RICHARD STEELE: A CONSCIOUS RATIONALIST

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PREFACE

This study represents an attempt to identify the intellectual premises underlying the religious, social, and political writings of Richard Steele, 1672-1729. Although Steele generally spoke through a persona, especially in his periodical essays, this study assumes that these personas speak for Steele. Furthermore, all of Steele's writings have been used, as representing his views whether they were his essays, his tracts, his plays, or his letters.

I would like to express deep gratitude to my major advisor, Dr. Samuel Woods, Jr., for his great patience and help. I would also like to express appreciation to the other members of my committee, all of whom offered valuable criticisms: Dr. David Berkeley, Dr. Walter Scott, Dr. Judson Milburn, and Dr. William Wray.

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Finally, I wish to express deep gratitude to my wife, Anita, and my children, Janet and Teresa, for their patience, encouragement, and many, many sacrifices.

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Eng.--The Englishman

PJ--Steele's Periodical Journalism

Spec.--The Spectator

TP--Tracts and Pamphlets:

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

George Sherburn offers a conclusion that would draw little disagreement: "The superiority of The Tatler and The Spectator over all other such periodicals . . . is in part due to the happy combination of these two authors, Addison and Steele."[1] They took the periodical essay, polished it, and popularized it, until it "reached its acme of achievement, early in the eighteenth century."[2] Sherburn makes another observation that few scholars would dispute: "In literary reputation Addison far surpasses Steele."[3] Indeed, Basil Willey speaks of Addison as "the mouthpiece of the age."[4] He even refers to England during the first two decades of the eighteenth century as "Addison's England."[5]

However, Steele has also established a place in English literature. If Steele was less gifted as a writer, "as a pamphleteer he

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[1] "The Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1660-1788," A Literary History of England, ed., Albert C. Baugh (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948), III, 871.

[2] Sherburn, Restoration, p. 870.

[3] Restoration, p. 871.

[4] The Seventeenth Century Background: Studies in the Thought of the Age in Relation to Poetry and Religion (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1962), p. 265.

[5] Seventeenth Cent., p. 264.

was more stirring than Addison, and as a playwright he had more influence than Addison," Sherburn believes.[6] Furthermore, Steele invented the periodical essay rather than Addison. Thus, George Sampson concludes that though "Addison was more effective . . . Steele was more original."[7] At any rate, Sampson believes that both Addison and Steele "collaborated with the spirit of their age" and both became its mouthpiece:

> After the fireworks of the Restoration and the nocturnal rowdiness of its lecherous "gentlemen" a calmer morning dawned. The steady, quiet, middle class began to make themselves heard. Of this cleaner urbanity Addison and Steele were the voices.[8]

Donald L. McDonald has made a study of Addison's underlying assumptions implicit in his criticisms.[9] This study is an attempt to study the underlying assumptions in Steele's criticisms, the other half of the Augustan Age's voice.

Most studies of Steele have been confined to one of Steele's special interests, and even then have only lightly discussed Steele's underlying philosophy. John Loftis (Steele at Drury Lane) has discussed Steele's interest in and his relation to the stage; hence his work is almost wholly biographical:

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[6] Restoration, p. 871.

[7] The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1959), p. 460.

[8] Hist. of Eng. Lit., p. 457.

[9] "An Examination of the Intellectual Premises Underlying the Religious, Political, and Social Criticism of Joseph Addison." Diss., Univ. of Wisconsin, 1960. Future references to this dissertation will read Diss., "Addison," with page number.

> George A. Aitken, by the thoroughness with which he explored the records of Steele's career, established his The Life of Richard Steele[10] as the point of origin for all future investigations of the subject. The decisive question about any subsequent book on any aspect of Steele's biography is inevitably, "What does it add to Aitken?" So with this book I answer that I have examined Steele's theatrical career in the context of early eighteenth-century stage and dramatic history--especially in the context of the dramatic reform movement in which Steele played such a prominent role--as it was impossible for Aitken to do in a general biography.[11]

Bertrand Goldgar has analyzed the political differences between Steele and Swift, which gradually led to a break between these two former friends. Goldgar almost wholly confines his study fo the historical facts surrounding the rupture of this famous friendship:

> My purpose in this study is to examine in some detail the personal, political, and literary relations of these three men [Addison is also included], and to set the known facts about their friendships and their quarrels against the background of party warfare and political journalism in the last six years of Queen Anne.[12]

The most complete study of Steele and politics has been made by Calhoun Winton. However, this work, he says, is primarily

> . . . biographical and critical, that is to say, I have adduced relevant facts of Steele's biography insofar as they have seemed important to his political writing and I have assessed the quality of that writing by comparison with the work of his contemporaries.[13]

Although Winton briefly discusses Steele's political and economical principles, he does not relate them to Steele's overall philosophy.

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[10] George A. Aitken, The Life of Richard Steele (London, 1889).

[11] Steele at Drury Lane (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1953), Preface, p. 1.

[12] The Curse of Party: Swift's Relations with Addison and Steele (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1961), Preface, p. viii.

[13] "Richard Steele: The Political Writer," Diss., Princeton Univ., 1955, Introduction, p. 3.

Rae Blanchard has made a study of Steele's moral theory in an unpublished dissertation.[14] Although her study is broader than either Loftis' or Winton's, she confines her analysis to Steele's role in social reform:

> It consists of (1) an analysis of his moral theory, as he presented it in The Christian Hero and developed it in later writings, and (2) a study of the way he applied it to a group of reforming projects: the drama, chief among his aesthetic interests, and two problems emphasized in his social propaganda, the status of women and the question of honor.[15]

Although my study will be similar to Blanchard's, it will differ from hers in two important ways. First, it will be broader than Blanchard's since it will attempt to define the intellectual premises undergirding all of Steele's views of life as well as his criticisms of English culture as they are revealed in his writings. It will do this by defining his religious views and by showing that the position he

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[14] "Richard Steele as a Moralist and Social Reformer," Diss., Univ. of Chicago, 1927; hereafter references to Blanchard's thesis will be indicated by Diss., "Steele as a Moralist." In addition to this unpublished dissertation, Miss Blanchard has published several articles on Steele. However, the great majority of them are not concerned with my subject. Very few of Blanchard's articles are interpretations of Steele; for the most part, they seek to establish some biographical fact about Steele. For example, in one article she suggests that Steele might have been a Freemason--"Was Sir Richard Steele a Freemason?" PMLA, 63 (1948), 903-17. In another, she simply presents facts about Steele's finances--"Steeleiana: An Eighteenth Century Account Book," Studies in Philology, 39 (1942), 502-09. In still another article she discusses Steele's personal finances--"Richard Steele's West Indian Plantation," Modern Philology, 39 (1942), 282. In addition she has published several articles that identify one of Steele's letters. In fact, seemingly only two articles interpret Steele's intellectual views. One is "Richard Steele and the Status of Women," Studies in Philology, 16 (1929), 325-55. This article seems to reiterate the thesis chapter on Steele's view of women. The other is "Richard Steele and the Secretary of the SPCK," Restoration and Eighteenth Century Literature: Essays in Honor of Alan D. McKillop, ed., Carroll Camden (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962).

[15] Diss., "Steele as a Moralist," Introduction, p. 1.

assumes in religion provides the basis upon which he built his philosophy of life. Or, to state this another way, Steele's views and criticisms, as he expressed them in his earliest writing, The Christian Hero (1701), in his later writings such as his periodical essays (1709-1715), and in his plays, on man's nature, English manners, the status of women, the arts, politics, economics, and social classes, harmonize with his religious position. Blanchard says nothing about Steele's specific religious beliefs, only that he accepted the Christian religion. Nor does she attempt to relate Steele's moral theory to his politics or his criticism of vice.

Second, the conclusion reached in this study will disagree with Blanchard's central point. Her point, which she believes gives a "predominant unity" to Steele's otherwise inconsistent views, is that Steele emphasized the "essential non-rational element" in man.

> It seems apparent from the thesis of The Christian Hero, from the temper of many of his essays, and from the turn given in the portrayal of human nature in plays, tales, and "characters," that Steele's primary accent is on the irrational quality in man.[16]

However, Blanchard does not mean to say that Steele is only acknowledging the reality of the way men generally act, but have the potential to act otherwise; her thesis maintains that Steele's theory of human nature is fundamentally anti-rationalistic:

> It [Steele's moral theory] has, however, a predominating and unifying element. This may be described as an anti-rationalistic bias--that is, an acknowledgement of the essential irrationality of human nature. In the first place, his analysis of the human faculties which serve as ethical motive powers stresses the insufficiency of reason and the power of

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[16] Diss., "Steele as a Moralist," p. 5.

> the passions. In the second place, his system of ethics rests on a belief that it is vain to depend upon the reason, "mere morality," to set up ethical standards of right and wrong; "no principles but the principles of Christianity are sufficient to make a man great."[17] Christianity, then, rather than rationalistic principle constitutes an ethical guide, by controlling the passions, imposing laws of right and wrong, and affording supernatural sanctions. These assumptions of anti-rationalism are apparently rooted in Steele's vigorous reaction against the Stoic exaltation of reason and in the urge of a Puritan conscience.[18]

Commenting further on the relation of the passions to virtues, Blanchard says:

> Although . . . Steele reacted against egoistic doctrine, he did not maintain, either in general or in concrete characters and episodes, a belief in the goodness of average human nature. His position is that when goodness does exist, it has its basis in good nature. It is this conception of virtue which determines the character and quality of Steele's sentimentalism. The criterion of virtue subscribed to by the age--universal benevolism--he considers as the Christian duty of charity, inextricably related to meekness, humility, and a forgiving spirit. As for the psychological nature of it, it is anti-rationalistic in that it has its origin, not in reason, but in the altruistic passions of pity, compassion, and sympathy for others.[19]

Blanchard believes that Steele's underlying premise is fundamentally anti-rationalistic because (1) he believes that the emotions, not reason, motivate man to virtues--indeed, man's natural benevolism, such as he has, originates in the altruistic emotions of pity and compassion; and (2) he believes that revelation must provide the standard of morality, not reason; i.e., morality must have supernatural sanctions. After analyzing Steele's views on the status of women, stage reform,

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[17] These quotations within Blanchard's thesis come from Steele's The Christian Hero.

[18] Diss., "Steele as a Moralist," pp. 196-97.

[19] Diss., "Steele as a Moralist," pp. 197-98.

and dueling, she concludes that his views on these subjects are consistent with his "anti-rationalistic bias."[20]

This study will show that Steele in his plays and essays argues for people to live a rational life. An analysis of Steele's rationalism hopefully will contribute to a further clarification of Steele's views. Although much of Blanchard's thesis can be accepted, her study which analyzes Steele's recognition of the non-rational part of man and which concludes that Steele is an anti-rationalist presents a picture of Steele's views that is too one-sided. To be sure, Blanchard's thesis acknowledges that Steele does pay some attention to the place of reason in human life: "As for reason, his distrust of it as an adequate ethical guide does not prevent his praise of rational virtue as the goal for human endeavor."[21] Sprinkled lightly throughout her thesis is a recognition that Steele did think that reason has a place in religion, in virtue, and in most of life's activities. What Blanchard passes over quickly needs more discussion, since, as this study will show, a more thorough discussion of Steele's views on the place of reason in one's life will show him to be a rationalist. It will not suggest that Steele worked out any systematic philosophy, but such views as are announced in his writings certainly give a much higher position to the rational element than Blanchard believes.

Of course, to say merely that Steele was a rationalist, without any modification, tells a reader very little for there were at least three rationalistic currents flowing at the time Steele was born.

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[20] Diss., "Steele as a Moralist," pp. 196-97.

[21] Diss., "Steele as a Moralist," p. 60.

In order to identify more clearly Steele's rationalism, these three currents will be discussed in Chapter II of this thesis. For now, only Steele's rationalism will be defined. It is composed of two parts. Steele believed, in the first part, that reason, a discursive action of the understanding on sense experience, can establish that God is and that the Bible is His revelation, a revelation which men need. In the second part, which grows out of the first part, Steele believed that each person must personally choose to accept Christianity; and personal choice should be the only basis on which he does. These two principles will be referred to in this thesis as "Christian rationalism." Indeed, an analysis of Steele's writings, expressed in his periodical essays and plays, shows that two principles of which his theological rationalism is one manifestation undergird his criticism of life. What one does and believes in life, his manners, his vocation, his aesthetics, his politics, and his economics, should be the issue of a personal choice, made on the basis of reason.

Steele's insistence that men's private judgments, that is private reason, ought to provide the foundation of their lives did not keep him from urging the consensus of good men as a kind of authority. Often in the Neo-classic age "reason" referred to this consensus, rather than to private judgment. Addison, for example, argues that a reasonable man ought to assent to notions that have been established by the wise of all ages:

> If none of these Reflections can have any Influence on them, there is one that perhaps may; because it is adapted to their Vanity, by which they seem to be guided much more than their Reason. I would therefore have them consider that the wisest and best of Men in all Ages of the World, have been those who lived up to the Religion of their Country, when they saw

> nothing in it opposite to Morality, and to the best Lights they had of the divine Nature.[22]

And, Hughes feels comfortable in that he has the consensus of wise men as well as revelation to sanction his belief in the immortality of the soul:

> It is a very great Satisfaction to consider the best and wisest of Mankind in all Nations and Ages asserting, as with one Voice, this [an immortal soul] their Birthright, and to find it ratify'd by an express Revelation (Spec. 210).

Indeed, according to Daniel McDonald, although "the sacred writings were, for Addison, a major source of wise authority . . . [he] rarely urged pure faith upon his readers. Biblical authority rarely stood alone."[23] McDonald further suggests that "Again and again, Addison found that he could support Christian doctrine by citing the authority of Greece and Rome."[24]

Molière, in his Le Misanthrope has Alceste appeal to this consensus of the sages. Discussing his lawsuit with Philinte, Alceste strongly believes in the justice of his side; in fact, if the court rules against him, he will forever know that

> Les hommes auront assez d'effronterie,
> Seront assez méchants, scélérats et pervers
> Pour me faire injustice aux yeux de l'universe.[25]

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[22] Donald Bond, ed., The Spectator (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), 5 vols. Hereafter citations from The Spectator will come from this edition and will be noted parenthetically within text by paper number.

[23] Diss., "Addison," p. 44.

[24] Diss., "Addison," p. 44.

[25] Le Misanthrope, in Théâtre Choisi de Molière, ed., Maurice Rat (Paris: Garnier, N.D.), p. 264. Hereafter this source will be cited parenthetically by page number.

In other words, the universe would support Alceste's side. By "universe" Molière seems to mean reason. After Philinte had urged Alceste "donnez au procès une part de vos soins," Alceste replies, "Je n'en donnerai point, c'est une chose dite." Philinte asks, "Mais qui voulez-vous donc qui pour vous sollicite?" Alceste quickly responds: "La raison, mon bon droit, l'équité" (p. 263). Later, after Alceste has lost his case, he decides that his generation is vile. He finds it difficult to believe that the courts ruled against him.

> Quoi! Contre ma partie on voit tout à la fois
> L'honneur, la probité, la pudeur et les lois

he cries. Furthermore, "on public en tous lieux l'équité de ma cause" (p. 311).

Then, in another passage, Alceste chides Philinte for being hypocritical in his show of friendship to those he [Philinte] did not really like. Alceste concludes:

> Une telle action ne saurait s'excuser,
> Et tout homme d'honneur s'en doit scandaliser (p. 257).

Alceste often does appeal to some vague standard which has become a part of the universe, which he calls "reason," "justice," and "right" and to which all men of honor will concur.

However, although Steele stresses, with almost tedious consistency, that every person ought to live a life that is the sum of one's personal choices, he has no hesitancy in recommending to one's choice the conclusions and judgments of past wise men. For example, Steele argues that one should forgive an insult instead of fighting a duel because "in a Nation where Forgiveness of Injuries is taught as the greatest Perfection to which the Soul of Man can arrive, it is ridiculous and absurd to make it consist in

profess'd Impatience of them."[26] Here Steele seems to suggest that what has been taught and generally believed by the English people ought to be listened to. In another periodical Steele probably alludes to the authority of consensus. Criticizing the impudent, those who will do anything to "carry a point," Steele says that they are willing to take "Steps in Defiance of Truth." And in defying the truth they act against "right Reason and bear the looks of reasonable men."[27] Reasonable men look askance at the "Impudents" because they act in harmony with "right Reason" and are perplexed that others do not. Right reason, in fact, is one aspect of common sense, Steele asserts:

> There are some Things which cannot come under certain Rules, but which one would think would not need them. Of this Kind are outward Civilties and Salutations. These one would imagine might be regulated by every Man's common Sense, without the help of an instructor, but that which we call common Sense suffers under that Word; for it sometimes implies no more than that Faculty which is common to all Men, but sometimes signifies right Reason, and what all Men should consent to. In this latter Acceptation of the Phrase, it is no great Wonder People err so much against it, since it is not everyone who is possessed of it, and there are fewer who against common Rules and Fashions, dare obey its Dictates (Eng. I, No. 10, p. 44).

I do not know that Steele clearly shows how people might possess "right Reason." Furthermore, it is likely that even when Steele sometimes did appeal to the consensus gentium as authority for certain beliefs and practices, he usually meant that the consensus opinion was reinforcement,

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[26] "The Antidote," in Tracts and Pamphlets, ed., Rae Blanchard (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1944), p. 515. Hereafter passages from this edition by Blanchard will be cited parenthetically within the text, using the abbreviation for the tract or pamphlet title and TP for the title of Blanchard's volume. Page number will also be given.

[27] The Englishman, ed., Rae Blanchard (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1958), First Series, paper No. 10, p. 44. Hereafter Englishman references will be cited parenthetically in the text by series, number, and page of this edition.

that the consensus opinion, while it ought to influence one, still had to be validated by one's private judgment. In The Englishman passage criticizing "Impudence," Steele says that the "Impudent" act against the "Truth" or against "right Reason." However, later in the passage Steele cited as an example of "impudence" the lynching of Socrates in which men "consulted not their own Bosoms, but other men's Faces for a Judgement of their actions" (I, 10, p. 44).

At any rate, in reading Steele's criticism of English life and society, one cannot ignore his persistent reliance on man's potential to reflect in his own mind and upon the basis of personal reflection make a decision. Steele's views can be grouped as follows: his religious views, his view of man's nature, his criticism of manners, and his views about the political economy. These four classifications will make up Chapters III through VI, respectively. Chapter II will present the rationalistic milieu during Steele's lifetime and define Anglican rationalism, to which Steele was indebted for his theological rationalism.

CHAPTER II

ANGLICAN RATIONALISM

Steele was committed to the Christian religion. In his The Christian Hero (1701) he explained on his title page that this was "an argument proving that no principles but those of religion are sufficient to make a great man."[1] To Steele, only Christianity can furnish the motivation of reward in heaven. The Christian Hero cites a few examples of famous classical heathen whose lives were both less virtuous and less confident than the lives of such Christian heroes as Paul.

To say that Steele was committed to the Christian religion is hardly sufficient to define his religious views because of the religious divisions that existed during his lifetime among those who claimed to be followers of Christianity. Briefly, within the large community of English people who included themselves with the Christian church, there were three major divisions: the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, and the dissenting bodies. The seventeenth century saw the Anglican Church torn with division; this body included such divergent views as the High Church position of Archbishop Laud and

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[1] ed., Rae Blanchard (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1932). Hereafter all references to The Christian Hero will be taken from this edition and cited parenthetically by the abbreviation CH and page number.

the extreme Low Church views of Calvinist Puritans.[2] Out of the religious controversy of the seventeenth century grew a body of principles called "Latitudinarianism." The Latitudinarians were notable for at least two broad principles, toleration and the use of reason in religion. Toleration, according to the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, was advocated by divines such as William Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor, and the Latitudinarians.[3] The Latitudinarians expressed this toleration in two ways. One expression was their willingness to leave undisturbed those whose faith differed from their own.[4] The other expression was that the Latitudinarians sought to comprehend as many

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[2] Godfrey Davies, The Early Stuarts, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 69-70. Davies discusses the struggle during 1603-1640, between Puritan ministers and those who favored episcopal church government. Both groups sought to impose their view of institutional pattern on the Church of England. For example, "Hitherto many puritan [sic] ministers had dispensed with such ritual and parts of the Prayer Book as were objectionable to them. The nature of the scruples is revealed in a petition usually called the Millenary Petition (1602) because its authors claimed that it expressed the views of more than a thousand ministers. In studiously moderate language it urged that some practices should be abolished, as the sign of the cross in baptism, or the ring in marriage, and that others should be left optional, as the cap and surplice. These demands were debated in the Hampton Court conference (1604) when James presided over the disputation between the heads of the church and four Puritans. The arguments of the latter completely failed to convince the king, who roughly told them that he would make them conform to existing usage or "harry them out of the land." However, Davis points out (p. 73) that the Puritans continued to attack the established position. They exploited the people's dislike for the bishop's "enjoyment of high public offices and engrossment of the royal confidence, which Clarendon says 'exposed them to the universal envy of the whole nobility.' Puritans were not slow to point out the inconsistency in the claim of the clergy to the exclusive control of matters of religion, when they were themselves simultaneously taking a leading part in directing the national policy."

[3] "Toleration," Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed., F. L. Cross (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963), p. 1365.

[4] "Toleration," p. 1365.

Englishmen as possible within the Church of England, regardless of theological differences. Tillotson, for example, as Archbishop of Canterbury, established his policy on two premises, "hatred of the Roman Catholic Church and a desire to include all Protestant dissenters other than Unitarians in the Church of England."[5]

The other principle for which the Latitudinarians were notable was their insistence that the Christian religion rests on a reasonable foundation, that is, they believed that Christianity could be verifiable by the use of reason. Gerald Cragg points out that "The relation of faith to reason was an intensely important issue in the seventeenth century." There were forces, Cragg says, "at work in the intellectual world which insisted that the two be kept apart."[6] The Latitudinarians insisted that they be kept together. The Latitudinarians certainly were not the first to make reason a foundation of faith. In the Anglican Church, the venerable Richard Hooker, in his Elizabethan defense of the established church against the inroads of Puritanism, appealed to reason as a foundation for revealed religion. Then, during the middle of the seventeenth century the Cambridge Platonists attempted to set revealed religion on a foundation of philosophical rationalism.

However, the attempt to reconcile reason and faith reached a peak with the work of the Latitudinarians. Although their movement did not remain prominent long in English theological thought, Philip Harth says

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[5] "Tillotson, John," Oxford Dict., ed., Cross, p. 1359. This work ("Stillingfleet, Edward," pp. 1392-3) also points out that Stillingfleet's first book, The Irenicum (1659), advocated a union between Episcopalians and Presbyterians.

[6] Gerald R. Cragg, The Cambridge Platonists (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), p. 16.

that "if success be measured by widespread influence, the Latitudinarians could claim to have achieved it to an extraordinary degree." Harth continues, "The echoes of their teaching were heard in many a country pulpit, and all over England the grandeurs of Christianity were reduced to the modest proposals of prudential ethics."[7]

In this study, "Latitudinarianism" will be used interchangeably with "Anglican rationalism." John R.H. Moorman says:

> The name originally applied to the Cambridge Platonists was 'Latitudemen' or 'Latitudinarians;' but this was later transferred to the school of liberal rationalistic men who succeeded them in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Men like Joseph Glanville, Simon Patrick, Edward Stillingfleet, John Tillotson.[8]

When this study mentions the Anglican rationalists, it will mean Glanville, Patrick, Stillingfleet, and Tillotson. Harth says that their use of reason in defending the Church of England became their chief characteristic:

> Their continual emphasis upon the importance of reason in religion as a means of defending the Church of England against the Puritans and other antagonists . . . became the special characteristic by which the Anglican rationalists were recognized by both friend and foe alike.[9]

Richard Steele indicates that he held Latitudinarian views: "These Low Churchmen, Mr. Pasquin, have brought the Roundhead to act like a reasonable man. . . . This Low Temper of mind is the natural effect of a True Sense of Religion. . . ."[10] The Low Church, he boasts,

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[7] Philip Harth, Swift and Anglican Rationalism (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 59-60.

[8] John R. H. Moorman, History of the Church in England (New York: Morehouse Barlow Co., 1967), p. 255.

[9] Harth, Swift and Ang. Rat., p. 30.

[10] In Tatlers, 129 and 187, appear two letters from

is the "means that the Church of England is in greater purity of Worship than any other, that the subject has greater liberty than in any Republick, and the Monarchy [of England] an higher Glory than. . . ."[11] It will be useful then to identify the rationalism of the Latitudinarians and to lay Steele's views on the relation of reason to faith alongside. First, however, the rationalism of the Latitudinarians can perhaps be more clearly identified if seen in relation to three currents of rationalism flowing at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

One current was philosophical rationalism, or as Thomas Whittaker calls it, "Contenental rationalism."[12] Making a contrast between English experimentalism and Contenental rationalism, Whittaker implies that the latter--of which Descartes is the father--emphasizes reason as the revealer of new truths:

> The new aspiration for firm knowledge, instead of barren disputes about insoluble questions, culminated for the time in the philosophical reforms of Bacon and Descartes. . . . Bacon not only clothed in the most impressive language the appeal to experience as the test by which every claim to possess real knowledge must be verified, but also developed some genuine outlines of a theory of induction, no longer

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"Pasquin of Rome to Isaac Bickerstaff of Great Britain." Steele printed these letters without comment except to indicate his satisfaction with the correspondence and to explain the name Pasquin. Pasquin, the reader learns, is a "maimed statue so called, on which the private scandal of that city [Rome] is generally posted" (No. 130). This citation and all citations of The Tatler will come from The Tatler, ed., G.A. Aitken (London, Hadley & Matthews; 1899), 4 vols. References will appear in parenthesis by paper number only.

[11] "Bickerstaff to Pasquin," TP, p. 633. Steele's manuscript breaks off here.

[12] "Reason," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed., James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), X, 596.

> unsystematic, but rising by stages from particulars to generals, as deduction descends from generals to particulars. Descartes, himself a discoverer in geometry, set against the sterile formalism of mere logic, which could only bring out what had been implicitly asserted, the real mathematical sciences. Thus began the two great movements in philosophy known as English experimentalism and Contenental rationalism.[13]

The Cambridge Platonists, in arguing for a philosophical basis for Christianity, were close to Descartes' epistemology. In discussing their rationalism, I will use the statements of Henry More and Ralph Cudworth, who will be considered as representatives of the Cambridge Platonists' views on the relation of reason to faith. Both of these men concentrated on attacking atheism; so this discussion of their views will be largely confined to their proof that God exists.

To a large degree, the question "How does one know that God exists?" is answered when a larger question is answered, "How does one know anything?" Consequently, More's and Cudworth's defense of God's existence involved them in epistemology. More argues that the mind possesses innate knowledge. Arguing that man is not born with a soul like a blank "Table-book," i.e., "Abrasa Tabula," he believes that

> the mind of man, more free [than being simply the passive recipient of sense impression], and better exercized in the close observations and nature, cannot but discover that there is an active and actuall knowledge in a man, of which these outward objects are rather the re-minders than the first begetters or implanters.[14]

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[13] "Reason," pp. 595-96.

[14] Henry More, "An Antidote Against Atheism," in The Philosophical Writings of Henry More, ed., Flora Isabel Mackinnon (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1925), Ch. V, par. 2, p. 14. Hereafter, More will be cited as Writings; More's division will be indicated, capital Roman numeral for chapter and a small Arabic numeral for paragraph. Then page number of this edition will be given.

However, More does not mean by "actuall knowledge" that

> there is a certain number of ideas flaring and skimming to the Admimadversive Faculty, like so many Torches or Starres in the Firmament to our outward sights . . . but . . . an active sagacity in the Soul, or quick recollection, as it were, whereby some small businesses being hinted unto her, she runs out presently into a more clear and larger conception.[15]

Some examples of this innate knowledge, cited by More, are the idea of a perfect circle, the angles of any triangle equal two right angles.[16] More also believes that "There are a multitude of Relative Notions in the Mind of Man . . . that cannot be the Impresses of any material Object from without. . . ."[17] Examples of these relative ideas are: "Cause, Effect, Whole and Part, Like and Unlike. . . ."[18] Finally, he thinks that there are

> also severall complex Notions in the same, such as these, The Whole is bigger than the Part; If you take Equall from Equall, the Remainders are Equall; Every Number is either Even or Odde; which are true of the Soul at the very first proposal, as any one that is in his wits does plainly perceive.[19]

From this More established the existence of God. First, he suggests that the idea of a "Being absolutely Perfect" is "as Natural, necessary and essential to the Soul of Man, as any other Notion or Idea whatsoever, and is no more arbitrarious or fictitious than the Notion of a Cube or Tetredrum, or any other of the Regular Bodies in

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[15] Writings, V, 2; p. 14.

[16] Writings, VI, 2; p. 16.

[17] Writings, VI, 2; p. 16.

[18] Writings, VI, 3; p. 16.

[19] Writings VI, 6; p. 17.

Geometry. . . ."[20] Next, he argues that the idea of God necessarily implies his existence:

> For this Idea of God being no arbitrarious Figment taken up at pleasure, but the necessary and natural Emanation of the Minde of Man, if it signifies to us that the Notion and Nature of God implies in it Necessary Existence . . . unless we will wink against our own natural Light, we are without further Scruple to acknowledge that God does exist.[21]

Other religious notions that, according to More, "stick very close to mans Nature" are:

> Natural remorse of conscience, and a fear and disturbance from the committing of such things as notwithstanding are not punishable by men, as also a Natural hope, of being prosperous and successfull in doing those things which are conceived by us to be good and righteous; and lastly, Religious Veneration, or Divine Worship; all of which are fruits unforcedly and easily growing out of the Nature of man. . . .[22]

Ralph Cudworth also chose to attack the atheists. He dismisses the "sottish conceit of these atheists" who do not attend to "their own cogitations," and who affirm "that not only sense, but also knowledge and understanding of men, is but a tumult, raised from corporeal things without, pressing upon the organs of their body"; or who affirm, more distinctly that knowledge is "nothing but the activity of sensible objects upon them, and their passion from them."[23] On the contrary,

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[20] Writings, VII, 5; p. 19.

[21] Writings, VIII, 1; p. 21.

[22] Writings, X, 1; p. 30.

[23] Ralph Cudworth, The True Intellectual System of the Universe, Wherein All the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is Confuted and Its Impossibility Demonstrated. With a Discourse Concerning the True Notion of the Lord's Supper and Two Sermons on I John 2:3,4 and I Cor. 15:57, ed., Thomas Birch (New York: Gould and Newman, 1938), p. 152. Cudworth's division of True Int. System, Chapter V, section 1, hereafter cited with a capital Roman numeral and an Arabic numeral. Page number of this edition given last.

Cudworth attempts to confute "This atheistic doctrine," by demonstrating "The existence of God, or a mind before the world, from the Nature of knowledge and understanding."[24] In the first place, there are within man's mind "universal" conceptions about the nature of things:

> . . . besides the phantasms of singular bodies, or of sensible things existing within us . . . it is plain, that our human mind hath other cogitations or conceptions in it; namely the ideas of intelligible natures and essences of things, which are universal, and by which and under which it understands singulars.[25]

In this way man understands anything, not by inductive reasoning, but by deductive:

> Wherefore the knowledge of the universal idea of a triangle by which one understands any single triangle, and the like truths, is not derived from singulars, nor do we arrive to them in way of ascent from singulars to universals, but, on the contrary, having first found them in the universals, we afterward descending, apply them to singulars; so that our knowledge here is not after singular bodies, and secondarily or derivatively from them, but in order of nature before them, and proleptical to them.[26]

Hence, according to Cudworth, universals are not received through sense experience.

But Cudworth seeks to strengthen his argument that these universal notions are not lodged in the mind from the senses. He says that some of them are abstract "as life, sense, reason, knowledge, and the like"; others "are of such things, whose singulars do not fall at all under sense; which therefore could never possibly be impressed upon us from

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[24] True Int. System, V, 1; p. 152.

[25] True Int. System, V, 1; p. 152.

[26] True Int. System, V, 1; p. 153.

singular bodies by local motion." And still others that seem to belong

> to corporeal and sensible things, yet, as their accuracy cannot be reached to by sense, so neither did they ever exist in that matter of this lower, which here encompasseth us, and therefore could not be stamped upon us from without. . . .[27]

Cudworth concludes: The human mind therefore hath a power of framing ideas and conceptions, not only of what actually is, but also of things which never were, nor perhaps will be, they being only possible to be."[28] The existence of this power, Cudworth says, implicitly supposes this existence of a God or omnipotent being thereby, which can make whatever is conceivable. . . ."[29] Cudworth, here, is not making the Cartesian ontological argument that man's idea of God necessarily implies his existence. He is saying that if there is in man the idea of anything perfect, such as a perfectly straight line, though it does not exist on earth, or will it ever, yet its possibility, which even atheists will admit, necessitates a power capable of creating it.

Moreover, the only way to account for the "universal conceptions," since they do not come from sense perception, must come from some other source, which is

> Certainly no other than this, that the first original knowledge is that of a perfect being, infinitely good and powerful, comprehending itself, and the utmost extent of its own fecundity and power, that is, the possibility of all things; their ideas, with their several relations to one another; all necessary and immutable truths. Here, therefore, is there a knowledge before the world and all sensible things, that was archetypal and paradigmatical to the same. Of which one perfect mind and knowledge all other imperfect minds (being derived from it)

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[27] True Int. System, V, 1; p. 154.

[28] True Int. System, V, 1; p. 154.

[29] True Int. System, V, 1; p. 154.

> have a certain participation; whereby they are enabled to frame intelligible ideas, not only of whatsoever doth actually exist, but also of such things as never were nor will be, but are only possible, or objects of Divine power.[30]

One can conclude that these men, in proving the existence of God, relied heavily on a priori reasoning. To them reason was a sort of intellectual inspiration. They were as close as one could be in using pure reason to prove God's existence. Possibly, this is the purest form of theological rationalism. However, it seems somewhat ironical that these men strove so fervently to provide a rational basis for religion, and were critical of the antirationalism of the "Enthusiasts," who believed in an immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit to validate God's existence and the authenticity of the Christian religion; yet, these men advocated a kind of divine intellectual light that can operate independent of sense experience to provide knowledge of natural theology.

Another kind of rationalism, which might be called "mechanic rationalism," located at the opposite end of the epistemological spectrum, is represented by Hobbes. Hobbes is at the opposite end because he believed that man's knowledge is only the sum of his sense experiences. Man must begin with simple thoughts, which are retained in the memory, but whose original is "that which we call Sense, (for there is no conception in a man's mind which hath not a first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of Sense."[31] Next, one can move

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[30] True Int. System, V, 1; p. 155.

[31] Leviathan, Introduction by A. D. Lindsay, new Am. Everyman edition (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1950); Hobbes' division, Part I, Chapter 1, indicated by capital Roman numeral and Arabic numeral.

from one thought to another--this movement Hobbes called "Mental Discourse," but he has "no Transition from one Imagination to another, where of [he] never had the like before in [his] Senses."[32] Thus, in mental discourse, one is limited by his memory, where all sense impressions are stored.

The next step is man's use of speech, which is used to transfer "our Mental Discourse into Verbal, or the Trayne of our Thoughts into a Trayne of Words." Hobbes suggests two reasons for doing this. One is that man needs to record consequences of his thoughts because they easily slip out of the memory; the other is that words provide a short cut to communication.[33]

Finally, Hobbes grants men the faculty of reason, by which he means

> nothing but Reckoning (that is, Adding and Subtracting) of the Consequences of generall names agreed upon for the marking and signifying of our thoughts . . . marking them when we reckon by ourselves; and signifying when we demonstrate or approve our reckonings to other men.[34]

Reason, he says, is not born with us, as sense and memory are, nor is it gotten by experience as prudence is; but it is gained by industry. First, one must aptly impose names; second,

> he must get a good and orderly method, in proceeding from the elements, which are names, to assertions made connexions of one of them to another; and so to syllogisms, which are the connexions of one assertion to another, till we come to a knowledge of all the consequences of names appertaining to the subject at hand; and that is in, men call science.[35]

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[32] Leviathan, I, 3.

[33] Leviathan, I, 4.

[34] Leviathan, I, 5.

[35] Leviathan, I, 5.

Although Hobbes thought that most men could reason a little, "as in numbering to some degree," it served them little "in common life."[36]

On the basis of this epistemology Hobbes rejects a rational basis for revealed religion. Seemingly, he does not reject revealed religion; he says that one must accept it by faith only. However, men can naturally know that some laws are valid; these Hobbes calls "Natural Laws," which "have been laws from all eternity, and called not only natural, but also moral laws, consisting in the moral virtues; as justice, equity, and all habits of the mind that conduce to peace and charity. . . ."[37] Still, one must not conclude that Hobbes believed in some abstract standard which men would understand came from God, but he believed in pragmatic rules, discovered by human experience to be necessary for survival:

> And consequently all men agree on this, that Peace is Good, and Therefore also the way, or means of Peace, which (as I have showed before) are Justice, Gratitude, Modesty, Equity, Mercy, and the rest of the Laws of Nature, are good; that is to say Morall Virtues, and their contrarie Vices, Evill. . . . These dictates of Reason, men use to call by the name of Lawes, but improperly: for they are but the conclusions, of Theoremes concerning which conduceth to the conservation and defence of themselves. . . .[38]

The other kind of laws, Hobbes says, is positive law, made "by the will of those that have the sovereign powers over others."[39] Divine

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[36] Leviathan, I, 5.

[37] Leviathan, II, 26.

[38] Leviathan, I, 15.

[39] Leviathan, II, 26.

"positive laws . . . are those which being the commandments of God, not from all eternity, nor universally addressed to all men, but only to a certain people or to certain persons by those whom God hath authorized to declare them."[40] But how, Hobbes asks, can people "without supernatural revelation be assured of the revelation received by the declarer?"[41] Hobbes concludes: "No man can infallibly know by natural reason that another has had a supernatural revelation of God's will, but only a belief. . . ."[42] Furthermore, Hobbes, in answer to the question, "How can one be bound to obey God's revelation of positive divine laws without being assured by natural reason that it is God's will?", says: "In all things not contrary to the moral law . . . all subjects are bound to obey that for divine law which is declared to be so by the laws of the Commonwealth."[43] Hobbes adds that one had only to obey these laws, not believe them.

The third kind of rationalism is represented by John Locke. Although he accepted revelation he did not agree with the theological rationalism of the Cambridge Platonists. Locke believed that knowledge resulted from the action of the reason, a discursive faculty, on sense experience. He did not accept innate knowledge. Yet, he did not agree with Hobbes' contention that God's existence could not be proved. To be sure, Locke believed that one could know that God existed the same way one knows any complex idea.

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[40] Leviathan, II, 26.

[41] Leviathan, II, 26.

[42] Leviathan, II, 26.

[43] Leviathan, II, 26.

Locke believed that all ideas come from sensation or reflection. "Let us then suppose," he writes, "the Mind to be, as we say, white Paper, void of all Characters. . . . How comes it to be furnished? . . . Whence has it all the Materials of Reason and Knowledge?" The materials, he believes, come wholly from "Experience."[44] By "Experinece" Locke means that "Our Senses, conversant about particular sensible Objects, do convey into the mind several distinct Perceptions of Things, according to those various Ways wherein those Objects do affect them." By "experience" he also means "the other Fountain from which Experience furnisheth the Understanding with Ideas is,--the Perception of the Operations of our own Minds within us, as it is employ'd about the Ideas it has got. . . ." Locke means such ideas as "Perception, Thinking, Doubting, Believing, Reasoning, Knowing, Willing and all the different Actions of our Minds."[45] However, the senses, he suggests, provide the mind, or understanding, with "most of the ideas we have."[46]

As the understanding receives simple ideas, it is "only passive," says Locke.[47] However, from this point, a faculty of the mind acts on the material received by the senses or by reflection. This part of the

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[44] John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Ninth edition (London: Printed by T. W. for A. Churchill and Edm. Parker at the Bible and Crown in Lombard Street, 1726), I, 67; Locke's division, Book II, Chap. I, Section 1. Hereafter, citations from Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, will come from this edition and will use the following abbreviations: Human Understanding; Locke's division or Book in capital Roman numerals, chapter in small Roman numerals, sections in Arabic numerals; page number of this edition given in Arabic numerals.

[45] Human Understanding, I, i, 4; p. 68.

[46] Human Understanding, I, i, 3; p. 68.

[47] Human Understanding, II, xii, 1; p. 123.

mind Locke calls "the discursive Faculty," and the activity of the "discursive Faculty" he calls "the use of reason."[48] One uses this "discursive Faculty" to form complex ideas out of simple ideas:

> The Acts of the Mind, wherein it exerts its Power over its simple Ideas, are chiefly these three: 1. Combining several Ideas into one compound one; and thus all complex Ideas are made. 2. The second is bringing two Ideas, whether simple or complex, together, and setting them by one another, so as to take a View of them by one another, without uniting them into one; by which Way it gets all its Ideas of Relations. The third is separating them from all other Ideas that accompany them in their real existence; that is called Abstraction: and thus all its general Ideas are made.[49]

Although the reason is limited to material received by sense or reflection, it has "great Power in varying and multiplying the Objects of its thoughts, infinitely beyond what Sensation or Reflection furnished it with. . . ."[50] In other words, thinking is a voluntary act of the mind.

In the realm of religion, man can know by reason that God exists and that He has provided man with a supernatural revelation. That God exists Locke judges to be "the most obvious Truth that Reason discovers . . . and its Evidence be (if I mistake not) equal to mathematical certainty. . . ."[51] Locke thinks that in order to know, i.e., be "certain that there is a God," one need "go no further than" himself and "that undoubted Knowledge" he has of his own existence.[52]

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[48] Human Understanding, I, ii, 15-16; p. 19.

[49] Human Understanding, II, xii, 1; p. 124.

[50] Human Understanding, II, xii, 2; p. 124.

[51] Human Understanding, IV, x, 1; p. 239.

[52] Human Understanding, IV, x, 1; p. 239.

> Thus, from the Consideration of ourselves, and what we infallibly find in our own Constitution, our Reason leads us to the Knowledge of this certain and evident Truth, that there is an eternal, most powerful, and most knowing Being.[53]

Within his system, Locke can still accept supernatural revelation, although proving the Bible to be such a revelation probably was more difficult for him than proving God's existence. Locke believes that God's existence is proved by the creation:

> For I judge it as certain and clear a Truth, as can anywhere be delivered, that the invisible things of God are clearly seen from the Creation of the World, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and God-head.[54]

He defines faith as "The Assent to any proposition, not made out by the Deductions of Reason, but upon the Credit of the Proposer, as coming from God in some extraordinary way of Communication. This way of discovering Truths to Men we call Revelation."[55] However, he will not accept for revelation any doctrine that would "shake or over-rule plain Knowledge," nor would he "rationally prevail with any Man to admit it for true, in a direct Contradiction to the clear Evidence of his own Understanding. . . ."[56] Second, he will accept revelation only when it has been validated by his reason:

> But to those who pretend not to immediate Revelation, but are required to pay Obedience, and to receive Truths revealed to others, which by the Tradition of Writing, or Word of Mouth, are conveyed down to them, Reason has a great deal more to do, and is that only which can induce us to receive them.[57]

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[53] Human Understanding, IV, x, 6; p. 241.

[54] Human Understanding, IV, x, 7; p. 242.

[55] Human Understanding, IV, xviii, 2; p. 309.

[56] Human Understanding, IV, xviii, 5; p. 311.

[57] Human Understanding, IV, xviii, 6; p. 312.

So, for Locke, reason is after all the ultimate judge. Faith becomes an act of the reason: "Faith is nothing but a Firm Assent of the Mind; which if it be regulated, as is our Duty, cannot be afforded to any Thing, but upon good Reason, and so cannot be opposite to it."[58]

Locke's view makes heavy demands on people. If God has provided men with faculties whereby they can discover, receive, and retain truths, then men ought to think and know for themselves.

Although Latitudinarians, or Anglican rationalists, without doubt, were influenced by More and Cudworth, their views on the relation of faith and reason were probably closer to Locke than to the Cambridge Platonists.[59] Like Locke, the Latitudinarians believed that God's existence, and the moral laws could be established by the discursive action of the mind on sense experience. According to Philip Harth, Richard Hooker is the spiritual father of Latitudinarian rationalism. In his Elizabethan defense of the established church against the claims of Puritanism, Hooker turned to an exposition of the place of reason in religion. His exposition became the legacy of the Anglican

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[58] Human Understanding, IV, xvii, 24; p. 307.

[59] James Moffatt in The Golden Book of Tillotson (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971), pp. 31-32 of the Introduction, indicates that Archbishop Tillotson was closer to Locke's rationalism: "Christianity is reasonable religion: it reiterates and supplements the moral law; reason can discover the moral law, which is natural religion, and verify it in Scripture. And so on. This was indeed the principle of the Cambridge Platonists, who taught that human religion (i.e., the existence of God, the moral law, future rewards and punishments, and the immortality of the soul) and also the Christian truths so plainly expressed in the Bible. But their religious philosophy included a Divine inspiration in the soul; the presence of God in the reasoning mind was one of their spiritual dogmas, and with this Tillotson had small sympathy."

rationalists.[60] Harth believes that Catholic apologists had replaced Puritanism as the Anglicans' most formidable opponent after 1660, but that Anglican divines stayed near the ground laid out by Hooker.[61] John Tillotson's view of reason's relation to religion will be used as representative of the Anglican rationalism. First, he seems to have been the most influential Anglican preacher during the last part of the seventeenth century and first part of the eighteenth. James Downey says:

> It is almost impossible to exaggerate the influence of Tillotson upon eighteenth-century theology and preaching. 'His Commandments are not Grevious' was easily the most popular sermon in eighteenth-century England. . . . Tillotson's prudential ethic is ubiquitous not only in the homiletics of the eighteenth century but in the literature as well. Steele, Addison, Richardson, Fielding, Graves, Smollet, Sterne, and Goldsmith all imbibed it.[62]

Second, as Downey indicates, Steele was influenced by Tillotson. Although Steele expressed his general approval of Low Church divines, he singles out Archbishop Tillotson for commendation. The Spectator, after reading two or three paragraphs from a sermon on sincerity, comments: "I do not know that I ever read anything that pleased me more. . . ." Before making this observation the Spectator had explained that this sermon was the "first Sermon on the first Volume of the Late Arch-Bishops Posthumous Works" (No. 103). The archbishop was Tillotson.[63]

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[60] Harth, Swift and Anglican Rationalism, p. 29. In the following exposition of Hooker's relationship to the Latitudinarians and the exposition of Latitudinarian theology, I am deeply indebted to Harth.

[61] Swift and Ang. Rat., p. 35.

[62] The Eighteenth Century Pulpit (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 15-16.

[63] Bond, Spec., I, 430, N. 1, explains that Tillotson's sermon was entitled "Of Sincerity Towards God and Man."

In a later Spectator paper, also discussing sincerity, Steele simply lifts a portion of Tillotson's sermon and uses it for three-fourths of his paper (No. 352).[64]

In discussing the religious views of the Latitudinarians, Hooker will, then, be used as a frame of reference since they were his spiritual descendents. Furthermore, a comparison between Latitudinarian arguments and Hooker's will show wherein they departed from Hooker, going beyond him in their claims as to what reason can do.

According to Hooker, reason can do three things: (1) enable man to know many things about God's nature and one's moral duty without revelation; (2) establish the motives of credibility; (3) enable one to interpret the scriptures.

To show that the Christian religion is grounded on reason, Hooker begins with reason's ability to determine God's existence and His moral laws:

> First, Concerning the inability of reason to search out and to judge of things divine, if they be such as those properties of God and those duties of men towards him, which may be conceived by attentive consideration of heaven and earth; we know that of mere natural men the Apostle testifieth, how they both knew God, and the Law of God.[65]

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[64] A study of Tillotson's literary reputation has been made by Louis G. Locke, Tillotson: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Literature (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1954), Chapter IV, "His Literary Reputation in Eighteenth-Century Textbooks;" Chapter V, "The Reputation of Tillotson in Eighteenth-Century Periodicals." This is Volume 4 of Anglistica.

[65] Richard Hooker, The Works of That Learned and Judicious Mr. Richard Hooker With An Account of His Life and Death by Isaac Walton, arranged by John Keble; Seventh ed., Rev. by R. W. Church and F. Paget (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888). Hooker's division, Book III, Chapter viii, par. 6. Vol. 1; p. 367. Hereafter, citations from Hooker will be indicated by Hooker followed by Hooker's division; capital Roman numeral will indicate book number, small Roman numeral will indicate chapter number, arabic numeral will indicate paragraph number. The page number of this edition will then be given.

Likewise in the latter half of the seventeenth century Archbishop Tillotson argues that men can naturally know of God's existence, His attributes, and the immortality of the human soul, i.e., the ingredients of natural religion, generally accepted by all men:

> If by Religion be meant the Belief of the principles of Religion, that there is a God, and a providence, that our souls are immortal, and that there are rewards to be expected after this life; these are so far from being singular opinions, that they are and always have been the general notions of mankind, even of the most barbarous Nations.[66]

How does one account for the presence of these general notions of mankind? Fear, Hobbes replies. But Tillotson declares that God's existence can be proved. Although he grants that God's existence cannot be established immediately by sense evidence--because God is a Spirit:

> Yet we have as great assurance that there is a God as the nature of the thing to be proved is capable of, as we could in reason expect to have, supposing that he was. For let us suppose that there was such a Being as an Infinite Spirit, cloathed with all possible perfection, that is as good and wise and powerful, etc. as can be imagined: what conceivable ways are there whereby we should come to be assured that there is such a Being? but either by an internal impression of the notion of a God upon our minds; or else by such external and visible effects as our Reason tells us must be attributed to some cause.[67]

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[66] The Works of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson, Late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury: Containing Fifty Four Sermons and Discourses on Several Occasions. Together With the Rule of Faith, Seventh Edition (London: Printed for T. Goodwin, B. Tooke, and J. Pemberton, in Fleetwood; J. Nicholson in Little-Britain; and J. Tonson in the Strand, 1724), Sermon I, "The Wisdom of Being Religious," p. 28. In quotations from this volume, I have made one change in spelling: the round "s" has been substituted for the long "s." Hereafter, citations from this volume will be indicated as Tillotson followed by the Sermon number and title. Abbreviations in the sermon titles will be used after the first citation of that sermon. Then the page number of this edition will be given.

[67] Tillotson, Sermon I, "Wisdom of Being Rel."; p. 21.

In this passage, one notes that Tillotson suggests that men may possess some innate notions. If he believed this it does not seem to have had much influence on his arguments. He seems to have emphasized the external creation providing evidence whereby the reason could deduce God's existence and attributes. In another sermon he wrote:

> The Creation is of all other works the most sensible and obvious Argument of a Deity. Other considerations may work upon our Reason and Understanding, but this doth as it were bring God down to our Senses. So often as we look up to Heaven, or down upon Earth; upon our selves, or into our selves; upon the things without us, and round about us: Which way soever we turn our eyes, we are encounter'd with plain evidence of a Supreme Being. . . .[68]

In still another sermon, he wrote that "the Creation is a demonstration of God's infinite Power. And this Consideration is apt to work upon our Fear. . . ." Furthermore, he argues, the "Creation is a demonstration of the Goodness of God to his Creatures."[69] Tillotson believed that natural religion was important:

> . . . All Religion is founded in right Notions of God, and of his Perfections: Insomuch that Divine Revelation it self does

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[68] Tillotson, Sermon LIV, "Concerning the Advantages of an Early Piety"; p. 639.

[69] Tillotson, Sermon LIV, "Con. Ad."; pp. 636-37. In Sermon XXI, "Of the Trial of Spirits," Tillotson, p. 224, Tillotson discusses "How we may discern between true and counterfeit Doctrines and Revelations?" This is to be done, he says, by an examination of each doctrine; "Reason is the faculty whereby Revelations are to be discerned. . . . For all Revelation from God Supposeth us to be Men, and to be indued with Reason; and therefore it does not creat new Faculties in us, but propounds new Objects to that Faculty which was in us before. Whatever Doctrines God reveals to Men are propounded to their Understandings, and by this Faculty we are to examine all Doctrines which pretend to be from God, and upon examination to judge whether there be reason to receive them as Divine, or reject them as Impostures." By "reason," then, Tillotson means a discursive faculty. He does not seem to make any provision for a faculty--called "reason" by the Cambridge Platonists--wherein one is endowed with some sort of Divine intellectual light.

> Suppose these for its Foundation, and can signify nothing to us unless these be first known and believed. For unless we be first firmly persuaded of the Providence of God, and of his particular care of Mankind, why should we suppose that he makes any Revelation of his will to us? . . . So that the Principles of Natural Religion are the foundation of that which is reveal'd.[70]

When the Anglican rationalists made the point that man can know many of his religious duties by reason alone, they often conceded so much to reason that they were accused of deism by some High Church Anglicans, such as William Sherlock, who viewed the Latitudinarians as "'Reasoning Apostates' who made common cause with deists and Socinians."[71] These Anglicans, Harth says, distrusted "any emphasis upon reason in matters of religion as a wedge by which deism, or as it was more commonly called during the Restoration period, 'Socinianism' might enter the church."[72] These Anglicans, Harth observes, dismissed natural religion as a legend "invented by the deists."[73] Dryden expresses, in his Religio Laici, that what men think is "discourse," or reasoning, is really revelation:

> Reveal'd Religion first inform'd thy Sight
> And Reason saw not, till Faith sprung the Light.
> Hence all thy Natural Worship takes the Source:
> 'Tis Revelation what those thinkst Discourse.
> (ll. 68-71)[74]

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[70] Tillotson, Sermon XLI, "A Thanksgiving Sermon for the Late Victory at Sea"; p. 485.

[71] Quoted by Harth, Swift and Ang. Rat., p. 31.

[72] Swift and Ang. Rat., p. 31.

[73] Swift and Ang. Rat., p. 31.

[74] Harth cites these lines from Dryden as an example of a High Church view; Swift and Ang. Rat., p. 31.

Often, scholars, writing on the history of ideas, have almost agreed with the High Church Anglicans: they have tended to blur any distinction between the deists and the Christian rationalists. Cragg, for example, refers to the "Latitudinarians balancing on the edge of Deism."[75] And J. H. Randall, although he grants that "the supernatural rationalists," of whom he mentions Locke, Tillotson, and Clarke, differ from the deists in that the former believe in revelation, he continually stresses the similarities between the beliefs of the two camps, almost implying that in reality there are few differences:

> In such a spirit Locke examined the New Testament, and there found set forth only two conditions of salvation: the belief that Jesus is the Messiah, and a righteous life. These two, faith and repentance, that is believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and a good life, are the indispensible conditions of the new covenant to be performed by all those who would obtain eternal life. Matthew Tindal, in the book Christianity as Old as The Creation, which remained the best statement of the radical position and earned the title of "The Deists' Bible," expresses precisely the same idea of natural religion.[76]

Sir Leslie Stephen reasons similarly. In his discussion of four Latitudinarian replies to Tindal's deistic book, Stephen claims that "two of the assailants are all but indistinguishable in their views from Tindal himself."[77]

While the Anglican rationalists held some common ground with the deists, to conclude or imply that they were deists is wrong. That they

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[75] Cragg, Reason and Authority, p. 25.

[76] The Making of the Modern Mind: A Survey of the Intellectual Background of the Present Age, Rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940), p. 228.

[77] English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, Third ed. (1879; rpt. New York: Peter Smith, 1949), I, 145.

were not deists will be clear when one compares Latitudinarianism with the views of such theological deists as John Toland and Matthew Tindal. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church offers the following comments on the nature of English deism:

> Among its precursors are P. Charron, J. Bodin (c. 1530-96); and esp. Lord Herbert of Cherbury . . . who in his De Veritate (1624) set out five truths common to all religions. J. Locke, though himself objecting to the title of 'Deist', also profoundly influenced subsequent developments through his Reasonableness of Christianity (1695). The classical exposition of Deism is J. Toland's Christianity not Mysterious (1696), which argues against revelation and supernatural altogether. S. Clarke, in his Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God (1704-6), distinguished four classes of Deists. For the first, God is only the Creator with no further interest in the world; the second admit a Divine Providence, but only in the material, not in the moral and spiritual order; the third believe in certain moral attributes of God, but not in a future life; and the fourth accept all the truths of natural religion including belief in a life to come, but reject revelation.[78]

The Anglican rationalists agreed with some of these tenets: their primary disagreement with most of the deists lay in their insistence that the Bible was the word of God.

The Anglican rationalists' spiritual mentor, Hooker, taught that a revelation was needed to do three things: (1) positively offer man an eternal reward; (2) reveal laws that would have been known with difficulty by reason only; (3) provide divine sanction for even those moral laws clearly revealed by the light of nature:

> The light of Nature is never able to find out any way of obtaining the reward of bliss, but by performing exactly the duties and works of righteousness.[79]

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[78] "Deism," p. 385.

[79] Hooker, I, xi, 5; I, 260-61.

> Neither is it vain that the Scripture aboundeth with so great store of laws in this kind: for they are either such as we ourselves could not easily have found out, and then the benefit is not small to have them readily set down to our hands; or if they be so clear and manifest that no man endued with reason can lightly be ignorant of them, yet the spirit as it were borrowing them from the school of nature, as serving to prove things less manifest. . . . Besides, be they plain of themselves or obscure, the evidence of God's own testimony added to the natural assent of reason concerning the certainty of them, doth not a little comfort and confirm the same.[80]

Tillotson argues similarly that men need Divine revelation. In the first place, only revelation provides men with proper motivation to do right. When men are persuaded that they shall continue eternally, he argues, they "cannot chuse but aspire after a happiness commensurate to their duration. . . ." Religion alone gives men "this hope"; and "the Christian Religion only can settle men in a firm and unshaken assurance of it."[81]

The question as to what constitutes proper motivation inducing men to practice virtue was important during the last part of the seventeenth and first part of the eighteenth centuries. Furthermore, the answer to this question identifies another difference between the Latitudinarians and the deists, at least deists like the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, who was unfriendly to the concept of rewards and punishments being meted out to men on the basis of their conduct. Shaftesbury concedes that "the Principle of Fear of future Punishment, and Hope of future Reward is yet in many Circumstances a great Advantage, Security,

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[80] Hooker, I, xii, 1; I, 262.

[81] Tillotson, Sermon IV, "The Advantages of Religion to Particular Persons"; p. 55.

and Support to Virtue."[82] However, Shaftesbury insists that

> neither this Fear or Hope can possibly be of the kind call'd good Affections, such are acknowledged the Springs and Sources of all Actions truly good. Nor can this Fear or Hope . . . consist in reality with Virtue or Goodness, if it either stands as essential to any moral Performance, or as a considerable Motive to any Act, of which some better Affection ought alone to have been a sufficient Cause.[83]

Part of the good affections that motivate one to practice virtue is the desire to imitate the "Deity" who is "understood to have, besides mere Power and Knowledg [sic], the highest Excellence of Nature, such as renders him justly amiable to All."[84] When man is too much motivated by the desire to obtain a reward, he is submitting to his less admirable affections, his self-interest, which reduces his piety.[85]

Latitudinarians, like Tillotson, agreed with Shaftesbury that men possess some innate benevolence, which serves to motivate them to do good, but they disagreed with his degradation of the reward/punishment principle. Tillotson regarded "the consideration of a future happiness and of those unspeakable and everlasting rewards which shall then be given to holiness and virtue" as "certainly the most powerful motive, and the most likely to prevail upon them."[86] Indeed, a future

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[82] Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, "Treatise IV: An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit," Characteristics, Fifth ed. (Birmingham: Printed by J. Baskerville, 1732), Book I, Part 3, Section 3; II, 60. Hereafter cited as "Inq. Con. Vir." Then Shaftesbury's divisions followed by volume and page number of this edition.

[83] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 3; I, 58.

[84] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 3; I, 56.

[85] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 3; I, 59.

[86] Tillotson, Sermon IV, "Adv. of Rel."; p. 55.

reward is "incomparably the greatest advantage that redounds to men by being religious. . . ." Any other motivation by comparison, Tillotson thinks, is "less than nothing and vanity."[87] Not only does the Christian religion offer men the greatest inducement to practice virtue, it also, he urges, "furnisheth us with the best motives and considerations to patience and contentedness under the evils and afflictions of this life"; in contrast, heathen philosophy, Tillotson believed, was unable to do this.[88]

In the second place, Tillotson believed that the Christian revelation was necessary to provide men with all doctrines necessary to salvation: "I observe hence the Necessity of the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures in order to our eternal Salvation. This is by our Saviour called the Key of Knowledge, that lets Men into the kingdom of Heaven."[89]

In the third place, he taught that the Christian revelation reinforced natural notions of religion. After quoting a passage from one of the prophets: "He hath showed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God," Tillotson concludes:

> This is the sum of the Natural Law. . . . And if we go over the Laws of Christianity, we shall find that, excepting a very few particulars, they enjoy the very same things; only they have made our duty more clear and certain.[90]

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[87] Tillotson, Sermon IV, "Adv. of Rel."; p. 55.

[88] Tillotson, Sermon V, "The Excellency of the Christian Religion"; p. 65.

[89] Tillotson, Sermon XXX, "The Necessity of the Knowledge of the Scriptures"; p. 350.

[90] Tillotson, Sermon VI, "The Precepts of Christianity Are Not Grievous"; p. 71.

Certainly, Tillotson argues, these natural laws, "have been esteem'd by some of the wisest among the Heathen"; but

> by reason of the degeneracy of the world, and of the obscurity and uncertainty of human reason, they never obtain'd to have the estimation and force of natural laws. So that we owe to Christianity the discovery of the most certain and perfect Rule of life that ever the world was acquainted with.[91]

However, that God has provided man with a revelation, which he needs, does not mean that man should no longer use his reason. Reason is still needed, Hooker believed, to do three things. First, reason must establish the motives of credibility. That is, one must be convinced that God is and that He is the author of the scriptures, which claim to be His revelation. Reason is responsible for both motives, or inducements to believe, since reason teaches men that God is, and men are induced to believe in the inspiration of the Bible on the basis of proof; in other words, reason verifies the Scriptures: "Scripture indeed teacheth things above nature, things which our reason by itself could not reach unto. Yet those things also we believe, knowing by reason that the Scripture is the word of God."[92] One believes the Gospel, according to Hooker,

> yet is reason of singular use, for that it confirmeth me in this my belief the more: if I do not as yet believe, nevertheless to bring me to the number of believers, except reason did somewhat help, and were an instrument which God doth use unto such purposes, what should it boot to dispute with infidels or godless persons for their conversion and persuasion in this point.[93]

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[91] Tillotson, Sermon V, "The Excellency of the Christian Religion"; p. 64.

[92] Hooker, III, viii, 12; I, 374-75.

[93] Hooker, III, viii, 14; I, 377.

Hence, Hooker objected to the view which argued that "if I believe the Gospel, there needeth no reasoning about it to persuade me; if I do not believe it must be the Spirit of God and not the reason of men that shall convert my heart unto him." This opinion, Hooker argues, implies that the "way to be ripe in faith were to be raw in wit and judgment; as if reason were an enemy to religion."[94]

Again the Latitudinarians followed Hooker. They taught that reason was to establish the motives of credibility. Reason can, and must, establish that God is and that the Scriptures are His revelation. As pointed out above, Tillotson used the design argument to establish God's existence and appealed to the light of nature to establish moral laws, i.e., natural religion. Harth points out that by using arguments from reason, the Anglican rationalists hoped that atheists by "an acceptance of natural religion" would be taking a "necessary first step toward embracing Christianity."[95]

Another thing man must be assured of is that the Bible is God's revelation. And, like Hooker, Tillotson appealed to human judgment to verify the authenticity of the Scriptures. One accepts the inspiration of the Scriptures in the same way he accepts God's existence; evidence discernible by the reason induces belief. In truth, for Tillotson, "all assent is grounded upon evidence."[96] Therefore, in the matter of the authenticity of revelation, "Reason is the faculty whereby Revelations

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[94] Hooker, III, viii, 4; I, 366.

[95] Swift and Ang. Rat., p. 36.

[96] Tillotson, Sermon XIX, Preached Before the House of Commons, November, 1678; p. 201.

are to be discerned. . . ." One does this by an examination of all "Doctrines which pretend to be from God and . . . to judge whether there be reason or evidence to receive them as Divine, or reject them as Impostures."[97]

Tillotson suggests two evidences supporting the Scriptures' divine origin:

> Among other things, which may justly recommend the Christian Religion to the Approbation of Mankind, the intrinsick goodness of it is most apt to make impression upon the Minde of serious and considerate Men. The Miracles of it are the great external Evidence and Conformation of its Truth and Divinity. . . .[98]

John Locke also suggests that miracles verify the Scriptures:

> To know that any revelation is from God, it is necessary to know that the messenger that delivers it is sent from God, and that cannot be known but by some credential given him by God himself. Let us see then whether miracles, in my sense, be not such credentials, and will not infallibly direct us right in the search of divine revelation.[99]

In addition to establishing the motives of credibility, Hooker believed that reason must be used to interpret the scriptures: "Unto the word of God . . . we do not add reason as a supplement of any maim

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[97] Tillotson, Sermon XXI, "Trial of Spirits"; p. 224.

[98] Tillotson, Sermon XIX, "Before House"; p. 201. Cragg (p. 54), points out that most of the Latitudinarians defended revelation by proposing miracles as evidence. There is a problem, of course, inherent in this argument, which seemingly Tillotson did not treat; "How," one may ask, "can miracles place the stamp of Divinity on the Scriptures for those living after the age of miracles?" Must each generation see miracles to be convinced that the record of the original miracles is true? This poses a difficulty for any believer in the inspiration of the Scriptures.

[99] John Locke, "A Discourse of Miracles," The Reasonableness of Christianity with a Discourse on Miracles and Part of a Third Letter Concerning Toleration, ed., I.T. Ramsey (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1958), p. 80.

or defect therein, but as a necessary instrument, without which we could not reap by the Scripture's perfection that fruit which it yieldeth."[100] By arguing that men are to use their minds to understand the Scriptures, Hooker was objecting to claims of special guidance by the Holy Spirit:

> From hence they [certain Dissenters from the established church of Hooker's day] proceed to an higher point, which is the persuading of men credulous and over-capable of such pleasing errors, that it is the special illumination of the Holy Spirit, whereby they discern those things in the work, which others reading yet discern them not.[101]

However, Hooker grants that not all men are capable of understanding everything in the Bible. There are some doctrines, he says, that belong

> unto the offices of Christian men: because they are more obscure, more intricate and hard to be judged of, therefore, God hath appointed some to spend their whole time principally in the study of things divine, to the end that in these more doubtful cases their understanding might be a light to direct others.[102]

But these difficult passages belong to a "lower degree of importance" than "things so familiar and plain, that truth from falsehood . . . is most easily discerned in them, even by men of no deep capacity." And of that nature, "for the most part, are things absolutely unto all men's salvation necessary, either to be held or denied, either to be done or avoided."[103]

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[100] Hooker, III, viii, 10; I, 371.

[101] Hooker, Preface, iii, 10; I, 150.

[102] Hooker, Preface, iii, 2; I, 143.

[103] Hooker, Preface, iii, 2; I, 143.

Tillotson and the Anglican rationalists also urged that men of themselves are able to understand the Scriptures. In other words, they argued for the doctrine of private interpretation:

> Because Many things in Religion, especially those which are most necessary to be believed and practiced are so plain, that every Man of ordinary capacity, after competent instruction in matters of Religion . . . can as well judge of them for himself, as any Man, or Company of Men in the World can judge for him; because in these he hath a plain Rule to go by, Natural Light and clear Revelation of Scripture.[104]

But Tillotson--like Hooker--would not do away with the teacher's office. He urged men not to abuse the liberty of private judgment; "for the understanding of obscure Texts of Scripture, and more difficult Points in Religion," one who is not "capable of judging himself . . . must necessarily trust others capable teachers."[105]

Making this claim for private judgment, the Latitudinarians were arguing against the claims of some Protestants, who, in their insistence upon special illumination of the Holy Spirit came little short of denying the authority of the Scriptures. Godfrey Davies describes the attitudes and activities of these folk:

> While the middle classes were united in opposition to episcopacy, they became divided about all else. Whereas the upper-middle-class man tended to adopt an Erastian form of [presbytery] the lower-middle-class man often became a separatist. The Presbyterian and the sectary had many grounds of difference, apart from their denominational opinions. Undoubtedly the merchants and moneyed classes who formed the backbone of presbyterianism despised the upstart mechanics, who now took upon themselves, male and female alike, to preach, and who often seemed totally

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[104] Tillotson, Sermon XXI, "Trial of Spirits"; p. 229. Much of the sermon is devoted to a defense of private judgment.

[105] Tillotson, Sermon XXI, "Trial of Spirits"; p. 228.

> devoid of all dignity and restraint. . . . Often causes of offence were their arrogating to themselves the name of the godly party or saints, their frequent interruption of services and assumption that ministers of other persuasions were time servers, their mission-like zeal . . . their claims to revelations (which are said to have led some to deny the scriptures to be the Word of God, and to have earned for themselves the epithet, "anti-Scripturists"), and the strange excitement--even ecstacy--that often attended their meetings.[106]

A.S.P. Woodhouse has more carefully defined the people described by Davies. After the war ended, there were roughly "four main groups" among the victors, Woodhouse says: "Three of the groups fall under the general designation of Puritans; the fourth stands apart, for its guiding principle is secular, not religious. . . ."[107] On the right were the English Presbyterians who "stood for adherence to the Covenant, the establishment of Presbyterianism on the general lines laid down by the Westminster Assembly, and the Suppression of every other doctrine and order."[108] The "Party of the Center," called the Independents, became the "party of toleration."[109] Finally:

> . . . the Parties of the Left, the sectaries, religious and political, were a Heterogenous company among whom the winds of doctrine assumed the proportions of a tempest. They were descended from the Separatists and Anabaptists, as the Independents were from the more sedate Congregationalists, and were so to speak, the Independents poor relations. . . . Two significant types of opinion emerge among the sectaries. The one is recognizable as predominately democratic in tendency, and ultimately secular in aim, though it maintains its emphasis on liberty of conscience and at times adopts the language of

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106 The Early Stuarts, p. 195.

107 "Introduction," Puritanism and Liberty (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 14.

108 Woodhouse, Puritanism and Liberty, p. 15.

109 Woodhouse, Puritanism and Liberty, p. 16.

> enthusiasm. . . . The second type of opinion is at bottom neither democratic in tendency nor secular in aim. It emphasizes not the rights of the people, but the privileges of the saints. . . .[110]

Enthusiasm was anathema to most Anglican clergymen during the latter part of the seventeenth century. Tillotson boasted that the Church of England is "excellently framed to make men soberly Religious: Securing men on the one hand from the wild freaks of Enthusiasm; and on the other, from the gross follies of Superstition."[111] He criticizes the Enthusiasts for imagining that human teaching is not needed when one has the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit: "So that it is a vain conceit and meer dream of the Enthusiasts concerning the Seculum Spiritus Sancti, the Age and dispensation of The Holy Ghost, when as they suppose, all human Teaching shall cease."[112] Only the scriptures, which every man can interpret, or which, in difficult matters, men of lesser ability defer to a qualified teacher for interpretation, serves as man's religious guide. However, whether one privately judges or defers to a teacher, the judgment of man is relied on, not the immediate illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Not only was Enthusiasm anathema to seventeenth century Anglican Divines, the authoritarian dogmatism of Roman Apologists of this period was also. The Latitudinarians' belief--along with the whole Protestant world--that the Bible constituted man's religious authority involved

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[110] Woodhouse, Puritanism and Liberty, pp. 17-18.

[111] Tillotson, Sermon XI, "The Hazard of Being Saved in the Church of Rome"; p. 129.

[112] Tillotson, Sermon XXV, "A Persuasion to Frequent Communion"; p. 283.

them in an intense pamphlet war with Roman Catholic apologists during the second half of the seventeenth century. Briefly, the Catholic theologians were making what Bredvold calls "the fideistic argument," which had two prongs. One was their challenge that the Scriptures were not trustworthy. And if they are not trustworthy, one must depend upon the authority of the Catholic Church for his religious beliefs.[113] The other prong was only another method of bringing men around to the authority of the Catholic Church. In this part Catholic theologians challenged the power of the human mind to authenticate revelation and its power to interpret the Scriptures. If man's reason is insufficient to interpret the Scriptures, he must rely on the infallible interpretations of the Church.[114]

Anglican rationalists reacted to claims for this kind of religious authority that would in effect suggest man's personal inability to be certain about religious matters; therefore he must defer to an in infallible interpreter. In his "The Rule of Faith," Tillotson answers the challenge of the Catholic theologians to the Scripture's integrity and reasserts his belief that the human intellect can understand the Scriptures. He is impatient with the Catholic theologians who "to

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[113] Louis Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden (1934; rpt. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1956), pp. 99-100.

[114] Bredvold, p. 81. In this book (pp. 73-129), Bredvold thoroughly analyzes this pamphlet warfare between the Anglican rationalists and the Catholic Theologians. It should be further noted that Bredvold (p. 75) points out that the extreme fideism advocated by English Catholic apologists at this time did not, and has never received the approbation of the Roman Church: "It has had a succession of histories rather than a history, and each manifestation of it has been modified by the peculiar circumstances . . . of the moment, as much as the intellectual turn of its proponents."

maintain Infallibility . . . are forced to run to the Extremities of Skepticism."[115] For Tillotson, and the Anglican rationalists, the Scriptures, not an infallible church, constitutes religious authority, or the rule of faith:

> When therefore we enquire what is the Rule of Christian Faith? The Meaning of that Enquiry is, by what Way and Means the Knowledge of Christ's Doctrine is conveyed down to us, who live at the Distance of so many Ages from the time of its first Delivery. . . .[116]

> The Opinion then of the Protestants concerning the Rule of Faith, is this in general, that those Books which we call the Holy Scriptures, are the Means whereby the Christian Doctrine hath been brought down to us.[117]

In defending the Anglican church against the claims of many Dissenters of an "inner light" revelation, against the claim of church authority by the Roman Catholics, and against the atheists, the Anglican divines of the late seventeenth century were notable for their reliance upon reason. In their argument that reason can and must be used, they closely followed the course laid out by the great Elizabethan divine, Richard Hooker. According to Hooker, reason serves man by enabling him to establish the motives of credibility and to interpret the Scriptures. So Tillotson and his colleagues argued.

However, the Anglican rationalists might have moved beyond Hooker in their claims as to what reason could do. Hooker had said that although reason is able to, and must, establish God's revelation, man, having accepted the revelation must accept its doctrines by faith, or

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[115] Tillotson, "Rule," Part II, Section 3; p. 679.

[116] Tillotson, "Rule," Part I, Section 2; pp. 654-55.

[117] Tillotson, "Rule," Part I, Section 3; p. 658.

by authority. Thus, Hooker made a distinction between faith and knowledge. Knowledge is

> that which we know by sense or by demonstration. The intellect gives assent to knowledge of this kind because it is evident, that no man which heareth them can doubt of them; the mind is constrained to say, this is true.[118]

But the matters man accepts by faith do not possess their own evidence; they are accepted on authority, Hooker said: "Whoso assenteth to the words of eternal life doth it in regard of his authority whose words they are."[119] Indeed, such matters are beyond understanding:

> The mysteries of our religion are above the reach of our understanding, above discourse of man's reason, above all that any creature can comprehend. Therefore, the first thing required of him which standeth for admission into Christ's family is belief.[120]

This distinction did not serve the Anglican rationalists, since they sought to dismiss transubstantiation and other Catholic articles of belief as being irrational. Therefore, they rejected this distinction and made faith and rational knowledge synonymous. "By faith," Stillingfleet wrote to a Catholic opponent, "we understand a rational and discursive act of the mind. For faith being an assent upon evidence, or reason inducing the mind to assent, it must be a rational and discursive act."[121] Glanville, in his account of the Divines of Bensalem, emphasized their theory that "Faith itself, is an act of

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[118] Hooker, Serm. I, "A Learned and Comfortable Sermon of the Certainty and Perpetuity of the Elect"; III, 584.

[119] Hooker, V, xxii, 8; II, 121-22.

[120] Hooker, V, lxii, 1; II, 305.

[121] Quoted in Harth, p. 43; Stillingfleet, A Rational Account of the Grounds of Protestant Religion (Oxford, 1844), I, 323.

Reason."[122] If faith is an act of reason, then one can understand what he believes. Bishop Rust assured his readers, "he that can persuade himself that he believes a thing that he does not understand, believes he knows not what."[123]

Tillotson is more cautious. He agrees that one can believe incomprehensible doctrines, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, although this does not mean that there is no reason or evidence to support it. Part of the evidence is assurance "by Divine Revelation of the truth of this Doctrine of the Trinity, and being assured of that, our not being able to comprehend it is not reason enough to stagger our belief of it."[124] Thus far, Tillotson sounds much like Hooker. However, in other places, he seems to agree that each Christian doctrine can be authenticated by reason, so that in reality no doctrine is accepted on authority only--not even Divine authority. For one thing, Tillotson will accept no doctrine that contradicts natural notions of religion; not even if this doctrine were attended by a miracle.[125] "Upon this Principle," he rejects "a great many Doctrines." One, "I cannot believe, upon the pretended Authority or Infallibility of any Person or Church, that Force is a fit Argument to produce Faith." Two, "I cannot believe, that God would not have men

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[122] Quoted in Harth, p. 43; Glanville, "Anti-fanatical Religion," Essays, p. 12.

[123] Quoted in Harth, p. 43; Rust, A Discourse of the Use of Reason in Matters of Religion (London, 1683), p. 26.

[124] Tillotson, Sermon XLVII; pp. 576-77.

[125] Tillotson, Sermon XXI, "Trial of Spirits"; p. 266.

to understand their public Prayers, nor the lessons of Scripture which are read to them." Three, "Least of all can I believe the Doctrine of the Council of Trent, that the saving Efficacy of the Sacraments doth depend upon the intention of the Priest that administers them. . . ."[126] For another thing, Tillotson will accept no doctrine that manifestly contradicts one's senses. On this basis he rejects transubstantiation: "Besides the infinite Scandal of this Doctrine upon the accounts I have mentioned, the Monstrous absurdities of it make it insupportable to any Religion." It is absurd, he says, because it contradicts the senses. Does any man, Tillotson asks, have

> greater evidence of the truth of any Divine Revelation than Every Man hath of the falsehood of Transubstantiation? Infidelity were hardly possible to Men, if all Men had the same evidence for the Christian Religion which they have against Transubstantiation, that is the clear and irresistible Evidence of Sense. He that can once be brought to contradict or deny his senses, is at the end of certainly.[127]

The Latitudinarians, led by John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury, in defending the Anglican Church against what they considered to be threats to its existence, the threat of Enthusiasm on the left and the threat of Catholic fideism on the right, adopted a theological rationalism that followed closely the path laid out by Richard Hooker. However, they added a dimension and offered, possibly, a new meaning of faith. Their theological rationalism was seemingly closer to John Locke's epistemology than to the idealism of the Cambridge Platonists or, certainly, to the pure mechanistic rationalism of Thomas Hobbes.

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126 Tillotson, Sermon XLI, "Thanksgiving Sermon for the Late Victory at Sea"; p. 485.

127 Tillotson, Sermon XXVI, "A Discourse Against Transubstantiation"; p. 314.

They made some ambitious claims for the human mind, but probably they failed to provide many real answers to the philosophical problems inherent in the relationship of reason and faith. However, for a half-dozen decades, they were quite influential, especially on Richard Steele.

CHAPTER III

STEELE'S THEOLOGICAL RATIONALISM

The bulk of Steele's writings does not concern itself with religion, but with social and political reform. Still, throughout his essays, tracts, and letters are statements from which one can make some specific observations about his religious stance. This study makes no claim that Steele's work reveals any systematic theology, but such statements that he does make show that he accepted the position of the Latitudinarians--as defined by Tillotson--on the relation of faith and reason. Steele was not at all an original thinker in theology. His virtue does not lie in contributing new ideas to theology, but in popularizing, for an emerging bourgeois audience, the consensus views of the intellectual community, or at least that part of it constituting the Whig aristocracy.

However, Steele was not a parrot; his religious position is well thought out, though not original. The Latitudinarians, by seeking to place religion on a reasonable foundation, were in tune with the rationalism of the age, an age that reacted to all forms of authority and dogmatism. Steele was well aware of this new rational spirit:

> The queriest [The Examiner] will find himself very much out of his calculation of a time seasonable for his Enquiries: He will find quite the contrary, that our Animosities are allayed; that the implicit Rage is over . . . that a Reason is now expected for everything which is advanced. . . . It is come to that, that People must prove what they say if they would be believed . . . (Eng. I, 5, p. 24).

Like the Anglican rationalists Steele closely follows Richard Hooker in that he believed: one, reason reveals God's existence, His attributes, many moral duties, and the immortality of the soul; two, reason is essential to establish the credibility of the Scriptures and to interpret them. Furthermore, he followed the Latitudinarians beyond Hooker, by urging that faith is an act of the reason. He, too, believed that Christian doctrine could be understood and proved by reason.

Steele, like Hooker and Tillotson, believed in natural religion, which Steele calls those "great and fundamental doctrines of mankind" (Tatler 135). Marking a contrast between those whom Steele considers to be pseudo-free thinkers and those whom he considers to be genuine truth seekers, such as Socrates and Reformation leaders, Steele says that "They all complied with the religion of their country as much as possible, in such particulars as did not contradict and pervert these great and fundamental doctrines of mankind." These "great points which these thinkers endeavored to establish into the minds of men" were "the formation of the universe, the superintendency of providence, the perfection of the divine nature, the immortality of the soul, and the future state of rewards and punishments" (Tatler 135). Steele concludes that Socrates believed and taught, without the aid of the Christian revelation, these fundamental doctrines of mankind, just as the Reformation leaders taught them though they had the Christian revelation.

Now, "on the contrary," Steele complains, the present persons, who "set up for free thinkers," ignore what, to Steele, is obvious evidence for these fundamental doctrines and

> Are such as endeavor by a little trash of words and sophistry, to weaken and destroy those very principles, for the vindication of which freedom of thought at first became laudable and heroic. These apostates from reason and good sense can look at the glorious frame of nature, without paying an adoration to Him that raised it, can consider the great revolution in the universe without lifting up their minds to that Superior Power which hath the direction of it, can presume to censure The Deity in his ways towards men; can level mankind with the beasts that perish; can extinguish in their own minds all the pleasing hopes of a future state, and lull themselves into a stupid security against the terrors of it (Tatler 135).

Obviously, Steele is impatient with these people who, because they deny natural religion, are "apostates from reason." Probably Steele leveled this charge at the "Wits" or "Scoffers," who, according to Harth, were supposed to be influential at court, and were commonly associated with the atheists.[1] In a letter to Mrs. Manly, Steele is much kinder, but he still insists that rejection of religion results from being unreasonable:

> . . . for there is neither Love, Galantry, or Poetry in it [The Christian Hero], but what surpasses at present the Charms of 'em all, downright religion, which all you Wits laugh at, but indeed laugh at for want of Reflection, for indeed if you'd allow it your consideration, you'd all be Votaries. . . .[2]

So far are pseudo free thinkers from being reasonable, Steele says, that "It may be doubted . . . whether there ever was in nature a more abject, slavish and bigoted Generation" (Spec. 234).

Steele not only believed that man could naturally know of God's existence, he also believed that man could know, by reason, much of his moral duty. In this he was similar to Addison. Edward and Lillian Bloom argue that Addison never fell into the error of some late

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[1] Swift and Ang. Rat., p. 35.

[2] The Correspondence of Richard Steele, ed., Rae Blanchard (1941; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 436.

seventeenth-century rationalists who completely identified religion with morality, but "espoused a moral philosophy based upon the close personal union between God and Man."[3] Addison, the Blooms say, divided religion into two categories: (1) faith or revealed religion was the substance of established orthodoxy; (2) morality or "natural religion" was predicated as the primary, fundamental goodness that went beyond church or creed. Addison wrote: "It was a pattern of good behavior that man was to practice"; these critics further suggest that Addison placed greater stress on the second, and, in so doing, directed his thoughts to the goal of the Cambridge divines, who were dedicated to a study of moral Christianity and the power conveyed by active participation in good works.[4] It is likely that Steele also placed greater stress on the second category:

> You are not to expect, that his Dulness and Inactivity [the Pretender's] would render him less dangerous in Power; for there is no condition of human life above Idiotism, which is not capable of superstition: Where this is infused, a weak mind will exercize all imaginable tyrannies and cruelties, and at the same time flatter itself with the idea of conscious virtue and zeal for the Noblest of all Motives, Religion. It is impossible for such a person to extricate himself from Prejudice so as to hold a man of a different Faith from himself in the same degree of Virtue; according to his respective tenets, he will naturally lay a stress upon the sensible ceremonies and Institutions of men, which he can understand and have no regard to the true notions of Virtue and Piety, which he has not the capacity to comprehend . . . and another of the Kirk of Scotland, notwithstanding their merit of Perjury and Treason for his sake, were esteemed too heterodox to say Grace at his table. What can be

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[3] "Addison's Enquiry After Truth: The Moral Assumptions of His Proof of Divine Existence," PMLA, 65 (1950), p. 200; Addison, Spec. 459.

[4] Edward and Lillian Bloom, "Addison's Enq.," p. 200. Addison, Spec. 459.

> expected from a Bigot, that cannot bear so indifferent a thing, as what is an Act of meer Religion, the giving of Thanks for benefits received when it is not done by one instituted in his own way.[5]

At any rate, Steele believed that morality could be derived by reason even though this morality is also revealed in the Bible. For example, he highly recommends that everyone read that "Admirable, Scheme and System of Christian Morality, the Sermon on the Mount, wherein there is nothing urged, but from the force of Reason and Natural Justice" ("Preface to Rom. Eccl. Hist.," TP, p. 222). This preface was written in 1714; and in making this point about the Sermon on the Mount, Steele is simply reiterating what he had written fourteen years earlier in The Christian Hero:

> In his admirable Sermon upon the Mount, he gives his Divine Precepts in so easie and familiar a manner, and which are so well adapted to all the Rules of Life and Right Reason that they must needs carry throughout a self evident authority to all that Read 'em (p. 44).

For another example (Lover 32, PJ, p. 116), Steele, agreeing with Aristotle that all sins are injustice and all virtue is justice, concludes that "it [Aristotle's principle of sin] is as applicable to virtue considered in a Christian light, as in a natural light." Steele, then, is saying that Aristotle, walking by a natural light, came up with a precept usable by Christians. Furthermore, the duty of

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[5] Town Talk, No. 8, p. 246. This passage from Town Talk comes from a volume edited by Rae Blanchard, Richard Steele's Periodical Journalism, 1714-16; The Lover, The Reader, Town Talk in a Letter to a Lady in the Country, Chit-Chat in a Letter to a Lady in the Country (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959). Hereafter all references from these essay periodicals will come from this edition and will be given parenthetically. Inside each parenthesis will be the name of the paper, the number of the paper, Periodical Journalism (PJ), and the page number on which the passage appears.

contentment, Steele urges, is enforced by both religion and reason. In another Lover paper, a young man "writes" that he has suffered the loss of his sweetheart, but has found great consolation in a book of sermons by Isaac Barrow, Of Contentment, Patience, and Resignation to the Will of God in Several Sermons. "The Duty of contentment," Steele writes, "is admirably explained, recommended, and enforced by arguments drawn from Reason and Religion" (Lover 26, PJ, p. 95).[6]

Though the moral duty of man to others and his duty to himself are revealed in the Bible, the revelation of these duties simply enforces and recommends what man can know and ought to know by reason, or natural religion. In The Christian Hero Steele states that we are "fram'd for mutual kindness, good will and Service," and that we are commanded by Christ to love one another. Now, he continues, if one "imbibes" this "noble principle," he is in no danger of transgressing against another, but will do him good "for whose Benefit (next to the adoration of his Maker) he knows he was created" (CH, p. 78). This temper of mind, Steele continues, "tends to this Purpose, and the Improvement of it by Religion raises on it an exalted Superstructure," which lifts such a mind above the deceit with which most are "perplex'd" (CH, p. 78). One can know naturally he has a duty to others, just as he can know he ought to adore God; and revealed religion enforces this knowledge, harmonizing with Anglican rationalist doctrine.

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[6] Steele does not mean to suggest a fundamental distinction between reason and religion. In this passage, by "reason" he means, what man can know by his thinking, without revelation. By "religion" he means the Christian revelation. Steele, like Hooker and Tillotson, believed that, for the most part, the Christian religion revealed--and reinforced--what men could naturally know, as the next paragraph discusses.

Steele also believed that man can know, by reason only, that he has an immortal soul. After relating the tragic circumstances of a young lady's fatal illness, Steele concludes:

> Were I an infidel, misfortunes like this would convince me that there must be a hereafter: for who can believe that so much virtue could meet with so great distress without a following reward (Tatler 94).

Thus, Steele, like the Latitudinarians, makes many concessions to reason. His belief in natural religion could open him, like his Latitudinarian mentors, to the charge of deism. Although Rae Blanchard has not said that Steele was a deist--her thesis emphasizes his belief in revealed religion--still, his recognition of the rational element poses a difficulty for her which she acknowledges in her doctoral thesis. She believes that in The Christian Hero (1701) Steele was sure that religion was the only force to make men virtuous; however, during the period of his most popular journals (1709-1715), she believes he is not sure that reason cannot do it.[7] There are times, she suggests, when Steele is just as emphatic in commending purely natural sanctions as a means of turning passions to good ends.[8] The shifting of emphasis that Blanchard sees from a "sweeping rejection of natural standards alone," in The Christian Hero, "to acknowledging that reason not only should but can prevail is what may be expected from one occupied with social reform." In his "zeal to improve society by holding up high standards of virtue and by presenting things as they ought to be," Blanchard thinks that Steele at times "makes

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[7] Diss., "Steele as a Moralist," p. 59.

[8] Diss., "Steele as a Moralist," p. 59.

claims for rational virtue which do not harmonize with his prevailing doctrine," this being his fundamental anti-rationalistic bias, in her view. Furthermore, "it seems apparent," she writes, "that as the years go on, his tendency to idealize rational conduct grows stronger." She considers The Conscious Lovers to be the climax of his rationalism.[9]

Just here the value of comparing Steele's theology with the Anglican rationalists can be seen; for Steele's statements expressing his belief in natural religion are no stronger than Tillotson's. Hence, Blanchard is mistaken both when she sees some disparity between Steele's claims for natural religion and his statements that revealed religion is necessary and when she suggests he may have changed his religious views. On the contrary, Steele believed, as announced in his Christian Hero (1701), in the necessity of revelation, and he never changed this view, as I shall show.

Even though Steele believed there are religious truths that one can know naturally, apart from supernatural revelation, he also thought that such a revelation was still essential. Steele believed that revelation was necessary to perform the same functions that Hooker and Tillotson believed revelation ought to perform. In the first place, only revelation can provide adequate motives to virtue, the motives being the hope of reward and the force of divine command. Reason might, to be sure, identify one's moral duties, but only revealed religion could adequately motivate one to practice these duties, the form of religion being the Anglican Church, of course. Only when one has the promise of eternal reward will he be motivated to practice virtue.

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[9] Diss., "Steele as a Moralist," p. 59.

This theme runs through one of Steele's earliest works, and his only extended statement of religious beliefs, The Christian Hero. For example, after quoting I Cor. 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord," Steele comments: "Here is supporting ourselves under misfortune, propos'd upon the reasonable terms of Reward and punishment: and all other is Fantastick, arrogant, and ungrounded" (CH, p. 63).

Steele never changed this early view expressed in The Christian Hero (1701) that the Christian religion's promise of rewards is the best motive for doing good. During the period of his life in which he published his most popular periodical journals, Steele still believes that the Christian hope of eternal reward is the most powerful motive to virtue. In The Spectator (1711-1712), Steele disagrees with one of the primary tenets of deism, disinterested virtue:

> It is owing to Pride, and a secret affectation of a certain Self-Existence, that the noblest motive for action that ever was proposed to man is not acknowledged the Glory and Happiness of their Being. The Heart is treacherous to itself, and we do not let our Reflections go deep enough to receive Religion as the most honorable Incentive to good and worthy Actions. It is our Natural Weakness to flatter ourselves into a Belief, that if we search into our inmost thoughts, we find ourselves wholly disinterested, and divested of any Views arising from Self-Love and Vain Glory. But, However, Spirits of Superficial Greatness may disdain at first Sight to do anything, but from a noble Impulse in Themselves, without any future Reguards in this or another Being; upon Stricter Enquiry they will find, to act worthily, and expect to be rewarded only in another world, is as heroick a pitch of virtue as human nature can arrive at (No. 365).

Without using special theological language, Steele may be talking about the effects of the Fall. Whatever man might have been before the Fall does not help him now. Thus thinking that one can rise above all self

interest is unrealistic. In another Spectator paper Steele wrote: "But the ready way, I believe to the right Enjoyment of Life, is by a Prospect towards another. . . ." (No. 143). An illustration of this appears in still another Spectator paper, condemning Dorimant, who, in Steele's opinion, is almost the opposite of what a "fine gentleman" ought to be, but commending Ignotus,[10] who is a gentleman:

> I hardly have observed anyone fill his several duties of life better than Ignotus. All the Underparts of his Behavior, have their rise in him from great and noble Motives. A firm and unshakable Expectation of another life, makes him become this . . . (No. 75).

Indeed, this prospect is so important that this life is, or should be, an "Education for Heaven" (Spec. 143). In the Englishman (I, 21; first series, 1713-1714, p. 88), Steele again proposes eternal life to be a strong motive:

> The end of their Institution [the clergy's] is to declare and publish to the world the Will and Commands of Their Master, to instruct the ignorant in the way of Righteousness, and to propose the Rewards and Punishments in another life, in order to move Men to the pursuit of Virtue, and to deter them from the Practice of Vice.

More specifically, Steele believed that the Christian religion provides the most important motive inciting men to practice patience,

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[10] Dorimant is the hero of Sir Fopling Flutter, a comedy by Etherege. In Spectator 65, Steele had, in a review of this play, suggested that its celebration was unjust because its hero, Dorimant, was "Low and Mean." So far as I know, the name Ignotus is simply an example of Steele's selection of a Latin name at random to give his example some concreteness. He frequently did this. He might have had his eye on someone he knew, but one cannot know. In Spectator 143, he uses Greek names in the same way. Cottilus is impatient to be done with the world. Uranius has found composure of soul. Bond (Spec. I, 65, n. 1), says that "Nichols thought that Cottilus was 'probably Mr. Hen. Martyn, who had a little habitation perhaps called for his Cot, at Blackheath,' and that Uranius was 'probably Mr. John Hughes.' There is no real evidence for either of these attributions."

unselfishness, and humility. Only the hope of reward, Steele believes, can carry one patiently through the afflictions of life. In his early statement Steele argued that without religion's promises men lack adequate "Motives to our Actions, that can render men Dauntless and Invincible to Pleasure and Pain" (CH, p. 14). To dramatize this point, Steele gives examples of non-Christian men living in the classical period who are often cited for their virtue, but who were less virtuous and less confident than Christian heroes such as Paul. However, Christianity offers one the incentive to bear life's misfortunes so

> that to make our life one decent and consistent action, we should have one constant Motive of Living and that Motive is confidence in God: For had he [Paul] Breath'd on any other Cause, instead of application to the Almighty, he must . . . have run to the dagger, or the bowl of Poison: For the Heathen Virtue prescribes Death before stripes or imprisonment (CH, p. 68).

Indeed, "it ever was, and ever will be, Pride or Cowardice, that makes life insupportable" (CH, p. 69). Only Christianity can lead men to "accommodate" themselves so as to bear life's misfortunes "with the greatest Decency and handsomest Patience" possible (CH, p. 69). Ten years later, in The Spectator 294, Steele comforts the poor by reminding them that they can expect compensation in heaven: "The wise Providence has amply compensated the Disadvantages of the Poor and Indigent . . . by a more abundant Provision for their Happiness in the next."

Christianity, furthermore, provides the motive for unselfishness:

> Thus are we fram'd for mutual Kindness, good will and Service, and therefore our Blessed Saviour has been pleased to give us (as a reiterated Abridgement of all his Law) the commandment of Loving one another; and the man that Imbibes that noble Principle is in no Danger of insolently Transgressing against his Fellow Creatures, but will certainly use all the advantages which he has from Nature and Fortune to the Good and

> Welfare of others, for whose Benefit (next to the adoration of his maker) he knows he was created: This Temper of Mind, when neither Polluted or mis-led, tends to this purpose, and the Improvement of it by Religion raises on it an exalted Superstructure which inclines in his Words and Actions to be above the little Crafts and Doubtes with which the World beneath him is perplexed: He is Intrinsically possessed of what mere morality must own to be a Fantastical Chimaera, the being wholly dis-interested in the affairs of the Person he affects or befriends: for indeed when the regard of our Maker is not our first impulse and Desire in our Hopes and Purposes, it is impossible but that the fondness of ourselves and our own Interest must recurr upon us, and leven the whole course of our actions . . . (CH, p. 78).

Although one can know naturally that he is to adore his Maker and do good to his fellow creatures, only when he is commanded to love others by his God will he really practice unselfishness. Several years later, when he published The Englishman (1713-1714), Steele still believes that men need the support of religion to keep them from being selfish: "Conscious Virtue is certainly preferable to all other Possessions; but it will soon resign itself to the Torrent of Prejudice and Hatred, without Supports from something more than humane" (I, 10, p. 45). When virtue has the sanction of religion, that is, when men are moved by their regard for religious duties, will they actually practice virtue. Otherwise, the "Fondness of oneself and one's own interest" would be their only consideration (CH, p. 78).

In addition, the Christian religion keeps a man humble; that is, it motivates one to keep his view of himself in proper perspective. Steele believes that a man must think neither too highly of himself nor too little of himself. Realizing the tendency of people to take pride in material possessions, Steele says that "the Sense of his [Christ's] Power and Omnipotence must give them Humiliation in Prosperity." Furthermore, people are prone to be "depressed in adversity,

but the Christian World has a Leader, the Contemplation of whose Life and Sufferings must administer Comfort in affliction" (Spec. 356). Hence, Steele is restating in this Spectator paper, what he had stated earlier in The Christian Hero. As a matter of fact, in this very paper, Steele emphasizes his point by describing in detail some of Christ's activities during the last week of His life, including His death. This description, which takes up the entire second half of this paper, is a transcription, with a few changes, from Chapter II of The Christian Hero.[11]

In the second place, the Christian religion reveals doctrines, necessary to salvation, which the reason cannot discover, one of these being the atonement. Steele believed in Jesus Christ as the Saviour:

> The Great Change of Things began to draw near, when the Lord of Nature thought fit as a Saviour and Deliverer to make his publick Entry into Jerusalem. . . Men were not Enobled but Sav'd, Crimes were not remitted, but Sin Forgiven; he did not bestow Medals, Honours, Favours, but Health, Joy, Sight, Speech (Spec. 356).

In another Spectator paper, he commends Pope's "Messiah" for its adoration of Christ as Saviour: "I will make no apology for entertaining the Reader with the following Poem, which is written by a great Genius, a Friend of mine, in the Country, who is not ashamed to employ his wit in the Praise of his Maker" (No. 378).

Thus Steele objected to two of the deists' assumptions: disinterested virtue and the non-essentiality of the Christian revelation. He counters by affirming that man must have the hope of future rewards and the threat of future punishment as motives to do right;

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[11] Bond, The Spectator, III, 327, n. 2.

consequently, men must have the Christian religion, which offers these motives, and which teaches them about the Saviour. Steele, in 1701 when he wrote The Christian Hero, believed that only the Christian religion could make one great; and during the years of his most prolific periodical essay writing (1709-1714), he still believed that only the Christian religion can make one great. Yet, although Steele was no deist, he seems to have held deism to be higher on the religious ladder than the Catholic Church and the non-Anglican sects. In an allegorical Tatler paper, the Tatler "visited" a waxwork show, its figures representing the religious faiths of England. In the middle was a dignified woman representing the Church of England, attended by the genius "Moderation." On either side were figures representing the Quaker, Anabaptist, Presbyterian, Catholic, and Jewish bodies; these figures are described in less than complimentary terms, to say the least. However, of the figure representing the deist Steele says: "Deism, if she had proper ornaments and education, would have made an agreeable and beautiful appearance" (No. 257). Perhaps Steele's description shows a belief that deism possessed the truth about natural religion, but needed the truth that revelation has to offer. Like Hooker and Tillotson, Steele believed that although man needs and has a revelation, men are not to lay aside their reason. Steele believed that reason is necessary to establish the credibility of the Scriptures and to interpret them. Before one can accept God's saving truth revealed in His Word, he must be convinced that there is a God, that He has certain attributes, and that He is the author of the Christian revelation. Thus one must have rational grounds for his religion. Natural religion provides evidence that God is and has certain

attributes; miracles and prophecies prove the divinity of the Bible.

In the above discussion of Steele's position on natural religion, one will notice that when he criticizes the free thinker he appeals to a traditional argument, developed in the Middle Ages and used by theologians in the eighteenth century, the proof of God's existence from the design of the universe. That anyone is an unbeliever, he urged to Mrs. Manley, is attributable to a lack of reflection. Furthermore, Steele accepts the divinity of Christ because of His miracles, an argument widely used by the Latitudinarians:

> Multitudes follow'd him, and brought him the Dumb, The Blind, The Sick, and Maim'd; whom when their Creator had touch'd with a second Life they saw, spoke, leap'd, and ran. . . . He had Compassion on them, and by a Miracle supplyed their Necessities. Oh the Extatick Entertainment, when they could behold their food immediately increase to the Distributor's Hand, and see their God in Person feeding and refreshing His creatures. . . . But the sacred Story is everywhere full of miracles not inferiour to this . . . (Spec. 356).

In Hooker's day the Puritans rejected the view that reason can provide the ground for religion. Hooker, one remembers, had argued that men are induced to believe in God's existence because of reason's examination of solid evidence. Moreover, men accept the Bible as God's inspired word on the basis of evidence of its divinity. As a consequence Hooker chided the Enthusiast's appeal to the "Testimony of the Spirit," saying: "If I believe the Gospel, There needeth no reasoning to persuade me, if I do not believe, it must be the Spirit of God and not the reason of man that shall convert my heart unto him."[12] As one notices, Hooker seems to be mixing two processes: first, the acceptance of the Bible's supernatural origin, and second, the acceptance

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[12] Hooker, III, viii, 4; I, 366.

of the Christian religion, generally called "conversion," by Protestants. Likely, Hooker--he claims to be quoting the Enthusiasts--is saying that for the Enthusiasts, the two processes were the same and happened at the same time; according to the Enthusiasts, it is the Holy Spirit that persuades one both to accept the Gospel as God's message and to become a disciple of Christ; that is, one is converted by the Holy Spirit. A man's reason, they say, according to Hooker, has nothing to do with either process: "A number there are, who think they cannot admire as they ought the power and authority of the word of God, if in things divine they should attribute any force to man's reason."[13] Hooker disagrees and attributes to reason an important part both in conversion and confirmation that the Bible is God's word: "Yea, whatsoever our hearts be to God and to his truth, believe we or be we as yet faithless, for our conversion or confirmation the force of natural reason is great."[14] Neither does Steele accept the Enthusiast's view of conversion: "God's empire"--that is, God's direction of a person's life through the Scriptures--is established, not "by conquest, but a right more lasting, arduous and Indisputable Conviction: For our slavery being Intellectual and in our Bosoms, the Redemption must be there also" (CH, pp. 41-42). One's conviction involves the intellect.[15]

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[13] Hooker, III, viii, 4; I, 365.

[14] Hooker, III, viii, 2; I, 374

[15] In an Englishman paper (I, 38, p. 155), Steele explains that a "Profession of Faith" cannot be imposed upon others by threat of torture; it must "proceed" from the "conviction of their minds."

Next, Steele followed Hooker and the Latitudinarians in believing that reason is necessary to interpret the Scriptures. Steele proudly observes that every "British Subject," if he can read, "can examine his own Heart by the Holy Scriptures, without exposing his Frailties to the Artifices of a false Teacher, that would make him expiate his Conscience with his Purse" (Eng., I, 23, p. 94). In another Englishman he says that it is the "glory of the churches of England"--this implies, of course, that not all churches make this boast--"that we of the Laity are left at Liberty to judge for ourselves, and search for our Duty" (Eng., I, 46, p. 185). These two references actually emphasize that Englishmen have the right to judge personally what is their Christian duty. In the Lover Steele shows that one must judge:

> One method, as I take it, to induce men to avoid Evil, is to know not only wherein it consists, but how great it is when we know wherein the true Greatness of every Sin consists, we shall see why we ought to avoid them when there is room for compassion, and where Punishment is necessary, we may be sure then to be severe in the right place . . . (No. 32, PJ, p. 114).

How is one to be able to judge, that is, to decide when there is room for compassion and when one must be severe?

> Now if in my Enquiries I have an Eye all along to the Christian institution and take a view of the Sins and Irregularities of mankind in such a Light as is consistent with the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles, I hope the softer and politer part of my Readers will not be upon that account disgusted (Lover, No. 32, PJ, pp. 114-15).[16]

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[16] One Latitudinarian, Ibbot (The True Notion of the Exercize of Private Judgment, I, 247, quoted in Cragg, p. 47), made a strong statement about the individual's responsibility to use private judgment: "Free thought in its proper sense--the exercize, that is of private judgment in matters of religion--is more than a possibility, it is not only every man's right . . . but tis every man's duty."

Since he believed that every man can personally use his private judgment to interpret the Scriptures, and thereby determine his Christian duty, Steele in the Englishman objected to the Catholic Church's claim of its right to rule men's consciences:

> We disown and utterly disclaim all manner of power and Jurisdiction over men's Consciences; and the Scandalous methods the Priests of the Church of Rome take to advance their Credit, we esteem and look on as unlawful (Eng. I, 21, p. 89).

It is lamentable, Steele says, that the Catholic Church discredits man's individual thoughts: "It is a Melancholy effect of Learning in his Holiness and Conclave, that their whole Thoughts and Designs are levelled at the Destruction of whatever is prompted by Reason and Nature" (Eng. II, 29, p. 365). But Steele is grateful to God that Englishmen are guided by "Spiritual Pastors, who assume no authority over our Minds or Persons," and that Englishmen have been "relieved" from those

> who attempt to impose a Yoke of implicit Resignation to whatever they shall dictate as the Precepts of Heaven. Those who should have the Impudence to attempt the Introduction of slavery among us . . . would stand exposed to the observation of every man that can read (Eng. I, 23, p. 84).

This claim by the Catholic Church of being the living authority, denying men the right of private interpretation, led it, Steele believed, to become exceedingly intolerant of anyone who would disagree with its claims. Steele, again and again, objects to this dogmatic, and often militant intolerance. In an Englishman paper, Steele reviews the abuse of Protestants during the reign of James II. Freedom was taken away, but in doing this, James acted "according to the Rules of his own Religion" (II, 27, p. 360). One of the threads running throughout the Englishman papers is that when Catholics occupy the highest

political offices in a land, that land soon loses its freedoms, and one of the most important freedoms is the right to worship according to the dictates of one's own understanding. Steele writes,

> It would not be improper to observe to them [his fellow English subjects] that Mohometism is not a greater enemy to Christianity than Popery is to the Reformation; nay much less: For amongst the Turks, Christians have leave to exercize their own Religion in their own Houses, and in many places public Churches are allowed; Whereas such a Toleration is unknown in the Popish Dominions (Eng. II, 28, p. 361).

In contrast, Steele is proud of the Anglican Church's policy of toleration as he shows in the wax-figure Tatler paper (No. 257). The stately woman representing the Anglicans was attended by the genius "Moderation," who waved a banner inscribed with "Liberty of Conscience." Since Steele favored a policy of toleration, he disagreed with his High Church Anglican brethren who favored suppression of Protestant Dissenters (Eng. II, 14, pp. 308-09).

Steele also objects to the Dissenters' unwillingness to use reason to interpret the Scriptures. Although most of them, along with the Anglican rationalists, believed that the Scriptures constitute the sole religious authority, they believed that in their interpretation of the Bible they were guided by an "inner light" or by the Holy Spirit rather than by reason. This amounted to a denial, in reality, of private interpretation. Steele does not make any statement directly commenting on the Enthusiasts' dependence upon an inner light when they studied the scriptures, but he makes some statements strongly disagreeing with their claims of direct inspiration. For example, in a "letter" to "Mr. Pasquin," Steele boasts that

> The Low Churchmen . . . have brought the Roundhead to act like a reasonable man, to forget the rebellious Principles

> of his Father, and to know that the words New Light, Righteousness, the Inward Man and a Thousand others have nothing to do with the ordinary commerce of Life but that the right understanding and application of them must make Him the more obedient to the Civill Magistrate and to venture his life for His Prince ("Letter from Bickerstaff to Pasquin," TP, p. 631).

In Tatler 212, Steele advocates rational piety rather than highly emotional devotion, which soon wears off:

> Thus humble, and thus great, is the man who is moved by piety, and exalted by devotion. But behold this recommended by . . . a great divine [Dr. South] I have heretofore made bold with: "It is such a pleasure as can never clog or overwork the mind, a delight that grows and improves under thought and reflection, and while it exercises, does also endear itself to the mind. . . . It does not affect by rapture and ecstacy, but is like the pleasure or health, greater and stronger than those that call up the senses with grosser and more affecting impressions."

Steele also criticizes Dissenters for never trusting their own judgments, but looking for a specific precept to guide every trifle of life:

> A thorough Critic is a sort of Puritan in the polite world as an Enthusiast in Religion stumbles at the ordinary occurrences of life, if he cannot quote Scriptural examples on the occasion; so the critic is never safe in his speech or writing without he has among the celebrated writers an authority for the truth of his sentence (Tatler 29).

Steele, like the Anglican rationalists, followed Hooker very closely in believing that natural religion established God's existence and His attributes, that miracles establish the Scriptures as His revelation,[17] and that man's reason must be used to interpret the Scriptures. Furthermore, Steele follows his Anglican mentors in going beyond Hooker: he, too, argues that reason not only establishes God's revelation but

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[17] Neither Steele nor the Latitudinarians explained the difficulty inherent in this argument; if miracles establish God's revelation, what establishes the record of the miracles? Must that record be accepted by faith?

also it establishes the doctrines of the Bible, so that faith itself becomes an act of the reason. A man, in any case, believes not because of authority, but because his reason assents.

Steele's view that faith is an action by the reason is emphasized by his objection to anyone's acceptance of or practice of his religion on non-rational bases: persecution, emotion, or custom. Steele is appalled that some men would impose their religion on others by the sword: "Horror that men can mediate to impose upon a Profession of Faith by the excruciation of their bodies, which can only be acceptable when it proceeds from the conviction of their minds" (Eng. I, 38, p. 155). In another Englishman paper he laments that since the clergy is "so great a Crowd of Men," there will be "some who think it a shorter Way to bring Multitudes over to their tenets by Persecution than Conviction" (I, 7, p. 28). A confession of faith under the threat of persecution means nothing, neither to the church nor to the confessor; but only a profession of faith resulting from conviction is meaningful, just as Steele had argued in The Christian Hero. In addition, Steele objects to religion's being accepted merely because it appeals to one's emotions:

> Your Eminences' paper [The Examiner] which came out to Day was very full of that your usual kind of Argumentation which fills the mouths of those who are for you, with more words to vent Their Passions and Prejudices, and afford no Reasons to convince those who are against you ("The Fr. Faith," TP, p. 271).

An Englishman paper criticizes what it considers to be the Roman Catholic Church's predominant appeal, the appeal to men's senses rather than to men's judgment as a basis for religion:

> . . . as reasonable Men could not be this grossly enslaved and imposed upon without some artifices, they have therefore

> taken prudent Care to dazzle and amuse weak Minds by the multitude of their shows and Ceremonies, to gratify all their Senses by a Profession of gaudy Ornaments, Splendid Temples, exquisite Statues and Pictures . . . and to varnish the Outside of Religion with so glaring Lusture and Splendor, that their reasons and Judgments might be taken off from enquiring and looking into its intrinsick Worth and Value (I, 14, p. 61).

Almost fifteen years earlier, in The Christian Hero (1701), Steele had written that, contrary to the Catholic method, the apostle Paul, who "by frequent brisk Sallies and quick Interrogatives," shows himself to be skilled in "approaching the Passions by Rhetoric," is quite "Modest in any of those Ornaments, and strikes all along at the Reason, where he never fails to convince the attentive and unprejudiced" (CH, p. 53). Finally, Steele objects to the force of custom as a basis of one's faith:

> Can we take anything with us that can make us cheerful, ready and prepared for all occasions, and can support us against all Encounters? Yes, we may (if we would receive it), a Confidence in God (CH, p. 14).

But it must not "be impos'd upon Men by a blind force or custom or the Artifice of . . . Persons."

On the contrary, Steele will accept only conviction as the basis for religious conversion. In Tatler 74, he says: "I have the deepest regard to conviction and will never act against it." And this "conviction," he believed, is an act of the intellect. Perhaps it will be useful to review a few of Steele's statements that show this. First, he makes a distinction between one's conversion, or profession of faith as he phrases it, and the conviction of the mind which precedes it; a profession of faith can be acceptable when it "proceeds from the conviction" of one's mind (Eng. I, 38, p. 153). In other words, Steele can conceive of one's being convicted and still not be professing his

faith, that is, become a Christian. Or, to state this still another way, "conviction," in Steele's view, is the means, leading to a profession of faith. Second, he seems to use "convince" interchangeably with "convict." In the Englishman (I, 38, p. 155), Steele said a profession of faith proceeds not from torture, but from "conviction of the mind." In another Englishman paper (I, 14, p. 61), Steele shows what he means to be persuaded: men are to use their "reasons and Judgements" to inquire into "its [religion's] intrinsick Worth and Value." The tenets of religion are to be accepted because the judgment faculty has determined their worth. This is what Steele says in The Christian Hero, but he uses the word "convince." Paul, he says, is a skilled rhetorician, but he rarely uses this ability; instead he "strikes at the reason where he never fails to convince the attentive and unprejudiced" (p. 53).

Indeed, Steele thought that every step man takes in religion is an act of the reason; first, Christian doctrine is reasonable; second, one should accept Christian doctrine only after he is convinced of its worth; third, Christian doctrine can be defended by reason; and finally, one rationally practices his Christianity.

Christian doctrine, Steele believed, appeals to the reason. Consequently, he finds Paul, all along, appealing to the "reason" and if one will give him a fair hearing, he never "fails to convince." Furthermore, Steele believed that the intrinsic worth of Christian doctrine is evident. In an Englishman paper (I, 14, p. 61), Steele says that the Catholic Church dazzles the eyes of reasonable men so that their judgments and reason are taken off from inquiring into the "intrinsick Worth and Value" of that Church. The implications are that

reasonable men should not permit themselves to be dazzled, nor should a church do this to gain converts. Reasonable men should use their judgments to consider the "intrinsic worth of any doctrine."

Since Christian doctrine appeals to the reason, and since the reason and the judgment are to inquire into the intrinsic worth of a doctrine, one should not accept any doctrine until he is convinced of its worth. Steele suggests that the Catholic clergy would persuade "by blind force or custom" that all "mirth and Gaiety" is not in harmony with a spiritual life and would "give us a melancholy Prospect; Let us not," though, "be frightened from the liberal use of our Senses, or merely resign our present opinion, till we are convinced from our own Reflections also, that there is something in that opinion which can make us" better spiritually than the "methods we are already engaged in" (CH, p. 14).

Another criterion Steele submits, that must be met by a doctrine before one accepts it, is that a doctrine must not contradict the senses. Steele rejects transubstantiation because it contradicts the senses as he shows in the Guardian's comparison of a "pseudo-freethinker's" contradictory statements to the Catholic's contradictory beliefs in accepting transubstantiation:

> I had the diversion of hearing the same men in one breath persuade us to freedom of thought, and in the next offer to demonstrate that we had no freedom in anything. One would think men should blush to find themselves entangled in a greater contradiction than any discourse ridicules. This principle of free fatality, or necessary liberty, is a worthy fundamental of the new sect; and indeed this opinion is an evidence and clearness so nearly related to transubstantiation, that the same genius seems requisite

> for either. It is fit the world should know how far reason abandons men that would employ it against religion.[18]

Furthermore, a doctrine cannot be accepted if it is manifestly absurd. Steele objects to the Catholic doctrine of celibacy on this basis; it is "ridiculous" because it denies one "honest Gratifications which are allowed to Natural Desires." "I say," he continues, that "this one unreasonable circumstance, one would suppose, might open the Eyes of all Nations" to the errors of Catholic doctrine (Eng. II, 14, p. 308). To sum up briefly, Steele seems to have accepted a sort of empirical, or pragmatic, theological rationalism. He suggests that one accepts Christianity when he is convinced that it is true, and one accepts any specific doctrine only after his judgment has determined its intrinsic worth.

The next step in the function of the reason needs to be emphasized; it is by the reason that men choose to accept and practice Christianity. In an Englishman paper Steele suggests that the decision to accept or reject an opinion is made by the reason:

> Men who are together from their Passions, follow each other by the Heap, while those who fall into the same Rank from consent in opinion, are obliged to wait the slow degrees of conviction. Men who do not act by Reason, take a Leader, as Sheep jump after the Bell-Wearer (II, 17, p. 319).

Awaiting the slow degree of conviction before one consents is to act by reason.[19] Perhaps it appears that this point has been belabored,

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[18] The Guardian, Three Vols., XIII, XIV, XV, in The British Essayists, ed., A. Chalmers (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1863), No. 9, XIII, 119. Hereafter all references to The Guardian will be cited parenthetically, by Guardian number, volume, and page number.

[19] The reader is reminded of Steele's distinction between one's being convinced--or convicted--and one's profession of faith. Steele wrote that "Paul strikes all along at the reason, where he never fails

that it is fairly obvious. One reason for emphasis is that Steele and his Anglican rationalist mentors opposed the Enthusiasts' insistence that religious conviction is separate from reason. The other reason for emphasis is that Steele's criticism of life is undergirded by this tenet; anything one does during his life must be done as a result of personal choice, this choice being made by the reason. Hence, Steele's philosophy of life is built on a rational foundation.

There is an important term that needs to be connected to personal choice, a term used by Steele throughout his writings from very early to late, even being incorporated into the title of his last play, the term "conscious." Steele introduces this term in his The Christian Hero and shows what he means by the word: "They did therefore Eat and were undone; they offended God, and like all their succeeding Criminals against him, were conscious that they did so" (CH, p. 38). Steele goes on to make the point that all men have repeated Adam's and Eve's sin; when man turns from God's Order for his life to an "independent Model of Life," he plucks the forbidden fruit (CH, p. 40). Continuing, Steele argues that God's Word will effect a change in a person like a "great Revolution," during which "God's Empire" is established, "not by Conquest, but a Right much more lasting, arduous and indisputable conviction; for our slavery being Intellectual and in our Bosoms, the Redemption must be there also" (CH, pp. 40-41). Conscious sin, then, means that Adam and Eve decided intellectually to sin. Redemption also is the result of intellectual activity. "Conscious Christianity," thus,

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to convince." Then Steele believes that a profession of faith, that is an acceptance of the Christian faith, must proceed from the conviction of the mind (Eng. I, 38, p. 155). This acceptance of Christianity is also an act of reason, Steele believes.

is one's choosing to accept Christianity. Throughout his writings, Steele advocates that one, to be human, must live his life as he personally chooses, chooses by his reason. This is conscious living.[20] Apparently, Steele equated being Christian with being fully human.

Furthermore, Steele believes that the doctrines of the Church of England, which he equated with Christian doctrine, could be defended by reason:

> Now let us consider how this bill, the Schism Bill, will affect the Church of England. It will bring upon it great and unanswerable Scandal. It will give arguments to her Enemies that she is unable to defend herself by Reason and truth. It will carry in it all the Guilt which we object against the Roman Catholics in founding her Power in the blind Obedience of the people and not in the conviction of their minds ("Schism Bill," TP, p. 249).

Therefore, he is critical of Catholic apologists who offer loaded words appealing to prejudice, but do not offer arguments to convince their opponents ("The Fr. Faith," TP, p. 271). Steele, like the Anglican rationalists, equates faith and knowledge. Christian doctrine must be believed only when one is convinced in his mind that it is truth, and any church has the responsibility to defend its doctrines by offering proof of their truth.

Since Christian doctrine can be defended by reason, and since no one ought to accept a doctrine that cannot be proved true, Steele opposes the late seventeenth-century Catholic view which settles all

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[20] Tillotson, Tillotson, Sermon XLIX, "Concerning Stedfastness in Religion"; p. 586, stresses that man's acceptance of the Christian religion ought to be the issue of his free choice: "Not that they, the Israelites, whom Joshua was addressing just before his death, were at liberty whether they would serve the true God, or not; but to insinuate to them that Religion ought to be their free choice: And likewise that the true religion hath those real advantages on its Side, that it may safely be prefer'rd to any considerate man's choice."

controversy by authority or faith:

> If ambition were spirited with zeal, what would follow but that his [the French king's] people should be converted into an Army, whose Swords can make Right in power, and solve Controversy in Belief. And if any men should be stiffnecked to the Doctrine of that visible Church, let them be contented with an Oar and a Chain . . . (Spec. 516).

In the Lover (No. 35, PJ, p. 124), Steele uses the word "faith" in the same way: "Miranda [a ficticious name] is one of those fashionable Ladies, who expecting implicit Faith from their admirers, are impatient and affronted at the least show of Contradiction." Then the paper gives an example of Miranda's being contradicted. In a conversation with the letter writer (this was one of the Lover's "letters" from a "correspondent"), Miranda remarked that the author of a certain book was possessed of a lively imagination to be so old. The writer replied that he knew the author to be but forty. Her reply: " . . . whether that was my Breeding to contradict a Lady." "Faith" in this context, as in the above quotation, means that one accepts what is said solely on the authority of who said it; one is not to question whether it is or is not the truth. Steele, like the Anglican polemicists of the late seventeenth century, objects to such authoritarianism. One does not believe a doctrine simply because the Church has said it.

Furthermore, if one is not to accept Christian doctrine on the basis of church authority, neither does he accept it on the basis of any authority only, not even the authority of revelation. Although the Scriptures are God's revelation, there is still nothing in them that is not reasonable.

Steele's Christian rationalism is evident also in his insistence on the conscious practice of Christianity. More specifically, Steele

believed that forgiving another man is a conscious act. He believed this when he wrote The Christian Hero (1701):

> But this extensive Magnanimity, according to the Rules of our Faith, is not to be bestowed on those only who are our Friends, but must reach also to our very Enemies; though good Sense as well as Religion is the most arduous Pitch human Nature can arrive at; a Coward has often Conquer'd, but a Coward never Forgave. . . . [This] Power of doing . . . flows from a Strength of Soul conscious of its power . . . (CH, p. 80).

And ten years later, when he published his The Spectator, he says that forgiveness is the "greatest Act of the Human Mind" (Spec. 97). Furthermore, the Christian virtue of patience is a conscious act. In The Christian Hero Steele suggests that the Latins who committed suicide ran from life (p. 69). In contrast, the Christian is supplied with "one constant Motive for living, a confidence in God." Because of this confidence in God, the Christian will "accommodate" himself to the troublesome irregularities of life, that "will (in spite of all our care and Vigilance) befall us"; and he will "accommodate" himself "so far, as to bear 'em with the greatest Decency and handsomest Patience he is able" (CH, pp. 68-69).

Steele recommends the conscious practice of two other Christian virtues, forbearance and chastity. However, he adds a dimension: although one is to practice virtue because he personally chooses to do so, one's motive must be proper or he cannot be considered virtuous. Steele says that the proper motive is one's desire to do his Christian duty. In other words, one must not be motivated purely by pragmatic expediency. The practice of forbearance "in itself," which Steele enthusiastically recommends as a happy antidote to dueling, does not constitute a great "Act of the Mind." In the first place, one might

not even resent an insult which, Steele says, could result from stupidity. In the second place, one might "Forbear Vengeance for Fear of the Person who does the injury; this is poor and base." In either case, the fact that one did not prosecute resentment did not make him pious. "But to suppress Resentment, for the sake of Virtue, and conquering a strong Impulse to revenge because a Man knows it is his Duty, is heroick" ("The Antidone," II, TP, p. 515).[21] Likewise, mere enforced chastity is no virtue:

> Nunneries and Monasteries are the Goals of Ecclesiastical Tyrrany, The prodigious Cheat of Locking up Young People of both sexes, by ridiculous and superogatory Vows of Chastity and abstinence, in bar of the honest Gratification which are allowed to Natural desires, and given us for the Ends of Providence. . . . Men and Women are preserved from Incontinence, as thieves and Cut-throats are from Bloodshed and Rapine; not by Precepts which should create in them an abhorrence of committing those Sins, but by Locks and Bar, which put it out of their Power to commit them (Eng. II, 14, p. 308).

For continence to be a virtue, it must be practiced not because one has been misled to believe that the "honest Gratifications of Natural

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[21] This argument involves Steele in a philosophical difficulty. Previously, he seems to have argued for a kind of pragmatic virtue. For example, he insisted that the intrinsic worth of Christian doctrine could be demonstrated and that one accepts any doctrine on that basis. Furthermore, Steele rejects a doctrine that, in his view, is manifestly absurd. This is almost pure empirical rationalism. One is virtuous because it is practical to be virtuous. Here, however, Steele seems to be saying that purely practical reasons for refusing a duel--such as the danger of being killed--is not sufficient to make one virtuous. If one is to be counted virtuous, he must refuse a duel because to refuse is his duty to do right, and he must be aware of this duty. Steele and the Anglican rationalists have a similar problem in their urging of hope of a reward and fear of punishment as proper motivation for practicing virtue. This is reasonable they said. Shaftesbury had pointed out that if this were the motive for practicing virtue, one was not virtuous. The question of motivation is complex and Steele's arguments show that he has not solved the problem. Perhaps he saw no problem. He might have made a circular argument: One's Christian duty ought to be fulfilled because it is his Christian duty. But this duty can be demonstrated to one's mind as being reasonable, or practical.

Desires" are sinful, nor because one simply has no power--or opportunity--to commit fornication, but because one abhors the sin and chooses to do right. In The Christian Hero, Steele emphasizes this point that one must choose to practice continence because incontinence is so ugly a sin, by reminding his readers that consciousness of Christ's clean body, and knowledge of Christ's promise to help resolve the conflicts of the soul should keep one from fornication. After he quotes I Cor. 6:15, "Know ye not that your bodies are the member of Christ? Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid," Steele concludes:

> How ugly has he made Corinna at one Sentence? Shall I, who am conscious that he who laid down an immaculate Body, to cleanse me from the Filth and Stain of a Polluted one and Know that the Holy Jesus has promis'd to be present to all the conflicts of my Soul, Banish Him Thence, and be Guilty of so unnatural a Coition as to throw that Temple into the Embraces of a Mercenary Strumpet? (CH, p. 64)[22]

Forbearance and continence are fundamentally virtues of the mind and must be practiced from choice made upon the basis of one's desire to please God and refrain from evil.

Part of living a Christian life was worship of God, and acceptable worship, Steele believed, must proceed from one who is conscious of what he is doing. To worship consciously, a man must understand what is taking place, he must be attentive, and he must worship because he personally chooses to. First, Steele believed that one's worship ought to be rational because he insisted that the worshipper understand what he is doing. Thus, he objects to any nonsensical worship.

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[22] I have been unable to identify "Corrina." Likely, the name is a classical pseudonym deriving from classical-pastoral tradition, and appears to refer to any harlot.

For example, Steele is impatient with certain "Books of Devotion" commonly used in home worship because they contain nonsensical prayers. However, Steele is not opposed to worship in the home, nor is he opposed to all prayer books. He heartily commends the Book of Common Prayer as "containing the best Prayers that ever were compos'd"; he agrees with "Dr. S___e" who stated: "The Common Prayer . . . was as perfect as anything of Human Institution" (Spec. 147). Steele does not name any other prayer books he approves, nor does he name those he objects to, but Bond suggests that Steele might refer to A Weeks Preparation Towards A Worthy Receiving of the Lord's Supper, by G. B. (1679), and Monthly Preparations for the Holy Communion, by R. B. (1696).[23] Though Steele does not lay down a criterion for acceptable prayer books, he is specific as to why he objects to certain prayer books:

> I have known those among us who think, if they every Morning and Evening spend an Hour in their closet, and read over so many Prayers in Six or Seven Books of Devotion, all equally nonsensical . . . they may all the rest of their time go on in whatever their particular Passion leads them to (Spec. 79).

Reading prayers that are nonsensical does nothing for a man's spirituality. In fact, these nonsensical prayer books are conducive to mechanical devotion:

> Much of this lack of real devotion I take to proceed from the Indiscretion of the Books themselves, whose very Titles of Weekly Preparations, and such limited Godliness, lead people of ordinary Capacities into great Errors, and raise in them a Mechanical Religion, entirely distinct from Morality (Spec. 79).

Steele also chides and exhorts preachers not to use nonsensical expressions in their prayers before the congregation. One of these

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[23] The Spectator, I, 341, n. 1.

expressions, which the "writer" has heard frequently when the preacher brings in the last petition, is "O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but this once." As if, the "writer" says,

> there was no difference between Abraham's interceding for Sodom, for which he had no Warrant, as we can find, and our asking those things which we are required to pray for; they would therefore have much more Reason to fear his Anger if they did not make such petitions to him (Spec. 312).

When a preacher prays, he should give careful attention to his words in order that both he and the worshippers understand exactly what is said. Furthermore, Steele is critical of preachers who "dote on controversy" but do not preach to edify, and who use big words such as "orthodox" and "heterodox." Steele suggests that they become patients in the Tatler's hospital until they "shall recover a right use of senses" (Tatler 142). He is especially critical of the jargon used in some Dissenting churches, which he calls "cant." "Cant," Steele says, "signifies all sudden Exclamations, Whinings, Unusual Tones, and in fine all Praying and Preaching like the unlearned of the Presbyterians" (Spec. 147). In this same paper, Steele, warming to his point, says: "As the matter of worship is now managed in Dissenting Congregations you find insignificant Words and Phrases raised by a lively Vehemence" (Spec. 147). Hence, praying or preaching that is liberally sprinkled with nonsensical words which neither the user nor the listener understands is less than useless. It is neither praise to God nor edifying to men.

In addition, Steele exhorts worshippers to give attention to what they are doing; otherwise in their prayers they are merely going through a ritual mechanically. Steele rebukes vain ladies who, at private prayers in their closets, do not concentrate on their prayers for

looking at themselves in the Mirror:

> The Beauteous Philanthia . . . is one of the Votaries; she has a very pretty furnished Closet, to which she retires at her appointed Hours, this is her Dressingroom, as well as Chapel; she has constantly before her a large Looking-glass, and upon the Table, according to a very witty author, "Together lye her Prayer-Book and Paint/ at once t'improve the sinner and the Saint." It must be a good Scene, if one could be present at it, to see this Idol by turns lift her Eyes to Heav'n, and Steal Glances at her own dear person (Spec. 79).

In this same paper Steele gives the example of another lady who is so given to "this sort of Devotion" that though she spends six to eight hours everyday playing cards, "she never misses one constant hour of prayer." While she is gone to pray, another holds her cards, "to which she returns with no little anxiousness 'till two or three in the morning" (Spec. 79).

Such worship will not do, Steele says: "all these acts are but empty shows, and, as it were, Compliments made to virtue; the mind is all the while untouched with any true Pleasure in the Pursuit of it" (Spec. 79). "Mind" is the key word: for worship to be acceptable, it must proceed from the mind. One must understand what he is doing, one's attention must be centered on heaven, and one must find pleasure in devotion. In short, prayer is a conscious act of the mind. A "letter writer" to the Spectator describes a conscious prayer he offered at a recent service:

> My eyes and My Thoughts could not Wander as usual but were confin'd to my Prayers: I then consider'd I address'd my self to the Almighty, and not to a beautiful Face, and when I reflected on my former Performance of that Duty, I found I had run it over as a matter of Form, in comparison to the Manner in which I then discharged it. My Mind was really affected, and fervent wishes accompanied my Words (Spec. 147).

In Steele's cares that worship not be purely mechanical, he touches a problem experienced by almost any church with a liturgical worship, whether worshippers are merely going through the liturgical motions or going through the liturgical motiong with consciously proper intentions. As usual, Steele was not the first to notice this problem, but his emphasis of the conscious element, i.e. having the proper intentions, is one of the special features he emphasizes.

Calhoun Winton has suggested that Steele's stance as a defender of the Christian religion and morality is "only superficially a traditional one." In reality, Winton believes,

> Steele is looking to the future. Religion and morality are going forces and are admissible insofar as they are socially useful; they are validated, so to speak, by their social utility.[24]

What Winton seems to be saying is that Steele's principal interest was in social and political questions, not in religious ones. But in Steele's day arguments about either usually had a religious moral base; Steele argued from the traditional religion of his country, the Anglican Church. How sincerely he believed the theology of his Church is perhaps open to question.

However, it is possible that Steele's superficial attitude--assuming that Winton is correct--is directed only towards traditional Anglican theology, but not towards religion. Furthermore, Steele's superficiality toward theology may mean only that he was not particularly interested in theology. This would be in harmony with his Christian rationalism, part of which was an emphasis on rational piety

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[24] Sir Richard Steele, MP: The Later Years (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 238.

(Tatler 19, for example). "Rational Piety," C. S. Lewis says, "is by its very nature not very doctrinal."[25] Lewis makes the following statement to describe Addison's religious views. Addison's essays, Lewis believes,

> do not invite criticism in terms of any very definite theology. They are everywhere "pious." Rational Piety, together with Polite Letters and Simplicity, is one of the hallmarks of the age which Addison was partly interpreting but partly also bringing into existence. . . . Perhaps the most illuminating passage is the essay on "Sir Roger at Church," and especially the quotation from Pythagoras prefixed to it--"Honour first the immortal gods according to the established mode." That is the very note of Rational Piety. A sensible man goes with his society, according to local and ancestral usage. And he does so with complete sincerity. Clean clothes and the sound of bells on Sunday morning do really throw him into a mood of sober benevolence, not "clouded by enthusiasm" but inviting his thoughts to approach the very mystery of things.[26]

With some modification, this could describe Richard Steele. Steele was opposed to a highly emotional worship service; he preferred the quiet reverence of Anglican prayers and the reasoned sermon appealing to one's reflection. For another thing, although he thought that one must be convinced by his reason before he accepted Christianity, or any of its doctrines, he does indicate that worshipping according to the established religion is important. True freethinkers, as well as the Reformation leaders, "all complied with the religion of their country as much as possible, in such particulars as did not contradict and pervert these great and fundamental doctrines of mankind" (Tatler 135). Although Steele does not specify any of these

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[25] "Addison," Essays on the Eighteenth Century: Presented to David Nichol Smith, eds. J. S. and F. P. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945), p. 4.

[26] Essays on the Eighteenth Century, p. 4; Addison, Spec. 112.

"particulars" that one can comply with, he must have believed that there were some. At any rate, one can say of Steele, as Lewis said of Addison, his essays "do not invite criticism in terms of any very definite theology." Still, in spite of his "superficial" attitude toward theology, Steele could have been a sincere Church of England man.

CHAPTER IV

STEELE'S VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE

The question of man's nature has been important in Western thought. Indeed, it may not be an overstatement to say that the whole tradition of Western thought divides on the question of what constitutes man's nature. This question can be stated in several ways: is man a rational animal and does that definition imply that only man has reason? Does it imply that man has free will, and that only man has free will? Steele's writings show he was vitally interested in man's nature, and although no one could ever claim that Steele systematically discusses the question, his statements about man's nature will show a unifying theme, his basic conscious rationalism.

One should expect Steele to believe that man is basically a rational being in view of his high claims for reason in religious matters. If one's religion is grounded on his reason so that he decides by reason to accept the Christian religion after it has been demonstrated to his reason that it is true and profitable, he is capable of grounding all life's activities on reason. Steele, then, answers "yes" to the above questions. However, there are two other questions pertinent to any discussion of man's nature: Why does evil exist? and are emotions predominantly good or bad? Steele has declared himself on all these questions, but his views might be better defined by

laying them by the side of two schools of thought, influential during Steele's life. For convenience, these are called the "School of Shaftesbury" and the "School of Hobbes." The views of these schools on man's nature differed widely; Steele's views fell somewhere between them.

Shaftesbury believed that men are born naturally good. That is, men are born with a moral sense. By a moral sense Shaftesbury does not mean "the Notion of what is good or ill in the Species or Society." Everyone, he continues, "Discerns and owns a publick Interest, and is conscious of what affects his Fellowship or Community," and this notion cannot be taken away.[1] Everyone--even the most wicked--for example, knows that "Offense and Injury" are punishable and that "equal Behaviour" (called merit) is "rewardable."[2] How everyone knows this, Shaftesbury does not say. By moral sense he means "a real Antipathy or Aversion to Injustice or Wrong, and . . . a real Affection or Love towards Equity and Right for its own sake, and on the account of its own natural Beauty and Worth."[3] And this

> Sense of Right and Wrong therefore being as natural to use as natural Affection itself, and being a first Principle in our Constitution and Make; there is no speculative Opinion, Persuasion, or Belief, which is capable immediately or directly to exclude or destroy it.[4]

Indeed, "'Tis evident that a Creature having this sort of Sense or

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[1] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 1; I, 40.

[2] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 1; I, 41.

[3] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 1; I, 42.

[4] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 3, I, 52.

good Affection . . . must necessarily act according to it. . . ."[5] However, Shaftesbury seems ambiguous. Shaftesbury usually defines moral sense to be a type of intuition, or non-empirical knowledge; yet, he also uses it synonymously with reason. Furthermore, Shaftesbury confuses the knowledge of what is moral with the motivation to practice morality. He does seem to suggest that man's moral sense is an intuitive knowledge by which one can immediately discern virtue and vice:

> 'Tis full as impossible to conceive that a rational Creature coming first to be try'd by rational Objects, and receiving into his Mind the Images or Representations of Justice, Generosity, Gratitude, or other Virtue, shou'd have no Liking of these or Dislike of their contrarys, but to be found absolutely indifferent towards whatsoever is presented to him of this. A Soul, indeed, may as well be without Admiration in the Things of which it has any knowledge. Coming therefore to a Capacity of seeing and admiring in this new way, it must needs find a Beauty and a Deformity as well in Actions, Minds, and Tempers, as in Figures, Sounds, and Colours.[6]

Yet, in another passage he seems to believe that one possesses before he is able to "reason" or "reflect," many

> good Qualitys and Affections, as Love to his Kind, Courage, Gratitude, or Pity. 'Tis certain that if you give to this Creature a reflecting Faculty, it will at the same instant approve of Gratitude, Kindness, and Pity; be taken with any shew or representation of the social Passion, and think nothing more amiable than this, or more odious than the contrary. And this is to be capable of Virtue, and to have a Sense of Right and Wrong.[7]

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[5] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 3; I, 52.

[6] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 1; I, 43. One might observe that in this passage Shaftesbury seems close to the belief of the Cambridge Platonists. At least there is some parallel. The Cambridge Platonists thought that one was born with the knowledge of God in his soul. This knowledge was as natural as the knowledge of a perfect triangle. Shaftesbury seems to be arguing that the knowledge--if that is the proper word--of morality is as natural as sense impression.

[7] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 3; I, 53.

Is Shaftesbury, then, in this passage saying that when one's reflective faculty approves what he has been doing from affection, he has moral sense?

Furthermore, this passage seems to make a distinction between the knowledge--or sense--of right and wrong and the motivation to practice virtue. One's reflective faculty that approves the good and condemns vice is the moral sense, but he is motivated to practice virtue by his affections, which are naturally inclined to benevolism. However, in another passage he seems to make the moral sense and motivation the same faculty: "it [moral sense] must consist in a real Antipathy or Aversion to Injustice or Wrong, and in a real Affection or Love towards Equity and Right for its own sake. . . ."[8] Perhaps the difficulty cannot be resolved; yet one can conclude that Shaftesbury obviously held a fairly optimistic view of human nature. Generally, he believed that everyone is born with a moral sense by which he intuitively recognizes virtue and vice and that this moral sense includes benevolent affections. Men will of necessity follow these affections unless they are rendered ineffectual.

These affections can be rendered ineffectual by what "takes away the natural and just Sense of Right and Wrong; Or creates a wrong Sense of it; Or causes the right Sense to be oppos'd by contrary Affections."[9]

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[8] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 1; I, 42. Though Shaftesbury was ambiguous here, the distinction between the knowledge of right and wrong and the motivation to practice virtue was important to the Anglican rationalists.

[9] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 2; I, 40.

The primary affections opposing the moral sense are "some settled sedate Affection towards a conceiv'd private good" or "some sudden, strong, and forcible Passion, as of Lust or Anger, which may not only subdue the Sense of Right and Wrong, but the very Sense of private Good itself. . . ."[10] As long as the good affections predominate, one will be a good person.[11]

Hobbes' view of human nature was considerably different from Shaftesbury's. First, whereas Shaftesbury believed that men are naturally benevolent, Hobbes believed that men are naturally selfish. All men, Hobbes believed, when they "live without a common Power to keep them all in awe . . . are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man." There are "in the nature of man . . . three principall causes of quarrell. First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly Glory." Man is a natural "enemy" to all other men because he is egoistic.[12]

However, men will give up some of their natural liberty to a commonwealth so that they might live at "Peace." But men do not desire to live at peace because they feel kindly towards their fellows, but because their "Passions . . . encline them to Peace . . . Feare of Death; Desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and

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[10] "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 3; I, 52. Shaftesbury is especially impatient with revealed religion or any religion--which in his view cultivates the self love principle, which takes away from one's true virtue. This has been discussed in Chapter II of this thesis.

[11] In this matter one could hardly call Shaftesbury a rationalist. To be sure, this view is anti-rational although in his theology, he is quite rationalistic, according to Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background: Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1940), p. 57.

[12] Leviathan, I, 13.

a Hope by their Industry to obtain them."[13] So men agree to live at peace because of egoistic feelings. And these affections are "no sin," Hobbes affirms.[14] He simply wants men to understand the motives of most actions.

Second, man is not born with any sort of moral sense:

> To this warre of every man against every man, this also is consequent; that nothing can be Unjust. The notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have their place. Where there is no common Power, there is no Law: Where no Law, no Injustice. Force and Fraud, are in warre, the two Cardinall Virtues. Justice, and Injustice are none of the Faculties neither of the Body, nor Mind. If they were, they might be in a man that were alone in the world, that relate to men in Society, not in Solitude.[15]

Seemingly, man is born only with his senses and his affections, which are egoistic. These affections, or desires, furnish the motivation for men's actions.

Third, man acquires other faculties of the mind which aid him in governing his life: "Prudence," which "is but Experience," and "Anticipation; that is, by force, or wiles, to master the persons of all men he can, so long, till he see no other power great enough to endanger him: And this is no more than his own conservation requireth; and is generally allowed"; and finally "Hope in the attaining of our Ends."[16]

There is another faculty of the mind, "Reason," that is neither innate, nor gotten by "Experience only, as Prudence is; but attayned by Industry." Most men, Hobbes believes, "have the use of Reasoning a

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[13] Leviathan, I, 13.

[14] Leviathan, I, 13.

[15] Leviathan, I, 13.

[16] Leviathan, I, 13. Hobbes, Leviathan, I, 4, believes that men are born with the sense and memory faculties.

little way, as in numbering to some degree; yet it serves them to little use in common life."[17] Men are served generally by their affections, inclinations, and acquired faculties such as "Prudence," "anticipation," and "Hope."

Hobbes' view of man's nature is either pessimistic or humanistic, depending on how one personally views man's nature. Hobbes did not condemn men; he simply said, this is the way men are. Hobbes' teaching that men are predominately egoistic and non-rational in the sense that the faculty of reason does not guide the lives of most men might cause many to accuse him of degrading human nature.

Two other important figures in the egoistic school were La Rochefoucald and Rochester. Bertrand Goldgar believes that the egoistic doctrine, at the heart of Hobbes' view of human nature, is expressed by La Rochefoucald. This doctrine--"Les Passions ne sont que les divers gouts de l'amour-proper," Goldgar says, was often accompanied by a "psychological anti-rationalism." This means, Goldgar says, that one's "self-love and difinative passions are more powerful than reason."[18] A sampling of La Rochefoucald's "Maxims" will show him to be kin to Hobbes' egoistic view of human nature:

17. The modesty of happy persons comes from the peace of mind which good fortune lends to their spirits.

19. We all have strength to bear the misfortunes of others.

38. We make our promises according to our hopes, and keep them according to our fears.

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[17] Leviathan, I, 4.

[18] The Curse of Party (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 12.

123. We could scarcely ever enjoy ourselves, if we never flattered ourselves.

149. To refuse praise means that you want to be praised twice.

22. Philosophy easily triumphs over past and future evils; but present evils triumph over philosophy.

78. For most of mankind, love of justice is nothing more than the fear of suffering injustice.

132. It is easier to be wise for others than to be wise about oneself.

102. The head is forever fooled by the heart.[19]

A third important writer in Hobbes' tradition is the Earl of Rochester. Of Rochester's "A Satyr against Reason and Mankind," David M. Vieth says that it is "indebted to Hobbes, Montaigne, and the tradition of le libertinage generally."[20] Whether one would or would not agree with this evaluation of Rochester, in his "Satyr Against Reason," Rochester attacks man and man's power of reason:

> Were I (who to my cost already am
> one of those strange, prodigious creatures, Man)
>
> A spirit free, to choose from my own share,
> What case of flesh and blood I pleased to wear,
> I'd be a dog, monkey, or a bear,
> Or anything but that vain animal
> Who is so proud of being rational.
> (ll. 1-7)[21]

In presenting his views on human nature, Steele has nothing new to offer. Again, as in his religious views, his virtue lies not in

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[19] World Masterpieces, eds., Maynard Mack, et al. Third ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1973), I, 131-32.

[20] The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, ed., David M. Vieth (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968), p. 94.

[21] The Complete Poems of Rochester, ed., David M. Vieth, p. 94.

original thought, but in popularizing the moral and political views of a rapidly developing Whig aristocracy. Man, Steele believes, is a three-part being, body, emotions and reason, the last two comprehending man's uniqueness: "The virtues of tenderness, compassion, and humanity, are those by which men are distinguished from brutes, as much as by reason itself . . ." (Tatler 134).

The body, Steele counted of little importance:

> Man is a creature of so mix'd composure, and of a Frame so inconsistent and different from its self, that it easily speaks his affinity to the highest and meanest Beings, that is to say, he is made of Body and Soul, he is at once an Engine and an Engineer: tho indeed both that Body and Soul act in many Instances separate and independent of each other; For when he thinks, reasons, and concludes, he has not in all that Work the least assistance from his Body: His finest Fibres, purest Blood, and highest Spirits are as brute and distant from a capacity of thinking as his very Bones; and the Body is so mere a machine, that it Hungers, Thirsts, Tastes, and Digests, without any exerted thought of the Mind (CH, p. 35).

The body, Steele believes, makes man kin to the animals; it is an engine, a mere machine; it has nothing to do with man's thinking; and it has appetites, peculiar to it, that are unrelated to thought. The body, then, is neither good nor bad.

In his view of the emotions, he shares some views with Shaftesbury. Steele believed that man possesses both kinds of emotions, benevolence and self-love. Disagreeing with Hobbes, Steele believes that man is born with a natural desire to do others good:

> If . . . concern arises from innate Benevolence, it never fails of Success; if from a Vanity to excell, its disappointment is no less certain. What we call an agreeable man is he who is endowed with that natural Bent to do acceptable things, from a delight he takes in them meerly as such. . . ." (Spec. 280).

Feeling for others is part of one's nature as Steele shows by commending

a statement in a comedy by Terence:

> In the first Scene of the Comedy, when one of the old men accuses the other of Impertinence for Interposing in his affairs, he answers, 'I am a Man, and cannot help feeling any Sorrow that can arrive at man'" (Spec. 502).[22]

Because of such passages some critics suggest that perhaps Steele was a benevolist. When Blanchard edited The Christian Hero, she said that Steele's view of man was fundamentally pessimistic, meaning that man's egoistic affections are predominant. However, Blanchard seems to have changed her mind. In 1958, she says, concerning Steele's story in the Lover, No. 36:

> This story of Provincial Maryland might be regarded as a literary document in the English crusade for the abolition of slavery, very near its beginnings in 1714, or as an early treatment of the 'Noble Savagery' of the American Negro, a 'Natural Man' with a disposition toward humanized conduct.[23]

By 1963 she is almost convinced that he is indeed a "benevolist."[24] Bertrand Goldgar is not quite so strong, but suggests that both Addison and Steele inclined toward the benevolist view. He agrees, however, that their statements in favor of the benevolist view are not

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[22] Terence might not have agreed with Steele's interpretation of this remark as it is more benevolist than Terence's. Other places in which Steele speaks of innate benevolism are Spec. 51, "good Natural Impulses that are in the audience"; Tatler 183, "seeds of generosity planted" in the heart.

[23] "Richard Steele's Maryland Story," American Quarterly, 10 (1958), 82.

[24] "Richard Steele and the Secretary of the SPCK," Restoration and Eighteenth Century Literature, ed., Carrol Camden (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 387. Even in her introduction to The Christian Hero, p. xvi, after stating that Steele was fundamentally a pessimist, Blanchard says that he refused to draw completely pessimistic conclusions about man's nature.

really clear.[25] John Harold Wilson, defining sentimental comedy, says that it dwelt upon the tender emotions for their own sake and presented good characters to be emulated or bad characters to be reformed by appeals to their fundamental goodness. A popular example, Wilson suggests, is Steele's Conscious Lovers.[26] Ricardo Quintana agrees that comedy underwent a change in its

> nature with the introduction of sentimental comedy. Instead of showing folly and knavery, it showed error; instead of portraying the fool and knave as incorrigible and thus in a sense true to the laws of their own being, it portrayed the aberrant character as open to reformation.

Quintana continued by observing that "the older view of man still prevailed in certain quarters--one thinks of Swift, of Samuel Johnson," but in Steele's variety of sentimental comedy, "human nature was always seen as innately generous--and quickly touched by the altruistic emotions." Quintana believes that "Steele is rightly regarded as the true founder of sentimental comedy." Quintana cites Steele's The Lying Lover as bearing

> the clearest marks of sentimentality. As the Preface tells us, the hero Bookwit 'makes false love, gets drunk, and kills his man; but in the fifth Act awakens from his debauch, with compunction and remorse. . . .' His anguish and the mutual sorrows between an only child and a tender father are perhaps, Steele proceeds, 'an injury to the rules of comedy, but I am sure they are a justice to those of morality.'

Continuing by commenting on Steele's later play The Conscious Lovers, Quintana thinks that it also "serves to illustrate admirably the

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[25] Curse of Party, pp. 12-13.

[26] Six Eighteenth Century Plays (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1963), p. x.

characteristics of early sentimental comedy."[27] However, Quintana does not discuss Cimberton, who is an unconverted knave. The point here is not to discuss whether Steele did or did not write sentimental drama, but that, according to these critics, in writing his plays, Steele affirmed that human nature is more good than evil.

Furthermore, Steele frankly acknowledges self interest: "The principle of self-love, as we are men, will make us inquire, what is like to become of us after our dissolution" (Guardian, XIII, No. 18, p. 94). One can laugh, Steele says, at "all who . . . profess to act for the service of mankind, without the least regard to themselves" (Tatler 62). However, Steele does not agree with Shaftesbury that these affections are morally inferior to benevolent affections. First, Steele believed that the promise of reward and the threat of punishment were necessary motives to virtue.[28] Second, Steele did not relegate self-love to a lower level than benevolism but included self-love in the higher emotions. For example, the desire to fame, Steele wrote in The Christian Hero, along with the "Conscience" are the "two great springs of Human Action" (p. 70). The Spectator agrees:

> Of all the affections which attend Human Life, the Love of Glory is the most Ardent. According as this is cultivated in Princes, it produces the greatest Good or the greatest Evil. . . . Where Sovereigns have it by Impressions received from Education only, it creates an Ambitious rather than a noble Mind; where

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[27] Eighteenth Century Plays (New York: The Modern Library, 1952), p. xvi.

[28] Shaftesbury, "Inq. Con. Vir.," Bk. I, Part 3, Sect. 3; I, 58, had said they must not be or one's "virtue" is not real virtue. Steele's position on the value of hope and fear as motives was treated in chapter III of this thesis.

> it is the natural Bent of the Prince's inclinations, it prompts him to the Pursuit of Things truly Glorious" (Spec. 139).[29]

The second part, comprehending man's uniqueness, is his reason. In the dedication of the Tatler (p. 3), Steele wrote: "It is the noble simplicity which makes you surpass mankind in the faculties wherein mankind are distinguished from other creatures, reason and speech."[30] In The Christian Hero, Steele calls man's ability to reason, consciousness:

> But we are inform'd that the wonderful creator of all things, after he had given the Rivers to Flow, the Earth to bring Forth, and the Beasts to Feed, saw and approv'd his Work, but thought a dumb Brute and a mechanical World an imperfect Creation 'till inhabited by a conscious Being, whose happiness should consist in Obedience to, and a Contemplation on him and his Wonders. For this Reason Man was created with Intellectual Powers and higher Faculties . . . (CH, pp. 36-37).

In Steele's vocabulary, a conscious being is one who reflects, one who thinks.

However, simply to assert man's distinction from brutes by his reason and the higher emotions is hardly enough to explain the complex problem of evil. The problem of evil divides into two parts, the evil which befalls one, and the evil which one does. These are usually designated "physical" and "moral evil" respectively.[31] According to

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[29] Spectator 38, also recommends "Love of Praise" as "a strong incentive to worthy action." Tatler 23, says: "The whole race of men have this passion in some degree implanted in their bosoms, which is the strongest and noblest incitation to honest attempts."

[30] See also Theatre, No. 4, p. 15; Theatre, No. 19, p. 86; Steele's The Theatre, ed., John Loftis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). Hereafter references to this edition of The Theatre will be made parenthetically by paper number and the number of the page on which the passage cited appears.

[31] W. D. Nevin, "Good or Evil," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, VI, 318.

J. McManners, the physical evil befalling man constitutes "an inescapable stumbling block" for the "reasoner"; but a Christian philosopher often accepted a solution offered by Leibniz, who "made theology 'reasonable' by placing the origin of evil in the eternal truths, so that taking into account the condition of the whole universe (and not just human welfare)," everything happens for the best.[32]

Sometimes Steele seems to accept this explanation. An example is Spectator 75:

> What can make a man so much in constant good Humor and Shine, as we call it, than to be Supported by what can never fail him, and to believe that whatever happens to him, was the best thing that could possibly befal him, or else he on whom it depends would not have permitted it to have befallen him at all.

In No. 294, he comforts the poor by offering them promise of compensation in heaven, so that their "poverty is, in reality, their Preferment." Finally, in No. 312, he suggests that pain is not really pain.

If Steele finds physical evil difficult to explain, he finds moral evil more so. Why do men commit evil? As noted above (Spec. 135), Steele thinks that part of the answer lies in uncontrolled self-love. Another part of the answer lies in the existence of vicious emotions, two of which, Steele says, are "Fear and Rage . . . Passions we have in common with Brutes" (Theatre, No. 19, p. 86). But why does man possess these lower "passions?" Answering this question, Steele shares some common ground with that segment of religion teaching human depravity,

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[32] J. McManners, "Religion and the Relation of Church and State," Rise of Great Britain and Russia, ed., J.S. Bromley; Vol. VI of The New Cambridge Modern History, adv. Com. G. N. Clarke et al. (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1970), p. 143.

or original sin. To be sure that man fell from some higher state when Adam sinned and that man must now live with a nature that has been adversely affected by the Fall is taught by Paul, and most Christians since Paul. However, the extent of man's complicity in Adam's sin, the degree of man's depravity, and the degree of man's personal spiritual capability have occasioned much debate over the centuries. Not everyone who claims Christian discipleship would wholly agree with this statement from the Westminster Confession, the official doctrinal standard of English-speaking Presbyterians, adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1647:

> By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body . . . they being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary posterity. . . . From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. . . . Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereto.[33]

Neither does Steele wholly agree; but he makes some statements, indicating agreement with the first part, which states that men through Adam "fell from their original righteousness" and that men thus have a "corrupted nature." In fact, Steele's statements led Rae Blanchard to conclude that "Steele's view of human nature was on the whole pessimistic." In the first place, she says, Steele believed that natural depravity is fundamental. Pride and vanity caused the fall. Later, as

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[33] Phillip Schaff, ed., The Creeds of Christendom, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), III, 615.

social life grew more complex, the egoistic passions "self-opinion" and "Self-admiration" continued to become stronger, until "from the desire of superiority in our deprav'd natures there was bred 'Envy, Hatred, Cruelty, Cunning, Craft, and Debate' to be our bosom companions." Blanchard concludes that Steele believed that egoism became firmly rooted in human nature.[34] In addition to his statements in The Christian Hero, Steele makes a few, rather strong statements in his periodical essays about human degeneracy, a degeneracy that began with the Fall; for example: "There are a thousand occasions," he says, "in which it [human nature] breaks through its original corruption and shows what it once was" (Tatler 87).

On the other hand, Steele disagrees with the Confession's statement that "we are utterly made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil . . . as a natural man . . . is not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself thereto." In other words, Steele did not believe man was at the mercy of his corrupted nature, for two causes: man is not wholly inclined to evil, but possesses benevolent emotions, and man is endowed with the faculty of reason, which, fortified by revelation and motivated by the higher "passions" and by the hope of eternal reward, can lift man above his corrupted nature; he is able both to "prepare himself" to receive Christianity and to "convert" himself.[35]

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[34] CH, p. xiv.

[35] There have been several theologians in the history of Christendom who taught that man has reason and will, but that both are impaired by the Fall. For example, Augustine, Saint Augustine: Anti-Pelagian Writings, ed., Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), p. 122, wrote: "Man's nature, indeed, was created at first

Although Steele recognizes that man is less glorious than he will be in heaven (Tatler 87), he believed in the dignity of present human nature:

> Having a very solid respect for human nature, however it is distorted from its natural make, by affection, humor, misfortune, or vice, I do apply myself to my friends to help me in raising arguments for preserving it in all its individuals, as long as it is permitted (Tatler 29).

Steele is distressed, not because his fellow Englishmen are less than Adam before the Fall nor because they are less than Christians will be in Heaven, but because they are less than what man can be and ought to be in this life. People do not live up to their humanity.

Steele reminds his readers of this by his frequent use of the animal image, a traditional metaphor to represent man divorced from reason.[36] On the other hand, Steele does not like animal images to describe human qualities such as courage; he likes "The Thoughts in a poem called 'The Campaign' where the simile of a ministering angel sets forth the most sedate and the most active courage" (Tatler 43). He also reminds his readers that when they resign reason, they become slaves (Tatler 170; Spec. 288).

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faultless and without any sin; but that nature of man in which everyone is born from Adam, now wants the Phisician [sic], because it is not sound. All good qualities, no doubt, which it still possesses in its make, life, senses, intellect, it has of the Most High God, its Creator and Maker. But the flaw, which darkens and weakens all those natural goods, so that it has need of illumination and healing, it has not contracted from its blameless Creator--but from that original sin, which it committed by free will." After the Fall, Augustine (pp. 226-27) argues that man dares not have the strength of will to determine to do God's will. Apparently, Steele does not agree with this view.

[36] Tatlers 62, 73, 76, for example.

When Steele discusses the functions of the emotions and the reason, his conscious rationalism is evident. Although he recognizes the importance of the emotions, he accords reason the more important function. Still the emotions, Steele believed as against Neo-Stoicism, are important because they can serve as powerful incentives to practice virtue and because their proper fulfillment provides personal satisfaction. In the first place, Steele thought that the emotions had a very useful function: they motivate one to do good and great actions. Thus Steele calls the emotions the "Springs of Human Actions" (CH, p. 70). For one thing, if man possesses benevolent "affections," as Steele believed, these will motivate him to make others happy; accordingly, in his dedication of The Lover to Sir Samuel Garth, whom Steele describes as "the best natured man in the world," Steele wrote:

> This propensity is the nearest akin to Love; and Good-nature is the worthiest affection of the Mind as Love is the noblest Passion of it. While the latter is wholly employed in endeavoring to make happy one single Object, the other diffuses its Benevolence to all the World. . . . As this is your natural bent . . . For what condition is more desirable than a constant Impulse to relieve the Distressed . . . the Manner in which you practice this heavenly Faculty of aiding human life. . . . (PJ, p. 3).

Next, Steele believed that self-love is equally important to motivate one to good and great actions. For example, the "Love of Praise is implanted in our Bosoms as a strong Incentive to worthy actions" (Spec. 38). Another example is love for the opposite sex. Upon this "one passion," Steele exhorts his readers to build "all the Sentiments and Resolutions which incline and qualify us for everything that is truly Excellent, Great, and Noble" (Lover, No. 1, PJ, p. 5). In another passage Steele is stronger in his claim for this power from

love of the opposite sex:

> I am more and more convinced, that this Passion is in the honest minds the strongest Incentive that can move the soul of man to laudable accomplishments. Is a man just? let him fall in love and grow Generous; is a man Goodnatured? let him fall in love and grow Public-Spirited. It immediately makes the good which is in him shine forth in new Excellencies" (Lover, No. 5, PJ, p. 21).

Steele argues that when one serves others, he is really serving himself. In The Conscious Lovers, he denies that there is any disinterested virtue. Indiana, his heroine, is impressed by Bevil's concern, shown by his financial support of herself and her aunt. She calls it "Disinterested virtue" since there is no sign--outwardly at least--of any personal benefit for Bevil. Bevil quickly replies that his support is not "Disinterested." "Any gentleman," he claims, ought to enjoy doing such as this simply because he is a "gentleman," one "who takes more delight in reflections than in sensations. He is more pleased with thinking than eating" (II, iii, p. 336).[37] And Steele concludes that when distress or danger appears and a man knows his wife and children are safe, "There is something in this that doubles Satisfactions" (Spec. 479). Hence, Steele establishes a happy circle; when one does good to others he makes himself happy, and the prospect of receiving this pleasure is an incentive to his doing good.[38]

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[37] The Plays of Richard Steele, ed., Shirley Strum Kenny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871). Hereafter, references to any of Steele's plays will be taken from this edition and will be cited parenthetically as above, act, scene, page number of this volume.

[38] Joseph Butler argues similarly, Willey, Eighteenth Century, p. 88, says: "Butler does not accept the analysis of all our actions into some form of self-love. Human nature, for him, is as clearly ordered for public as for private good. There is a 'natural principle

However, Steele not only argued that both kinds of emotions provide motivation to virtue, he also argued that they are proper within themselves. Personal satisfaction received from a judicious fulfillment of the emotions is right, and this subject is frequently discussed by Steele. Married love is capable of bestowing great personal satisfaction, and Steele enthusiastically recommends it for this purpose. The Spectator observes that one who is happily married "has this Passion in Perfection; in Occasions of Joy can say to himself . . . How happy this will make my Wife and Children," but, he can also enjoy "his own Satisfaction" (No. 479). Indeed, physical love makes this otherwise miserable life, livable:

> But must we then desert Love and the Fair?
> The Cordial Drop Heav'n in our Cup has thrown,
> To make the Nauseous Draught of Life go down.
> (CH, p. 65).

In addition, Steele recommends many earthly pleasures from which one received satisfaction, as this "letter" to The Spectator shows: "I design to pass away in hearing music, going to Plays, Visiting, and all other satisfactions which Fortune and Youth, protected by Innocence and Virtue, can procure for" (79).

In his theory of human nature, Steele accords man's emotions an important place, but he viewed reason as performing an even more important function. When he discusses reason's function, his fundamental

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of benevolence in man,' which has the same relation to society as self-love has to the individual. At this point Butler seems to resume common ground with Shaftesbury. . . . The social and the self-affections, he agrees are so intimately connected, that we cannot procure self-satisfaction without having some benevolence, and conversely self-love is the great security for our correct social behaviour."

rationalism becomes evident in that he believed reason ought to rule the emotions and that one's life ought to be lived according to the dictates of his personal opinions which are to be derived by the reason.

Although compassion is a part of man's uniqueness, wherein he differs from brutes, it still must be regulated by the reason. In the Englishman (II, 21, pp. 333-34), Steele implies that one must judge whether another is worthy of compassion. For example, a man should extend compassion to all "ill adventure" befalling the unfortunate or to the unhappy man. But compassion extended to the criminal is misplaced.

Reason must control another of the benevolent emotions, affection. One kind of affection is parental love. Although Steele does not write nearly so much on parents' love for their offspring as the love of man and woman for each other, he thought it was beautiful. However, natural parental affection must be guided by reason because love can lead either to happiness or misery:

> According as the Husband is disposed in himself, every Circumstance of his Life is to give him Torment or Pleasure. When the Affection is well placed and supported by the considerations of Duty, Honor, and Friendship . . . There can nothing rise in the common course of Life . . . in which a man will not find matters of some Delight unknown to a single condition" (Spec. 479).

The key clause here is "when the affection is well placed," for the Spectator has seen parental love misplaced. In Number 263, the Spectator prints two "letters" dramatizing Steele's point that judgment must guide parental love. The first is from a widow to her profligate son, profligate because both she and her late husband loved him as a

child, but loved without reflection. The mother confesses her "Partiality" to her son in "making your Father do so much as he had done for you," an action for which she must now make up to his sisters. She reminds him that she "tended him as a weak and sickly child," but he "outgrew" his "illness" to waste his "vigor on harlots." In addition, he insists on keeping half the income, set aside by her husband for herself. "Smothering" her "passion," she announces that unless he gives her her money, she will sue and "without one Tear more condemn you." In spite of the severity of this letter, she signed it, "Your affectionate mother." The time had come for her judgment to control her love and as a result to chastise her wayward son, which she did effectively as his reply shows, that he will bring the money on "his knees" and will "take care that she will never have to write so again."[39]

Married love, although Steele makes high claims for its motivating power, must be guided by judgment. First, one can be so carried away by his love that he attends to nothing else, that he cannot even talk coherently enough to declare himself. In truth, Steele says, those who possess the

> great Passions are usually unsuccessful; it has been long since observed by a celebrated French writer that it is much easier for a man to succeed who only feigns a Passion, than for a man to succeed who is truly and desperately in

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[39] In Spectator 192, Steele gives another example of parents' lack of judgment; too often they expect nothing but earthly greatness for their children: "I know a good Woman who has but three Sons, and there is, she says, nothing she expects with more certainty than that she shall see one a Bishop, the other a Judge, and the third a court Physician." Steele concludes: "The Humour is that anything which can happen to any man's child, is expected by every man for his own." Steele thought this unreasonable. In contrast, the Spectator recommends his

> Love. The first is still master of himself. . . . The latter is too much taken up with his own Passion to attend to anything also . . ." (Lover, No. 37, PJ, p. 129).

Second, married love must be solidly based on reality. For instance, the Spectator exhorts husbands to be realistic about their wives; unhappiness often arises because

> . we generally make love in a Stile, and with Sentiments very unfit for ordinary Life: they are half theatrical, half Romantick. By this means we raise our Imaginations to what is not to be expected in human Life.[40]

Husbands are often surly because they are not realistic about their wives: "we did not think of the creature we were enamored of as subject to Dishumor, Age, Sickness, Impatience, or Sulleness, but altogether considered her as the Object of Joy." On the contrary, "the man who brings his Reason to support his Passion, and beholds what he loves as liable to all the Calamities of humane life . . . will adapt his mind to the Nature of his circumstances" (Spec. 479).

Steele cautions that men must be watchful so that neither kind of love, parental or physical, gains the upper hand:

> How necessary will it appear that it were inculcated that men would be upon their Guard to support a constantcy of affection, and that grounded upon the principles of Reason, not on the Impulses of Instinct" (Spec. 268).

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friend, who "does not flatter himself with such vain Expectations, but has his Eye more on the Virtue and Disposition of his children, than their advancement or Wealth."

[40] Likely, Steele alludes to "Whining Love." David S. Berkeley, "The Art of Whining Love," Studies in Philology, 52 (1955), 478-96, has thoroughly described whining love. The art of whining love, he informs, was well known to the Restoration audiences through Restoration tragedy and romances. Whining love called to their minds a "definite and precise set of attitudes, postures, and a kind of eloquence."

Reason must rule the "self affections" or they can become vices. The Spectator warns men not to put desire of fame ahead of conscience:

> But those men are truly great, who place their Ambition rather in acquiring to themselves the Conscience of worthy enterprizes, than in the Prospect of Glory which attends them.[41]

Continuing, Steele describes the great man as one who can "enjoy himself independent of its Favour [the "Applause of the Multitude"] (Spec. 172). And elsewhere Steele says that disregard of the conscience happens when a man so disregards "Reason and Truth, as not to follow it" (Reader, No. 9, PJ, p. 176; see also Tatler 49).

The desire for personal pleasure must be guided by reason or human beings are, in reality, miserable:

> But I fear, pleasure is less understood in this age, which so much pretends to it, than in any since the creation. It was admirably said of him who first took notice, that (res est severa Voluptas) there is a certain severity in pleasure. Without that, all decency is banished: and if reason is not to be present at our greatest satisfactions, of all the races of creatures, the human is the most miserable (Tatler 15).

The Spectator warns that when pleasure becomes one's "chief Pursuit of Life," then "Reason and Reflection" are rooted out and in their place "a general Impatience of Thought" and "a constant Pruriency of inordinate Desire" is substituted (No. 151).

Steele believed that judgment must control Wit.[42] Wit, as used by Steele, means creative genius and entertaining conversation.[43] This

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[41] In Spectator 38, Steele admits that "It is a very difficult task to get above a Desire of it for things that should be wholly indifferent."

[42] It may be improper to speak of wit as a non-rational faculty. Steele does seem to have made a distinction between wit and judgment, or the reflective faculty. Probably Steele did not fully understand what wit comprehended.

[43] In Spectator 51, Steele seems to use poetic "invention" and

"good talent" must be used judiciously:

> There can be no greater Injury to human society, than that good Talents among men should be held honourable to those who are endowed with them, without any regard how they are applied. The Gifts of Nature and accomplishments of art are valuable, but as they are exerted in the Interests of Virtue, or governed by the Rules of Honor. We ought to abstract our minds from the observation of any Excellence in those we converse with, till we have taken some motive . . . of their minds; otherwise the Beauty of their persons, or the Charms of their Wit, may make us fond of those whom our Reason and Judgment will tell us we ought to abhor. . . . When we suffer ourselves to be thus carried away by meer Beauty or meer Wit, Omnamante with all her Vice will bear away as much of our Goodwill as the most innocent Virgin (Spec. 172).

Steele makes two points in this passage: one, good talents ought to be "exerted in the Interests of Virtue," and ought to be "governed by the rules of Honor"; two, the reader should not be carried away by "meer wit" if his "Reason and judgment tell" him to abhor it. In truth, raw wit is of little value. If a man lacks "discretion" in the use of his wit, he may "extremly affect one for the present, but his merit soon vanishes away, while a wise man that has not so great a Stock of Wit shall nevertheless give you a far greater and more lasting satisfaction" (Spec. 244).[44]

"wit" synonymously. He also uses the word "Genius" interchangeably with "wit" in this paper; and in Spectator 504, he uses "wit" and "imagination" interchangeably. If he does not use "wit" and "fancy" as synonyms, he closely associates them (see Eng. I, 7, p. 31; Spec. 514). Furthermore, Steele considered wit to be innate, but not possessed by everyone: "Besides, My Lord, your man should have considered that to endeavour at Wisdom was every Man's Duty; but to endeavour at wit is the utmost of follies. Wit must be born with a man, or he will never have it" (Eng. I, 1, p. 7).

[44] In other Spectator papers Steeke discusses the deformity of wit when it is not accompanied by discretion, or when the witty person wants to show his wit. The Spectator (38), describes a conversation with a beautiful woman and a witty man; his wit was turned into absurdity "by the meer force of affectation. . . . You might see his

How, then, does one know how to use wit judiciously, to see that it does not separate itself from virtue and practical use, and to see that affectation does not distort it into an absurdity or destroy it? The answer, wit must be checked and guided by judgment and reason. Wit, the Spectator says, is the child of fancy and judgment. Hence, wit is not fancy alone, or judgment alone, but fancy checked by judgment. Steele dramatizes this by having his Spectator take a trip to Parnasseus where he saw, among other things, a beautiful woman and an aged man:

> The one was a young nymph in the Prime of her Youth and Beauty; she had Wings on her Shoulders and Feet, and was able to Transport herself to the most distant regions in the smallest Space of Time. She was constantly varying her Dress, sometimes into the most natural and becoming Habits in the World, and others into the most wild and freakish Garble that can be imagined (No. 514).

But, standing near to correct her "Inconsistencies" by "showing them in his Mirror," and to throw away her "affected and unbecoming Ornaments" was a "full-aged" man, "Judgment," the only "acknowledged offspring of time." In other places, Steele's language is stronger; wit must be ruled by reason:

> Mr. Hobbes calls Anger sudden Courage; if it be so, it is no more commendable without regard to circumstances, than quick Wit; for all actions of men are to be esteem'd as they are agreeable to Propriety and Reason (Theatre, No. 19, p. 85).

The witty talker must be discreet. Witty talk, or the ability to entertain, is a good quality in a prospective husband, the Spectator counsels; but he cautions young women:

Imagination on the stretch to find something uncommon, and what they call bright, to entertain her. In Spectator 144, he describes a beautiful and witty lady whose "affection prevents her excellencies from walking together."

> I do not mean that Wit, and a Capacity to entertain, is what should be highly valued, except it is founded upon Good-nature and Humanity. There are many ingenious Men, whose abilities do little else but make themselves and those about them uneasie. Such are those who are far gone in the Pleasures of the Town, who cannot support Life without quick sensations and gay Reflections, and are Strangers to Tranquility, to right Reason, and a calm Motion of Spirits without Transports of Dejections (No. 522).

Finally, Steele's rationalism is evident in his insistence that a man must "possess" himself (Spec. 143) in order to live up to the dignity of his humanity. Steele variously refers to "possessing oneself" as to "possess his own mind" (Tatler 251); to form a personal "Scheme of Life" (Spec. 157); and to enjoy one's "own Spirit" (Eng. I, 15, p. 63). By possessing oneself, Steele means that a man must do three things: (1) not allow any external force to govern his life; (2) follow the dictates of personal choices; (3) base these choices on personal reflection. When a man allows any external influence, such as fortune, distress, or other people, to govern his life, he does not possess himself. On the contrary, when he does possess himself, neither fortune nor distress will frustrate him:

> It is as mean to be overjoy'd upon occasions of Good Fortune, as to be dejected in Circumstances of Distress. . . . We should not form our minds to expect transport on every Occasion, but know how to make it Enjoyment to be out of Pain. Ambition, Envy, Vagrant Desire, or impertinent Mirth will take up our minds, without we possess ourselves (Spec. 143).

Nor should a man allow other people to rule his life. Steele says that if necessary the "whimsical" disobeys the understanding of others "who are more in fashion than himself" (Theatre, No. 4, p. 15). The Spectator agrees that "he only is a great Man who can neglect the applause of the Multitude, and enjoy himself independent of its Favor" (No. 172).

Next, to possess oneself, he must follow the dictates of his personal opinions. Steele illustrates this by comparing critics to subjects of a kingdom. In this comparison Steele recommended neither the "natural critic" whom he likened to the subjects of anarchy, nor the "cautious critic," whom he likened to the subjects of an arbitrary Prince; but he recommended the "free critic," whom he likened to the free Briton who "is governed by the Laws which he himself votes for" (Eng. I, No. 7, p. 31). Likewise, the free human being lives by rules dictated by himself. Thus the Tatler counsels his readers to "possess" their minds so as to be "satisfied" with their own reflections. For man ought to measure his actions by his own opinions, not his actions by the rest of the world (No. 251). After he had been passed off as a "whimsical," Steele wrote that being designated as a "whimsical" is a compliment because a "whimsical," according to the modern acceptance of the word, is a person who "governs himself according to his own understanding" (Theatre, No. 4, p. 15). In other essays Steele complains of those deceived by the "Church Party" as being those "who do not think for themselves" (Eng. II, No. 17, p. 318).

A man can live according to the dictates of his personal reflections only if he possesses a free will. Steele clearly declares that man possess a free will: "A Man is born with Free-Will; does it therefore follow that it is lawful to kill himself?" ("Dunkirk," TP, p. 112). He refers to one who "enjoys" his own Spirit as a "Freeman," and adds that anyone can be a freeman, "D. Steele the Playwright," or "Tom Smith the corn cutter" (Eng. I, 15, p. 63).

However, a man still does not possess himself unless his opinions are based on reason. The Tatler, after observing that merchants in the

exchange govern their lives only by credit, and courtiers only by honor, declares:

> But the world will never be in any manner of order or tranquility, till men are firmly convinced, that conscience, honor, and credit, are all in one interest and that without the concurrence of the former, the latter are but impositions upon ourselves and others (No. 49).

Continuing, Steele explains exactly what he means by "the concurrence of the former":

> Were men so enlightened and studious of their own good, as to act by the dictates of their reason and reflection, and not the opinion of others, conscience[45] would be the steady ruler of human life, and the words, Truth, Law, Reason, Equity, and Religion, would be but synonymous terms for that only guide which makes us pass our days in our own favor and approbation (Tatler 49).[46]

Steele, thus, emphasizes that in order for one to "possess" himself, he must form his own "Scheme of Life," which in turn is derived from the "Dictates of Reason."

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[45] Steele appears to be using the word in a fairly special sense. The OED(definition II, 4, a) says: "Popularly, the word is often used for the whole moral nature." Beyond this, "opinions as to the nature, function, and authority of conscience are widely divergent, varying from the conception of the mere exercize of the ordinary judgment on moral questions, to that of an infallible guide of conduct, a sort of deity within us." John Milton (PL, III, 195), the OED says, leans towards the latter view: "and I will place within them as a guide My Umpire Conscience;" John Locke (Hum. Und. II, iii), uses the word in the former sense: "Conscience . . . is nothing else but our own Opinion or Judgment of the moral Rectitude or Pravity of our own actions." Steele appears to use the word as Locke defines it.

[46] Steele (Theatre, No. 4, p. 15), in his description of a "whimsical," makes this point that one acts by his personal opinions, but opinions based on reason: "Your true whimsical is too hardy a creature to be discontenanced and undone by Innuendoes, and is never mortifi'd but when Truth, Honour, and Reason are against him; which as soon as he perceives, he without ceremony, or taking leave runs to the side on which they appear."

A man must do this in order to live up to his humanity. In other words, Steele is positive about personally forming a "Scheme of Life" from reason. Steele is saying not only that human nature comprehends a rational element and freedom of will, enabling man to live as his reflections dictate, but also that man must do this if he is to be fully human. Therefore, Steele is critical of the "indolent," who "put themselves in no Method of pleasing themselves or others." "It is," Steele continues,

> an intermediate Stage between Pleasure and Pain, and very much unbecoming any Part of our Life after we are out of the Nurse's Arms. Such an aversion to Labor creates a constant Weariness, and one would think, should make Existence it self a Burthen (Spec. 100).

The Indolent man, Steele charges, "descends from the Dignity of his Nature;" not because he is guilty of vice, but because he

> makes that being which was Rational nearly Vegetative: His life consists only in the meer Encrease and Decays of a Body, which, with Relation to the rest of the World, might as well have been uninformed, as the Habitation of a reasonable Mind (Spec. 100).

Steele emphasizes the non-being of the indolent by calling them dead men:

> In the office I have undertaken you are to observe, that I have hitherto presented only the more insignificant and lazy part of mankind under the denomination of 'dead men,' together with the degrees towards non-existence, in which others can neither be said to live nor to be defunct (Tatler 174).

And the Tatler complains about the "Obstinant dead men who will neither labor for life nor go to their grave" (No. 106).[47]

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[47] Other papers in which Steele utilizes this metaphor to emphasize that those who will not "labor for life" are denying their humanity are Tatlers 7, 99, 118, 166; Spec. 374.

If one can judge Steele by his writings, he truly held a healthy respect for human nature, and he is distressed when his fellow Britons do not meet the responsibilities of being human. Human nature, Steele believes, comprehends the emotions and the reason. The emotions serve as powerful motives to virtue and serve to delight humans when these forces are properly controlled. The reason functions as the judge to guide the emotions. Furthermore, fulfilling human responsibilities involves more than negativism, i.e., checking the emotions; it also means that one must work out a personal "Scheme of Life." This plan is to be derived from the dictates of one's personal opinions, which in turn are based on "Truth and Reason."

However, he is realistic enough to know that this is not accomplished without a struggle:

> When a man is in a serious mood, and ponders upon his own make, with a retrospect to the actions of his life, and the many fatal miscarriages in it, which he owes to ungoverned passions, he is then apt to say to himself, that experience has guarded him against such errors for the future: but nature often recurs in spite of his best resolutions, and it is to the very end of our days a struggle between our reason and our temper, which shall have the empire over us (Tatler 172).

Perhaps Steele really believed that man was capable of governing his life, but that few would make the effort. Those who did were heroic spirits:

> I began to reflect with admiration on those heroic spirits, which in the conduct of their lives seem to live so much above the condition of our make as not under the agonies of pain to forbear any intemperate work or gesture, but also in their general behaviour to resist the impulses of their very blood and constitution. This watch over a man's self, and the command of his temper, I take to be the greatest of human perfections, and is the effect of a strong and resolute mind (Tatler 176).[48]

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[48] Other papers discussing the heroic mind are Spec. 248: "It

The questions attending any discussion of human nature are complex, and they have been debated by thinkers for centuries--such questions as the existence of evil, both moral and physical, the efficacy of emotions--are they good or evil?, the problem of motives--can one be wholly disinterested? have brought various responses, the fidelity and resignation of Job and the cynicism of Voltaire. No wonder that critics have found the unsystematic thinking of Richard Steele sometimes difficult to analyze.[49] No doubt, Steele's unsystematic thinking on human nature is related to his lack of originality. In every subject he discusses, Steele offers nothing new; he took the ideas of others and enthusiastically expounded them in his periodical essays, which were often stylistically careless, sometimes imaginative, often entertaining, but usually popular.

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is in every man's Power in the World, who is above meer Poverty, not only to do things worthy but heroic"; and Spec. 368 in which Steele describes the courage of a French lady who refused to allow a terminal illness to govern her life: "There hardly can be a greater Instance of a Heroic Mind, than the unprejudiced manner in which the Lady weighed her misfortune."

[48] For example, in 1932, when Rae Blanchard edited The Christian Hero, p. xvi, she believed Steele's view of man was "fundamentally pessimistic." In 1963 she is almost convinced that he is a benevolist, "Richard Steele and the Secretary of the SPCK," Restoration and Eighteenth Century Literature, ed., Carrol Camden (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 381: "a background has now been provided for understanding these letters and for adding a few strokes to the picture of Steele as a benevolist." Another example is Bertrand Goldgar, Curse of Party, pp. 12-14. He believes that Steele was inclined to the benevolist view, but thinks Steele's insistence on the hope of reward as a motive to virtue contradicts his benevolist statements.

CHAPTER V

STEELE'S CRITICISM OF MANNERS

Although Calhoun Winton may be correct in saying that "The bulk of Richard Steele's writing was, in one sense or another, political,"[1] there still remains a considerable amount criticizing English manners. This was evidently one of the main purposes of his most popular periodical essays, The Tatler, The Spectator, and The Guardian. When he closed The Tatler, Steele, under his own name, explains that he spoke in a mask because "severity of manners was absolutely necessary to him that would censure others"; Steele suggests that while he does not consider himself a "vicious man," his life is "at best but pardonable" (Tatler 145). Steele thus implies that much of The Tatler concerned itself with reproving people for their vice and folly. In his first paper, the Spectator indicates that he intends to comment on English manners:

> Thus I live in the World, rather as a Spectator of mankind . . . by which means I have made myself a Speculative Statesman, Soldier, Merchant, and Artizan. . . . I am well versed in the Theory of an Husband, or a Father, and can discern the Errors in the Oeconomy, Business and Diversion of others, better than those who are engaged in them, as Standers-by discover Blots, which are apt to escape those who are in the Game (No. 1).

The Guardian plainly tells his readers that his main purpose shall be,

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[1] Diss., "Steele: The Political Writer," Intro., p. 1.

> to protect the Modest, the industrious; to celebrate the wise, the valiant, to encourage the good, the pious, to confrount the impudent, the idle, to condemn the vain, the cowardly, and to disappoint the wicked and profane (No. 1, XII, p. 71).

One might wonder at Steele's willingness to undertake this task since his personal life was less than exemplary. By his own admissions (Tatler 145) he used the persona Bickerstaff because reproval would come with better grace from Isaac Bickerstaff than from Richard Steele. Others did not fail to take notice of the discrepancy between Steele's preaching and his practice. Although the Spectator claimed to understand economy, Steele's notoriety for bad management of personal finances led his colleague Colley Cibber to say: "Sir Richard, though no man alive can write better of Oeconomy than himself yet perhaps he is above the Drudgery of Practicing it."[2] Another contemporary reference to Steele's inconsistency was made in an article in the St. James-Post. Steele refers to this article in his Letter about the condemned Lords in which he argued for clemency, or, at least, for clemency if the King saw fit. The St. James-Post reminded Steele that a few months before he had profusely argued for the execution of some others, the Tory Ministers. While the Post mentions his inconsistency on this, it also reminds him of the discrepancy between his personal life and his censorous writings:

> But the Reputation this Gentleman had formerly gain'd by his Writings, being at a very low ebb, not only because he had of late made his Pen a common Prostitute, but also by Reason of his private Extravagances, at the same time that he assumed to himself the character of a Public Censor, no great stress was laid upon his Threadbare Oratory ("Condemn'd Lords," TP, p. 410).

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[2] Quoted in John Loftis, Steele At Drury Lane (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1952), p. 91.

Allowing for some prejudice on the part of the St. James-Post, one can still conclude that there was a gap between what Steele preached and what he practiced.

Why, then, did Steele appoint himself the public censor of English manners? Steele censored English vice and bad manners because he was sincerely interested in reforming society. Samuel Monk and Lawrence Lipking say that "both Steele and Addison were conscious moralists and did not disguise their intention of improving the minds, morals and manners of their readers." These critics point out that moral reform had been in the air since 1690, and a new society was coming into existence; this new society, was "certainly in some degree the creation of Addison and Steele." John Gay in a pamphlet, The Present State of Wit, shortly after the discontinuance of The Tatler, praised Steele for banishing or checking follies and persuading the town to virtue, religion, and learning: "In the dress he gives it [learning] 'Tis a most welcome guest at tea tables and assemblies, and is relished and caressed by the merchants on the 'change'."[3] Steele's statements in The Tatler, The Spectator, and The Guardian show that he was indeed a conscious moralist who was interested in improving people's behavior. An additional statement from the Guardian will show that Steele wrote, according to what he said, to improve people's behavior: "My design upon the whole is no less than to make the pulpit, the bar, and the stage, all act in concert in the care of piety, justice and virtue . . ." (No. I, XIII, p. 71).

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[3] "The Restoration and Eighteenth Century," The Norton Anthology of English Literature, ed. M. H. Abrams, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1974), I, 2103.

That Steele was a conscious moralist is reinforced by his many statements that all of his political tracts and essays were written for the public good.[4] For example, in The Englishman he acknowledges that a self-appointed guardian of England's political system is due some criticism, but he will write anyway--for the common good:

> It is possible that my zeal may have transported me to the Supererogation of concerning myself in matters to which I was not called by any particular authority or charge upon me to do more than another man; but this objection will lie against all men who exert themselves for the common Good, without reguard to their own Fame or Fortune. . . . I do not know that I ought to retract any sentiment which I have hitherto advanced; but still insist, that what I have done flowed from no other cause, but Zeal for the Honour of the Queen, the safty of the constitution, and the happiness of the people . . . (I, 57, p. 227).

Opposing the South Sea Project, Steele insists that he writes for the common good:

> But on the contrary, the contempt of Profit and Loss, applause and Detraction, to a man's apparent and sensible disadvantage, for the Good of others, is as honest a Design as the other is dishonorable. I shall not use the great word Public Spirit, but be contented at present to say I am moved only by common Charity (Theatre, No. 22, p. 94).

According to his statements, Steele wrote because he was looking out for the common good, which he says gave him much pleasure. Although one is inclined to be a bit suspicious about those who proclaim too often their interest in the people's good, one must concede that Steele did have a public conscience. John Loftis believes that Steele's

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[4] Although one can grant Steele's interest in the public good, a student of Steele must remember that his political writings served his ends as well. Calhoun Winton, Captain Steele, p. 213, has observed that Steele's fidelity to the Hanoverian Succession and to the Whig party--this fidelity was mentioned often by Steele--was well rewarded: "Within a few months [of George I's ascension] he was knighted by the new king and was re-elected to Parliament."

opposition to the South Sea Project was evidence of his "sensitive public conscience."[5] And he believes that Steele's boast of being neglectful of his personal fortune in the "ardour of his devotion to public service" can be abundantly corroborated.[6] Although Steele used the expression "public good," or its equivalent, when he wrote on some political question, perhaps his public conscience was as troubled when he looked at the folly of his fellow Britons' lives as when he looked at their political dangers.[7]

Another reason that Steele wished people to improve was his indignation at seeing man, created in God's image, act so foolishly. Steele believed that the people of his age were living beneath the dignity of man's nature so that there was little distinction between man and an animal. As a moralist Steele could not abide this and sounded the call for man to awaken and live in accord with the responsibilities attending humanity.

Apart from Steele's vision of reforming English manners into something worthy of human nature, he says (Tatler 145) that he found an "exquisite pleasure" in commending the good and criticizing vice.

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[5] The Theatre, p. xxiii.

[6] The Theatre, p. 131; Loftis' notes on Theatre, No. 11.

[7] Maynard Mack, "The Muse of Satire," Yale Review, 61 (1951), 86 plausibly argues that part of the satirists' rhetorical strategy is to establish an authoritative ethos "if he is to be effective in 'that delightful teaching'; he must be accepted by his audience as a fundamentally virtuous and tolerant man, who challenges the doings of other men not whenever he happens to feel vindictive, but whenever they deserve it." Thus, Mack concludes that the "satirist's Apologia for his satire is one of the stock subjects of both the classical writers and Pope." Although Steele was writing seriously, not satirically, he very well could have been following the satirist's practice of inventing such a persona, like the Stoic vir bonus, through which to attack vice.

He found an "exquisite pleasure" in exposing the least observed, but potentially the most enjoyable, parts of life "in an agreeable view," referring specifically to family relationships. Furthermore, he found an exquisite pleasure from inquiring into the "seeds of vanity and affectation" and in laying before his readers "the emptiness of ambition," and in showing "much shorter methods than men ordinarily practice to be happy, agreeable, and great" (Tatler 145).

Whatever Steele's rationale for frequently criticizing the manners of his fellow Britons, the fact remains that he did.[8] When Steele offered his censorship, his advice, or his praise, he comprehended both the actual behavior of the English people and the representation of their behavior on the stage, which was important to Steele mainly as a means to reform manners. The Tatler, the Spectator, or the Guardian, taking up their pens, no one was spared: they censored the profligate, the uncivil, and the bad-mannered. The premises upon which Steele criticizes English manners harmonize with his conscious rationalism. Steele believes that although human nature is composed of the emotions and reason, reason is to rule the emotions. Therefore, when man fails to check his emotions by his reason, he will commit sin, and this is the basis for Steele's criticism of vice and folly. Or to state this positively, evil follows disregard of reason and truth, which Steele

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[8] The OED gives, as one definition of "manners," (definition 4a), "a person's habitual behavior or conduct." I have used the word in this sense in my chapter title. However, in my discussion of Steele's criticism of English behavior, or manners, I will use the word "profligate" to include those whom Steele considered morally corrupt; the practice is called "vice," by Steele. I will use the expression "bad mannered" to include those guilty of ridiculous and irritating habits; the practice of ridiculous habits is called "folly" by Steele. A third category is the uncivil, who probably are guilty of "folly," not "vice."

calls "nonsense to the Conscience":

> Nonsense to the Conscience is when the Party has arrived to such a disregard to Reason and Truth, as not to follow it, or acknowledge it when it presents itself to him. . . . From this nonsense of conscience proceed all the Evils which can possibly betide mankind . . . (The Reader, No. 9, PJ, p. 176).

And, in his frequent observations on various vices and follies, Steele reminds his readers that all evils do indeed proceed from man's disregard of his conscience.

Various kinds of profligacy proceed from lively imaginations that are unchecked. For example, the rake comes under heavy criticism from Steele:

> His designs run away with him; through the strength and force of a lively imagination, which hurries him on to unlawful pleasures before reason has power to come in to his rescue. . . . The fellow with broken limbs justly deserves your alms for his impotent condition; but he that cannot use his own reason, is in a much worse state; for you see him in miserable circumstances, with his remedy at the same time in his own possession, if he would or could use it (Tatler 27).

In the Guardian (No. 131, XV, 49), Steele, to emphasize the rake's complete lack of judgment, suggests that one can almost pity him because of it. At least, the rake, Steele argues, is less deplorable than the slothful person who chooses idleness when he is fully possessed of himself whereas the rake is driven into vice "through the heat of wine or youth, which Mr. Hobbes calls a natural drunkeness." Hence, rakes are more excusable because people are more excusable for any "errors committed during the deprivation or suspension of our reason, than in possession of it" (Guardian, No. 131, XV, 49).

Another profligate under heavy criticism by Steele is the gambler, and, like the rake, his vice is the lack of emotional control as the Tatler observes in describing the close examination of a gambler's brain:

> When we first take our place about a man, the receptacles of the pericranius are immediately searched. In his, I found no trace of thinking; but strong passion, violent desires, and a continued series of different changes, has torn it to pieces. There appeared no middle condition, the triumph of a price, or the misery of a beggar, were his alternate state (No. 13).

In one of his better Guardian papers, Steele effectively lays before his readers by the use of irony the utter irrationality of gambling. First, he "apologizes" for having "spoken incautiously heretofore of that class of men." Next, he says that he would have to drop "all title to modesty, should I any longer oppose the common sense of the nobility and gentry of the kingdom." Now, one must not think a man stupid, the Guardian says, for losing his money--as indeed most gamesters will since few are "the favorites of blind chance"--because

> It is not the height of sphere in which a man moves, but the manner in which he acts, that makes him truly valuable: When therefore, I see a gentleman lose his money with serenity, I recognize in him all the great qualities of a philosopher. If he storms and invokes the gods, I lament that he is not placed at the head of a regiment. The great gravity of the countenance round Harrison's table, puts me in mind of a councilboard; and the indefatigable application of the several combatants furnishes me with an unanswerable reply to those gloomy mortals who censure this an idle life. In short, I cannot see any reason why gentlemen should be hindered from raising a fortune by those means which, at the same time, enlarge their minds (No. 74, XV, p. 265).

Still another prodigal who receives Steele's attention is the lavish spender who wastes money because he desires to live beyond his means. The Englishman says that "many and great Evils into which this nation is involved, are to a great Degree owing to an affectation of living above our condition"; and he recommends a gentleman's suggestion that Sir Harry Lizard propose a "wholesome Sumptuary-Law to prevent men's living in Indigence and Anxiety to support an Ostentation of Wealth and Ease." On the contrary, the "man who lived much

within his Fortune, would daily throw up New Bulwarks to support his integrity against the allurements of ambition and The Terrors of Poverty" (I, 4, p. 18). It is reasonable to live within one's means, and the lavish spender has forsaken his reason by giving over to ambition, which leads the Spectator to observe: "And if we consider lavish men carefully, we shall find it always proceeds from a certain Incapacity of possessing themselves, and finding enjoyment in their own minds" (No. 220).

Steele criticizes heavy drinking. When one imbibes liquor, the "imagination is raised and the judgement is depressed" (Tatler 241). Steele criticizes those who must constantly be tasting liquor, who today would be called heavy social drinkers. He calls them the "whetters," defined as those who "drink themselves into an intermediate state of being neither drunk nor sober before the hours of change, or business. . . ." He places the "whetters" in the same class with the snuff-takers, the only difference between them lying in "the expedition" they take in "destroying their brains"; the "whetter is obliged to refresh himself every moment with a liquor, as the snuff-taker with a powder" (Tatler 141). In sum, the Spectator criticizes those who are never "able to relish their being" without the transport of some passion or the gratification of some appetite:

> For want of this capacity the World is filled with Whetters, Tipplers, Cutters, Sippers, and all the numerous train of those who for want of thinking are forced to be ever exercizing their Feeling or Tasting.

It is an important lesson "to learn how to enjoy ordinary Life, and to be able to relish your being without this kind of transport" (Spec. 222). The man who must constantly be feeling or tasting something receives all

his pleasure from the wrong source; lasting pleasure comes from one's mind. This is rational pleasure.

Furthermore, drunkenness, Steele argues, reduces men to bestiality (Tatler 231). Indeed, when one is drunk, he is in the same condition as he who has been carried away by his passions, like the rake, whose reason is suspended. "He who laughs at a man drunk," Steele says, "abuses the absent," and he who "strikes a man drunk, strikes a man absent" (Theatre, No. 19, p. 85). Still, in a Tatler paper Steele advocates the moderate use of wine (No. 252). Steele criticizes the one who is dependent on wine for his pleasure, or the one who drinks so that his reason is impaired and the man is no longer master of himself. This, to Steele, is a cardinal sin, loss of reason.

Steele's criticism of vice follows the pattern one would expect of a conscious rationalist. His examples show either that the practice of a vice takes away the reason or that the practice results from not thinking.

Another area, criticized by Steele, is civil relations, that is, one's relationships to others. And in this, the foundation of Steele's criticism is that uncivilities are irrational. When one is not thinking, for example, he may be filled with a ridiculous pride. "There are several," the Tatler complains, "whose brains are hurt with pride," and suggests, moreover, that those afflicted with pride ought to be taken care of "in bedlam," implying that the proud have lost their minds. The Tatler, in this essay, condemns pride of blood, pride of doing evil, and insolent benevolence. In a Guardian paper Steele, through a ficticious correspondent, condemns pride in dress by using irony:

> I am a lady of birth and fortune, but never knew, till last Thursday, that the splendor of my equipage was so beneficial to my country. I will not deny that I have drest for some years out of the pride of my heart, but am very glad that you have so far settled my conscience in that particular, that I can now look upon my vanities as so many virtues. Since I am satisfied that my person and garb give pleasure to my fellow-creatures, I shall not think the three hours business I usually attend at my toilet, below the dignity of a rational soul (No. 58, XIV, p. 31).

Here, Steele's point is that pride in dress--or pride in blood, pride in anything--is beneath human dignity.

Another uncivility that constitutes a lapse from rationality is being overly good-natured. Such a person deserves no commendation, Steele says, because what he does is not voluntary (is not conscious virtue, in other words). Half of what is

> acted about him is done rather by his sufferance than approbation. It is generally a laziness of disposition which chooses rather to let things pass the worst way, than to go through the pain of examination. . . . Such a person has it usually said of him, he is no man's enemy but his own, which is in effect saying, he is a friend to every man but himself and his friends: for by natural consequence of his neglecting himself, he either incapacitates himself to be another's friend, or makes others cease to be his . . . (Tatler 76).

Steele urges people to discriminate, to examine; one should not pass his favors to just anyone. This discrimination rests on one of the stones in Steele's philosophical foundation, that everything one does must result from personal choice. The overly good-natured allow the immediate circumstances to determine their benevolence, rather than using their minds to judge, and upon the basis of the examination, make a choice as to who shall receive their favors and their friendship.

Another kind of uncivility treated by Steele is impudence, an example of which is men's willingness to "carry a point, without being ashamed of the ill means by which they attained it." In fact, that is

the most "Triumphant Achievement of Impudence." To carry their point they are willing to take "Steps in Defiance of Truth," act against "right Reason and bear the looks of reasonable men with a firm countenance." Now, Steele carefully explains that he would not call them "Impudent, who do unreasonable things for want of understanding; but the true Impudent acts against the Dictates and Convictions of the Mind" (Eng. I, 10, p. 44). Steele objects also to those who will make their point whether or not others are injured. In this same paper he cites the example of Athens' being seized with impudence, resulting in the death of the innocent Socrates. Steele gives Xenophon's record of his apprehensions of the Athenian people's impudence:

> When says he, the Trial of Socrates came on, what gave me the most melancholy thoughts concerning him, was, that the Sense of Shame was extinguished by the number of offenders, and no one was out of countenance, when he was not out of Fashion. Men consulted not their own Bosoms, but other men's Faces for a Judgment of their actions.

For judgment of actions, men are to consult their own opinions--one is to possess his own mind--and these opinions are to be based on reason. To consult other men simply to be in fashion is impudence, and impudence can cause harm, as Steele notes in the case of Athens versus Socrates.

The act of uncivility drawing the most vociferous criticism from Steele was dueling. In criticizing dueling, Steele shows his usual rationalistic bias in that he demonstrates the utter unreason of the duel and, in that his answer to its prevention is the divine command to forgive which is itself a conscious act. First, dueling is irrational because, as the Tatler observes, it "proceeds only from the force of custom" (No. 29). In a Guardian paper Steele disagrees with

those men who allow custom to dictate to them that they must fight, or lose their honor by being branded cowards. Steele cannot understand how two soberminded men can treat each other with outward courtesy, yet allow the thirst for revenge or the desire for honor to lead them to stab each other, sometimes mortally. To emphasize this, Steele simply gives the contents of two letters from prospective combatants. After complimenting each other profusely for the other's "honour" and "courage to do me right," and after one claims that "it shall be always far from me to seek a quarrel," both close their respective letters with statements that each is ready to meet the other. There is no reference to a quarrel. In fact, one letter states what seems to be the real cause of this duel: "Be master of your own weapons and time: the place wheresoever I will wait on you. By doing this you shall shorten revenge and clear the idle opinion the world hath of both our worths" (No. 129, XV, p. 39). Sheer stupidity is Steele's point, which he effectively makes.

Second, dueling is irrational, because it often issues from anger, which ought to be controlled. This anger might be caused by resentment, for example, of having received a blow. But Steele demonstrates how unreasonable it is for one to take offense after having received a blow. Blows are given by the excessively angry whom Steele compares to a drunk man or a blind man. No gentleman, he argues, will "allow himself to be offended by a drunk, who has neither strength of mind or limb." Nor will one strike a blind man even though the blind man has publicly insulted him. Consequently, a gentleman should not strike--fight a duel with--the angry man who insulted him, for the angry man is like a drunk or blind man (Theatre, No. 19, p. 85). But what about

the man who strikes the blow? Steele shows how unreasonable it is for him to fight. The striker has no right, Steele declares, "to demand or receive Satisfaction." Going beyond "due bounds dishonors a Man more than not going far enough." He is in the lowest condition of life, Steele thinks; and all he has left is "Penitence to restore him to the Conversation of Gentlemen." The cause of this miserable state, which demands open humiliation, is "too quick Resentment" that "transports" one into it. Steele concludes that the anger of the one struck or the anger of the one striking does not justify a duel; for in both cases the anger is groundless anger, and "groundless anger" is not "courage." "Courage," Steele says, comes "from thought" (Theatre, No. 19, p. 84).

To prevent this deplorable insult to human reason, Steele suggests that the one who offends another should repent, and the one offended should forgive. In "The Antidote II," Steele emphasizes the absurdity of grudges: "And in a Nation where Forgiveness of Injuries is taught as the greatest Perfection to which the Soul of Man can arrive, it is ridiculous and absurd to make it consist in a profess'd Impatience of them" (TP, p. 515). It is reasonable then because the English people generally believe forgiveness the greatest act of the human mind.[9] Furthermore, forgiveness involves the reason because it is a conscious act. In the "Antidote II" Steele points out that

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[9] In The Christian Hero (pp. 80-81), Steele gives another reason why forgiveness is reasonable: "The love of them is not to be in the least accounted for by the Force of Constitution but it is a more spiritual and refined moral introduced by him, who dies for those that persecuted him, yet very justly deliver'd to us. When we consider ourselves as Offenders, and to be forgiven on the reasonable terms of forgiving, for who can ask what he will not bestow?"

> Forbearance of resenting an Injury, is not, in itself, a great act of mind . . . but it is great not to prosecute Resentment . . . to suppress Resentment, for the sake of Virtue, and conquering a strong impulse to Revenge, because a Man knows it is his Duty, is heroick (TP, p. 515).

Another type of human beings, guilty of uncivility, neglect to keep small promises. One ought to keep his word, even in small matters because when one learns to break his word in small matters, he "insensibly" continues until he breaks it in important matters: "the first steps toward Ill are very carefully to be avoided, for men insensibly go on when they are once entered and do not keep up a lively abhorrence of the least Unworthiness" (Spec. 448). If these "did think at all, they would reflect upon their Guilt" (Spec. 448). In this criticism one notices Steele's emphasis on the guilty becoming "insensible" which, he explains, is the failure to keep a "lively Abhorrence" of the sin. This harmonizes with his fundamental Christian rationalist viewpoint; that is, a virtuous man is a conscious man.[10]

Steele's criticism of bad manners also reflects his fundamental rationalism. Those who sprinkle their speech with cursing do so because they are "barren" of thought: "But of all the persons who add elegances and superfluities to their discourses, those who deserve the foremost rank are the swearers. . . . Dulness and barrenness of thought is the original of it . . ." (Tatler 137). When the Tatler takes the opportunity to examine a swearer's brain, he finds "half of it was worn out, and filled up with expletives" (No. 13). This means that such a person always has plenty to say without the drudgery of knowledge gained and wisdom applied. Consequently, after the Tatler

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[10] Keeping "up a lively abhorrence of the least unworthiness," recommended here by Steele, suggests conscious virtue.

had influenced a swearer to quit his oaths, the ex-swearer was

> extremely short in his phrases; for as I observed before, a common swearer has a brain without any idea on the swearing side, therefore my ward has yet mighty little to say, and is forced to substitute some other vehicle of nonsense to supply the defect of his useful expletives (No. 13).

Another folly that Steele criticizes is snuff-taking. Although Steele suggests one parallel between excessive drinking and snuff-taking, that both provide an unhealthy psychological crutch, his view of the habits themselves is considerably different. Excessive drinking is a vice; snuff-taking is folly, or bad manners. The Spectator (344), for example, goes into great detail to describe the offensiveness of this habit both to the user and to those around him.[11] But that it is a dirty, offensive habit is not Steele's main point. He criticizes the purpose of snuff-taking which is similar to the purpose of swearing: the pause for a pinch of snuff fills in awkward gaps in the conversation so that one is not put out to think of something to say. To dramatize this, Steele has the Tatler complain because a story-teller continually interrupted his narration to reach for a pinch of snuff. On one occasion the Tatler hid the man's snuff box as an experiment. During the time the story-teller would ordinarily be taking a pinch of snuff, the Tatler observes, he will interrupt with, "as I was saying," or "and so sir." After the Tatler returned his snuff, the story-teller resumed his tale, upon which the Tatler remarked:

> . . . and I took notice, that his dulness was much more regular and fluent than before. A pinch supplies the place of "as I was saying" and "and so sir," and he went on currently enough in that style which the learned call the insipid.

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[11] Other papers that emphasize the bad manners of the snuff-taker are Spec. 138 and Tatler 35.

> This observation easily led me into a philosophic reason for taking snuff, which is done only to supply with sensations the want of reflection. This I take to be an Eupenka, a nostrum. . . . For it is natural to lift a man's hand to a sore, when you feel anything coming at you, so when a person feels his thoughts are run out and has no more to say, it is natural to supply his weak brain with powder at the nearest place of access, viz., the nostrils (No. 35).

Beneath the lightheartedness, one notices that Steele is deadly serious. In truth, he is dealing with something much more serious than a dirty, ridiculous habit. He is critical of the unwillingness of his fellow Britons to use their thinking power. People reach for snuff to supply the "want of reflection," or thought. Snuff, then, is a symbol of anything that people reach for instead of depending on their personal judgments. This can be pernicious whenever people reach for others' opinions, or for custom, and allow these to dictate their actions. When men do this, they become a prey for the unscrupulous. This happened, Steele thought, when the English people allowed the Tory Ministry to do their thinking for them; and this action almost destroyed them. But Steele also alludes to the proverbial vicious circle in that he says a habit such as snuff-taking not only is the evidence of a sterile mind; but also, such a habit contributes to more mental sterility. Reaching for a pinch of snuff becomes as natural as "to lift a man's hand to a sore, when you feel anything coming at you" (Tatler 35).

Other ill-mannered people who lack reflection are the inquisitive, the railers, those who attend church but do almost anything other than worship, and the negligent. The inquisitive, Steele says, "do not take in anything for their own use, but merely to pass it to another." They are "the Funnels of conversation," who are as "eager

to learn a trifle as an important truth." This "creature," the Spectator concludes, is "naturally vacant of thought in itself" (No. 228). Another ill mannered dullard is the heckler at a play who often ends his badgering with an obscenity. He acts, the Spectator says, "from a dull sterile brain" (No. 443). But misconduct at worship drew heavier criticism from the Spectator than either of the other two. Because Steele thought that church attendance was serious and that the only proper reason for one's attendance was worship, he is critical of the man who arrives late, bows to all, takes a pinch of snuff, surveys the congregation and sleeps; in short, does everything but worship (Spec. 380). Furthermore, he criticizes ladies who engage in various antics to be noticed, such as those who play with their fans (No. 134).[12] His criticism, in one way or another, pokes fun at those who go to church seemingly for purposes other than worship. In fact, the Guardian concludes that those who really worship are few. In view of the fact that people attend worship, but whisper, ogle, sleep, etc., he concludes that worship is a "task rather than a voluntary act" (No. 65, XIV, p. 68). If it is not a voluntary act, then it is not worship according to Steele's Christian rationalism.[13] Still another ill mannered person who shows himself to be unreasonable affects the careless air: "general negligence is what they assume upon all occasions, and set up for an aversion to all manner of Business and attention. . . . It is the professed maxim with these people never to Think." (Spec. 284).

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[12] Other Spectator papers that criticize similar misconduct at worship are 259, 284, 460, and 503.

[13] This was developed in chapter III of this thesis.

Their opposites are equally unreasonable; they are guilty of "Impertinences of being always in a hurry" (Spec. 284).

The aged are quite often guilty of folly and ill manners when they need not be. Two infirmities of age, "insipidness" and loneliness could be avoided by some forethought in youth. The Tatler, to illustrate the insipidness often accompanying age, describes a club, composed of five old men, that meets every evening at six. The Tatler says that he usually joins them before he retires, so that his brain can unwind; he looks upon their conversation "as taking my nap before I go to bed." He can, he says, depend on these men to say the same things each evening. Major Matchlock, for example, retells all his battles, and Jack Ogle, who has memorized ten distiches of Hudibras, somehow works them into the conversation each evening.[14] The only way of avoiding such a "trifling and frivolous" old age is

> to lay up in our way to it such stores of knowledge and observation as may make us useful and agreeable in our declining years. The mind of man in a long life will become a magazine of wisdom or folly, and will consequently discharge itself in something pertinent or improving (No. 133).

The Spectator also warns that one ought to lay up in store against loneliness in old age. He prints a "letter" from an old Bachelor who has spent a profligate youth and now has nothing; he wishes that he had

> laid out that which I profused in Luxury and Wantonness, in acts of Generosity or Charity. I have lived a Bachelor to this day, and instead of numerous offspring with which, in the regular ways of life, I might possibly have delighted myself, I have only to amuse myself (No. 260).

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[14] This club, like the Spectator Club, is fictitious.

Another folly of old age is refusal to accept it by attemtping to act young. The dignity of human nature suffers the greatest violence when the natural order of things is reversed:

> And in nothing is it more remarkably Villified and ridiculous, than when Feebleness preposterously attempts to adorn itself with that outward Pomp and Lustre which serve only to set off the Bloom of Youth with better advantage (Spec. 496).

In another paper the Spectator shows the absurdity of refusing to accept age:

> It is . . . as absurd in an old man to wish for the Strength of a youth, as it would be in a young man to wish for the Strength of a Bull. These wishes are both equally out of nature, which should direct all things that are not contradictory to Justice, Law, and Reason. (Spec. 153).

And in this same paper, the Spectator asserts that "the State of an Old Man, who is dissatisfied" because he is old, is the "most out of all measures of Reason and good sense of any being we have any account of."

Indeed, the basis of Steele's criticism of vice and bad manners derives from his essential rationalistic assumptions in that Steele thought one committed folly because he is unwilling to think or because he allows himself to be transported by his passions, which ought to be controlled by the reason, and in that Steele thought some follies contribute to mental sterility. Steele believed that "Nonsense to the conscience" is the mother of all folly.

When Steele, the public censor, commented on English manners, he included women. However, these comments are worthy of separate treatment because of Steele's intense interest in their social and family roles and in what he considered their peculiar follies. Even a casual reader would be struck with the sincerity as well as with the number of essays Steele wrote on the subject of women. Thackeray was.

He suggests that Steele was the first of English "writers who really seemed to admire and respect" women;[15] he "salutes" women "with his heart as well as with his hat."[16] Some, however, believed that Steele's respect and admiration for the ladies bordered on sentimentality. Blanchard thinks that Steele in his portrait of the ideal woman comes perilously close to "mawkish sentimentalism."[17]

Steele generally was not overly sentimental about women; on the contrary he realistically explored their follies and weaknesses, and offered them practical,rational--if not original--advice. In her thesis Blanchard devotes one of her chapters to Steele's views on women. Blanchard, one remembers, suggests that Steele shows an anti-rationalistic bias in his moral theory. In his views on women, Blanchard suggests, this same bias is evident.[18] Still, her chapter, in which she discusses Steele's views on women, devotes considerable attention to Steele's rationalism on the subject of women as wives.[19] In addition to the points Blanchard makes about Steele's views on marriage, there are other points that further confirm Steele's fundamental rationalism. For example, he insists that one's marriage partner be consciously chosen. One is not to allow others (including parents), custom, desire for a fortune, or the wiles of a pretty fortune-hunter,

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[15] W. M. Thackeray, The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century, ed. Wm. L. Phelps (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1900), p. 122.

[16] Eng. Hum., p. 124.

[17] Diss., "Steele As a Moralist," p. 119.

[18] Diss., "Steele As a Moralist," pp. 148.

[19] Diss., "Steele As a Moralist," pp. 140-44.

to force him into marrying one whom he does not wish. This is one of the important themes of The Conscious Lovers. Lucinda's mother wants her to marry cousin Cimberton, who is "proper" for her, but she wants to marry Myrtle, and does. Bevil's father wants him to marry Lucinda and join two family fortunes; but he wants to marry Indiana, and does. Not only the parents, but custom would have dictated that Bevil marry Lucinda, not Indiana, who is presumably poor. Thus Isabella warns Indiana that she flatters herself to think that a "Man of his [Bevil's] Figure and Fortune will make himself the jest of town and marry a handsome beggar for love." However, Indiana quickly replies, with Steele's approval: "The town: I must tell you, Madam, the fools that laugh at Mr. Bevil, will but make themselves more ridiculous; his actions are the Result of Thinking" (II, ii, p. 331). In this same play Tom, the servant, states this favorite idea of Steele's: "I am my master's servant for hire, I am my mistress's by choice" (III, i, p. 339). In a Tatler paper, Steele, comparing the love of parents for their offspring with the love between man and woman, says that whereas the former is the result of instinct, "the affection between lovers and friends is founded on reason and choice" (82).

Steele insists that a husband, in order that the marriage be happy, must respect his wife as his intellectual equal. In fact, if there is not "a union of the minds" in marriage, as well as the bodies, wedlock is simply a "somber prostitution" (Tatler 91). To be happy, a husband and wife must first choose each other; then they must communicate, not just physically, but intellectually also. To show that a man must respect his wife's intellect so that she is a rational

companion, not just a sex partner, the Spectator commends the following "lover's letter":

> Beauty, my fairest creature, palls in the possession, but I have also your Mind: your soul is as dear to me as my own, and if the advantage of a liberal Education, some knowledge, and as much contempt of the world, join'd with endeavors towards a life of strict Virtue and Religion can quality me to raise New Ideas in a Breast so well dispos'd as yours is, our days will pass away with joy; and old age instead of introducing melancholy Prospects of Decay, give us hope of Eternal Youth in a better Life (No. 142).

And in his The Conscious Lovers Steele has Indiana say: "Nay, I had rather have a man of honor should pay me that [esteem] than all the homage of a sincere and humble love." Then she explains why: "Esteem is a result of reason . . . love often kindles from external merit only" (II, iii, p. 333).[20]

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[20] Steele believed that a man ought to respect his wife's intellectual power so that she becomes his friend, as well as his wife. The Spectator (No. 490) says that this friendship is even superior to love; "But under favour of him and all other fine Gentlemen, I cannot be persuaded but the Passion a Bridegroom has for a virtuous young Woman, will by little and little, grow into Friendship, and then it is ascended to a higher Pleasure than it was in its first Favor." The Englishman (I, 9, p. 39), agrees: "It is the very Essence of Love to be free and unconstrained; Love is the will improved into Friendship and Desire." And he further suggests that the friendship between husband and wife is superior to the friendship between man and man: "The Friendship which a generous Husband has towards his Wife, is as much above the Friendship which man bears to man, as the conversation of courtship is more pleasing than ordinary Discourse." Furthermore, the wife is not to be just a sympathetic shoulder to cry on, but a friend "on which to employ the best Dispositions of the mind" (Eng. I, 9, p. 39). In his own marriage Steele put this into practice or so he declared in a letter (Correspondence, p. 203) to Mrs. Steele, in which he says that he is attracted not only by her beauty, but also by her virtue: "The pleasing hope with which my mind is possess'd is too delicate a touch of soul to be explaine'd, but it is founded on so solid and lasting motives that I am sure it will actuate the behavior of my whole life; for I do not entertain my Imagination with those transports only which are rais'd by beauty, but fix it also on the satisfaction which flows from the reverence due to Virtue. Thus I am not only allur'd by Your person, but convinc'd by Your Life and You are the most Amiable of Women." In a letter, one month later, (Correspondence, p. 209), Steele

When a couple does not make a "marriage of the minds," they will not enjoy the marriage. The Spectator sadly reports a marriage grown insipid because the couple do not esteem each other:

> These two people of seeming merit fell into each other's arms, and passion being sated, and no Reason or good Sense in either to succeed it, the Life is at a Stand: Their meals are insipid, and their time Tedious; Their Fortune has placed them above Care, and Their Loss of taste reduced them below Diversion (No. 421).

The Tatler sharply criticizes Osmyn (a fictitious name) who was interested only in his wife's physical charms although he had reason enough to be impressed with her mind because

> she was not beholden to the charms of her sex that her company was preferable to any Osmyn could meet with abroad . . . [for], were all she said considered without regard to her being a woman, it might stand the examination of the severest judges. She had all the beauty of her own sex, with the conversation--accomplishments of ours (Tatler 53).

In this quotation Steele mentions a favorite theme: with respect to her mind a woman is to be considered not simply a woman but a human being. Also, he alludes to the friendship that ought to exist between a husband and wife (a wife is capable of entertaining her husband in conversation as well as a male friend could). Steele is critical of Osmyn for considering his wife only as a mere female, and for not appreciating her mind:

> But Osmyn very soon grew surfeited with the charms of her person by possession, and her mind by want of taste, for he was one of that loose sort of men, who have but one reason for setting any value upon the fair sex; whoever consider brides but as new women, and consequently neglect them when they cease to be such. All the merit of Elmira could not

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describes this esteem as friendship: "You may assure yourself, I value you according to your merit, which is saying that you have my heart, by all the Types of Beauty, Virtue, Good-nature, and Friendship."

> prevent her from becoming a mere wife within a few months after her nuptials (Tatler 53).

In his views on women Steele's characteristic rationalism is evident when he comments on marriage. First, a man's wife should be his personal choice. Second, she should be chosen because he respects her mind as well as appreciates her body. Third, she should become his best friend.

Another aspect of Steele's view of women is his insistence that they be treated with the respect due a reasonable being. The Tatler approves the view expressed in a letter a young man has written to his beloved:

> I know no reason why difference of sex should make our language to each other differ from the ordinary rules of right reason. I shall affect plainness and sincerity in my discourse to you, as much as others do perplexity and rapture (No. 35).

Again Steele makes the point that, as far as the intellect is concerned, there is no difference in men and women. But the point for emphasis here is that this lover will not use the romantic foolishness, common in tales of chivalry and cavalier poems,[21] but he will treat her as a rational person; to speak as the romantics speak would be treating her as a nonrational person, wholly vulnerable to flattery. Indeed, Steele argues that a woman can "obtain such qualifications so that she can please men not on the basis of her being a woman, but with such merits as would please were she not a woman." Then, having done so, the men are to appreciate her on that basis, not as a mere female:

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[21] See Berkeley, "The Art of Whining Love," pp. 478-96.

> She therefore that is bred with freedom, and in good company, considers men according to their respective characters and distinctions, while she that is locked up from such observations but as a man. In like manner, when men converse with women, the well-bred and intelligent are looked upon with an observation suitable to their different talents and accomplishments, without respect to their sex, while a mere woman can be observed under no consideration but that of a woman, and there can be but one reason for placing time in her company (Tatler 61).

Therefore, Steele criticizes men who appreciate women for only those physical qualities peculiar to their womanhood. In a "letter" a girl complains to the Spectator that because she works in a shop, and because she is pretty she has "little else to do but give Audience." Merchants come in, she says, as they go to the exchange "to say something of my roguish Eye; and here is one who makes me once or twice tumble all my Goods, and then owns it was only a Gallantry to see me act with these pretty Hands." Then she refers to an ugly girl whose shop is not far away but whom they leave alone; "must I," she asks, "that am a Beauty be treated with nothing but my Beauty?" (No. 155) In addition, Steele criticizes those who look on women as pleasant diversions, but whose minds are not capable of liberal education. When Steele planned his censorium, a sort of lyceum, ladies were invited as well as men. And he was asked

> how it happened that the Undertaker of this Design had against the Sense and Practice of all other Sages who have ever yet appear'd in the world made the presence of Ladies necessary for the Promotion of Knowledge?

"Why," Steele replied to the one who had asked about the invitation, "you may have observed that Diversion was made the Instrument of Improving of our Minds" (Town Talk, No. 4, PJ, p. 210). So women only serve as diversion for men, while men improve their minds. But Steele is ironic here, and implies that women can gain knowledge to improve their

minds, as well as men, and ought to be treated as equals. Consequently, they are invited to the lyceum.

However, if men are obligated to treat women as rational beings, women in turn ought to act like rational beings. The Englishman says that a husband has a friend "on which to employ the best Dispositions of the Mind," providing he "is possessed of a Woman of Merit" (I, 9, p. 39). Too often women make no effort to become women of merit. The Tatler scolds ladies for overconcern with trifles which show a lightness of mind. He recalls a lady who became impatient with her companion for being so overly concerned about trifles, such as a lap dog. She argues that this is the reason men have "mean ideas of our souls and affections." She suggests that it is a wonder men are willing to take women as life companions because of the "low plane of their affections." When the companion will not stop making over her lap dog, the lady leaves in disgust, the Tatler says, as she always does "at anything . . . which discovers in [their] sex a levity of mind, which renders them inconsiderable in the opinion of others" (No. 40). In another paper the Tatler criticizes women for overemphasizing externals, such as beauty: "for it is very just that She who values herself on her beauty should be regarded by others on no other consideration" (No. 61). If a man is to treat a woman with the respect due a rational being, then the woman is obligated to conduct herself as a rational being; she must develop some excellencies that would be appreciated though she were not a woman.

Steele had much to say on the subject of women, their nature, their role in marriage, and man's attitude towards them. His views show that on this subject he assumed a fundamentally rationalistic

position. He refused to accept the view that her mind was inferior to man's. In marriage, which was to be based on two people's consciously choosing each other because they love each other, both the partners have obligations to meet, and the marriage is to be a union of minds as well as bodies and fortunes. Steele, believing that in society women are to be treated as rational beings, criticizes men who think of women only for physical qualities. The woman must think of herself as a rational being and thus develop her character and her mind. Steele's rationalistic approach to women struck Thackeray, who was moved to say: "It was Steele who first began to pay a manly homage to their goodness and understanding, as well as to their tenderness and beauty."[22]

Although Steele wrote to entertain and thereby sell his Tatlers, Spectators, and Guardians, he also wrote to reform people's behavior. Hence, he offered, for five or six years, his criticism of English manners. Closely related to his censorship of manners is his art criticism, focused mainly on drama, because he saw the stage as a powerful means of social reform. Several critics have commented upon Steele and the stage, but few have offered more than a brief statement. In her thesis Blanchard provides a review of the scholarship up to her thesis date, 1929, on Steele and drama. Most comments she says, center on the sentimental element in Steele's plays since A. W. Ward called him the father of Sentimental drama.[23] Since Blanchard's thesis, others have commented on Steele's plays and his association with Drury Lane Theatre.

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[22] Eng. Hum., p. 123.

[23] Diss., "Steele As a Moralist," p. 3.

For the most part their comments are like those cited by Blanchard: they are brief and refer to Steele's sentimentalism. The longest study of Steele and the drama has been John Loftis' Steele At Drury Lane. Although Loftis' work is primarily biographical, he does discuss Steele's theory of comedy, which, Loftis says, can be stated in three parts: "(1) the employment of exemplary characters; (2) the appeal to the emotion of sympathy; (3) the self-conscious avoidance of licentious dialogue." Only the middle one was a uniform characteristic of early sentimental drama, Loftis believes.[24] However, Elvena Green believes that Steele clearly shows the rationale of what later came to be called "sentimental comedy": (1) the theatre has a moral didactic purpose, (2) in order to fulfill its purposes the theatre must show innocent, virtuous characters instead of the vicious licentious ones of the Restoration, (3) thus the comedy of ridicule and laughter is replaced by a comedy of pity and tears.[25]

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[24] Drury Lane, p. 197.

[25] "Three Aspects of Richard Steele's Theory of Comedy," Educational Theatre Journal, 20 (1968), 141. Both Loftis and Green seem to emphasize Steele's appeal to the emotions. As a matter of fact, I do not think that Steele intended to emphasize human emotions at the expense of the rational part of man in his four plays. According to Arthur Sherbo, English Sentimental Drama (East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1957), p. 12, Ernest Bernbaum's The Drama of Sensibility is the standard work on English sentimental drama. Bernbaum's "definition of sentimental drama serves as a model" against which other definitions "can be tested for differences of opinion or additional elements." According to Bernbaum, "the drama of sensibility . . . was from its birth a protest against the orthodox view of life, and against those literary conventions which have served that view. It implied that human nature, when not, as in some cases, already perfect, was perfectible by an appeal to the emotions." Bernbaum also suggests that Steele's unique contribution to sentimental drama was "improbability of plot," by which Bernbaum means "that virtuous people came to a happy issue out of all their afflictions." He cites the "world of the

In her thesis Blanchard attempts to show that Steele consistently reveals an anti-rationalistic bias and she discusses Steele's views on the drama from that position. She concludes that Steele's view of comedy is in harmony with his anti-rationalism for two reasons: (1) as a reformer of manners, Steele was interested in and exploited the potential of the stage to teach the public: "Thus the general trend of Steele's theorizing and practice . . . indicated his intention of presenting his moral theory to the public from the playhouse";[26] (2) since man's nature contains an "element of altruism," which is a foundation for a group of passions highly favorable to virtue, pity, compassion, and generosity," the "practical moralist must strengthen these passions which can be done through comedy."[27]

One can grant that Steele does recognize some non-rational uses of the stage--one may or may not agree with Blanchard's logic above; still when Steele's total criticism of the drama is surveyed, his fundamental rationalism is evident. Blanchard concedes that Steele's anti-rationalism "does not preclude his criticism of the irrational tone of the stage. "He is indignant," she writes, "at the invasion of the province of the drama, which should be addressed legitimately to the intellect." "The invasion" to which she refers are mechanical

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conscious lovers as an example. On this basis, Steele's sentimental comedy does not contradict his basic rationalism. His comedy makes a statement about human nature more than simply presenting a study of emotions. These quotations from Bernbaum are given in Sherbo.

[26] Diss., "Steele As a Moralist," p. 85. Blanchard's point is that Steele's use of the stage to reform people shows his anti-rationalism because the stage tricks people into reforming.

[27] Diss., "Steele As a Moralist," p. 74.

devices, Italian operas, preplay acrobats, and an over-appeal to the senses. Blanchard concludes: "But if we may judge by the frequency and the intensity with which he inveighs against it . . . he is . . . concerned about the irrational tone of the stage."[28]

Furthermore, Steele thought people ought to enjoy the stage intellectually:

> I think it but just to give an abstract of the law of action, for the help of the less learned part of the audience, that they may rationally enjoy so refined and instructive a pleasure as a just representation of human life (Tatler 35).

In this passage Steele mentions two types of pleasure to be derived from the stage. First, the stage offers a "refined" pleasure, which in this context, means a pleasure appealing to one's reflection or thinking. For people to "enjoy rationally" such refined entertainment, two elements are essential: (1) people who are interested in rational entertainment, and (2) entertainment such as the stage that really appeals to the intellect. In a Theatre paper Steele criticizes some contemporary French drama because of its immorality; he also fusses at English audiences for enjoying this sort of drama. To enjoy this drama means that the audience have reduced themselves to animalism:

> But if we are any longer to march on two legs, and not be quite prone, or on all four, like other animals, let us assume manhood and human Indignation against so barbarous an affront to acquaint Women of Honour with what is more filthy than could be seen at a Brothel; to entertain our wives and daughters with what their whole education tended to make them abhor is something more monstrous than I believ'd even this age of contradictions could even produce. But I forsee the Theatre is to be utterly destroy'd, and sensation is to banish Reflection, as Sound is to beat down sense. The Head and the Heart are to be mov'd no more, but

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[28] Diss., "Steele As a Moralist," p. 74.

> the basest Parts of the Body to be hereafter the Sole Instruments of human delight . . . (Theatre, No. 21, pp. 90-91).

Likewise, Steele is critical of some English tragedy because it presents entertainment from which a human being ought not to find pleasure. The Tatler sadly agrees with Rapin who "observes that the English theatre very much delights in bloodshed, which he represents as an indication of our temper":

> I must own, there is something very horrid in the public executions of an English tragedy. Stabbing and poisoning, which are performed behind the scenes in other nations, must be done openly among us, to gratify the audience. . . . I would not have it thought, that there is just ground for those consequences which our enemies draw against us from these practices; but methinks one would be sorry for any manner of occasion for such misrepresentation of us. The virtues of tenderness, compassion and humanity, are those by which men are distinguished from brutes, so much as by reason itself (Tatler 134; see also Spec. 502).[29]

Thus Steele is critical of English audiences for enjoying immoral and violent plays; and he is critical of the plays themselves. Consequently, Steele hopes that playwrights will resist the temptation to write such plays:

> But it is to be hoped, that men of Wit and Genius will be prevailed upon to write for the Stage . . . who will scorn to be beholden to men's appetites and Desires for their applause, but will venture to stand or fall, according as they please well-informed Judgment and promote well-directed Passion (Town Talk, No. 6, PJ, p. 232).

Second, the audience is to enjoy rationally the "instructive pleasure," offered by the stage. Blanchard has shown that Steele recognized and exploited the stage as a powerful tool for reform. One method of using the stage as a reform medium was to write plays appealing to the

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[29] In this same paper Steele makes the point that these tragedies are enjoyed by people of "the higher rank"; their enjoyment indicates barbarous temper among this class just as the enjoyment of cock fights and bear-baiting indicates such a temper among "common people."

audience's virtuous passions, sympathy and pity. So Steele, without apology, wrote plays that attempted to arouse the audience's pity--this was a part of his theory of comedy. Yet he thought a play a poor play which appeals only to one's feeling of pity. Commenting on a contemporary tragedy, Steele says:

> There is not one good line in it. Yet it never fails to draw tears from some part of the audience . . . a remarkable instant, that the Soul is not to be moved by words, but things. . . . I must confess that this is not wrought on such as examine why they are pleased (Tatler 14).

Although Steele thought the appeal to one's pity an important element in a play, even more important is the rational content of the play.

When one turns to Steele's criticism of other arts he will find Steele's predominant emphasis is on the intellect. However, this does not keep him from recognizing the non-rational elements of art. Just as the stage was a means of moving people to practice virtue by its appeal to the imagination,[30] so he believed that other art forms hold such an appeal. He praises painting as having the potential to be a good teacher, providing painters will choose proper subjects; however, Steele complains

> that the art of Painting is made so little use of to the Improvement of our Manners. When we consider that it places the Action of the Person represented in the most agreeable aspect imaginable, that it does not only express the Passion or concern as it sits upon him who is drawn, but has under those Features strong Images of Virtue and Humanity might we not expect would be instilled into the mind from the Labors of the Pencil? . . . but the use of it is generally perverted, and that admirable Skill prostituted to the basest and most unworthy Ends. Who is the better man for beholding the most beautiful Venus? (Spec. 226)

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[30] The imagination of Steele was primarily visual. See Tatler 98.

The painter can appeal to the viewer's mind through his imagination and make the viewer better. The Tatler agrees with this by comparing painting to a theatrical presentation: "If a thing painted or related can irresistably enter our hearts, what may not be brought to pass by seeing generous things performed before our eyes" (No. 8).

Likewise, Steele was impressed by the power of poetry to charm one into virtue:

> I have always been of the opinion that virtue sinks deepest into the heart of man when it comes recommended by the powerful charms of poetry. The most active principle in our mind is the imagination: to it a good poet makes his court perpetually, and by this faculty takes care to gain it first. Our passions and inclinations come over next; and our reason surrenders itself with pleasure in the end. Thus the whole soul is insensibly betrayed into morality; by bribing the fancy with beautiful and agreeable images of those very things that in the books of the philosophers appear austere, and have at best but a kind of forbidden aspect (Tatler 98).

"Imagination," in this passage means man's faculty to see word pictures--the fancy is bribed "with beautiful and agreeable images"; poetry, then, as a means of instruction is parallel to painting and scenic drama.

Although Steele pays tribute to the power of art's appeal to one's imagination, his more serious concern is with the intellectual activity involved in creating art and in enjoying art. Mr. Myrtle, Steele's mouthpiece in The Lover, is impressed by the private gallery of one who has been judicious in his selection of paintings so that they appeal to one's mind as well as his eyes:

> I cannot better express my Gratitude for the Favour you do my Ears, than by inviting you to divert your Eyes in my large Gallery, which is now garnisht, from top to bottom with the finest Paintings Italy has ever produced: I dare promise myself you will find such Variety, and such Beautiful Objects, of both History and Landscape, Profane and Sacred,

> that it will not only be sufficient to please and recreate the sight but also yield Satisfaction to your Mind (Lover, No. 12, PJ, p. 45).

For a painting to satisfy one's mind, two things are essential, a worthy painting by the artist and good taste by a viewer. And, to exercise good taste, a viewer should do two things: he should study excellent paintings, and he should examine all paintings using his reason as a judge. To be sure, a "letter" writer thinks it should be "The Business of a Spectator to improve the Pleasures of Sight," and, the "writer" continues, "there cannot be a more immediate Way to it than recommending the Study and Observation of excellent Drawings and Pictures" (No. 244). Steele's pronoun reference is careless here, but he seems to mean that one can improve his taste in paintings by carefully studying excellent drawings; the "writer" then says that he has done this by viewing the "Cartons" of Raphael. At first viewing, the "writer" confesses, "I was barely pleas'd"; the next time "I liked them better, but at last as I grew better acquainted with them I fell deeply in love with them, like wise Speeches they sunk deep into my Heart" (Spec. 244). The "writer" then explains why he was not at first impressed by comparing these drawings to a wise man:

> For you know, Mr. Spectator, that a Man of Wit may extreamly affect one for the present, but if he has not Discretion his Merit soon vanishes away, while a wise Man that has not so great a Stock of Wit shall nevertheless give you a far greater and more lasting Satisfaction: Just so it is in a Picture that is smartly touch'd but not well study'd, one may call it a witty Picture, tho' the Painter in the meantime may be in Danger of being called a Fool.

A wise picture, like a wise man, will seldom dazzle one at first sight; he must look beyond that which appeals only to the eyes.

This assumes also that there is a distinction between a mere "witty" picture and a "wise picture." To determine which is which "Every Man when he looks on a Picture should examine it according to that Share of Reason[31] he is master of, or he will be in Danger of making a wrong judgement" (Spec. 244). But how is one to judge a painting by reason? A "wise painting," Steele says, is one

> that is thoroughly understood in the whole, and well performed in the Particulars, that is begun on a Foundation of Geometry, carry'd on by the Rules of Perspective, Architecture, and Anatomy, and perfected by a good Harmony, a just and natural Coloring, and such Passions and Expressions of the Mind as are almost peculiar to Raphael. . . . Other Pictures are made for the Eyes only, as Rattles are made for children's Ears, and certainly that Picture that only pleases the Eye, without representing some well-chosen Part of Nature or other, does not but shew what fine colours are to be sold at the colour-shop, and mocks the Works of the Creator (Spec. 244).

Steele's criticism of poetry is similar to his criticism of paintings. Just as a painting ought to appeal to the mind, making a point by "representing some well-chosen part of nature, a poem ought to appeal to the mind by driving home a point for the reader's reflection" (Guardian, No. 16, XIII, p. 148). Steele admires the songs and lyrics of the ancients, Sappho, Anacreon and Horace because he believes their poems are the "completest models" for little odes or sonnets: "You will find them generally pursuing a simple thought in their songs, which is driven to a point, without those interruptions and deviations so frequent in the modern writers of this order." Steele then discusses two kinds of interruptions and digressions, characteristic of some

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[31] Here, by reason Steele may mean the consensus opinion of what constitutes a good picture. Still, he urges one to examine personally a painting and make a judgment.

English lyricists, too many thoughts--none of which are clearly made, and too much wit. In contrast to the Greek lyricists:

> Our writers generally crowd into one song materials enough for several; and so they starve every thought, by endeavoring to nurse up more than one at a time. They give you a string of imperfect sonnets instead of one finished piece, which is the fault of Mr. Waller.

But this is not the only fault of English lyric poets, Steele says; some of them use too much wit, which dazzles the reader's imagination, but obscures the points:

> Of all our countrymen, none are more defective in their songs, through a redundancy of wit, than Dr. Donne and Mr. Cowley. In them one point of wit flashes so fast upon another that the reader's attention is dazzled by the continual sparkling of their imagination, you find a new design started almost in every line, and you come to the end without the satisfaction of seeing any one of them executed (Guardian, No. 16, XIII, p. 148).

Wit , then, is to be used primarily to provide ornamentation for the truth. Ornamentation attracts the reader's imagination and gains the reader's attention so that he will receive the truth, but the truth must be examined in the reason.

Steele's rationalism and his neo-classicism show when he comments on "the rules,"[32] as one notes in a definitive statement in the Englishman. Steele says that most critics fall into two classes: "such as judge by Rule, or such as judge by Nature. The first are Men of little or no Taste, who having read over the Mechanical Rules, and learned a

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[32] This expression, of course, means the literary theories of the classical poets. "The Rules" was a set topic during the eighteenth century. Pope's discussion of them in "Essay on Criticism" is typical. One of Pope's points is: "Those Rules of old discovered, not devised, / Are Nature still, but Nature methodized." I, 88-89. Steele refers to these same "rules," and expresses approximately the same view as Pope's "Essay on Criticism." In this, Steele shows himself expressing common early eighteenth-century views.

few terms of art," thus enabled to note obvious "Faults or Beauties in an Author. . . . The others are generally Talkers, of glittering Fancies, and hurried Imaginations, who despise art and method, who admire what was never said before. . . ." Steele is critical of the one for slavishly following the rules and of the other for ignoring all rules and decorum. He advocates a middle course in which "The free Critick . . . is governed by laws which he himself votes for whose liberty is checked by the Restraints of Truth and the Monarchy of right Reason" (Eng. I, 7, p. 31).

In his efforts to reform manners, Steele's basic premise is evident: most of man's ills are related to the resignation of, or the abuse of, his reason. Failure to consult the reason causes vice, folly, and bad manners. The resignation of reason is responsible for man's behavior toward men. The position that women hold in society, the belief that they are inferior, that they were useful only to keep house and bear children was unreasonable, Steele thought. He argued that they were rational beings and should be treated as such. Hence husbands ought to respect their wives as persons and as friends, as well as sex partners. In addition to his periodical essays as a means of social reform Steele saw the theatre as a great tool for social reform; but he objected to its irrational tone, its cynical view of human nature, its obscenity, and its appeal to the senses rather than an appeal to the reason. Furthermore, he was distressed that human beings were entertained by the violence and sex, which often appeared on the English stage and which appealed only to lower instincts which man has in common with animals: humans ought to be entertained by

that which is in harmony with human dignity, that which entertains the heart and the mind. Likewise, he saw the other arts as a moral tool, but his criticism of painting and poetry shows a rationalistic bias.

CHAPTER VI

STEELE'S VIEWS ON POLITICAL ECONOMY

Calhoun Winton is probably correct when he observes: "The bulk of Richard Steele's writing was, in one sense or another, political."[1] This should not be surprising in that "he was in or near the center of English political life from almost the turn of the century until 1723, for much of that time a member of Parliament."[2] Winton says that "as historical documents, Steele's writings are of primary importance."[3] They are of primary importance because they give a comprehensive statement of the general Whig political principles during the early eighteenth century. John Loftis, for example, says that the Englishman papers "offer forceful statements of the Whig position in the decisive period just before and just after the death of Queen Anne."[4] The division between the Whigs and the Tories in these years, Loftis contends, represented a "deep ideological difference, suggested but not comprehended by the difference in the political interests of the moneyed and the landed man."[5]

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[1] Diss., "Steele, The Political Writer," Introduction, p. 1.

[2] Winton, Diss., "Steele, The Political Writer," Introduction, p. 3.

[3] Diss., "Steele, The Political Writer," Introduction, p. 3.

[4] "The Blenheim Papers and Steele's Journalism, 1715-1718," PMLA, 66 (1951), 212.

[5] Loftis, "The Blenheim Papers," p. 206.

Steele's political principles have been identified in the most comprehensive study of his politics, "Richard Steele: The Political Writer," by Calhoun Winton. Although Winton's work is primarily "biographical and critical,"[6] Winton has devoted considerable space in his thesis to identifying Steele's political principles in doing what he announced, and concludes that "Steele was a consistent if not an original thinker." His writings, Winton continues, reflect very explicitly the things in which he believed: legalism, the Revolution of 1688 and the Protestant Succession (as justified by John Locke), Latitudinarian Anglicanism (italics mine), and a broad humanitarianism. Although all of these were commonplace Whig doctrines, Winton believes that Steele did seem to be "less devoted to the Whigs than to what he regarded as 'Revolution Principle', the 'common cause', as he put it, in which 'I am engaged to the End of my life.'"[7] Rae Blanchard, who has edited most of Steele's minor essay periodicals, as well as all his miscellaneous tracts and pamphlets, including his political periodical, The Englishman, says that Steele's writings do not show an ordered system of political thought in any piece, but agrees that they do possess a "unifying theme," which"stamps him as a man of Revolutionary Principles."[8]

Consequently, it will not be my purpose in this chapter simply to ferret out Steele's political principles, since that has been done. I propose to offer a fresh perspective by showing that Steele's political

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[6] Diss., "Steele, The Political Writer," Introduction, p. 3.

[7] Diss., "Steele, The Political Writer," Introduction, p. 3.

[8] The Englishman, p. x.

statements are entirely in harmony with the theological rationalism of Latitudinarianism. As a Christian rationalist Steele's philosophy of life is grounded on his belief in the ability of man's intellect to judge the truth and worth of religion. A man should live by the dictates of personal choices, these to be based on reason. But man not only has the capability, but also the responsibility to respond by making reasonable decisions in areas affecting his life; or he does not live up to his humanity. Therefore, Steele argues for a free political economy enabling one to do this. The major premise of Steele's free political economy is that a government is established to secure each citizen's life, his liberty, and his property. As critics have pointed out, Steele closely followed Lockean political principles. For example, Calhoun Winton concludes:

> The Word [Two Treatises of Government] became for Richard Steele the foundation of his political philosophy; time and again in later years he was to refer to Locke as to a final authority, and Steele's effort as a popularizer of Locke was considerable.[9]

Locke taught that man has the natural right to "life, liberty, and property," and that to protect these rights, governments are established by common agreement.[10] Indeed, Steele believed that each man's possessing the freedom to enjoy life, liberty, and property is essential to man's nature, his being.

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[9] Captain Steele, p. 35.

[10] "Concerning Civil Government," in Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Vol. 35 of Great Books of the Western World, ed., Robert Maynard Hutchings (Chicago: William Benton, 1952), Chapter V; paragraph 87; p. 30. "Man being born, as has been proved, with a title to perfect freedom and uncontrolled enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of the law of nature, equally with any other man . . . hath by nature a power not only

Steele argued that civil liberty is so essential to one's life that without it, he does not "possess" his soul:

> It is every man's Duty to correct the Extravagances of his Will, in order to enjoy Life as becomes a rational Being, but we cannot possess our Souls with pleasure and satisfaction, except we preserve to ourselves that inestimable blessing which we call Liberty. By Liberty I desire to be understood to mean, the Happiness of Mens [sic] living under Laws of their own making by their personel consent, or that of their representatives ("The Crisis," TP, p. 137).[11]

Steele's point here, that liberty means living under laws which one helps make, is also stated in the Englishman (I, 7, p. 31), wherein he says that the "free Briton, is governed by the Laws which he himself votes for." In the Englishman (I, 28, p. 113), Steele states that without civil liberty man becomes a slave:

> Liberty and Property are necessary to the very being of mankind; for without them we become Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water, and are no better than Beasts of Burden; nay the more polite arts and sciences of Greece and Rome contribute only the Elegance of Life, and without Liberty may be made use of to establish the Slavery of Mankind.

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to preserve his property, that is his life, liberty, and estate, against the injuries and attempts of other men, but to judge of and punish the breaches of that law in others, as he is persuaded the offence deserves. . . . The only way whereby any one diverts himself of his natural liberty and puts on the bonds of civil society is by agreeing with other men to join and unite into a community, for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any that are not of it." Hereafter this work will be cited as "Civ. Govt." Chapter will be indicated by capital Roman numeral, paragraph by Arabic. Then the page number of this volume will be given.

[11] In this passage, Steele calls participation in making laws simply "Liberty"; at other times he will refer to the right of participation in government as civil rights and he will sometimes refer to the right to worship as the conscience dictates as a civil right. I will use the term "civil liberty" or "civil right" to mean the right of government participation and the right to worship as the conscience dictates.

Another kind of civil liberty specified by Steele as essential to man's being is religious freedom. In the Englishman (II, 14, p. 307), Steele reminds his readers that men are placed above the beasts of the field in

> the distinction of being born to Fortunes; but above all, to such Civil Rights as we express by the Word Liberty, the most important Instant of this Happiness is Liberty of Conscience; and it is the Essence of the Protestant Religion, both to assert it for ourselves, and to allow it to others.

In another Englishman paper (I, 16, pp. 68-69), he boasts that England's freedom of religion and property gives it preference over all other nations:

> The Esquire [Nestor Ironside] is tall, abstemious, eloquent, and thin, but as to the rest, a passionate and knowing Lover of his country. When I say knowing, I mean a man that prefers it and its Interests to all private considerations and gives it the Preference to all other nations from that only in which it excels all the rest of the World, its Freedom in Religion and Property: In Religion, in having all the advantages of Education and Holy Writ laid before us in our native language; in Property, in being subject to no Laws to which we have not ourselves assented.

In the Englishman (I, 28, p. 113), along with civil liberty, Steele mentions property as "necessary to the very being of mankind." By liberty of property, Steele means not only that each man in a free society must have the right to own property, but also that each man must own property. That is, each man must have the means of maintaining a degree of financial independence so that he is not dependent on another for his livelihood. This independence is essential to one's being.

For Steele, without the civil liberty to participate in government, without the right to practice one's religion, and the right to own property, one cannot really be a man:

> for as the true life of man consists in conducting it according to his own just Sentiments and innocent Inclinations, his being is degraded below that of a free agent which Heaven has made him when his affections and Passions are no longer governed by the Dictates of his own Mind, and the Interests of Humane Society, but by the arbitrary unrestrained Will of another ("The Crisis," TP, p. 137).

Furthermore, Man, Steele says, has the right to these liberties given to him by God. In a fictitious letter from Sir Walter Raleigh to Prince Henry, Steele reminds all princes of their duty to preserve these sacred rights:

> Exert yourself, O generous Prince, against such Sycophants [who were loudly arguing for the doctrine of Divine Right] in the glorious Cause of Liberty; and assume an ambition worthy of you, to secure your Fellow-creatures from slavery; from a condition as much below that of Brutes, as to act without Reason is less miserable than to act against it. Preserve to your future Subjects the Divine Right of being Free agents (Eng. I, 2, p. 13).

Since liberty, essential to man's being, is granted by Divine right, Steele favored a governmental system that in his opinion secured these rights; and he objected to any political conception or action that threatened them. In the first place, the only purpose of government is to secure the rights of all men in a community. "Raleigh" exhorted "Prince Henry" to "Preserve to your future subjects the Divine Right of being Free Agents." To be sure, the only Divine Right princes have is this responsibility: "Believe men, my Prince, there is no other Right can flow from God" (Eng. I, 2, p. 13). In a Town Talk paper Steele makes the point that the only basis of government is the good of the people:

> There are . . . Thousands in England, that know the Basis of all government is the Good of the People governed; and that all Incidents of a State must be rectified by that single Rule, and no other, and that it is an impious and prophane thought to

> believe any other maxim to be consonant to the Goodness of the Creator; and the Law of Nature which he has implanted in the Mind of every man living (No. 5, PJ, pp. 214-15).

Next, when the people are convinced that an administration no longer functions in their best interests, they can dismiss it, Steele tells the Pretender:

> The Business of Mankind cannot stand still, if Princes by their unhappy conduct render it unsafe for them to remain at the Head of their subjects and whatever has befallen you, you are to attribute to your Pretended Father, not his people, who by his Flight with you were under the necessity to fly to the nearest Refuge (Town Talk, No. 5, PJ, p. 215).

In the Englishman (I, 32, pp. 128-29), he restates the condition upon which the authority of governors ceases:

> The Authority of those that govern in any of the several sorts of Government, had its original from, and must still be supported by the opinion of those that are governed have of their Piety, Wisdom, Justice, Valour, Goodness, Sincerity, Love of their country, and other Virtues, and whenever that Opinion of the Governed ceases, the authority of those Governing will soon be at an end.

In this passage Steele alludes to a second reason that justifies rebellion against a king, the doctrine that government arises from the agreement of men to appoint able men as governors for the protection of their lives and property: "The authority of those that govern . . . had its original from . . . the Opinion those that are governed have of their piety," etc. When princes break the agreement, or contract, the men who made the agreement in the first place can replace them. Or, to look at this from a different view, when Steele states that those who govern "must still be supported by the Opinion those that are governed have of their ability and integrity," he implies that although society does agree to submit to governors, society still retains a portion of governing power itself. When a governor would seek to take away the

people's share of governing power, they can defend their "Share of the Supreme power, if they are to have any share" ("The Crisis," TP, p. 135). Since all men have a natural right to civil liberty, liberty of property, and liberty of conscience, governments were established to secure these rights--that is, men agreed to select certain men because of their ability to govern for the good of everyone. Whenever governors cease to function for the people's good, the people can dismiss them, since they were put in by the people in the first place, and govern by their consent in the second place.

Since a government exists for the good of the people, Steele fervently argued for any governmental principle or action that afforded the people the greatest amount of liberty. One can almost conclude that the single criterion by which Steele measured any political conception or action was, will it promote the liberties of the English people? A recurring theme in Steele's political writings was the necessity of maintaining the Hanoverian Settlement, the reason being that this settlement would secure a Protestant Succession on the English Throne. The Protestant Succession was the real issue for Steele, not the right of Hanover. Steele favored, so ardently, a Protestant Succession because, in his judgment, England's liberties were more nearly secure under a Protestant Succession than under a Roman Catholic Succession, represented by The Old Pretender.[12]

Another presistent theme is Steele's adherence to the Revolutionary principles, one of which was the Protestant Succession, which

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[12] Steele's support of Hanover and his fight against James' claims will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

finally meant the Hanoverian Succession. Steele espoused these Revolutionary principles because they secured the rights of the English people:

> I insist the more upon these Revolution-Principles (as they are scornfully called now-a-days) not only because there never was more need of them at this time, but because the best and greatest part of the clergy . . . have in all ages, so far as relates to our Nation, and as far as my small Reading informs me, been ready and hearty assertors of the Priviledges and Properties of the People (Eng. I, 57, p. 213).[13]

Steele is saying here that these principles are really not new, not something that some ambitious usurpers have quickly thought up to justify the Revolution, but that in all ages these principles have been taught by those--including the clergy--who believe in the rights of the people. England needs these principles because these principles best secure the Lockean triad of life, liberty, and property.

However, Steele does not simply talk generally about principles; he is specific about his political beliefs. He declares himself in favor of several political principles: a limited monarchy, separation of governmental branches, constitutionalism, and, by implication, the predominance of the legislative branch. In every defense his primary argument to justify each principle is that it will maintain English liberty; it will help maintain a political environment in which each person can "possess his life."

In the Englishman (I, 28, p. 114), Steele reviews the history of English government to show the advantages of a limited monarchy. He

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[13] One notes that in this passage Steele cites the consensus of wise men as authority for these principles. Generally though, Steele relies on more pragmatic arguments.

makes the point that English government grew out of the practices of North Germanic tribes, who "wherever they went, established constitutional monarchies;" and of all these Germanic peoples, "only England had retained the limited monarchy system."[14] The reason he favors the constitutional monarchy, and opposed the absolute monarch is that the latter constitutes a threat to man's liberty because too much power in the hands of a single man often corrupts him. In the Englishman (I, 31, p. 116), Steele, deploring that any who consider themselves part of the Christian church should persecute "Followers of the same Saviour" with a cruelty "which is fit only for Demons to exercize," concludes, "this Scene is what absolute and unlimited Power, lodged in so weak a Being as man, exposes to open day."

Indeed, Steele is wary of too much power lodged in any group of men. In the Englishman paper, discussing the origin of limited monarchy, Steele objects to absolute monarchies, absolute oligarchies, and pure democracy, which is the same as saying absolute majority. He identifies three times when England faced a crisis that threatened its liberty, stemming from too much power being concentrated in one of these groups. The Magna Carta freed England from the danger of absolute

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[14] Probably Steele got this from Tacitus' "Germany," from Voyages and Travels: Ancients and Modern; The Harvard Classics, ed., Charles W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1910); in choosing their leaders, the Germans, Tacitus says (pp. 88-99), "they [their kings] are determined by the splendour of their race, [their] generals by their bravery. Neither is the power of their kings unbounded or arbitrary." Explaining, Tacitus (pp. 101-02), continues: "Affairs of smaller moment the chiefs determine: about matters of higher consequence the whole nation deliberates. . . . If the proposition displease, they reject it by an inarticulate murmur: If it be pleasing, they brandish their javelins." References to ancient history became part and parcel of Whig argumentation during Steele's time. Steele did this in other papers such as "The Plebeian," TP, p. 465; Eng. I, 28, pp. 113-16.

monarchy because the Norman kings were about to become absolute monarchs. After this crisis, the constitution fell into the "Danger of an Oligarchy," and "we find a Earl of Warwick was capable of making and unmaking our kings." Later, the constitution "suffered the greatest shock from the Democratick of it," which reached its "zenith" in the "murder of King Charles the First, and the Fall of the Church of England." This happened because the law allowed "the Commons to become too powerful through buying estates of nobility and through trade increase" (I, 28, pp. 115-16). To keep a king or the aristocracy from becoming an absolute dictator, Steele advocated two courses, separation, with a balance of power among the ruling branches, and legalism, or government by law.

In the Englishman (I, 28, pp. 115-16), Steele is proud that England is the only people, of the Northern Germanic tribes, which has retained the limited monarchy system, composed of "King, Lords, and Commons," each with its own sphere. In the Englishman (I, 46, p. 184), he compares the balance of power in England's system to a pyramid; the base represents the people; the middle, the nobility; and the top, the King. When powers are separate, they serve as a "check on the Queen and her Heirs . . ." (Reader, No. 6, PJ, p. 164). Steele favored a separation and balance of powers, then, as a check against absolutism. Therefore, he opposed any action that, in his judgment, would upset the balance of power. In 1713 he opposed the creation of new peers because, he argued, it would upset the balance of power provided by the Revolution Settlement. A year before, in January, 1712, Queen Anne had created a dozen new Tory lords to secure approval in the House of Lords for

the new Preliminaries of Peace. One year later, when rumors were heard of a creation of new Lords to support the commercial portion of the Treaty, Steele was ready: "This fatal novelty," he argues, will affect all three constituents of that balance: "The Queen's most Excellent Majesty, the House of Peers, and the whole People of England." Although "It is the Prerogative of the Crown to create Peers"--and Steele would have it no other way, since this serves as a check on the Lords--an indiscriminate use "diminishes her part in the Legislature."[15] Then in 1719, a Bill was proposed to limit the House of Lords to two hundred and thirty-five members with the King's prerogative of creating peers restricted to filling vacant titles only.[16] Steele attacks this bill because it also would upset the balance between the Lords and Crown. To bolster his argument, he cites examples of nations whose kings allowed their power to diminish and "accrue to the Lords with loss of freedom" (The Plebeian I," TP, p. 465). John Loftis says Steele argued that if this Bill [to limit the house of Lords] passed, it would "destroy the equilibrium of power among sovereign, Lords, and commons upon which, he believed, English liberty depended."[17]

The second course that would keep too much power from being concentrated in the hands of a king or Parliament is constitutionalism,

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[15] Quoted in Winton, Diss., "Steele, The Political Writer," p. 184. Winton's thesis gives a thorough account of this whole affair along with Steele's reasoning. Steele's strongest statement on Occasional Peers is found in "A Letter to Sir M.[iles] W.[arton] Concerning Occasional Peers," dated March 5, 1713 (TP, p. 76); also in "The Importance of Dunkirk Considered" (TP, p. 112).

[16] Winton, Diss., "Steele, The Political Writer," p. 385.

[17] Richard Steele's The Theatre, pp. xiii-xxiii.

which means that the government is limited by the law, and that the liberties of the people are protected by law. Winton mentions Steele's legalism as one of his political principles consistently adhered to.[18] One is reminded of Steele's boast that England has retained the "limited monarch." Furthermore, England, Steele says, is "a happy land in which the property of the lowliest citizen is protected by Laws" (Eng. I, 28, p. 115). In a letter to Sir Thomas Hanmer, written after Steele's expulsion from the Commons, he expresses his confidence that the law will enable him to receive justice yet:

> I writ what I writ with the laws in my view, and I thought myself safe as long as I had them on my side. I am sure I did what I did in order to preserve them, and now they are my refuge. . . . My Reputation which is dearer to me than my life, is wounded by this Vote and I know no way to heal it, but by appealing to the laws of my Country that they may have their due effect in the protection of Innocence.[19]

Steele is quite jealous for the law. In addition to opposing the creation of occasional peers as a threat to the balance of power, he also opposed this action because it threatens the constitution:

> These Occasional Lords are a menace to all people because they are ignorant of legislative process and of law, yet immediately become legislators with the power to make and repeal laws. Thus the constitution can be subverted by this practice of occasional Lords ("Letter to M. Wharton," TP, p. 76).

In the Reader (No. 6, PJ, p. 165), he reemphasizes that this bill would seriously alter "our ancient constitution" through which "our ancestors have conveyed down Liberty to us."

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[18] Diss., "Steele, The Political Writer," p. 3 of Introduction.

[19] Correspondence, p. 90.

However, sometimes Steele favored altering the law. In 1716, Steele found himself arguing, during the debate on the Septennial Bill, in favor of a law which would extend the Parliament sessions from three to seven years. At first, Blanchard says, Steele seems to have opposed this Bill, but altered his opinion.[20] At any rate, in this speech he argues for its passage; three years, he thought, is not enough time to accomplish anything. He very carefully anticipates the charge that this bill violates the constitution by offering two considerations: One, the parliament has the responsibility of "changing laws" when necessary as well as "safeguarding the laws," the criterion being the "public good"; also, the length of time is a subordinate consideration anyway ("Speech on the Sept. Bill," TP, pp. 417-18). Steele generally was a legalist, but sometimes he became quite pragmatic.

In addition to arguing for a limited monarchy, separation of powers, and government by law, Steele implies that the legislative branch ought to predominate as a means of preserving liberty. Steele's letter to Lord Clare (Dec. 18, 1714), expresses gratitude for a second chance to serve in the Commons because "the Opportunity of acting with uprightness in the Legislature is the most desirable Station in life . . . ."[21] In her introduction to "The Crisis," Blanchard says that Steele's tone is "alarmist," but his underlying argument is "one of principle that the liberty of the subject and the power of parliament against the power of the crown, fought for and won in 1688, are again

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[20] Blanchard, Introduction to Steele's "Speech on the Septennial Bill," TP, p. 416.

[21] Correspondence, p. 98.

in danger."[22] But, whether or not he believed the legislative ought to be the most powerful branch, he, without doubt, thought its function was the most important of the government branches because it is in the legislature where the laws are made; and in the Commons, the people through their representatives participate in making the laws which govern them. The nature of man, Steele believed, demands that he be governed by laws of his own making:

> There is something so great in the nature of men, that they are not to be ruled but upon the principles of Reason and Justice, and Absolute Power cannot possibly subsist without the Extirpation of arts and Sciences, without the Strictest Administration of Justice, to which if a Monarch ties himself, it is for his Ease and Glory to govern by Laws of his Peoples own making (Reader, No. 9, PJ, p. 177).

Furthermore, participation in making the laws is essential to a people's being free. The Englishman claims that the "free Briton is governed by the Laws which he himself votes for" (I, 7, p. 31). In his "Dunkirk" pamphlet he argues that one of the "cogent" reasons that the English people "expect Dunkirk to be destroyed" is the protection of the English people's "birthright," being born "a part of the Legislature" (TP, p. 115). Steele, then, reiterates the principles of Protestant succession, separation and balance of powers, legalism, and predominance of the legislative branch.

At the same time Steele opposed any political conception or action that threated England's freedoms. On this basis he wrote against the doctrine of Divine Right; the Schism Bill; a Roman Catholic king and Catholic succession; and the saving of Dunkirk.

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[22] TP, p. 125.

When one accepts the Lockean doctrine of the natural origin of government, he probably will be opposed to the doctrine of Divine Right rule of kings, and Steele is. According to the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, the "Divine Right of Kings" is

> the doctrine that a monarch in the hereditary line of succession has a divine and indefeasible right to his kingship and authority, and that for a subject to rebel against him is the worst of political crimes. Where active obedience is morally impossible, it is held that passive obedience (i.e., the willing acceptance of any penalty for non-compliance) is demanded.[23]

The Pretender, Steele argues, cannot claim the throne on the basis of some Divine Right; for any "Divine Right" can be revealed "only by Divine Law, or natural Law." But Steele reasons, Divine Law does not justify the Pretender's claim; for it "provides only that men have governments, it does not specify any form of Government." This leaves only "Civil Law," Steele says, "which could possibly justify James' claim"; but civil law can change, and it has been changed "with respect to our succession and we maintain that this change was made both by a proper authority and on Just and Natural motives" (Eng. II, 34, p. 387). George of Hanover will not become king because he has been appointed by God, since the Bible names neither him nor James, but he will be king because civil law--or parliament--has determined that he will rule Britain.

Steele also rejects Hereditary Right. He denies James' right to the throne on the basis of his being nearest blood kin to the House of Stuart. In his "Apology," he grants that James has the better blood

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[23] "Divine Right of Kings," Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, p. 408.

claim, and that the House of Hanover cannot be selected "but by passing over many of those who are the next Heirs in Blood." But "the Act of Settlement . . . [has] determined that the House of Hanover will succeed to the throne" (TP, p. 303). In "The Crisis," he emphasized that "all notions of hereditary Right" are "at an end";

> and from this Great Area to which is so easie to look back every Briton may make this happy conclusion; that all the Notions of Hereditary Right, but that of her majesty and the heirs of her body, and in Default of such Issue, that of the most Illustrious Princess Sophia, and Heir of her Body, being Protestants, are at an End (TP, p. 169).

Steele then gives in tedious detail the texts of the original Crown Settlement of Parliament of Feb. 13, 1688, followed by four official restatements of the settlement on Hanover. Steele is saying that George will not become king because he is the nearest blood kin of the preceding English monarch, but because Parliament had determined the succession.

He also rejects Passive Obedience. He believes that

> all honest and disinterested Britons, of what party soever, if they understood one another, are of the same Opinion in Points of Government: and that the Gross of the People, who are imposed upon by Terms which they do not comprehend are Whigs in their Hearts. They are made to believe, that Passive-Obedience and Non-Resistence, Unlimited Power and Indefeasible Right[24] have something of a venerable and Religious meaning in them . . . (Town Talk, No. 7, PJ, p. 234).

Steele goes on to say that if people really understood the conception behind these words, they would abhor them (Town Talk, No. 7, PJ, p. 234).

In these passages, in which Steele states his opposition to the whole Divine Right notion, one point stands out: Parliament has the

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[24] Possibly some of the defenders of Divine Right used these terms. Steele seems to indicate this. As the Oxford Dict. of the Christian Church (p. 408), shows, the ideas behind these terms were part of the Divine Right doctrine.

right to declare who the King will be. This emphasis on the right of Parliament to name the king is also evident in his "Apology" where Steele shows the impracticality of the doctrine of Hereditary Right. He points out that if hereditary succession had been strictly adhered to in England, which it has not in England or any country, the Stuarts would never have ascended the throne: "The Exigencies of respective Times and Places have not admitted it." In addition, he argues, "no nation has ever followed the practice of always granting the property to the eldest son, much less an office, in this case the highest of the land." However, after making these practical arguments, Steele offers the clinching argument, that kings are made, not born. And this has been the law of England, Steele says, "before as well as since the Revolution, that the limitation of the crown is in the Parliament." Therefore, "according to the laws of our Country, we have sworn inviolable allegiance to George" ("The British Subjects Answer," TP, p. 398).

Steele's insistence that the king of England rules because Parliament declares that he is king, harmonizes with his belief that the legislature was the most important governmental branch. However, in addition to objecting to Divine Right because he thought that one can be king only if Parliament says so, Steele forcefully argues that the notion of Divine Right threatens English liberty, which is the ultimate criterion upon which Steele judges any political principle. Steele believed that the notion of Divine Right really signifies a conception of the kingship granting the king the right to be an absolute dictator:

> They are made to believe that Passive-Obedience and non-Resistance, unlimited Power and Indefeasible Right have something of a venerable and Religious meaning in them,

> whereas in Reality they only imply, that a king of Great Britain has a Right to be a tyrant, and that his Subjects are obliged in conscience to be Slaves. Were the Case truly and fairly laid before them, they would know, that when they make a Profession of such Principles, they renounce the legal claim to Liberty and Property, and unwarily submit to what they really abhor (Town Talk, No. 7, PJ, p. 234).

An acceptance of these principles, Steele claims, means that one renounces his claim to liberty and property, which reduces one to slavery, makes him "a hewer of wood and a drawer of water" (Eng., I, 28, p. 113).

To be sure, Steele spoke out against any political Act that would reduce man's liberty. For this reason he argued against the Schism Bill, or "The Schism Act," passed in 1714, which forbad dissenters to keep schools or engage in teaching.[25] In his "Open Letter" on the Schism Bill, Steele offers two arguments against the bill, one legal, one moral. This bill, he submits, will take away rights already secured to Dissenters by the Act of Toleration; and this bill will take away the right to a Lockean liberty that man naturally is entitled to:

> This act therefore, in a stealing and too artful a manner, takes away the Toleration of Dissenters; for the Force of it is directed to take place in Confirmation of a Law which they are expressly defended against by the said Act of Toleration . . . and you may with equal Justice, take away the Lives of the Dissenters, as punish the Dissenters in their Liberty or their Estates for instructing children their own way (TP, pp. 245-56).

And while he is on the point of natural rights, one of which is religious freedom, Steele argues that this Act violates man's natural right to knowledge, as well as man's civil rights.[26]

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[25] "The Schism Act," Oxford Dict. of the Christian Church, p. 1223.

[26] One might be tempted to wonder whether Steele's declaration--

Steele's primary criticism of the Roman Catholic Church was that it threatened the religious and civil liberty of England, and thus was mostly political. In fact he centers his criticism almost entirely on the succession problem. Above everything else in Steele's political writing, he argues for the legality of the Hanoverian succession and the falsity of the Pretender's claims. One of his major arguments for the Hanoverian succession is that it will secure "a Protestant Successor to the Throne," as he reminds his readers in his "Apology" (TP, p. 302). Although Steele believes that Catholicism is a false religion and Protestantism is a true religion, that is not his central point in the succession question. He wants a Protestant on the throne because he believes a Roman Catholic king constitutes a threat to England's liberty. England could expect not only their Protestant clergymen to be abused, but also every citizen, whose property, liberty, and life would be in grave danger. In a "letter" to the Pretender Steele says that

> your Priest will constantly thunder in your ears, to take away, as fast as you can have Power to do, not only the estates and

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that he is interested in religious freedom--was his primary motive in arguing for toleration. There is the possibility that he was also motivated by practical politics. It was to the advantage of the Whigs that Dissenters be granted civil rights since they usually supported Whig politicians and Whig measures. Basil Williams, "The Whig Supremacy: 1714-1760," second ed, The Oxford History of England, rev. C. H. Clark, ed., Sir George Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), XI, 70, has described the Whig political pragmatism: "Now, however, the protestant [sic] dissenters' attitude at the Revolution and their zeal for the Hanoverian succession, especially during the '15, made it impossible for the Whigs, at any rate, to regard them as anything but a bulwark to the new dispensation. So the toleration begun in William's reign was further extended during the long regime inaugurated with George I. To enable the dissenters to be admitted more freely to country districts, the Occasional Conformity Act was repealed, and to restore their right to educate their children in their own schools the Schism Act was also repealed in 1719."

> Liberties, but the lives of all who will not become Papists, and that in the most cruel Manner, for example to others . . . (Town Talk, No. 5, PJ, p. 215).

Steele argues that the primary reason why James, as a Roman Catholic king, would constitute such a formidable threat to England's freedom is the Catholic belief of the Church's superiority to earthly governments:

> The Horror which a Reasonable Man has to Popery itself is chiefly raised from the Usurpation of Power in Secular Matters, and pretended Superiority to all Ordinances and Establishments among Men from his authority who declared his Empire not to be of this world (Eng. II, 14, p. 307).

In truth, Steele feared any power assumed by clergymen beyond the laws of the country:

> For this reason, I dare acknowledge that any Power, affected by clergymen, above what the Laws of our country allow them, or Independent of the Sovereignty of it, is to me Popery, I cannot think of the Endeavour of Temporal Power from the service at the Altar, a less Guilt than building a false Superstructure upon that Foundation which only can be laid for Spiritual, and Holy Purposes ("Rom. Eccl. Hist.," TP, p. 220).

Using the altar of God, that is, the Church of God, from which to exercise temporal power, is misusing God's altar; it is to be used only for spiritual purposes. And, as Blanchard points out in her introduction to this pamphlet, Steele's real concern is "the danger lying in wait for a constitutional monarchy in the encroachment of a church--either Anglican or Roman--upon Civil Rights."[27]

Another contemporary issue Steele comments on is the effectiveness of the Peace of Utrecht. He is cautious, but he will judge its effectiveness to be good or bad according to whether it does or does

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[27] TP, p. 215.

not promote English liberty:

> The only way to judge impartially of the merits of the Peace-makers is to consider how it may affect the nation in three Essentials, Religion, Liberty, and Commerce which I think will be allowed to include all that is valuable to us as men and Christians (Town Talk, No. 8, PJ, p. 242).

Another contemporary issue, an issue growing out of the Peace of Utrecht, was the Dunkirk Port. Steele wrote profusely on this issue, strongly insisting that the French destroy the Port of Dunkirk according to the Peace agreement. When France delayed, Steele waged a relentless campaign in the Englishman to arouse governmental action. As usual, his argument, in a "letter" to the Englishman, is that Dunkirk's existence threatens the liberties of the Lockean triad: "You [the Englishman] may depend upon it this is the true State of the affair of Dunkirk, which you will do Justice to your country in printing; this Point being of the last Consequence to its Wealth, Trade and perhaps its Liberty" (I, 31, p. 128).

Steele's political principles rest on the same foundation on which his religious principles rest, the foundation that man's dignity consists in choosing his own life. For man to do this, a free civil society is essential, a society in which a government secures one's life, one's liberty--both civil and religious, and one's property.

Since Steele had much to say on the third part of the Lockean triad, his economics deserve separate comment. When Steele's views on economics are analyzed, two conclusions become apparent: (1) his economic principles are mainly rationalistic, and (2) he agrees with Locke in two important beliefs as to the function of property.[28] Property to

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[28] According to Winton, Capt. Steele, p. 35, Steele was thoroughly

Locke was, first, the means whereby man sustains his life, and, second, a means whereby distinctions are made between men of different degrees of industry.[29]

Likewise, in his economics, Steele includes in the term "property" the means whereby men sustain life, and the means whereby distinctions are made evident among men. Furthermore, Steel thought, along with Locke, that the invention of money made both of these functions easier. Consequently, even a casual reader will find Steele, especially in the Spectator, defending business. One cause for this defense, Winton says,

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steeped in Lockean politics: "John Locke, though no longer in residence, had been for many years a fellow of Christ Church. When his Two Treatises of Government appeared in early 1690, the College must have sounded with discussion of its merits and defects. The work became for Richard Steele the foundation of his political philosophy; time and again in later years he was to refer to Locke as to a final authority, and Steele's effect as a popularizer of Locke was considerable."

[29] Property to Locke includes more than real estate; it,"Concerning Civil Government," V, 26; p. 30, includes the means whereby one sustains his life. In the first place, "every man has a 'property' in his own 'person.'" In the second place, "Concerning Civil Government," V, 27; pp. 30-31,"the 'labour' of his body and the 'work' of his hands, we may say, are properly his." And "whatsoever, then, he removes out of the state that Nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with it, and joined it to something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property." However, a more important kind of property is "not the fruits of the earth itself, as that which takes in and carries with it all the rest." In addition to one's person, and the means of sustaining life, Locke, "Concerning Civil Government," V, 47; p. 35, mentions a third kind of property, money: "and thus came in the use of money; some lasting thing that men might keep without spoiling, and that by mutual consent, men would take in exchange for the truly useful but perishable supports of life." Defining property in this way, Locke believes its accumulation--especially money--as a means whereby distinctions are made among men: "and as different degrees of industry were apt to give men possessions in different proportions, so this invention of money gave them the opportunity to continue and enlarge them." Furthermore, "Concerning Civil Government," V, 50; p. 35, "since gold and silver, being little useful to the life of man, in proportion to food, raiment, and carraige, has its value only from the consent of men--whereof labor yet makes in great part the measure--it is plain that the consents of men have agreed to a disproportionate and unequal possession of the earth."

was "his natural, inherent, somewhat inexplicable sympathy for the cause of business."[30] One can agree that Steele's sympathy is natural--to him --but not inexplicable. Although Steele does not specifically state that money is property, some of his statements strongly imply that he considered it property. For example, the Englishman argues that "the course of Wealth within ourselves makes a Distinction between Brethren" (I, 4, p. 21). In this context, "wealth" is money, and in a Theatre paper Steele argues against low interest and for the "free Course of Money, which alone can turn the wheel of trade, and conduce to the Plenty and Prosperity of the English Nation" (No. 17, p. 78). His praise of trade and merchants stems from the influence of Locke but more importantly, harmonizes with his view of human nature. To be fully human, one must oversee his own life. Steele praises trade because he believes it offers the opportunity for everyone to profit:

> When I am giving my Thought a Loose in the Contemplation of the Ways of Men, there is no Man whom I so highly honor as the Merchant. This is he who turns all the Disadvantage of our situation to our Profit and Honour. His Care and Industry ties his Country to the Continent, and the whole Globe pays his Nation a voluntary Tribute due to her from his Merit . . . All other Subjects of our Island, from the highest to the lowest, are as much below the Merchant in political Merit as that ravenous Worm in the Entrails of the State the Stock-Jobber. Other Subjects prey upon each other, and one grows richer in proportion as the other grows poorer. . . . The course of Wealth within ourselves makes a Distinction between Brethren, but the Merchant is the child of Britain who enriches the whole Family (Eng. I, 4, pp. 20-21).

In the Theatre paper arguing against low interest, Steele emphasizes a point that he considers his clinching argument:

> This last consideration may convince us, that we cannot be too careful that nothing may stop the free Course of Money, which

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[30] Diss., "Steele, The Political Writer," p. 146.

> alone can turn the wheel of Trade, and conduce to the Plenty and Prosperity of the English Nation (No. 17, p. 78).

Therefore, trade and merchants, since they make it possible for everyone to profit, provide an important freedom, economic freedom, which to Steele is freedom of property, and which is as important to man's being as civil and religious freedom are. Steele did not mean that one literally had to own land, to be a man, but that one must be able to provide, for himself, the necessities of life. Although money alone is not a basis of distinction, it does have the practical effect of enabling one to provide for himself if he has it. When one has no money, his life is wholly at the mercy of others:

> Nothing indeed can be more unhappy than the condition of Bankruptcy. The Calamity which happens to us by ill Fortune, or by the Injury of others has in it some Consolation; but what arises from our misfortune or Error, is the State of the exquisite Sorrow (Spec. 456).

Then Steele explains why bankruptcy is the most unhappy condition of man:

> When a man considers not only an ample Fortune, but even the very necessities of Life, his Pretence to Food itself, at the mercy of his Creditors, he cannot but look upon himself in the state of the Dead. . . . From this Hour the Cruel World does not only take Possession of his whole Fortune, but even of everything else (Spec. 456).

The pitifully sad condition of a bankrupt is that he, being wholly dependent on others for necessities, is no longer a man; he is as one dead. Of course, what Steele says about the bankrupt is true of anyone without money for whatever reason.

Consequently, Steele, although he recognizes that there may always be masters and servants, commends Sir Roger de Coverley because he makes it possible for deserving servants to become independent:

"A Man of Honour . . . considers, it would be miserable to himself to have no Will but that of another . . . and for that Reason goes on as fast as he is able to put his Servants into independent Livelihoods" (Spec. 107). And Steele is happy that Captain Sentry, who, after he has inherited Sir Roger's estate, intends to "lend my money to the use of none but indigent Men, secured by such as have ceased to be indigent by the Favor of my Family or my self" (Spec. 544).

It is important that one not be indigent, that one not be wholly at the mercy of creditors or of a landlord, even a benevolent one, for his livelihood; because if one were, he does not fully possess his life. This is where the merchant was so important in Steele's economic views; the merchant by providing jobs enables men to be relatively independent in contrast to the old feudal system which kept tenants under obligation. Steele's best exposition of this point is Sir Andrew Freeport's defense of the merchants in his debate with Sir Roger de Coverley on the merits of their respective classes. After listening to Sir Roger's charge that the Trader's virtues are "Frugality and Parsimony," but that "his punctual Dealing" is "below a Gentleman's charity to the Poor, or Hospitality among his Neighbors," Freeport ably replies:

> I shall not, continued he, at this Time remind Sir Roger of the great and noble Monuments of Charity and publick Spirit which have been erected by merchants since the Reformation, but at present content myself with what he allows us, Parsimony and Frugality. If it were consistent with the quality of so Antient a Baronet as Sir Roger, to keep an Account or measure things the most infallible way, that of numbers, he would prefer our Parsimony to his Hospitality. If to drink so many Hogshead is to be hospitable, we do not contend for the Fame of that Virtue; but it would be worth while to consider whether so many Artificers at work ten Days together by my Appointment, or so many Peasants made merry on Sir Roger's charge, are the Men more obligated; I believe the Families of the Artificers will thank

> me, more than the House holds of the Peasants shall Sir Roger. Sir Roger gives to his men, but I place mine above the necessity or obligation of my Bounty (Spec. 174).

What man needs, and really wants, is the opportunity to make his own way, not charity so that he is dependent on and obligated to another for his livelihood.

For another thing, Steele praises trade because it "enlarges the mind of Man." In an Englishman paper Steele states that the late Tory Ministry were opposed to Trade, not because they were landed men, but because they knew that "Commerce enlarged the Minds of Men and the Transaction of various Business, with men of different Characters and Nations, makes Men inquisitive and consequently less ductile" (II, 17, p. 319). This implies that this intercourse helps educate people; and the better educated people are, the less likely they are to allow absolute rulers to govern them. In contrast to those connected with business, Steele describes, in the same paper, the landed gentlemen, who stagnate:

> Young Gentlemen possessed of land usually take up a Way of Life, in which they are at the top at once, and pass their Days in a Succession and Repetition of the same Delights and Amusements, in which they are gratified by all about them, and seldom meet with anything which contradicts either their Fancy or their Judgment. Thus, they are to their Lives End, only what they were, when they first left their Studies, and do not pass from one way of thinking to another, or alter their Ideas of things, from Reflection and Experience, as all Men must necessarily do, as the Reason of things obliges them (II, 17, p. 319).

Furthermore, Steele, with Locke, believed that the accumulation of property was an external means by which men are distinguished from one another. In truth, Steele argues that property, of one kind or another, not simply blood or birth, is a basis for distinction. Now, Steele

does not argue that property alone is a basis--indeed he rejects this notion--but that property accumulated because of personal worth, i.e., strong character and diligent effort, is the proper distinction, whether the property consists of land, title, or money.

Steele believed that there are two kinds of distinctions existing among men: (1) natural advantages; and (2) the esteem one commands from his fellows because of worth. In the first manner of distinguishing among men, Steele includes such things as talent and education: "All Men are not educated after the same Manner, nor have all the same Talents." To be sure, some are "so deficient" in talent and education as to "deserve our Compassion, and have a Title to our Assistance" (Spec. 432). He also includes employment. Different talents and education will result in different employments, which society needs: "The Necessities of Mankind require various Employments" (Spec. 432). In addition it is inevitable that a good education will give one advantages: "It is certainly a great happiness to be educated in Societies of great and eminent Men. Their Instructions and Examples are of extraordinary advantage." Furthermore, it is inevitable that some employments command more prestige than others: "It is highly proper to instill such a Reverence of the governing Persons, and Concern for the Honour of the Place, as may spur the growing Members to worthy Pursuits and honest Emulation . . ." (Spec. 432). Thus Steele recognized the inequality of men brought about because of the presence of, or the lack of, such accidents of fortune. However, in the second manner of making distinctions among men, that of praising worthy men, these accidents counted little with Steele.

He advocates a rational basis for this sort of distinction: one, he objects to externals such as family and fortune being the sole basis; two, he argues that anyone can be worthy of esteem regardless of station; and three, he submits that one's behavior is the ultimate basis of praise.[31]

First, Steele strongly objects to people's giving or expecting praise only because they are engaged in a certain employment or because they have been born into an illustrious family. In a Spectator paper Steele is critical of the jealousy existing among different trades; one's pride, he says, in his employment, only because he belongs to a certain occupation is similar to pride in one's birth:

> . . . But to swell young Minds with vain thoughts of the Dignity of their own Brotherhood, by debasing and villifying all others, doth them a real injury. By this means I have found that their Efforts have become languid, and their Prattle irksome, as thinking it sufficient Praise that they are children of so illustrious and ample a Family (No. 432).

In another Spectator paper (202), Steele illustrates his point that esteem should not come from simply a noble birth, but from character.

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[31] Those who advocated blood superiority, no doubt, had a rationale for their belief. Godfrey Davis, The Early Stuarts: 1603-1660 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), IX, 266, points out that during the middle of the seventeenth century when James I and Charles I were creating new peers rather frequently, the older peers "looked askance" at the new nobility because the (old peers) were "attached to blood nobility." One of their rationale components could have been a belief in what Walter Allmann, The Carolingian Renaissance: The Birkbeck Lectures, 1968-9 (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1969), p. 54, calls "blood Charisma"; during the tenth century the Germanic Ruler "embodied a sacred and magical mythos because of his blood kinship with distant ancestors." Also, Allman, (p. 111), concludes, the power of the nobility began to emerge, one reason being that they claimed "to have a special blood charisma," and did not owe "their position to either king or bishop." Steele's view of distinction based on personal worth harmonizes with his view of human nature, that every person has

As the Spectator was watching a fight between a blacksmith's apprentice and an arrogant coachman, the Spectator heard the apprentice tell the coachman that he was a gentleman's son. The Spectator was then joined by the blacksmith who declared that the young gentleman "had very good Friends, and he could trust him with untold Gold." In addition, the Spectator, as he notices a crowd watching the fight, observes: "but he shewed himself Superior to the Coachman in his Personal qualities of courage and activity, to confirm that of being well allyed, before his Birth was of any Service to him." The real distinctions of esteem cannot be solely the advantage of money or birth, the Spectator concludes:

> If one might moralize from this silly story, a Man wou'd say, that whatever advantages of Fortunes, Birth, or any other Good, People possess above the rest of the World, they should shew collateral Eminence besides those Distinctions; or those Distinctions will avail only to keep up common Decencies and Ceremonies, and not to preserve a real place of Favour or Esteem in the Opinion and common sense of the Fellow Creatures.

In the second place, Steele believed that anyone can be worthy of honor, regardless of his station in life: "Whoever excells in his Province is worthy of Praise" (Spec. 432). True, there are higher and lower stations in life, "but in all Places there arise, at different times, such Persons as do Honour to their Society, which may raise Envy in little souls, but are admired and cherished by generous Spirits" (Spec. 432). For example, the Tatler observes that the

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the potential of making decisions which will lead to righteousness, happiness, and property. When Steele's view of the basis of distinctions is referred to as a "rationalistic view," rationalism needs to be understood within this context.

"meanest artificer," who "within his power is good to his friends, moderate in his demands for his labour, and cheerful in his occupation," is superior to an aristocrat, "loaded with riches and honors," but who "has thoughts and inclinations" below the common artificer; therefore, the artificer should be esteemed higher. The Tatler is distressed that often, however, a man is ranked low only because of his low station: "It is to me a very great meaness . . . to rank a man among the vulgar for the condition of life he is in, and not according to his behaviour, his thoughts and sentiments in that condition" (No. 69). Anyone regardless of his station in life, can be worthy of esteem, and should be honored if he is worthy.

Although Steele evidences a democratic spirit, he makes several statements which suggest that he accepts the notions of nobility, and an upper social class. If he does, he is in tune with the Augustan view of social classes. A. R. Humphreys describes the ideal of this age as being

> less equalitarian justice than social sympathy and religious duty, 'each man walking in Godly wise in his state of wealth or poverty,' as William Law's Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life puts it. This could dwindle into the idea that the poor should know their station, and that priviledge was divinely approved. Yet the belief that the social order was ordained of God was not hypocrisy; the eighteenth century inherited the age-old faith that God had appointed the structure of society and that though the rich should ease the burden of the poor, poverty itself, like pain and death, was part of the mystery of creation. This faith was . . . certainly not designed to condemn the poor to perpetual subjugation, for if God had ordained gradations of wealth he had ordained also the duty of laboring in one's vocation and of earning those rewards by which the industrious apprentice might finish as Lord Mayor of London.[32]

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[32] The Augustan Age (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 2.

Although Steele does not offer a systematic discussion of what an upper class ought to be, he still, here and there, speaks of heroic spirits who stand above the common people. The "good old way among the gentry of England to maintain their pre-eminence over the lower ranks," he says, was "their bounty, munificence, and hospitality. . ." (Tatler 180).[33]

Steele refers to this class as "Men of Honour" (Spec. 107); "Men of Figure" (Tatler 180); "great and undertaking Spirits" (Tatler 202), and "men of condition or quality" (Spec. 294). When these "men of

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[33] Is Steele being paternalistic in spite of his insistence that men are capable of ordering their own lives? So these passages might suggest, along with others such as Spectator 107 in which the Spectator observes Sir Roger's kindness to his servants and concludes that he "lives rather like a Prince than a master in his Family." I do not believe Steele generally holds a paternalistic outlook. These passages must be interpreted in the light of Steele's general philosophical position. When Steele writes about the "upper class" as opposed to the "lower"--one must consider all his statements on this subject--he is positive; the lower class is lower only in relation to the "Great and Undertaking Spirits." By his statements about the upper class and/or lower class, Steele means simply that the Great and Understanding Spirits are worthy of high esteem, not that the so-called lower class is not capable of independence. True, Steele recognizes the existence of master/servant relationships, but he is never clear as to whether he thought this was inevitable. Perhaps he is only realistically recognizing the imperfections of Britain's economy. At any rate, he has his Spectator commend Sir Roger for allowing some of his servants to become financially independent (No. 107). Another explanation might be that Steele does not mean for his readers to take Sir Roger's paternalism seriously. C. S. Lewis, "Addison," Essays On the Eighteenth Century, p. 2, notes that Addison, in contrast to Tory satirists, for whom "every enemy . . . becomes a grotesque," treats his "enemy," Tory aristocrats symbolized by Sir Roger, gently. "The enemy," Lewis concludes, "far from being vilified, is turned into a dear old man. The thought that he could ever be dangerous has been erased from our minds, but also the thought that anything he said could ever be taken seriously." Possibly Steele, as well as Addison, gently pokes fun of Sir Roger's paternalism. In Steele's account of Sir Roger's debate with Freeport, on the subject of paternalism, Steele clearly gives Freeport, who argues for non-paternalism, the upper hand (Spec. 174). And when Capt. Sentry inherits Sir Roger's estate, he intends to loan the money to indigents so they can become self-supporting (Spec. 214).

great and undertaking spirits" perform, they are worthy of high esteem:

> There is no Doubt but the proper Use of Riches implies that a Man should exert all the good qualities imaginable; and if we mean by a man of condition or quality one, who according to the Wealth he is Master of, shews himself just, beneficent, and charitable, that term ought very deservedly to be had in the highest Veneration . . . (Spec. 294).

Who, then, did Steele think ought to be a man of quality, and thus be held in the highest veneration? To begin with, Steele does not accept the traditional notion of what distinguished this upper class.

The traditional notion of the upper class comprehended two groups, peers and the landed gentry. Peers possessed powers legally, being summoned to sit in the legislature. Until 1387 peerage depended entirely upon tenure of land and summons by writ to a council or parliament; but in this year Richard II introduced the practice of creating peerage by letter patent.[34] Along with the notion of land ownership as being an attribute of a peerage is that of heredity and an inalienable quality which enobles the blood of the holder and his heirs.[35]

The other kind of upper class had no special legal privileges, but wielded great political power and enjoyed social prestige simply because of land ownership. Hence, as George Trevelyan points out, often people, great merchants especially, bought land because they "desired to have that significance in society which only the possession of land could give."[36] Trevelyan further observes that if a man possessed

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[34] Cyrill Francis James Hankinson and Michel Francois, "Peerage," Encyclopaedia Britannica, ed., Warren E. Preece (Chicago: William Benton, 1970), XVIII, 523.

[35] "Peerage," Encyclopaedia Brit., XVIII, 523.

[36] "The Eighteenth Century," Vol. 3 of Illustrated English Social History (1952; rpt. of New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1962), p. 14.

land, even if he were not a titled peer, he could at least be called a "gentleman" or "esquire." The squire, for example, who mixed freely with the yeomen on almost "equal terms," was still distinguished from them by "a coat of arms, and by the respect which all paid to him as a 'gentleman.'"[37] The traditional notions of what distinguished the upper class, then, consisted of one or more of these elements: ownership of land, a family name, superior blood, and some kind of title. Steele rejects the view that these constitute of themselves, the criteria for an aristocracy.

To begin with, a man does not have the right to be considered a part of an upper class simply because he inherits an estate. It is not the mere owning a large piece of land which makes one a man of honor:

> The Folly of People's procedure, in imagining that nothing more is necessary than Property and superior circumstances to support them in Distinction, appears in no way so much as in the Domestic part of Life. . . It is not only paying Wages and giving Commands, that constitutes a Master of a Family, but prudence, equal Behaviour, with readiness to protect and cherish them, is what entitles a man to that character in their very Hearts and Sentiments (Spec. 202).

The Tatler criticizes "men of figure" who inherit large estates, but allow themselves to be bullied by a manager "from a false grandeur which they take upon them in being unacquainted with their own business . . . ." As a result "many who believe themselves in possession of a large share of dignity in the world, must give place to their inferiors" (No. 180). They believed they were due a large share of dignity simply because they had inherited a large estate; Steele is saying that this alone does not make a man worthy of veneration.

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[37] Trevelyan, p. 13.

Furthermore, although part of inheriting an estate usually meant that one inherited an old family name, this, Steele believed, does not by itself make one a member of the upper class. Steele is critical of those whose only claim to honor is having descended from "old houses." "Riches and Honour," Steele observes, "are Ornamental to the Possessors of 'em, only when those Possessors have such arts or endowments which could render them conspicuous without them." However, too many of these "aristocrats" dote on their "illustrious" ancestry:

> You must know they set up extremly for Genealogies, old Codes, and Mystick Writings, and knowing in the several ages in which it was acted; but there is constantly in all they pretend to do, some Circumstance which secretly tends to raise the Honour and Antiquity of the Family (Lover, No. 11, PJ, p. 39).

In The Conscious Lovers, Steele juxtaposes the Sealands, a merchant family, to the Bevils, of the landed gentry. When Sir John Bevil and Mr. Sealand meet to arrange the marriage details for their children, Bevil says that "The Business of an ancient House and Genealogy and Descent are to be of some consideration in an affair of this sort." Sealand replies: "Sir John, value yourself as you please upon your ancient House . . . Sir I have no objections to your Son's Family--'Tis his morals, that I doubt" (IV, p. 358). Steele is saying that it does not matter what one's ancestors did; what matters is the accomplishment of the present generation.

Finally, Steele objects to the notion that a mere title, for whatever reason, means that one is worthy of veneration. A title might come informally; one might be known as a gentleman or squire simply because he owns land. Indeed, Steele pokes fun at landed men who dote on the title "squire" (Tatler 19). Or one might be known as a "man of

quality" only because he is rich, to which Steele also objects. This title is meaningless unless accompanied by good character (Spec. 294). However, sometimes titles were conferred legally, as when the king exercised his prerogative, or as when one inherited a peerage. Although Steele did not object to "Titles and Epithets to great Men, which are indeed due them in their several Ranks and Stations" (Spec. 312), he did object to their being in themselves a basis of claiming esteem, even in the case of peers. Titles, he insists, are symbols of one's responsibility:

> for . . . a Man of Honour, that is to say, a man of conscious Integrity, knows that he is a peer for the sake of his fellow subjects, and this right is vested in him and his family for the sake of society, not for himself and Successors only ("Let. to Oxford," TP, p. 560).

As a matter of fact, Steele is not arguing against the externals of land, title, money, or family name making a distinction among men; he recognizes that they do. He objects to these externals only being the means of social distinction. Steele looks on land, title, and money as rewards of a worthy character and hard work. In other words, "Great and Undertaking Spirits" will accumulate more property than ordinary men; or as Locke put it: "And as different degrees of industry were apt to give men possessions in different proportions, so this invention of money gives them the opportunity to continue and enlarge them."[38]

Hence, Steele grants that owners of large estates can be "Men of Honor" by a judicious use of an estate, a use that can be expected "from a rational being." However, Steele

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[38] "Con. Civ. Govt.," V, par. 48; p. 35.

> cannot help but lament the destruction that has been made of the wild beast of the field, when I see large tracts of earth possessed by men who take no advantage of their being rational, but lead mere animal lives, making it their whole endeavor to kill in themselves all they have above beasts; to wit, the reason, and taste in society (Tatler 169).

Their whole "entertainment" is "Gluttony, drunkness, and riot." These do not really possess the estate; they really have no right to it even though they have inherited it: "But the Truth is, there is no man who can be said to be proprietor of an estate, but he knows how to enjoy it." Steele calls those who misuse an estate "peasants." But, those who properly use an estate--as becomes a rational being--are "landlords." A landlord, Steele says, enjoys what he has "with his heart," and his entertainment is "benevolence, civility, social human virtues," all of which Steele bases on reason (Tatler 169).

A rational use of one's estate involved at least four activities: (1) personally managing the estate, (2) keeping it debt free, (3) treating one's servants kindly, and (4) making it productive. Steele criticizes those who, upon inheriting an estate, grow lazy:

> Nay I have known a young fellow who was regularly bred an attorney, and was a very expert one till he had an estate fallen to him. The moment that happened he who could before prove the next land he cast his eye upon his own, and was so sharp that a man at first sight would give him a small sum for a general receit, whether he owed him or not, I say, have seen, upon coming to an estate, forget all his difference of mankind, and become the most manageable thing breathing. He immediately wanted a striving man to take upon him his affairs, to receive and pay, and do everything which he himself was too fine a gentleman to understand (Tatler 180).

Neglecting their responsibilities, such men "give way to their inferiors" (Tatler 180). Next, a landlord ought to keep the estate free of debt. If the owner of an estate is heavily in debt, he certainly cannot claim special distinction, Steele says: "The greatest of all

distinctions in civil life is that of debtor and creditor, and there needs no progress in logic to know which is the advantageous side" (Tatler 180). In this same paper Steele observes that proprietors of estates were often heavily indebted to the clothiers and butchers to keep up a pretence of luxury.[39] Furthermore, one was a judicious manager of an estate if he enjoyed a good relationship with his servants. Sir Roger de Coverley is commended because of his "manner of rewarding his servants." Instead of

> bestowing only trifles on his Servants; a good Servant to him is sure of having it in his choice very soon of being no servant at all . . . I say, he knows so well that Frugality is the Support of Generosity, that he can often spare a large Fine when a Tenement fails, and give that Settlement to a good Servant who has a mind to go into the World (Spec. 107).

Sir Roger is a "Man of Honour" who knows "it would be miserable to himself to have no will but that of another . . . and for that Reason goes on as fast as he is able to put his Servants into independent Livelihoods" (Spec. 107).

The fourth responsibility of an estate owner was probably more important to Steele than any of the other three: an estate owner is to make it productive if he is to be worthy of honor. Steele devotes an entire Guardian paper (No. 9, I, p. 104), to an exposition of the activities of a Mr. Charwell, who, twenty years before, had purchased an estate near the estate of Lady Lizard.[40] When he bought the estate, it was on the brink of poverty:

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[39] See also Spec. 114.

[40] The Lizards are the fictitious family around which the Guardian, Nestor Ironside, offers his views. Mr. Charwell likely is also fictitious.

> The estate, then, consisted of a good large old house, a park of 2,000 acres, and 80,000 acres of land divided into farms. The land was not barren, but the country very thin of people, and these the only consumers of the wheat and barley that grew upon the premises . . . and as for the tenants, they were all racked to extremity, and almost everyone of them beggars. All these things Mr. Charwell knew very well, yet was not discouraged from going on with his purchase.

First, he built a smaller house "not much larger than my lord's dog-kennel, and a great deal less than his lordship's stables," yet with "all convenient offices more suitable to his revenues." Next, he reduced the park to just 200 acres, near his new house; "The rest he converted to breeding cattle, which yielded greater profit." Then, the tenants began "to be very much dissatisfied with the loss of my lord's family, which has been a constant market for great quantities of their own. . . ." Since the river, running by the estate, was not navigable and did not afford a way to market for their products and there were no sufficient roads, Mr. Charwell decided that he must "bring the market home to his tenants, which was the very thing he intended before he ventured upon his purchase. He had then projected . . . the plan of a great town just below the old house." Charwell's plan succeeded quite well, Steele thought:

> In the space of twenty years he is so fortunate as to see 1000 new houses upon his estate and at least 5000 new people, men, women, and children inhabitants of those houses, who are comfortably subsisted by their own labour, without charge to Mr. Charwell, and to the great profit of his tenants.

One can see the glow in Steele's eyes as he describes this man who is master of an estate that is a credit to himself and useful to society.

Steele's kind of rationalism is evident when he advocates that outstanding people other than land owners ought to be judged by the

same criteria as the nobility, great merchants, for example. In a Theatre paper Steele says that the great merchants make up a kind of third gentry:

> He [Sealand][41] is a true pattern of that kind of third Gentry, which has arose in the world this last century: I mean the great and rich Families of Merchants and eminent Traders, who are so far from being below the Gentry, that many of them are now the best Representatives of the ancient ones, and deserve the imitation of the modern Nobility (No. 3, p. 12; see also Spec. 218).

In the dedication of his pamphlet, "A Nation, a Family," to Sir John Fellows, he reiterates this: "I assure you, it is with a true Zeal and Spirit of good will to all fair traders, who are, in my opinion, the most honorable, because the most useful of men in this state (TP, p. 577).

Furthermore, Steele thought a commoner, if he proves himself worthy, ought to have even the rank of peer available to him. When the Peerage Bill, which would have limited the creation of new peerages to vacancies created by deaths, was proposed, Steele wrote against it. This bill, Steele argues, would prevent talented commoners from being rewarded: "But shou'd this Bill pass, A Commoner will have as little incitement to great Actions as a Peer, and be as far below the Possibility of rising, as a Lord is above it" ("Peerage Bill," TP, p. 460). Steele objected to any notion of a numerically fixed, hereditary nobility; anyone who distinguished himself should be highly esteemed and rewarded.

As a reader will observe, Steele, in the exposition of his views on the political economy, does not present as strong a case for

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[41] Sealand is father to Indiana, Steele's heroine of The Conscious Lovers.

empirical rationalism as he does in expounding his religious views, his views on human nature, and his criticisms of English manners. In other words, Steele's main argument in political economy is not that man's reason deduces certain political and economical principles--although this is certainly implied, but that such principles as he defends are essential to man's freedom. Steele's views, then, on political economy harmonize with his fundamental ratiionalist position. A government exists to secure the lives, civil liberties, and property of all citizens, who are born with the natural right to these three freedoms. Steele further believes that man is of such a nature that he must enjoy these freedoms in order to live up to his humanity. Steele's economic principles grew out of his acceptance of this Lockean triad. Since property is the third freedom or right, necessary to the being of man, each must have it (or the possibility of getting it); England's growing trading class, established on capitalism, provided the best opportunity, in Steele's judgment, for every responsible man to own "property." However, it is likely that some will accumulate more property than others; Steele does not object to this, but he insists that "property" of any sort be distributed on the worth of industry of the individual.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

From perusing Steele's writings, one can judge him to be basically a rationalist. Steele's rationalism is composed of two premises and these form the underlying premises of his moral, social, and political criticisms, appearing in his periodical essays, his tracts, and his four plays. He believed that each man's private reason could reflect on all issues of life. As a result of this reflection, one can arrive at truth. Furthermore, each man should use his private reason to make decisions that affect his life. For Steele this is conscious living. This rationalistic approach to life is apparent in his voluminous writings on religion, man's nature, manners, and politics.

Steele's religious views provide a touchstone since his views on other subjects harmonize with his faith. One's reason, Steele argues, concludes God's existence and verifies the Christian revelation. Next, a profession of faith is the result of two actions by the reason; (1) the reason is convinced of Christianity's truth and worth, and (2) the reason makes the decision to accept Christ as Saviour. This is conscious Christianity. In fact even the doctrines of Christianity can be verified. Thus, Steele chides the Catholics for not offering reasons to convince men of the worth of their doctrines. He rejects transubstantiation because it contradicts the senses and celibacy because it

is manifestly absurd, in his opinion. Steele, to be sure, makes high claims for individual reason in matters of faith.

Steele's view of human nature, growing out of his religious views, is apparent in his many comments on that subject. First, although the emotions, which along with the reason make up man's uniqueness, are conducive to much good, they are to be controlled by the reason. Second, whether one decides to practice virtue or vice, decides which one to marry, decides on a profession, or decides which side of a political issue he will support, his reason ought to perform two services. One, the reason judges what the truth is. Consequently, Steele offers reasons for practicing virtue and rejecting vice. Gambling, for instance, is not worth the risk. Virtue for Steele is practical. Two, the reason is to make the decision in any matter affecting one's life. For Steele, this is "conscious" living. He also calls this "possessing one's life." Finally to "possess one's life," Steele believed that religious freedom, civil liberty, and freedom of property are essential. He advocated a capitalistic economy operating within a constitutional monarchy as the political environment best suited to provide these essentials. Steele, then, is a rationalist, a thesis holding the following implications.

First, Steele's theological rationalism helps to locate him in the history of Christian theology. In his emphasis on freedom of the will--this freedom is inherent if one can determine in the reason to accept Christianity--Steele, and the Latitudinarians, find themselves in the Arminian camp. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church says that Arminian theology was formerly set forth in the Remonstrances of 1610: "The Arminians insisted that the Divine sovereignty was compatible with

a real free will in man; and that both the Supralapsarian and Sublapsarian views of predestination were unbiblical."[1] This work also states that "In general the sympathies of Latitudinarians lay with Arminian theology."[2]

Next, by accepting the position of the Anglican rationalists on the relation between faith and reason, Steele allied himself to a movement that flourished for a period and then, according to Harth, almost vanished: "it flourished only as long as the climate of controversy which had called it forth." (However, its influence continued well into the eighteenth century.) In the nineteenth century, Harth continues, "when Anglican thought experiences a resurgence, it was to Hooker that John Keble and Bishop Paget and Dean Church turned once more. The Anglican rationalists have been remembered only to be misunderstood."[3] Leslie Stephen agrees with Harth that theological rationalism ran its course. However, Stephen says that theological rationalism "gave fresh life to the central beliefs." Indeed, "the vigour of English theology--and it was the golden period of English

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[1] "Arminianism," p. 88. According to this work, "Supralapsarianism," p. 1306, means that God decreed the election or non-election of individual men before the fall. Calvin's followers taught this, not Calvin. After the Synod of Dort (1618), sublapsarianism has been generally dominant among Calvinists. "Sublapsarianism," p. 1300, means that God decreed the salvation of individual men after the fall.

[2] "Latitudinarians," p. 789. F. E. Mayer, The Religious Bodies of America (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing Co., 1954), p. 291, shows that Arminian views have been influential. The following, he notes, identify themselves as Arminian: the Methodist bodies, the Salvation Army, several bodies related to Methodism such as The Evangelical Association, and the large number of Holiness groups originating during the present century.

[3] Swift and Ang. Rat., p. 51.

theology--is due to the fact that, for a time, reason and Christian theology were in spontaneous alliance."[4]

Neither Harth nor Stephen states specifically what aspect of theological rationalism all but disappeared. Perhaps they meant the whole notion of attempting to demonstrate the tenets of theology which is, Stephen cautions, a "dangerous task."[5] Likely, Harth means the definition of faith put forth by the Anglican rationalists; faith itself is an act of one's reason. In other words, faith is simply an assent to evidence.[6] At any rate, the emphasis that the Latitudinarians placed on reason pushed them to the very edge of traditional Anglican faith as Cragg implies:

> They [complaints about the decay of religion] run like a refrain through episcopal sermons; they appear in the prefaces to most serious works, whether written by the champions of the traditional faith or by Latitudinarians balancing on the edge of Deism.[7]

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[4] Eng. Thought in the Eighteenth Century, I, 79.

[5] Eng. Thought, I, 80.

[6] This view of faith that Steele and the Anglican rationalists preached was picked up by two men (Thomas and Alexander Campbell) in the United States, from whose work has grown two religious bodies that jointly make up the fifth largest religious group in the United States, according to F. E. Mayer, The Religious Bodies of America, p. 376, n. 17. He identifies the two groups as the Disciples of Christ and the Churches of Christ. In analyzing the theology of one of these groups (pp. 373-74), Mayer says that two points of view "have given direction and emphasis to the message of the Disciples down to the present: the peculiar emphasis of the significance of the New Testament and the definition and nature of faith." Mayer continues: "they argue that only the New Testament constitutes religious authority for the Christian," and they conclude "that faith is not a supernaturally wrought trust in God, but rather an intellectual testing and accepting of the basic principles of the moral order of salvation presented in the New Testament." This definition of faith, the Campbells got from Locke, Mayer concludes.

[7] Cragg, Reason and Auth., p. 25. Cragg's statement also shows in what way he considered the Latitudinarians to be on the edge of the

Second, the central point of this thesis clarifies Steele's philosophical position, for two reasons. For one thing, it corrects Blanchard's misleading conclusion that Steele was basically an anti-rationalist. Either Steele scholars have accepted or ignored her thesis, for they neither agree nor disagree with her conclusion. In either case this thesis contends that Steele is closely related philosophically to John Locke--in truth, it might not be an exaggeration to say that he is a thorough Lockean. For another thing, reading Steele as a rationalist provides a surprising degree of unity to his voluminous writings on a wide spectrum of subjects.

Third, identifying Steele as a rationalist will show that he was, indeed, fairly consistent. This is not to say that his practice completely harmonized with his theory. Steele's inconsistencies here have been pointed out by both friend and enemy. Certainly, like most men, Steele did not always practice what he preached. But sometimes he did. Although Steele was loyal to the Whig party, he did not hesitate to oppose its leaders if he thought they were wrong. For example, Steele's support of clemency for the condemned Lords, those who were convicted after the rebellion of 1715, placed him in opposition to Whig leaders. In Blanchard's introduction to Steele's tract, "A Letter to a Member and Concerning the Condemn'd Lords" (March, 1716), she recounts:

> Nottingham, the veteran Tory who had moved in the Lords to address the king for clemency, was soon relieved of his post as Lord President of the Council. Steele, who had seconded the move in the Commons and acted throughout as an opposition Whig, would inevitably suffer chastisement. His opposition

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traditional Anglican faith: they were emphasizing reason to the extent that they were close to being outright deists. Thus, they seem to be marginal Anglicans.

> was the more conspicuous because the Tory, William Shippen, supported him (TP, p. 403).

Steele was contending for the prerogative of the king to grant forgiveness:

> I have not entered into the question whether the Prisoners are Objects of Mercy, or not: I have contended only, that if they were, or should become objects of Mercy, the King might have it in his Power . . . to bestow it, when deserv'd (TP, p. 409).

Hence, one sees Steele, who teaches that men ought to "act according to the Dictates" of their consciences, here practicing what he preaches. Probably, Steele's practice was generally as consistent with his philosophy as most men's practice.

However moot the question of Steele's concord of his life and his theories might be, this study concludes that his views are fairly consistent.[8] Already noted is Steele's belief that although man needs a revelation, reason can demonstrate God's existence and verify God's revelation. Private reason, then, becomes Steele's ultimate authority in religion.

But private reason is Steele's ultimate authority to validate all truth. To be sure he appeals, occasionally, to the consensus for a kind of authority to support his views. When Steele does use authority, he usually cites the ancient philosophers or the consensus of the majority. For instance, he uses the examples of Socrates and the Reformation leaders, who, Steele urges, worshipped according to the religion of their respective countries as far as they were able without

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[8] Winton, Diss., Steele, the Political Writer," p. 3, speaking of Steele's politics, agrees that "Steele was a consistent if not an original thinker."

offending their consciences (Tatler 135). And to describe greatness he cites Cicero's definition ("A Letter to Lord _____ on Greatness Among Moderns," TP, p. 621). Furthermore, he thought that there are times when one should consider the majority consensus. To reinforce one's duty to forgive, he reminds his readers that the English nation has concluded that forgiveness is the greatest act of the human mind ("Antidote II," TP, p. 515). And, "No man ought to have the esteem of the rest of the world," Steele urges, "for any Actions which are disagreeable to those Maxims which prevail where he lives" (Spec. 175).

However, nowhere does Steele indicate that one should ever defer his private judgment to either the consensus of the best minds or the consensus of the majority. On the contrary, he did not hesitate to declare, in his The Christian Hero, Paul's theology to be superior to classical philosophy. Also, he is frankly critical of the coldness of Stoic philosophy ("Town Talk," No. 3, PJ, pp. 199-200). In addition, when Steele could have added authority to his political essays, I do not recall that he ever mentioned Locke's name, though often his argument was Lockean. There is no indication that Steele believed one ought to accept something only because Socrates, the Reformation leaders, or Locke had concluded it. Still less would he advocate that one ought to accept something only because the majority had concluded it. When a man is confronted with a choice between following the dictates of personal judgment or the majority, Steele quickly declares in favor of the former:

> It is an argument of a clear and worthy spirit in a man, to be able to disengage himself from the opinions of others so far as not to let the deference due to the sense of mankind ensnare him to act against the dictates of his own reason (Tatler 138).

If the central point of this study is correct, Steele makes high claims for the power of human reason. Perhaps there are many who would not accept the view that man can rationally govern his life. Even Steele conceded that rational control is achieved only after a struggle: "It is to the very end of our days a struggle between our reason and our temper, which shall have the empire over us" (Tatler 172). Yet, he believed it both possible and essential to men's humanity. Furthermore, there are certainly many who would not accept private reason as the ultimate authority. But Steele optimistically believes that men's souls naturally seek the truth and will find it if the judgment directs the investigation: "The Soul of man indeed loves Truth alone, but is easily led to mistake Appearance for Realities, if Judgement doth not direct Penetration" (Eng., I, 7, p. 32). And when he wrote, he believed that his readers would be personally convinced: "All the Impudence he [Steele] has been guilty of, was, that despite all Opposition, People would be convinc'd that two and two make four" (Theatre, No. 11, p. 49).

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