land that affects government and not the regulation of money.⁶⁶⁰

Turnbull leaves matters at that and, as he did in his remarks regarding property, he tells us that he will discuss the origin of government later. It seems that he is not too concerned about the details of the duties and laws that result from natural law, but rather on the foundation of them. This is most likely why he refers to Harrington to complement Heineccius' exposition, but he does not give much analysis of the treatment of commerce here. Instead, he abstracts the common feature to all cases of commerce and money, which must guide it for its proper functioning, and this feature is honesty:

If it be asked what the law of nature says about money in a state of nature, the answer is obvious; it requires that commerce be carried on with or without money, in an honest and candid way; so as none may be made richer at the detriment of others; and allows bartering, buying, letting and hiring, and other contracts, all imaginable latitude or liberty within the bounds of honesty, the general dictates of which, with regard to all contracts, are sufficiently explained by our Author.⁶⁶¹

This sheds light on Turnbull's interest in natural law. Whatever the specific details of the duties and obligations are, their relevance lies in the fact they must conduce to the happiness and virtue

⁶⁵⁹ Turnbull, *System*, 291.

⁶⁶⁰ Turnbull, *System*, 294.

⁶⁶¹ Turnbull, *System*, 295.

of human beings, and the path to happiness can be established from the observation of nature. Once this is established, then the specific duties and obligation will easily follow.

In the last two chapters of the first book of the *System* Heineccius discusses pacts. Turnbull does not add any specific remarks to these chapters and instead adds some brief remarks to the first book. The main purpose of these final remarks is to point out the usefulness of Heineccius' exposition of the law of nature. Turnbull defends the author of the *System* against a possible criticism that might arise from the extensive use of particular cases, some of which might be considered not very useful. Turnbull's strategy is to draw an analogy with natural philosophy:

But however rarely any such cases may happen, yet as one cannot be an expert, ready natural philosopher, without having run through many possible cases, and determined how gravity, elasticity, or any other physical powers, would operate in these circumstances according to their laws of working; and therefore, such exercise is by no means useless, but highly useful: So for the same reason, one cannot be ready and expert in the moral science, so as to be able readily to determine himself, or advise others how to act upon every emergency, without having practised himself in resolving all, or very many possible cases, *i.e.* in determining what is requisite in such and such cases, in order to do the least harm, and render every one his due.⁶⁶²

We have seen Turnbull use this analogy (based on the unity of the natural and moral realms) to support the use of the experimental method in moral philosophy. He first defines it in *Principles 1*, and then applies it in *Principles 2*, *Education*, *Painting*, and now in his edition of the *System*. This is why Turnbull finds the thought of the natural law tradition of great value: he sees it as carrying out an investigation of law and politics, or a science of moral philosophy, by following the experimental method.

Turnbull then draws the connection between the law of nature and the law of nations. Any rules regarding societies must be based upon and deduced from the law of nature. Once the law of nature is determined, the law of nations will easily follow. Turnbull announces that this is why in book two of the *System* there will not be any need to add many remarks, perhaps except the topic

⁶⁶² Turnbull, *System*, 316.

he has already announced he will discuss: the origin of government. He believes that no one has given an account of this topic as fully as Harrington has.⁶⁶³

We can make an initial assessment of Turnbull's thought regarding law and politics so far. We have seen that Turnbull accommodates the description Heineccius gives in some instances to his own thought. Turnbull sees the *System* as an exposition of the rights and obligations of human beings deduced from the law of nature. Almost all of Turnbull's remarks clarify that such rights, obligations, and rules can and must be deduced from our natural constitution and the end we were made for by the Author of nature. I have commented throughout this chapter that this is how Turnbull accommodates the text to his own agenda. God is infinitely wise and benevolent and this is supported by the fact that even civil laws can be deduced from the observation of human nature and the regularity and order in the world.

7.2 Heineccius' *System*: law of nations

Before we examine book two of the *System* I want to clarify that our examination will not be as extensive as the one we have just concluded regarding book one. Given that Turnbull himself has announced that he will not add many remarks, and since we have seen that he believes that the law of nations must be based upon the law of nature, we do not need to explore book two in full detail. So instead of examining each of the chapters of book two, I will focus on Turnbull's remarks and briefly summarize the relevant points of Heineccius' text.

In the first remark Turnbull discusses whether or not the physical state of man is a part of moral science. In one of the first sections of book two of the *System*, Heineccius discusses the different states of human beings and holds that our physical state is not part of moral science:

Now, we may consider man merely as consisting of certain faculties of body and mind which he is endowed by his Creator, or we may consider him as subjected to laws for the regulation of his free actions. The first way of considering man is called *considering him in his physical state*. The second is *considering him as a moral being*, or *in his moral state*. But in treating of the law of nations, the objects of which are mens free

⁶⁶³ Turnbull, *System*, 317.

actions, it is evident, that it is not merely man's physical, but more directly his moral state, which then falls under consideration.⁶⁶⁴

Turnbull does not agree with Heineccius' comment and argues that the physical state must be part of moral science. As we have seen in all his texts, human nature must be the foundation for any sort of knowledge we acquire regarding the science of man. Turnbull recognizes the dual nature of man, but the sensual and moral aspects are not meant to be separated when it comes to our present state:

For whence can a man's duties or obligations, which constitute his moral state, be inferred but from his physical state, from his frame, condition, rank and circumstances; from his make, and the relations he stands in, in consequence of his make and situation? Properly speaking, man's physical state lays him under moral obligations...man's physical state constitutes the law of his nature.⁶⁶⁵

This is exactly what Turnbull sets out to establish in *Principles 1*: that from our constitution it is clear that we are moral beings endowed with all the necessary powers and faculties for the pursuit of virtue. Our duties in society follow from this nature, so we should not set aside the physical aspect of our nature in moral science. Whatever the law of nations or the law in a civil state establishes it must always be in accordance with the law of nature.

There is another aspect that Turnbull covers in his first remarks to book two of the *System*, namely natural inequalities among human beings. We are all equal in the sense that we are "equally subject to the same universal law, and equally free or exempt from all obligations but those which arise from the law of nature."⁶⁶⁶ And this kind of equality is not inconsistent with the natural inequalities present in mankind, as it is the case, for example, regarding the difference between parents and children. Turnbull devotes the remainder of these initial remarks to explaining how these natural inequalities are consistent with moral equality. For his explanation he quotes Harrington to show that these natural inequalities follow from the wisdom and perfection of God. There is a "natural aristocracy" implanted in nature: just as the stags which have the bigger heads lead the herd, the wisest human beings should lead society; not by mere

⁶⁶⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 324.

⁶⁶⁵ Turnbull, *System*, 339.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

authority of force, but rather because their wisdom can serve as a guide to procure what is best for us in order to have a good life and follow the path to virtue.⁶⁶⁷

Since there is an evident natural difference among human beings, but it is also the case that God does nothing in vain, then such difference cannot be anything but good. This seems to be the claim Turnbull wants to highlight (by quoting Harrington), to which he adds two further clarifications. In the first place, those few that are naturally endowed with a higher degree of wisdom cannot “command what is contrary to reason and the law of nature; so it can lay no obligation upon the many to be led by the few to what is wrong or contrary to the law of nature.”⁶⁶⁸ This statement points to a comment we made in chapters two and three of this thesis regarding Turnbull’s definition of right and wrong: right is whatever conduces to our natural end and wrong whatever goes against it. Since our end is virtue or happiness, then if the few who lead command contrary to it, they will not have the power to gain the obedience of the many. Turnbull’s belief in the natural goodness of mankind makes an appearance here: it is only by following the path to virtue that the few can gain the right to lead over the many.⁶⁶⁹

Lastly, there is another natural inequality among human beings regarding wealth and external goods. As we examined earlier regarding industry and property Turnbull, leaning on his arguments from *Principles 1*, explains that since the law of industry is part of our constitution then whatever human beings acquire through it is just, and it gives power. Turnbull here clarifies that power is not the same as authority, and therefore this natural inequality regarding wealth cannot give human beings the right to exercise their power contrary to the law of nature.⁶⁷⁰ It is in accordance to the law of nature that we gain power through industry, but there are certain laws and obligations attached to this, all of which can be reduced to “the law of love and benevolence.”⁶⁷¹ This links back to the discussion in book one where Turnbull agrees with Heineccius that love is the foundation of the law of nature. Further, since those natural inequalities are “intended by the Author of nature” they cannot be a threat to the moral equality among human beings. As Turnbull has argued, these inequalities are still subject to the general principle of the law of nature: that the proper laws, rights and obligations are those that conduce to our natural end.

⁶⁶⁷ Turnbull, *System*, 341-342. Harrington, *Political Works*, 172-173.

⁶⁶⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 342.

⁶⁶⁹ Turnbull, *System*, 343.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁷¹ Turnbull, *System*, 344.

Heineccius goes on to give details of the rights and obligations regarding the matrimonial state, the society between parents and children, between masters and servants, and within family. Turnbull's next set of remarks are added to the chapter regarding family. He wants to focus in particular on the natural causes of that state, since he believes it sets the stage for the discussion regarding government and its causes.⁶⁷² Turnbull does not disagree with any of the claims Heineccius has made, so instead he supplements it by adding a passage by Harrington to show that what is said about the government of a family must serve as the basis for considerations about any kind of government. The first claim Turnbull highlights is that family depends on property. Harrington gives the examples of a monarchical family and a popular family. The government of the family depends on the balance of property, and the laws should have this purpose. Proper law-giving consists in "erecting necessary superstructures, that is, such as are conformable to the balance of foundation; which being purely natural, requires that all interposition of force be removed."⁶⁷³ This applies both to families and larger bodies, and so depending on the balance of property we have different kinds of government:

...if one man hold the over-balance unto the whole people in propriety, his property causeth absolute monarchy: if the few hold the over-balance unto the whole people in propriety, their propriety causeth aristocracy, or mixed monarchy. If the whole people be neither over-balanced by the propriety of one, nor a few, the propriety of the people, or of the many, causeth democracy, or popular government...⁶⁷⁴

As we mentioned earlier, it is this link between property and government that allows Turnbull to display his agenda here and rely on his guiding principles. If government is based on property, and property depends on the law of industry of our natural constitution, then: (a) the law of nations is subservient to the law of nature, and hence everything related to the former follows from the observation of our constitution; and (b) since human nature shows the wisdom and perfection of God and our natural end is virtue, then God has naturally endowed us with the faculties to achieve the happiness of virtue not only in a natural state, but also in the civil one. Turnbull also adds here that this kind of enquiry into the laws of the civil state also follows the experimental method:

⁶⁷² Turnbull, *System*, 399.

⁶⁷³ Turnbull, *System*, 399-401. Harrington, *Political Works*, 602-603.

⁶⁷⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 401. Harrington, *Political Works*, 808.

All these truths...have the same relation to or connexion with theories about government, whether domestic or civil and national, whether consisting of one or many families, as the real laws of matter and motion have with theories in natural philosophy: For they are moral facts or principles upon which alone true theories in moral philosophy or politics can be built, as the other are the natural facts, laws or principles upon which alone true axioms in natural philosophy can be erected.⁶⁷⁵

The experimental method applied in his other texts is also present here in his comments on law and politics. Turnbull concludes his remarks by considering cases regarding the relation between parents and children, and between master and servant, to reinforce his claims: that the natural cause of family and government is based on property and dominion, and that whatever we conclude about government must be in accordance with the law of nature.

Heineccius follows his discussion of family with a chapter on civil society. Turnbull takes the opportunity to reinforce a claim from *Principles 1*, namely, that since we are naturally disposed for society, the proper government can help us achieve “the greatest perfection and happiness of mankind.”⁶⁷⁶ Turnbull draws an analogy with natural philosophy to remind us that there is an aspect of our nature that is sociable and benevolent, an aspect that, as we have seen, is grounded in his belief on the natural goodness of mankind:

If therefore the highest perfection and happiness within human reach be attainable, and only attainable in a rightly constituted civil state, and if men be sufficiently impelled to, and furnished for rightly constituting a civil state, man may be said to be intended for a rightly constituted civil state, and all the perfection and happiness attainable in it, or by it, in the same sense that any animal structure, or any machine, is said to be intended for its end.⁶⁷⁷

If we grant Turnbull’s constitution of the human mind then it follows that God has made us for a civil state, since it is a state that stems from all our natural faculties and powers. Even though we can obtain a great degree of happiness before entering a civil state, the path to virtue and perfection can only be completed by the exercise of our faculties for the good of society. This,

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ Turnbull, *System*, 425.

⁶⁷⁷ Turnbull, *System*, 426.

Turnbull tells us, is something that has been considered by other authors and confirmed in history: those societies with a better civil government show a greater degree of happiness and virtue.⁶⁷⁸

Turnbull goes on to consider how human beings can come to know the best form of government, while reminding us that this is a matter of fact as with any other science:

But let me just observe...that ends and means to ends, can only be learned from nature itself by experience, and reasoning from experience. This must be equally true with regard to natural and moral ends and means. The consequence of which is, that the political art required time, observation and experience, to bring it to perfection, as well as natural or mechanical arts.⁶⁷⁹

Turnbull further specifies two main questions within political science: (a) what are the ends government must aim at, and the means to those ends, and (b) how governments have been formed and changed through history. Both are questions of fact and must therefore be carried out by following the experimental method. The latter, “a matter of fact or history,” highlights the usefulness of history we found in *Education* and *Painting*; by learning the way different civil states have been governed, along with their causes and consequences, we can come to a better knowledge of the right form of government. The first question is also a matter of fact, but it is not to be learnt as much from history as from the observation of our nature:

The other question supposes knowledge of human affairs, and the natural operations of moral causes, learned in this way from fact, and reasoning from fact or experience; and it is properly a philosophical enquiry into what ought to be done in consequence of the natural operation of moral causes, or of the laws of human nature, known by experience, in order to frame such a civil government as would make its members as happy as men can be.⁶⁸⁰

We can see here a confirmation of one of the claims I make in this thesis, namely, the unity of Turnbull’s text and the centrality of *Principles 1* for the interpretation of the other books.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ Turnbull, *System*, 427.

⁶⁸⁰ Turnbull, *System*, 428.

Through his anatomy of the human mind (or enquiry into the laws of human nature) Turnbull establishes the operation of moral causes in *Principles 1*, and that knowledge is deployed here to deduce what a proper government should be. However, instead of discussing the origin of government from his anatomy of the human mind, Turnbull summarizes the main claims from Harrington's works. Our task here is to examine how the propositions he borrows from the author of *Oceana* coincide with Turnbull's own views.

The first proposition we examined in detail earlier is grounded in the claim that the origin of government lies in the balance of property. We pointed out that, since property or dominion arises from the law of power and industry, Turnbull grounds the origin of government in his anatomy of the human mind. We also saw that the balance of property gives rise to absolute monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy depending if it hangs on, respectively, one, a few, or many. Here Turnbull borrows from Harrington the consequences of shifting the balance by force: respectively, tyranny, oligarchy, and anarchy. Since government is based on property, then fixation of the former can only be achieved through the fixation of the latter, and this can only be achieved by laws. These *Agrarian* laws are necessary to maintain the balance, whether in monarchy, aristocracy or democracy.⁶⁸¹

Turnbull then tells us that from these principles regarding property and government Harrington gives an account of different governments throughout history, and that he has inferred that when "the balance comes to be intirely changed, it is the more immediately to be attributed to divine providence..."⁶⁸² This is the connection between property and providence that Ahnert points out and which we have developed here in detail.

There are two further propositions that Turnbull examines. The first one contains a sketch of the way different types of superstructures pertain to the different types of government: hereditary senate, clergy, king, etc.⁶⁸³ The details need not detain us here. However, the final proposition serves to highlight Turnbull's use of natural histories to support his claims (or in this case, Harrington's): "these principles (as Mr. Harrington has observed) were not unknown to ancient politicians and are sufficiently confirmed by history."⁶⁸⁴ Turnbull goes on to give the

⁶⁸¹ Turnbull, *System*, 429-432.

⁶⁸² Turnbull, *System*, 432.

⁶⁸³ Turnbull, *System*, 434-436.

⁶⁸⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 436.

passages Harrington takes from Aristotle and Plutarch that confirm the claims made, and concludes by reinforcing the experimental nature of inquiries into law and politics:

This short specimen of our Author's [Harrington] way of reasoning about the rise and fall, or variations of civil government is sufficient to shew, that he reasons from natural causes in these matters, as natural philosophers do about phenomena commonly called natural ones.⁶⁸⁵

Just like in *Education* and *Painting*, history provides examples that serve to confirm the theories derived from the observation of nature. This is a particular feature of the natural law tradition that Turnbull finds appealing. At various point Turnbull comments that Heineccius has provided in his *scholia* sufficient examples that confirm the claims made throughout the *System*. But even then Turnbull provides more examples from history, usually from Harrington's work, to complement Heineccius' exposition. This is the case with the previous two sets of remarks regarding family and the civil state, and this same feature is also guiding his final (before the supplements) remarks in the *System*. This time the topic is sovereignty.

Linking this topic to the earlier discussion regarding the origin of government, and reinforcing that the civil law is subservient to the law of nature, Turnbull tells us that the consideration of what a sole monarch is bound to do should suffice for deducing all other cases of Government. He grounds the answer in benevolence and justice:

In general, therefore, may we not answer, that such a master is under perfect obligation to exercise justice towards his subjects or servants, let them be called what you will, and under imperfect obligation to exercise beneficence towards them?⁶⁸⁶

Turnbull further specifies his answer by adding some brief propositions focusing on the balance of property. First he reminds us that it is lawful to acquire property and dominion. As we know, this follows from the fact that dominion is acquired through the law of industry, which is a good general law of human nature. In his second proposition he says that any violation of property is unlawful, and so the balance of government can only be changed by fixing the balance of property, which we saw can only be achieved through laws and not by force. So this means that

⁶⁸⁵ Turnbull, *System*, 438.

⁶⁸⁶ Turnbull, *System*, 461.

whoever holds the balance (whether one or many) should not be subject to violation of property. This being said, whoever holds the balance is, by the law of nature (love and benevolence), obliged “to make their dependents as happy as they can, as much *men* as they can.”⁶⁸⁷ From these propositions Turnbull concludes that it is lawful to hold an over-balance of property (for one person or the many) as long as power is only exercised according to the law of nature, i.e. through love and benevolence. Further, people have the duty to balance property in a situation where whoever holds the balance is exercising power contrary to the law of nature, or, which is the same, against the interest of people and society. In the same manner, whoever holds the over-balance is obliged to govern and exercise power always with a view to the happiness of the people.⁶⁸⁸

To prove his claims, Turnbull quotes passages from Harrington, who has given examples that show that those societies that have prospered most are those where whoever was in power was guided by the law of nature and by virtue and benevolence. Turnbull concludes his remarks with a reminder that specifying which one is the best type of government is not part of his investigation, but that whichever the best type of government is can be deduced from the law of nature and from the natural end of human beings.

In the three remaining chapters of the *System* Turnbull refrains from adding any remarks. Instead, he adds a supplement “concerning the duties of subjects and magistrates” which contains a general conclusion to Heineccius’ system and a further examination of duties. He begins by giving a review of the book that praises its method:

...our Author will be found...to have given a very full compend of the laws of nature and nations, in which, they are deduced by a most methodical chain of reasoning, from a few simple and plain principles...⁶⁸⁹

Following this method Heineccius has explored the two parts of the science of morals: one where the rules for our conduct are deduced from few axioms (law of nature) and the other where the application of these rules in more complicated cases is explored (law of nations).

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Turnbull, *System*, 461-462.

⁶⁸⁹ Turnbull, *System*, 531.

Turnbull believes that Heineccius has deduced the social duties of mankind from one self-evident principle:

That it is just to hurt or injure no person, and to render to every one his own, or his due; or in other words, That it is just and equal to do to others, as we would have them to do to us.⁶⁹⁰

Turnbull wants to show here that, more than in any other science, the more complex cases of morality can be resolved from the first principles of moral science. This is the feature that Turnbull admires in Heineccius, and to support the claims made by the latter he decides to give an overview of Cicero's thought. It seems that Turnbull turns to Cicero to support his own view on natural law: the law of nature comes from God and the law of nations or civil laws can and must be deduced from the law of nature. Turnbull refers to Cicero's *De inventione* to show the definition of the law of nature:

The law of nature...does not consist in opinion merely, neither is the sense of its obligation wholly formed by education and art; but it is from nature: we are led, directed, and impelled to fulfill its obvious dictates by certain dispositions congenial with us: we feel its force, so soon as objects proper to excite and stir certain affections deeply inlaid into the frame of our minds, are presented to us. Nature thus leads us to religion, to piety, to gratitude, to resentment of injustice, to esteem and veneration, to veracity and candour.⁶⁹¹

Notice that Turnbull highlights the thought that the law of nature leads to religion, i.e. religion is an aspect of our natural constitution. This is a claim he argues for in *Principles 1*. Turnbull refers to Cicero to show that the law of nature is called such because it is founded on human nature, which leads us to the idea of the perfection and benevolence of our Author. Cicero's definition of the law of nations (civil laws) also agrees with the interpretation Turnbull gives in his remarks, namely, that government and civil society are based on property:

⁶⁹⁰ Turnbull, *System*, 532.

⁶⁹¹ Turnbull, *System*, 533. Cicero, *De inventione, De optimo genere oratorum, Topica*, trans. H. M. Hubbell (London: William Heinemann, 1949), 231. The translation offered in the *System* varies from the Loeb edition of Cicero's texts.

The end of civil society, and civil laws...is security of property, and equal treatment to the members of the same state, in consequence of just constitutions, formed and guarded by mutual consent.⁶⁹²

It seems that Turnbull wants to highlight here the fact that civil law follows from the law of nature and all the duties regarding human beings in a civil state can be deduced from human nature. However, knowledge of the principles of our nature and its consequences is only the first part of moral science; in order to complete it, “one must be capable of following them thro’ all their remotest consequences,”⁶⁹³ as it is the case with civil laws. More than supplementing Heineccius’ text it seems that Turnbull is rather finding support for his own view on law, expressed throughout his remarks.

Turnbull concludes his overall review of the book by commenting on the importance of the study of law. As we saw earlier, he views Heineccius’ text as a great introduction to the topic; he decided to translate it so it could be useful for students and serve as a starting point for the study of the other authors of the natural law tradition, Grotius and Pufendorf in particular.⁶⁹⁴ Turnbull spends the rest of this supplement on the specific details of the duties of subjects and magistrates taken from Barbeyrac’s notes to Pufendorf’s *Law of nature and nations*. The details of the duties are not relevant for our present purpose. We do need to point out that all that Turnbull says about such duties is guided by his thought on human nature. Our frame and constitution shows that we are made for virtue and benevolence, and it is this principle that all duties of whatever kind must abide to.

7.3 Turnbull’s *Discourse*

Turnbull added a text of his own to Heineccius’ *System* in which he expands on the views he expresses in the remarks. The text is *A Discourse Upon the Nature and Origine of Moral and Civil Laws*. Stephen Buckle only briefly mentions Turnbull in his *Natural Law and the Theory of Property*, but he singles out the *Discourse* as an example of “the enthusiasm for the experimental method,” and mentions *Principles 1* in passing.⁶⁹⁵ He acknowledges that his brief account is derived from

⁶⁹² Turnbull, *System*, 534. Cicero, *Topica*, 389.

⁶⁹³ Turnbull, *System*, 536.

⁶⁹⁴ Turnbull, *System*, 537-538.

⁶⁹⁵ Stephen Buckle, *Natural Law and the Theory of Property: Grotius to Hume* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 242-243.

what Forbes says of Turnbull in *Hume's Philosophical Politics*,⁶⁹⁶ so Buckle's account is superficial and it only serves the purpose of contrasting Hume's account of property, Buckle's main concern in his book. So even though Buckle recognizes Turnbull as one of the promoters of the application of the experimental method (along with Hutcheson), he downgrades the importance the experimental method had for Turnbull's whole system of philosophy, and wrongly claims that the *Discourse* is an expansion of the methodological statements found in *Principles 1*, when in fact, the methodological statements in the *Discourse* are mainly a reconfirmation of the methodological claims made in all of Turnbull's texts.

Given that the *Discourse* is mostly an abridged version of *Principles 1* (with the exception of a section that summarizes the main argument from *Principles 2* and a brief section on civil laws), we will not analyze the arguments Turnbull explores, but rather point out how Turnbull argues from his anatomy of the human mind to civil laws. Of particular interest is the reconfirmation of the application of the experimental method in all our moral enquiries. Turnbull discusses this issue in the first sections of his *Discourse*, where he begins by drawing an analogy to natural philosophy. He explains that natural philosophy is the science of the laws of nature, which are "the settled methods, according to which nature works, and human arts must work, in order to produce certain effects."⁶⁹⁷ Examples of this are the laws of motion in mechanics and the laws of refraction in optics.

Just as there are laws of nature in natural philosophy, we also have laws in moral philosophy. Turnbull constructs his definition of the latter by distinguishing natural from moral ends:

If therefore there are any other ends distinct from those called *natural ends*, or *the ends of mechanical arts*; which, to distinguish them from the latter, may properly be called *moral ends*; the established connexions in nature with regard to the attainment of these latter ends, will be, properly speaking, the connexions which constitute means to moral ends; and the science of these means and ends will properly be called *moral philosophy*.⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹⁶ Forbes' main account of Turnbull is contained in *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, 3-6. However, Forbes does refer to Turnbull in other parts of his book, though mostly to confirm his exposition of Hutcheson's thought.

⁶⁹⁷ Turnbull, *Discourse*, 553. The page numbers for the reference to the *Discourse* are those from the 2005 edition of the *System*.

⁶⁹⁸ Turnbull, *Discourse*, 555.

Turnbull further divides moral philosophy in two parts: theoretical and practical. Even though there is a theoretical part it must be carried out from experiments and observation:

...there are two parts of moral philosophy, one of which is employed in investigating by experiments the laws according to which phaenomena of the moral kind are produced, and in reducing other phaenomena into these laws so ascertained; and the other consists in deducing rules for human conduct in the pursuit of certain moral ends from the established connexions and laws of nature relative to them.⁶⁹⁹

Turnbull does not specify here the exact nature of the experiments carried out in moral science, but we already know what he believes count as experiments in moral science from our examination of his other texts. The interesting aspect of this passage is that it sheds light on his interpretation of the connection between the law of nature and the law of nations. While the former is deduced and established from the observation of human nature, the latter deduces rules for conduct based upon the law of nature. It is this theoretical part (or the law of nature) of moral science that Turnbull discusses in the rest of his discourse by abridging the claims made in *Principles 1*.

He goes on to identify the law of nature with the natural constitution of human beings: "...the natural consequences of human affections and actions within and without man, are a natural law to man."⁷⁰⁰ Further, since all these causes and effects regarding the actions of human beings are established by God, then the law of nature is the law of the Author of nature.⁷⁰¹ Now that we know what the law of nature is, our next task is to find out the specific laws pertaining to the conduct of human beings. Turnbull begins his observation of human nature by briefly summarizing the argument he gave in *Principles 1* against Hobbes and those authors who believe that human beings are only ruled by self-love. Their mistake lies in considering only one of the affections of our nature, which Turnbull divides in three general groups: sensitive appetites, intellectual affections and social affections.⁷⁰² Besides these affections we also have reason, which God gave to us so we could direct our affections and make them work together for our natural

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁰ Turnbull, *Discourse*, 556-557.

⁷⁰¹ Turnbull, *Discourse*, 557.

⁷⁰² Turnbull, *Discourse*, 561-562.

end. With this account of human nature Turnbull deduces the first law of human nature: “to maintain reason in our mind as our governing principle over all our affections and pursuits.”⁷⁰³

Here Turnbull introduces the overall argument he gave in *Education*: it is the main purpose of education to establish the government of reason so that from early in our life we are set in the correct path to virtue. Since his text had not yet been published (it appeared a year later) he directs the reader to Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, but the argument he gives is still a brief summary of his own thought which he develops at length in his own book on the topic.⁷⁰⁴

Turnbull resumes his examination of human nature with a discussion regarding the law of industry, which we have seen plays an important role throughout his remarks on the *System*. He points out that it is only through this law of industry that we can acquire any goods (both material and intellectual) pertaining to our life.⁷⁰⁵ As in his remarks to the *System*, the law of industry is followed by what Turnbull here calls “the law of sociality.” Turnbull comments on the sociable nature of human beings which allows us to obtain many goods required for the fulfillment of our natural end. In particular, Turnbull emphasizes the claims made in *Principles 1* regarding natural sociability because this feature takes a central role when it comes to law and politics. The civil state stems from the social feature of our nature, and since we are made by God for society, then we are capable of deducing the laws pertaining to a civil state from our natural constitution. Since we already examined at length the details of Turnbull’s interpretation of human nature we can focus on the argument he gives in the discourse regarding civil laws.

After his abridgement of *Principles 1* Turnbull gives a summary of his anatomy of the mind that serves as the first step in his argument:

...man is in the same sense made for prudence and self-government; for industry; for acting with reason, and agreeably to its dictates; for benevolence, or the pursuit of public good; for paternal cares and filial gratitude; for indignation against injury and oppression, and for compassion towards our suffering or distressed fellow

⁷⁰³ Turnbull, *Discourse*, 565.

⁷⁰⁴ Turnbull, *Discourse*, 567-568.

⁷⁰⁵ Turnbull, *Discourse*, 571-573.

creatures; it follows, I say, that we are made for these ends in the same sense that he eye is made to see, the ear to hear....⁷⁰⁶

It is from this constitution of human nature that we must deduce the rules of civil society. God has created us with all these faculties and powers, and when we examine them we deduce that we are made for virtue. If this is the end we confirm from the observation of human nature, then the laws of civil society must aim towards the same end. No that he has a complete account of human nature, Turnbull goes on to briefly specify civil laws, which he divides into three general groups: laws regarding property, regarding religion and regarding public order.

The first set of laws follows one specific rule: “the order of that love which we reciprocally owe to one another.”⁷⁰⁷ We saw throughout his remarks to the *System* that the general rule behind the laws of society is to do to others what we would want them to do to us. This follows from the natural sociability God has endowed us with. The second set of laws, those regarding religion, must be founded in the connection with virtue. As he argued in *Principles 2* the Scriptures coincide with what we have already proved through reason, i.e. that we are made for virtue. All the laws regulating public worship and religion must be established with regard to this end. Finally, Turnbull does not specify in any detail the laws of public order; instead he just reminds us that like all other laws, they must be determined by our nature.

With this brief account of civil laws Turnbull concludes his discourse, which he believes shows that the laws of a civil state can be deduced from our natural constitution and the law of nature (from the Author of nature). Since we have commented on all these aspects throughout our examination of the *System*, there is little to add here. We can conclude by summing up the salient features of Turnbull’s thought on law and politics.

As in Turnbull’s other texts, his remarks in the *System* and his *Discourse* are best interpreted as an application of the account of human nature given in *Principles 1*. Throughout the remarks we saw how Turnbull accommodated Heineccius’ text to fit with his overall agenda and show that the law of nature is the law of God, that we can deduce this law from the observation of our nature (through the experimental method), and that the laws pertaining to a civil state easily follow from

⁷⁰⁶ Turnbull, *Discourse*, 599.

⁷⁰⁷ Turnbull, *Discourse*, 614.

the law of nature. In the *Discourse* he gives an abridgment of *Principles 1* to confirm the same claims made in the remarks.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8 Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis I set out to prove three main claims by exploring Turnbull's philosophical work. I will conclude by reviewing how each of these claims has been established throughout this thesis.

8.1 Turnbull's System of Philosophy

The first claim I proposed was that Turnbull's texts are better understood as interrelated parts of a system of philosophy which is unified by his set of guiding principles. We have seen that all of Turnbull's texts are interrelated in several ways: the content of each of his works regularly relates to passages in his other texts, and we have also seen that the guiding principles regularly appear as a salient feature in Turnbull's arguments.

The first of the guiding principles is the belief that human beings are naturally good. This principle underlies all of Turnbull's exposition of the anatomy of the human mind. Every law of nature he deduces by introspection is described as a good general law because it contributes or aims towards our natural end. Turnbull confirms this principle through the observation of human nature. We saw that rather than establishing that human beings are naturally good, Turnbull instead confirms that our natural make up is consistent with the belief that we are made for virtue, and this in turn is used to show that the Author of nature has made us perfectly fit for virtue. This assumption underlies all the laws of human nature he describes and, in fact, allows him to justify the goodness of such laws. It is in this way that the ways of god to man can truly be vindicated

As we explored in chapter three, some of the laws described in *Principles 1* have consequences that at first sight do not appear consistent with virtue. Such is the case of the law of power, which on its own might lead to selfishness, or the law of association that needs to be regulated to avoid bad habits. We saw that Turnbull accounts for such cases by relying on a consequence of the union between two of his guiding principles: the natural goodness of human beings and the progressive chain of nature. The idea of the continuity and gradation of the great chain of being places human beings in a particular, privileged stage with respect to other animals, even though it is also not the highest stage within the chain. This makes our present stage one of progress and learning. Within the chain, every creature or species has a natural end, and it is this end each

individual creature must aim for. Given that the natural end of human beings is virtue, we must learn to follow the path that leads to it and avoid those paths that do not.

If this is a stage of learning to achieve virtue, then human beings cannot be perfectly virtuous from the start, but must experience and encounter obstacles so we can learn to discern virtue from vice and right from wrong. It is this aspect that explains the apparent negative consequences of the laws: they naturally follow from the fact that human beings are in a learning stage. Since the presumably bad consequences end up contributing to the good of the whole chain of being, then those consequences are not really bad at all.

This connection between the natural disposition for virtue in human beings and the great chain of being is also guiding *Education* and *Painting*. As we examined in chapters four and five, both these texts are concerned with the importance of education. The fact that our present stage is one of learning explains Turnbull's determination to insist upon the relevance of education. The theory explored in *Education* is built upon the guiding principle which states that the natural end of human beings is virtue. Turnbull first highlights in his natural history that one of the main reasons why Ancient Greece achieved great progress and witnessed the life of so many eminent characters was due to the fact that in their education they always recognized virtue as the main purpose. Since all the human faculties are made for virtue, it must be the proper aim of our education to cultivate and exercise those faculties for our natural end.

In *Painting*, Turnbull constructs a natural history of painting to show that the representation of virtue is the proper end of the arts. As we examined in chapter five, Turnbull can argue that the proper purpose of art is aiding in our quest for virtue thanks to his belief that virtue is the proper end of human beings. The pleasure we can derive from art is higher, according to how well the artwork is suited for our natural end. When painting stops being merely ornamental and appeals to virtue it is capable of giving us a higher degree of pleasure. This results as a consequence of Turnbull's aesthetic moralism,⁷⁰⁸ and it also renders the imitative arts especially useful for our education.

While exploring *Principles 2*, we saw that Turnbull discusses his thought on religion by focusing on the parable of the sower. Throughout the text he shows that the Scriptures are in agreement

⁷⁰⁸ By aesthetic moralism I mean the view that the only aim of art is to teach morality. For a discussion on this topic, though dated, see R.W. Beardsmore, *Art and morality* (London: Macmillan, 1971).

with the nature of human beings precisely because they recommend and promote our natural end of virtue. In order to infer that there is a future state Turnbull needs to assume that human beings are part of the great chain of being, and that our present state is one of learning and preparation for the next one.

Finally, when we examined Turnbull's thought on law and politics we saw that he highlights the natural aspect of sociability found in the natural law tradition. Further, the comments he makes to Heineccius' *System* and the discussion in his *Discourse* point out that whatever the specific duties and governments are, the crucial factor is that they contribute to the natural end of human beings, i.e. happiness, which is based on virtue and benevolence.

So far I have only commented on the first two of Turnbull's guiding principles. His commitment to the experimental method is explicit in all his system of philosophy. We saw that the initial sections of all his texts contain statements that highlight the spirit of experimental philosophy. He constantly refers to experience, experiments, and observations as well as the rejection of the use of hypotheses and mere speculation. We also saw that all his methodological statements were not mere rhetoric; instead, they clearly highlight his commitment to the experimental method. In *Principles 1*, we saw how Turnbull relies on introspection to access the experience and observations of the human anatomy. In *Education* and *Painting*, we saw how he constructed natural histories to deduce his own theories. In the latter, the usefulness of paintings lies on the fact that he can define them as experiments in moral philosophy. Turnbull even added the paintings in copper plates to his book so that the readers had the experiments at hand to confirm his claims. In *Principles 2*, he examines miracles as experiments, and refrains from making any positive claims about the future state given the limits of experience. Finally, in his remarks to the *System* and the *Discourse* he argues that politics and moral science are at the same level than any other science, and therefore it must be carried out in the same way that natural philosophy. I will expand more on Turnbull's experimental method when we explore the ESD framework in section 8.3.

There is one feature of these guiding principles that takes a central role in Turnbull's system and helps us understand how they all work together. We saw while examining the features of the great chain of being that a very important consequence was the unity of all the sciences. This particular feature is constantly present and it allows Turnbull to argue from the natural to the moral world. As I mentioned while exploring *Principles 1*, the connection between the moral and

natural worlds amounts to more than a mere analogy. Most of the commentators on Turnbull's work mention his insistence on the analogy,⁷⁰⁹ but fail to recognize that there is far more to it. Turnbull constantly uses the analogy *because* of the unity of all the sciences. The natural and moral worlds are both linked parts of the same system, so it is not a mere similarity that enables the analogy.

The unity of the sciences is crucial for understanding Turnbull's way of arguing in *Principles 1*, and in *Education* and *Painting* the idea appears more prominently. In *Education* Turnbull sets up a plan of education based on his natural history of the topic, as we examined in chapter four. Turnbull refers to Francis Bacon and the Ancients to construct this plan, in which all the arts and sciences must be included and balanced in a proper system of education. He justifies teaching all the natural sciences, moral sciences, arts, and even taking due care of the body because of this unity of the sciences that results from the features of the great chain of being.

In *Painting*, the unity of the sciences explains the usefulness of paintings for education. We saw that Turnbull explicitly mentions that perhaps the biggest mistake regarding education is that those in charge have separated the arts and sciences. Knowledge is about nature and, since everything in nature is continuous, we should not separate in our education what is necessarily linked in nature.

In *Principles 2*, expanding upon the unity of the sciences, Turnbull relies on the unity of everything to account for a future state, miracles, and the attributes of God. In his thought on law and politics the unity is brought up to justify the method to deduce rights and obligations, and through the unity of everything Turnbull argues that the law of nature and the law of nations are actually two parts of the same law of the Author of our nature.

Besides the unity of all his texts, we have seen that Turnbull believes that he has deduced the anatomy of the mind from experience and observation, which guarantees its place as the foundation for all other enquiries regarding mankind. In the next section we examine how, beyond the guiding principles, Turnbull's system of philosophy is best interpreted as a development of the furniture of the mind established in *Principles 1*.

⁷⁰⁹ See for example Ken MacKinnon, "George Turnbull's Common Sense Jurisprudence." In *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment: proceedings of a conference held at the University of Aberdeen*, ed. J. J. Carter and J. H. Pittock (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), 104; and Haakonssen, *Natural law and moral philosophy*.

8.2 The Development of *Principles 1*

The second claim that I proposed is that there is a developmental aspect to Turnbull's system: his anatomy of the human mind is the foundation upon which he develops his religious, aesthetic, pedagogical, and political thought. As we have seen, none of his texts can be properly understood without acknowledging the anatomy of the mind constructed in *Principles 1*.

In *Principles 1* Turnbull establishes the laws of human nature and shows that they confirm the belief that we are perfectly fitted for virtue. In *Education* Turnbull builds upon this claim to establish his theory of education, so he naturally goes back constantly to the laws established in *Principles 1*. We have seen that his account of the role of rewards and punishments refers to the law of association; the law of power explains our natural desire for knowledge and requires education in order to exercise this power keep it in due balance; lastly, the connection between mind and body is the foundation for the importance of instructing the mind as well as the body. Though this explicit connection between certain laws and his plan of education is important, the recurring idea of the pursuit of virtue further highlights the importance of *Principles 1* for interpreting Turnbull's thought on education. Given that the anatomy of the mind establishes that the natural end of human beings is virtue, the proper aim of education is to help us achieve such end.

The main conclusion derived from the furniture of the mind established in *Principles 1* is also the main motivator behind *Painting*. In particular, Turnbull draws on the connection between mind and body and appeals to the dual nature of human beings in order to justify the use of the arts, which appeal to our bodily senses to transmit the higher pleasures and virtues of the moral world. The law of the moral sense also makes an appearance in *Painting*, linking our natural delight in beauty, order and perfection with the representation of virtue in paintings.

We saw that *Principles 2* is, for the most part, an expansion and confirmation of the laws of nature established in *Principles 1*. As we examined throughout chapter six, the general purpose of *Principles 2* is to confirm in the Scriptures what has already been proven by the observation of nature in *Principles 1*. We also saw that in a number of his arguments Turnbull mentions that he will not give extended details because he has already given proof in *Principles 1*. This is the case

when he deals with the problem of evil, the immortality of the soul, the sense of beauty and the moral sense, liberty, and the law of knowledge and power.

Finally, the connection between *Principles 1* and his political thought in his remarks to the *System* and the *Discourse* is prevalent: he frequently summarizes the details of his anatomy of the human mind in his remarks and almost all of the *Discourse* is an abridged version of *Principles 1*.

The two claims that I have commented on show that we should interpret Turnbull's texts as a systematic, closely knitted system of philosophy. Bevilacqua and Stewart allude to this fact but never develop it.⁷¹⁰ I have presented here Turnbull's system of philosophy and shown that it is guided by a specific set of principles, and that the anatomy of the human mind presented in *Principles 1* is the foundation for the development of his other texts. In the next section we will examine the third and final claim that I set out to prove in this thesis.

8.3 The ESD and Moral Philosophy

Finally, the third claim I proposed stated that the ESD provides the best framework to explain the impact the rise of experimental philosophy had on Turnbull's thought. This is very clear from the plethora of methodological statements in all his texts. Turnbull aside from using the rhetoric of experimental philosophy; he is also in fact applying the method.

We have seen how the initial sections of all his works promote the use of the experimental method of natural philosophy in moral enquiries. It was also clear that after giving his methodological statements Turnbull condemned the use of mere speculation and hypotheses. This is one of the features of the ESD that we examined in chapter two. Within Turnbull's methodological statements we also find that he goes beyond the mere collection of observations and experiments. He tells us that his method is a mix of observations, experiments, and reasoning from those experiments. Unlike the traditional rationalism/empiricism distinction (RED), the ESD provides an entirely natural explanation of these methodological statements. Thus, in addition to being the actual terms used by Turnbull, the ESD provides a better framework within which to interpret his writings.

⁷¹⁰ Turnbull, *Painting*, VII(of the Bevilacqua edition); Stewart, "George Turnbull and educational reform," 99.

I want to give an example of how the ESD is better for interpreting Turnbull. George Davie dedicates a few pages to Turnbull in his *Scotch Metaphysics* within the context of Hume and the Rankenian society. Comparing Maclaurin to Turnbull, Davie tells us that the latter

...does not join issue at all with the anti-empiricists of the continent, and does not, apparently, see that there is any problem about foundations.⁷¹¹

This is not entirely correct. In our examination of *Principles 2* we saw Turnbull arguing against Spinoza, and in general his rejection of hypotheses and mere speculation (directed towards what I believe Davie labels the anti-empiricists) shows that he did find an issue with the way any inquiry into knowledge had to be made, and with the proper foundation to work on.

Besides the rhetorical aspect of the ESD there is the issue of applying the experimental method of natural philosophy in moral inquiries. This aspect points to another of the themes we saw throughout all of Turnbull's system, namely, the importance of introspection. The experimental method is grounded on facts and observations. But while natural philosophy finds these in external objects, moral philosophy does not. Introspection provides Turnbull with the facts and observations of the moral world. We have seen that Turnbull constantly calls upon his audience not to take his claims for granted but rather to confirm them by themselves.

Throughout the examination we also witnessed a number of instances where Turnbull illustrates his commitment to experimental philosophy by staying within the boundaries of human experience, providing propositions we can deduce from facts and observation, and reasoning from them. We saw a clear example of this both in *Principles 1* and *Principles 2* in his discussion of the future state and the immortality of the soul, where he comments on probable knowledge and its usefulness.

In this section I have commented how the ESD is a better framework (than the traditional ones, like the rationalist-empiricist framework) to interpret Turnbull in particular, but by using the ESD we might very well gain a better understanding of all the figures involved with projects in the science of man movement. In the next and final section of this thesis I will comment on the usefulness of the study I have provided of Turnbull's system of philosophy.

⁷¹¹ Davie, *Scotch metaphysics*, 12.

By interpreting Turnbull's work within the framework of his set of guiding principles, I have confirmed the three claims discussed, and have shown that there is more to Turnbull's philosophy than just repetition and borrowing from other authors. In particular, we have seen that he has a unique interpretation of nature, where he combines the traditional concept of the great chain of being with a view of nature regulated by general laws. He might borrow from Butler, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson extensively, but we have also seen how he distances himself from these authors throughout his texts. Turnbull was one of the first philosophers to apply the experimental method in moral philosophy, and certainly the most systematic in doing so. On a par with Hutcheson, he should be considered as one of the founders of the movement of the science of man. I want to conclude this thesis with some desiderata for further research.

8.4 Thoughts for further research

In the first chapter I mentioned that modern commentators have neglected Turnbull and that when they do mention him, they generally have a negative perception of him. Let us examine the general comments some recent commentators have made regarding Turnbull in order to show that the exposition given here should lead us to look into Turnbull's work and his influence in more detail.

While examining *Principles 1* I mentioned Norton's account of Turnbull's use of the analogy between the natural and moral worlds which I argued is not quite accurate. However, his overall view of Turnbull is mixed. He tells us that *Principles 1* is a "long, rambling, and repetitive work"⁷¹², but he also acknowledges that Turnbull added some details to the school of moral sense.⁷¹³ Even though at the beginning of his article Norton claims that Turnbull's views deserve attention, he does not go beyond a brief sketch of *Principles 1* and analyses it through Hume and Reid.

Haakonssen also gives an account of Turnbull but only in relation to other figures, Francis Hutcheson in this case. Like Norton, he has a mixed view of Turnbull, although it is more

⁷¹² Norton, "George Turnbull and the Furniture of the Mind," 704.

⁷¹³ Ibid. 13.

positive than negative. He acknowledges Turnbull's effort but describes his work as "rambling, repetitive argumentation and unctuous rhetoric."⁷¹⁴

However not all is negative. In recent years some commentators on the Scottish Enlightenment have recognized Turnbull as more than just Thomas Reid's teacher. Nevertheless, we are still lacking a detailed explanation of his views or his importance. Paul Wood, M.A. Stewart, and Alexander Broadie have worked extensively on Turnbull, and have recognized him as one of the key figures of the time. Both Broadie and David Allan have highlighted *Painting* as an important contribution to the Scottish Enlightenment⁷¹⁵ Paul Wood has worked extensively on the Aberdeen enlightenment and sees the importance of Turnbull, in particular regarding education.⁷¹⁶ M.A. Stewart has also contributed to the improvement of Turnbull's image. Some decades ago he told us that Turnbull's work is one of the best examples of the current of thought in the early decades of eighteenth-century Scotland:

The current itself can hardly be ignored by those who wish to understand properly the intellectual history of the later part of the century, and Turnbull's place in this tradition deserves the attention which it has recently started to attract.⁷¹⁷

Despite this improvement, up to now there has not been a detailed account of Turnbull's system of philosophy as a whole. The most detailed account of his work can be found in a section of Broadie's *A History of Scottish Philosophy*,⁷¹⁸ but while useful, that study still does not provide a full exposition of Turnbull's work as a system and leaves out some important details of his work. What I have presented here is not only a detailed account of Turnbull's philosophy but an interpretation of his work with a framework that allows us to gain a better understanding of the thought of the time. In some way I hope to have developed here what M.A. Stewart noticed many years ago.

Given the usual perception of Turnbull as nothing more than Thomas Reid's teacher the issue of influence comes to mind. I have not explored this issue at all since we can only settle it after properly understanding Turnbull's thought. This thesis is just a first step into this inquiry, and

⁷¹⁴ Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy*, 98.

⁷¹⁵ Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 156-161; and David Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century: Union and Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Longman, 2002), 157-158.

⁷¹⁶ Wood, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment*.

⁷¹⁷ Stewart, *George Turnbull and Educational Reform*, 101.

⁷¹⁸ Broadie, *A history of Scottish Philosophy*, 108-123.

hopefully it will provide the groundwork for investigating the influence Turnbull had not only on Thomas Reid but also on education in Aberdeen, on the Aberdeen Philosophical Society⁷¹⁹, and on the science of man in general. If anything, I hope to have at least shown that there is more to Turnbull than just a selection of repetitive ramblings: instead we find in his work a unified, comprehensive, and embedded system of philosophy. It is a proper and important sample⁷²⁰ of a project within the science of man movement.

⁷¹⁹ Lewis Ulman considers this possibility. Philosophical Society of Aberdeen, *The Minutes of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society 1758-1773*, ed. Lewis Ulman (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990), 19-20, and 50-51.

⁷²⁰ I borrow the term 'proper sample' to describe Turnbull's philosophy from Stewart, "George Turnbull and educational reform," 101.

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