



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

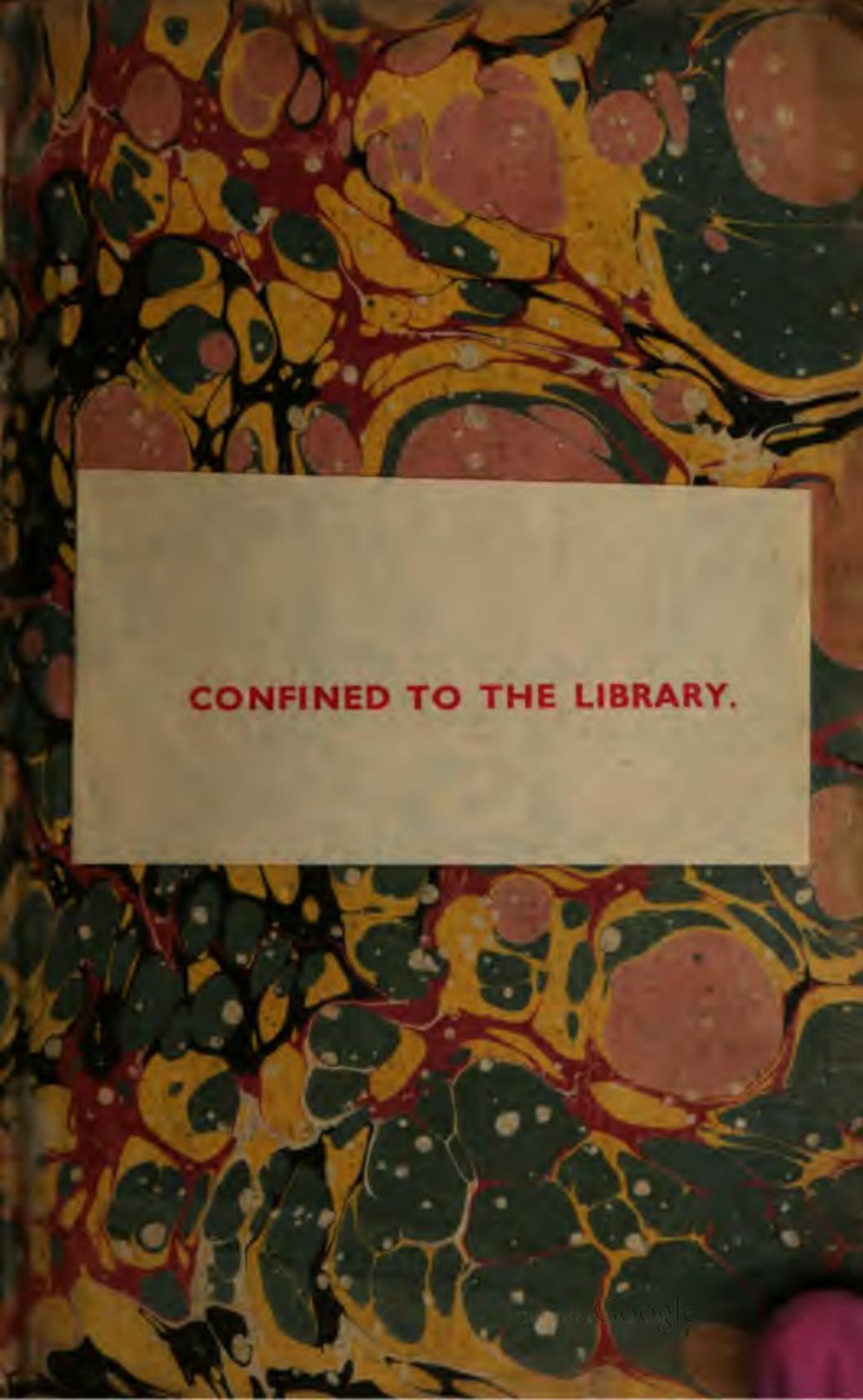
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



The image shows a book cover with a traditional marbled paper pattern. The pattern consists of irregular, organic shapes in shades of yellow, green, and red, set against a dark, almost black background. The colors are distributed in a complex, non-repeating fashion. In the center of the cover is a rectangular white label. On this label, the text "CONFINED TO THE LIBRARY." is printed in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The text is centered both horizontally and vertically within the white area. At the bottom right corner of the image, there is a faint, semi-transparent watermark that reads "Digitized by Google".

**CONFINED TO THE LIBRARY.**

Benjamin Baylis Esq. Brighton

Jan 1

XL48.577 (44)



THE  
L I F E  
O F  
DAVID HUME, Esq.

[ PRICE 1s. 6d. ]







*DAVID HUME, Esq.*

THE  
L I F E  
OF  
DAVID HUME, Esq.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

---

L O N D O N:  
PRINTED FOR W. STRAHAN; AND  
T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

MDCCLXXVII.



---

---

**M**R. H U M E, a few months before his death, wrote the following short account of his own Life; and, in a codicil to his will, desired that it might be prefixed to the next edition of his Works. That edition cannot be published for a considerable time. The Editor, in the mean while, in order to serve the purchasers

chasers of the former editions ; and, at the same time, to gratify the impatience of the public curiosity ; has thought proper to publish it separately, without altering even the title or superscription, which was written in Mr. Hume's own hand on the cover of the manuscript.

M Y

---

---

M Y O W N  
L I F E.

---

**I**T is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity; therefore, I shall be short. It may be thought an instance of vanity that I pretend at all to write my life; but this Narrative shall contain little more than the History of my Writings;

B

as

as, indeed, almost all my life has been spent in literary pursuits and occupations. The first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity.

I was born the 26th of April 1711, old style, at Edinburgh. I was of a good family, both by father and mother: my father's family is a branch of the Earl of Home's, or Hume's; and my ancestors had been proprietors of the estate, which my brother possesses, for several generations. My mother was daughter of Sir  
David

David Falconer, President of the College of Justice: the title of Lord Halkerton came by succession to her brother.

My family, however, was not rich, and being myself a younger brother, my patrimony, according to the mode of my country, was of course very slender. My father, who passed for a man of parts, died when I was an infant, leaving me, with an elder brother and a sister, under the care of our mother, a woman of singular merit, who, though young and handsome, devoted

B 2

her-

herself entirely to the rearing and educating of her children. I passed through the ordinary course of education with success, and was seized very early with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and the great source of my enjoyments. My studious disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me; but I found an unsurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning; and while they fancied I was

poring

poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring.

My very slender fortune, however, being unsuitable to this plan of life, and my health being a little broken by my ardent application, I was tempted, or rather forced, to make a very feeble trial for entering into a more active scene of life. In 1734, I went to Bristol, with some recommendations to eminent merchants, but in a few months found that scene totally

B 3                      unsuit-

unfuitable to me. I went over to France, with a view of prosecuting my studies in a country retreat; and I there laid that plan of life, which I have steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature.

During my retreat in France, first at Reims, but chiefly at La Fleche, in Anjou, I composed

posed my *Treatise of Human Nature*. After passing three years very agreeably in that country, I came over to London in 1737. In the end of 1738, I published my *Treatise*, and immediately went down to my mother and my brother, who lived at his country-house, and was employing himself very judiciously and successfully in the improvement of his fortune.

Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my *Treatise of Human Nature*. It fell

B 4                      *dead-*

## 2 MY OWN LIFE.

*dead-born from the press*, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots. But being naturally of a cheerful and sanguine temper, I very soon recovered the blow, and prosecuted with great ardour my studies in the country. In 1742, I printed at Edinburgh the first part of my *Essays*: the work was favourably received, and soon made me entirely forget my former disappointment. I continued with my mother and brother in the country, and in that time recovered  
the

the knowledge of the Greek language, which I had too much neglected in my early youth.

In 1745, I received a letter from the Marquis of Annandale, inviting me to come and live with him in England; I found also, that the friends and family of that young nobleman were desirous of putting him under my care and direction, for the state of his mind and health required it.—I lived with him a twelvemonth. My appointments during that time made a considerable accession to my small fortune,

tune. I then received an invitation from General St. Clair to attend him as a secretary to his expedition, which was at first meant against Canada, but ended in an incursion on the coast of France. Next year, to wit, 1747, I received an invitation from the General to attend him in the same station in his military embassy to the courts of Vienna and Turin. I then wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced at these courts as aid-de-camp to the general, along with Sir Harry Erskine and Captain Grant, now Gene-

ral Grant. These two years were almost the only interruptions which my studies have received during the course of my life: I passed them agreeably, and in good company; and my appointments, with my frugality, had made me reach a fortune, which I called independent, though most of my friends were inclined to smile when I said so; in short, I was now master of near a thousand pounds.

I had always entertained a notion, that my want of success in publishing the Treatise of  
Human

Human Nature, had proceeded more from the manner than the matter, and that I had been guilty of a very usual indiscretion, in going to the press too early. I, therefore, cast the first part of that work anew in the Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, which was published while I was at Turin. But this piece was at first little more successful than the Treatise of Human Nature. On my return from Italy, I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment, on account of Dr. Middleton's Free Enquiry, while my performance

was

was entirely overlooked and neglected. A new edition, which had been published at London of my Effays, moral and political, met not with a much better reception.

Such is the force of natural temper, that these disappointments made little or no impression on me. I went down in 1749, and lived two years with my brother at his country-house; for my mother was now dead. I there composed the second part of my Effays, which I called Political Discourses, and also my

‡

Enquiry

Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, which is another part of my treatise that I cast anew. Meanwhile, my bookseller, A. Millar, informed me, that my former publications (all but the unfortunate Treatise) were beginning to be the subject of conversation; that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by Reverends, and Right Reverends, came out two or three in a year; and I found, by Dr. Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good  
com-

company. However, I had fixed a resolution, which I inflexibly maintained, never to reply to any body; and not being very irascible in my temper, I have easily kept myself clear of all literary squabbles. These symptoms of a rising reputation gave me encouragement, as I was ever more disposed to see the favourable than unfavourable side of things; a turn of mind which it is more happy to possess, than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year.

In

In 1751, I removed from the country to the town, the true scene for a man of letters. In 1752, were published at Edinburgh, where I then lived, my Political Discourses, the only work of mine that was successful on the first publication. It was well received abroad and at home. In the same year was published at London, my Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals; which, in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject), is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It  
came

came unnoticed and unobserved into the world.

In 1752, the Faculty of Advocates chose me their Librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library. I then formed the plan of writing the History of England; but being frightened with the notion of continuing a narrative through a period of 1700 years, I commenced with the accession of the House of Stuart, an epoch when, I thought, the misrepresentations of faction began

C gan

gan chiefly to take place. I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian, that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment: I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, churchman and sectary, freethinker and religionist, patriot

patriot and courtier, united in their rage against the man, who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me, that in a twelve-month he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Her-

C 2

ring,

ring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates separately sent me messages not to be discouraged.

I was, however, I confess, discouraged; and had not the war been at that time breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more have returned to my native country. But as this scheme was not now practicable, and the subsequent volume was

con-

considerably advanced, I resolved to pick up courage and to persevere.

In this interval, I published at London my Natural History of Religion, along with some other small pieces: its public entry was rather obscure, except only that Dr. Hurd wrote a pamphlet against it, with all the illiberal petulance, arrogance, and scurrility, which distinguish the Warburtonian school. This pamphlet gave me some consolation for the otherwise indifferent reception of my performance.

In 1756, two years after the fall of the first volume, was published the second volume of my History, containing the period from the death of Charles I. till the Revolution. This performance happened to give less displeasure to the Whigs, and was better received. It not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother,

But though I had been taught by experience, that the Whig party were in possession of bestowing all places, both in the state and in literature, I was so  
little

little inclined to yield to their senseless clamour, that in above a hundred alterations, which farther study, reading, or reflection engaged me to make in the reigns of the two first Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory side. It is ridiculous to consider the English constitution before that period as a regular plan of liberty.

In 1759, I published my History of the House of Tudor. The clamour against this performance was almost equal to that against the History of the two

first Stuarts. The reign of Elizabeth was particularly obnoxious. But I was now callous against the impressions of public folly, and continued very peaceably and contentedly in my retreat at Edinburgh, to finish, in two volumes, the more early part of the English History, which I gave to the public in 1761, with tolerable, and but tolerable success.

But, notwithstanding this variety of winds and seasons, to which my writings had been exposed, they had still been making  
ing

ing such advances, that the copy-money given me by the book-fellers, much exceeded any thing formerly known in England; I was become not only independent, but opulent. I retired to my native country of Scotland, determined never more to set my foot out of it; and retaining the satisfaction of never having preferred a request to one great man, or even making advances of friendship to any of them. As I was now turned of fifty, I thought of passing all the rest of my life in this philosophical manner, when I received, in 1763, an

an invitation from the Earl of Hertford, with whom I was not in the least acquainted, to attend him on his embassy to Paris, with a near prospect of being appointed secretary to the embassy; and, in the meanwhile, of performing the functions of that office. This offer, however inviting, I at first declined, both because I was reluctant to begin connexions with the great, and because I was afraid that the civilities and gay company of Paris, would prove disagreeable to a person of my age and humour: but on his lordship's repeating the invitation,

tion, I accepted of it. I have every reason, both of pleasure and interest, to think myself happy in my connexions with that nobleman, as well as afterwards with his brother, General Conway.

Those who have not seen the strange effects of modes, will never imagine the reception I met with at Paris, from men and women of all ranks and stations. The more I refused from their excessive civilities, the more I was loaded with them. There is, however, a real satisfaction  
in

in living at Paris, from the great number of sensible, knowing, and polite company with which that city abounds above all places in the universe. I thought once of settling there for life.

I was appointed secretary to the embassy; and, in summer 1765, Lord Hertford left me, being appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. I was *chargé d'affaires* till the arrival of the Duke of Richmond, towards the end of the year. In the beginning of 1766, I left Paris, and next  
summer

summer went to Edinburgh, with the same view as formerly, of burying myself in a philosophical retreat. I returned to that place, not richer, but with much more money, and a much larger income, by means of Lord Hertford's friendship, than I left it; and I was desirous of trying what superfluity could produce, as I had formerly made an experiment of a competency. But, in 1767, I received from Mr. Conway an invitation to be Under-secretary; and this invitation, both the character of the person, and my connexions with

Lord Hertford, prevented me from declining. I returned to Edinburgh in 1769, very opulent (for I possessed a revenue of 1000 l. a year), healthy, and though somewhat stricken in years, with the prospect of enjoying long my ease, and of seeing the increase of my reputation.

In spring 1775, I was struck with a disorder in my bowels, which at first gave me no alarm, but has since, as I apprehend it, become mortal and incurable. I now reckon upon a speedy dissolution.

lution. I have suffered very little pain from my disorder; and what is more strange, have, notwithstanding the great decline of my person, never suffered a moment's abatement of my spirits; insomuch, that were I to name the period of my life, which I should most choose to pass over again, I might be tempted to point to this later period. I possess the same ardour as ever in study, and the same gaiety in company. I consider, besides, that a man of sixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities; and though I see  
\*  
—  
many

many symptoms of my literary reputation's breaking out at last with additional lustre, I knew that I could have but few years to enjoy it. It is difficult to be more detached from life than I am at present.

To conclude historically with my own character. I am, or rather was (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful

cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeas'd with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men any

D

wife

wife eminent, have found reason to complain of calumny. I never was touched, or even attacked by her baleful tooth: and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct: not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought

thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained.

April 18, 1776.

D 2

LET-



**L E T T E R**

**F R O M**

**A D A M S M I T H, LL.D.**

**T O**

**W I L L I A M S T R A H A N, Esq.**

**D 3**



---

---

Kirkaldy, Fifeshire, Nov. 9, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

**I**T is with a real, though a very melancholy pleasure, that I sit down to give you some account of the behaviour of our late excellent friend, Mr. Hume, during his last illness.

Though, in his own judgment, his disease was mortal and incurable, yet he allowed himself to be prevailed upon, by

D 4

the

the entreaty of his friends, to try what might be the effects of a long journey. A few days before he set out, he wrote that account of his own life, which, together with his other papers, he has left to your care. My account, therefore, shall begin where his ends.

He set out for London towards the end of April, and at Morpeth met with Mr. John Home and myself, who had both come down from London on purpose to see him, expecting to have found him at Edinburgh.

Mr.

Mr. Home returned with him, and attended him during the whole of his stay in England, with that care and attention which might be expected from a temper so perfectly friendly and affectionate. As I had written to my mother that she might expect me in Scotland, I was under the necessity of continuing my journey. His disease seemed to yield to exercise and change of air, and when he arrived in London, he was apparently in much better health than when he left Edinburgh. He was advised to go to Bath to drink the waters,

## 42 LETTER FROM

waters, which appeared for some time to have so good an effect upon him, that even he himself began to entertain, what he was not apt to do, a better opinion of his own health. His symptoms, however, soon returned with their usual violence, and from that moment he gave up all thoughts of recovery, but submitted with the utmost cheerfulness, and the most perfect complacency and resignation. Upon his return to Edinburgh, though he found himself much weaker, yet his cheerfulness never abated, and he continued  
to

to divert himself, as usual, with correcting his own works for a new edition, with reading books of amusement, with the conversation of his friends; and, sometimes in the evening, with a party at his favourite game of whist. His cheerfulness was so great, and his conversation and amusements run so much in their usual strain, that, notwithstanding all bad symptoms, many people could not believe he was dying. "I shall tell your friend, Colonel Edmondstone," said Doctor Dundas to him one day, "that I left you much better,

“ and in a fair way of recovery.”  
“ Doctor,” said he, “ as I be-  
“ lieve you would not chuse to  
“ tell any thing but the truth,  
“ you had better tell him, that  
“ I am dying as fast as my ene-  
“ mies, if I have any, could  
“ wish, and as easily and cheer-  
“ fully as my best friends could  
“ desire.” Colonel Edmondstone  
soon afterwards came to see him,  
and take leave of him; and on  
his way home, he could not for-  
bear writing him a letter bidding  
him once more an eternal adieu,  
and applying to him, as to a dy-  
ing man, the beautiful French  
verses

veries in which the Abbé Chau-  
lieu, in expectation of his own  
death, laments his approaching  
separation from his friend, the  
Marquis de la Fare. Mr. Hume's  
magnanimity and firmness were  
such, that his most affectionate  
friends knew, that they hazard-  
ed nothing in talking or writing  
to him as to a dying man, and  
that so far from being hurt by  
this frankness, he was rather  
pleased and flattered by it. I  
happened to come into his room  
while he was reading this letter,  
which he had just received, and  
which he immediately showed  
2 me.

me. I told him, that though I was sensible how very much he was weakened, and that appearances were in many respects very bad, yet his cheerfulness was still so great, the spirit of life seemed still to be so very strong in him, that I could not help entertaining some faint hopes. He answered, "Your hopes are ground-  
"less. An habitual diarrhoea of  
"more than a year's standing,  
"would be a very bad disease at  
"any age: at my age it is a  
"mortal one. When I lie down  
"in the evening, I feel myself  
"weaker than when I rose in the  
"morning;

“ morning; and when I rise in the  
 “ morning, weaker than when I  
 “ lay down in the evening. I am  
 “ sensible, besides, that some of my  
 “ vital parts are affected, so that  
 “ I must soon die.” “ Well,”  
 said I, “ if it must be so, you  
 have at least the satisfaction of  
 leaving all your friends, your  
 brother’s family in particular,  
 in great prosperity.” He said  
 that he felt that satisfaction so  
 sensibly, that when he was read-  
 ing a few days before, Lucian’s  
 Dialogues of the Dead, among  
 all the excuses which are alleg-  
 ed to Charon for not entering  
 readily

readily into his boat, he could not find one that fitted him ; he had no house to finish, he had no daughter to provide for, he had no enemies upon whom he wished to revenge himself. “ I could not well imagine,” said he, “ what excuse I could make to Charon in order to obtain a little delay. I have done every thing of consequence which I ever meant to do, and I could at no time expect to leave my relations and friends in a better situation than that in which I am now likely to leave them ; I, therefore, have all reason to die contented.”

“tented.” He then diverted himself with inventing several jocular excuses, which he supposed he might make to Charon, and with imagining the very surly answers which it might suit the character of Charon to return to them. “Upon further con-  
 “sideration;” said he, “I  
 “thought I might say to him,  
 “Good Charon, I have been  
 “correcting my works for a new  
 “edition. Allow me a little  
 “time, that I may see how the  
 “Public receives the alterations.”  
 But Charon would answer,  
 “When you have seen the effect

E

“ of

“ of these, you will be for mak-  
 “ ing other alterations. There  
 “ will be an end of such excuses;  
 “ so, honest friend, please step  
 “ into the boat.” But I might  
 still urge, “ Have a little pa-  
 “ tience, good Charon, I have  
 “ been endeavouring to open  
 “ the eyes of the Public. If I  
 “ live a few years longer, I may  
 “ have the satisfaction of seeing  
 “ the downfall of some of the  
 “ prevailing systems of supersti-  
 “ tion.” But Charon would  
 then lose all temper and decency.  
 “ You loitering rogue, that will  
 “ not happen these many hun-  
 “ dred

“dred years. Do you fancy I  
“will grant you a lease for so  
“long a term? Get into the  
“boat this instant, you lazy  
“loitering rogue.”

BUT, though Mr. Hume al-  
ways talked of his approaching  
dissolution with great cheerfulness,  
he never affected to make  
any parade of his magnanimity.  
He never mentioned the subject  
but when the conversation naturally  
led to it, and never dwelt  
longer upon it than the course  
of the conversation happened to  
require: it was a subject indeed

which occurred pretty frequently, in consequence of the inquiries which his friends, who came to see him, naturally made concerning the state of his health. The conversation which I mentioned above, and which passed on Thursday the 8th of August, was the last, except one, that I ever had with him. He had now become so very weak, that the company of his most intimate friends fatigued him; for his cheerfulness was still so great, his complaisance and social disposition were still so entire, that when any friend was with him,  
he

he could not help talking more, and with greater exertion, than suited the weakness of his body. At his own desire, therefore, I agreed to leave Edinburgh, where I was staying partly upon his account, and returned to my mother's house here, at Kirkaldy, upon condition that he would send for me whenever he wished to see me; the physician who saw him most frequently, Doctor Black, undertaking, in the mean time, to write me occasionally an account of the state of his health,

On the 22d of August, the Doctor wrote me the following letter :

“ Since my last, Mr. Home has passed his time pretty easily, but is much weaker. He sits up, goes down stairs once a day, and amuses himself with reading, but seldom sees any body. He finds that even the conversation of his most intimate friends fatigues and oppresses him ; and it is happy that he does not need it, for he is quite free from anxiety, impatience, or low spirits, and passes his time very well

well with the assistance of amusing books."

I received the day after a letter from Mr. Hume himself, of which the following is an extract.

Edinburgh, 23d August, 1776.

" MY DEAREST FRIEND,

" I am obliged to make use of my nephew's hand in writing to you, as I do not rise to-day.

\* \* \* \* \*

E 4

" I go

“ I go very fast to decline, and last night had a small fever, which I hoped might put a quicker period to this tedious illness, but unluckily it has, in a great measure, gone off. I cannot submit to your coming over here on my account, as it is possible for me to see you so small a part of the day, but Doctor Black can better inform you concerning the degree of strength which may from time to time remain with me. Adieu, &c.”

Three

Three days after I received the following letter from Doctor Black.

Edinburgh, Monday, 26th August, 1776.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Yesterday about four o'clock afternoon, Mr. Hume expired. The near approach of his death became evident in the night between Thursday and Friday, when his disease became excessive, and soon weakened him so much, that he could no longer rise out of his bed. He continued to the last perfectly sensible,

## 58 LETTER FROM

fible, and free from much pain or feelings of distress. He never dropped the smallest expression of impatience; but when he had occasion to speak to the people about him, always did it with affection and tenderness. I thought it improper to write to bring you over, especially as I heard that he had dictated a letter to you desiring you not to come. When he became very weak, it cost him an effort to speak, and he died in such a happy composure of mind, that nothing could exceed it."

•  
Thus

Thus died our most excellent, and never to be forgotten friend; concerning whose philosophical opinions men will, no doubt, judge variously, every one approving, or condemning them, according as they happen to coincide or disagree with his own; but concerning whose character and conduct there can scarce be a difference of opinion. His temper, indeed, seemed to be more happily balanced, if I may be allowed such an expression, than that perhaps of any other man I have ever known. Even in the lowest state of his fortune,

fortune, his great and necessary frugality never hindered him from exercising, upon proper occasions, acts both of charity and generosity. It was a frugality founded, not upon avarice, but upon the love of independency. The extreme gentleness of his nature never weakened either the firmness of his mind, or the steadiness of his resolutions. His constant pleasantry was the genuine effusion of good-nature and good-humour, tempered with delicacy and modesty, and without even the slightest tincture of malignity,

ty, so frequently the disagreeable source of what is called wit in other men. It never was the meaning of his raillery to mortify; and therefore, far from offending, it seldom failed to please and delight, even those who were the objects of it. To his friends, who were frequently the objects of it, there was not perhaps any one of all his great and amiable qualities, which contributed more to endear his conversation. And that gaiety of temper, so agreeable in society, but which is so often accompanied with frivolous and  
super-

superficial qualities, was in him certainly attended with the most severe application, the most extensive learning, the greatest depth of thought, and a capacity in every respect the most comprehensive. Upon the whole, I have always considered him, both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit.

I ever am, dear Sir,

Most affectionately yours,

ADAM SMITH.

A  
L E T T E R  
T O  
ADAM SMITH LL.D.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

THE HISTORY OF THE

OF

THE

OF

A  
L E T T E R  
T O  
A D A M S M I T H L L . D .  
O N T H E  
L I F E , D E A T H , A N D P H I L O S O P H Y  
O F H I S F R I E N D  
D A V I D H U M E E S Q .

---

By one of the People called CHRISTIANS.

---

*Ibant obscuri, solâ sub nocte, per umbram,  
Perque domos Ditis vacuas, et inania regna.*

VIRG.

---

O X F O R D :

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS. 1777.  
SOLD BY DANIEL PRINCE; AND BY  
J. F. AND C. RIVINGTON, G. ROBINSON,  
AND T. PAYNE AND SON, LONDON.



## ADVERTISEMENT,

**I**T is of no consequence, gentle Reader, to you, any more than it is to Dr. SMITH, that you should know the name of the person, who now addresseth you. Your mind cannot be biaſſed, either way, by that, of which you remain ignorant. The remarks in the following pages are not therefore true, or false, because I made them; but I made them, because I thought them to be true. Read, consider, and determine for yourself. If you find no satisfaction, throw the book into the fire, regret

## ii. ADVERTISEMENT.

(but with moderation, as becometh a philosopher) the loss of your shilling; and take care not to lose another, in the same manner. If, on the contrary, you *should* find satisfaction (and, it is humbly hoped, you will find a great deal) neglect not to communicate to others, what has thus been communicated to you. Speak handsomely of me, wherever you go, and introduce me to your kinsfolk and acquaintance. The enemies of Religion are awake; let not her friends sleep.

I intended a much longer work; but, like the learned

## ADVERTISEMENT. iii

editor of Mr. HUME's Life, am necessitated to "gratify," with all possible expedition, "the impatience of the public curiosity;" so eager is it to hear, what they, who believe in GOD, can possibly have to say for themselves. And if this will do the business, why should you be troubled with more? I am far from agreeing with Mr. VOLTAIRE, in all his observations. But there is one, in which it is impossible to disagree with him. "I have said, and I abide by it," cries the little hero, "that the fault of most books is, their being too large." On review-

#### iv ADVERTISEMENT.

ing what I have written, I really cannot see there is occasion to add another sentence.

Had I not chosen, for reasons best known to myself, thus to make my appearance *incog*. I would certainly have fate for my picture, and have tried to cast a look at my title page, as lively and good humoured, as that of Mr. HUME himself. My bookseller, indeed, told me, it would have been a much more creditable way of doing the thing; "and then, you know, Sir," said he, "we could have charged the other sixpence."

A LET-

A  
LETTER, &c.

SIR,

**Y**OU have been lately employed in embalming a philosopher; his *body*, I believe I must say; for concerning the other part of him, neither you nor he seem to have entertained an idea, sleeping or waking. Else, it surely might have claimed a little of your care and attention; and one would think, the belief of the soul's existence and immortality could do no

B

## 2 A LETTER TO

harm, if it did no good, in a *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. But every gentleman understands his own business best.

Will you do an unknown correspondent the honour, Sir, to accept a few plain remarks, in a free and easy way, upon the curious letter to Mr. STRAHAN, in which this ever memorable operation of *embalming* is performed? Our Philosopher's account of *his own life* will likewise be considered, as we go along.

Trust me, good Doctor, I am no bigot, enthusiast, or enemy to human learning—*Et ego in Arcadiâ*—I have made many a

DR. ADAM SMITH. 3

heartly meal, in private, upon CICERO and VIRGIL, as well as Mr. HUME\*. Few persons (though, perhaps, as Mr. HUME says, upon a like occasion, "I ought not to judge on that subject") have a quicker relish for the productions of genius, and the beauties of composition. It is therefore as little in my intention, as it is in my power, to prejudice the literary character of your friend. From some of his writings I have received great pleasure, and have ever esteemed his History of England to have been a noble effort of *Matter and Motion*. But when a

\* LIFE, p. 5.

#### 4 A LETTER TO

man takes it into his head to do mischief, you must be sensible, Sir, the Public has always reason to lament his being *a clever fellow*.

I hope it will not be deemed vanity in me likewise to say, that I have in my composition a large proportion of that, which our inimitable SHAKESPEARE styles, *the milk of human kindness*. I never knew what envy or hatred was; and am ready, at all times, to praise, wherever I can do it, in honour and conscience. DAVID, I doubt not, was, as you affirm, a social agreeable person, of a convivial turn, told a good story, and

played well at “his favourite  
 “game of whist\*.” I know  
 not that JOHN THE PAINTER  
 did the same. But there is no  
 absurdity in the supposition. If  
 he did not, he might have done  
 it—Doctor, be not offended—I  
 mean no harm. I would only  
 infer thus much, that I could  
 not, on that account, bring my-  
 self absolutely to approve his  
 odd fancy of firing all the dock-  
 yards in the kingdom.

Concerning the *philosophical*  
*opinions* of Mr. HUME you ob-  
 serve †, that “men will, no  
 “doubt, judge variously.” They  
 are certainly at liberty so to do,

\* LIFE, &c. p. 43. † LIFE, &c. p. 59.

## 6 A LETTER TO.

because the author himself did the same. Sometimes, to be sure, he esteemed them ingenious, deep, subtle, elegant, and calculated to diffuse his literary fame to the ends of the world. But, at other times, he judged very differently; very much so, indeed. “ I dine, says he, I  
“ play a game at back-gammon,  
“ I converse, and am merry  
“ with my friends; and when,  
“ after three or four hours  
“ amusement, I would return  
“ to these speculations, they  
“ appear so *cold*, so *strained*, and  
“ so *ridiculous*, that I cannot  
“ find in my heart to enter into

“them any farther”\*. Now, Sir, if you will only give me leave to judge, before dinner, of Mr. HUME’s philosophy, as he judged of it after dinner, we shall have no farther dispute upon that subject. Only I could wish, if it were possible, to have a scheme of thought, which would bear contemplating, at any time of the day; because, otherwise, a person must be at the expence of maintaining a brace of these metaphysical Hobby-Horses, one to mount

\* *Treatise of Human Nature*. I. 467. In the Postscript to this Letter, a view will be given of the HUMIAN system, taken exactly as it appeared to it’s author at six o’clock in the evening.

## 8 A LETTER TO

in the morning, and the other in the afternoon.

After all, Sir, friend as I am to freedom of opinion (and no one living can be more so) I am rather sorry, methinks, that men should judge so *variously* of Mr. HUME's philosophical speculations. For since the design of them is to banish out of the world every idea of truth and comfort, salvation and immortality, a future state, and the providence, and even existence of GOD, it seems a pity, that we cannot be all of a mind about them, though we might have formerly liked to hear the author crack a joke, over a bottle,

DR. ADAM SMITH. 9

bottle, in his life time. And I could have been well pleased to have been informed by you, Sir, that, before his death, he had ceased to number among his happy effusions tracts of this kind and tendency.

For—(let me come a little closer to you, Doctor, if you please, upon this subject—Don't be under any apprehensions—my name does not begin with a B—) Are you sure, and can you make us sure, that there really exist no such things as a GOD, and a future state of rewards and punishments? If so, all is well. Let us *then*, in our last hours, read LUCIAN, and play

C

## 10 A LETTER TO

at WHIST, and droll upon CHARRON and his boat \*; let us die as foolish and insensible, as much like our brother philosophers, the calves of the field, and the asses of the desert, as we can, for the life of us. But—if such things BE—as they most certainly ARE—Is it right in you, Sir, to hold up to our view, as “perfectly wise and “virtuous” †, the *character* and *conduct* of one, who seems to have been possessed with an incurable antipathy to all that is called RELIGION; and who strained every nerve to explode,

\* LIFE, &c. p. 47, et seq.

† LIFE, &c. p. 62.

suppress, and extirpate the spirit of it among men, that it's very name, if he could effect it, might no more be had in remembrance? Are we, do you imagine, to be reconciled to a character of this sort, and fall in love with it, because it's owner was *good company*, and knew how to manage his *cards*? Low as the age is fallen, I will venture to hope, it has grace enough yet left, to resent such usage as this.

You endeavour to entertain us with some *pleasant conceits* that were supposed by Mr. HUME to pass between himself and old CHARON. The philo-

## 12 A LETTER TO

sopher tells the old gentleman, that "he had been endeavouring to open the eyes of the Public;" that he was "correcting his works for a new edition," from which great things were to be expected; in short, "if he could but live a few years longer (and that was the only reason why he would wish to do so) he might have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of *superstition* \*."

We all know, Sir, what the word SUPERSTITION denotes, in Mr. HUME'S vocabulary, and

\* LIFE, &c. p. 50.

against what Religion his shafts are levelled, under that name. But, DOCTOR SMITH, do you believe, or would you have us to believe, that it is CHARON, who calls us out of the world, at the appointed time? Doth not HE call us out of it, who sent us into it? Let me, then, present you with a paraphrase of the Wish, as addressed to HIM, to whom it should, and to whom alone, with any sense and propriety, it can be addressed.— Thus it runs—

“ LORD, I have only one  
 “ reason why I would wish to  
 “ live. Suffer me so to do, I  
 “ most humbly beseech thee,

## 14 A LETTER TO

“ yet a little while, till mine  
“ eyes shall behold the success  
“ of my undertaking to over-  
“ throw, by my metaphysics,  
“ the faith which thy SON de-  
“ scended from heaven to plant,  
“ and to root out the knowlege  
“ and the love of thee from the  
“ earth.”

Here are no rhetorical figures, no hyperbole's, or exaggerations. The matter is even so. I appeal, in the face of the world, Sir, to yourself, and to every man, who can read and understand the writings of Mr. HUME, whether this be not, in plain, honest English, the drift of his *philosophy*, as it is called ;

for the propagation of which alone he wished to live; and concerning which you are pleased to say coolly, “men will judge variously, every one approving or condemning these opinions, according as they happen to coincide or disagree with his own\*.” Our thoughts are very naturally carried back, upon this occasion, to the author of the *first philosophy*, who likewise engaged to *open the eyes of the Public*—He did so; but the only discovery they found themselves able to make, was,---that they were NAKED.

\* LIFE, &c. p. 59.

## 16 A LETTER TO

You talk much, Sir, of our philosopher's *gentleness* of manners, *good nature*, *compassion*, *generosity*, *charity*. Alas, Sir, whether were they all fled, when he so often fate down calmly and deliberately to obliterate from the hearts of the human species every trace of the knowlege of GOD and his dispensations; all faith in his kind providence, and fatherly protection; all hope of enjoying his grace and favour, here, or hereafter; all love of him, and of their brethren for his sake; all the patience under tribulation, all the comforts, in time of sorrow, derived from these fruitful and perennial sources?

sources? Did a good man think himself able, by the force of metaphysic incantation, in a moment, to blot the sun out of heaven, and dry up every fountain upon earth, would he attempt to do it?—TULLY had but a faint glimpse of the country towards which we are all travelling; yet, so pleasing was any the most imperfect and shadowy prospect into futurity, that TULLY declared, no man should ravish it from him\*. And surely, TULLY was a phi-

\* Quod si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro, nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo. DE SENECTUTE, ad Fin.

D

lofopher, as well as HUME. O had he feen the light which fhone upon HUME, he would not have clofed his eyes againft it; had the fame cup been offered to him, he would not have dafhed it untafteed from him!

“ Perhaps our modern fcep-  
 “ tics are ignorant, that with-  
 “ out the belief of a GOD, and  
 “ the hope of immortality, the  
 “ miferies of human life would  
 “ often be infupportable. But  
 “ can I fuppose them in a ftate  
 “ of total and invincible ftupi-  
 “ dity, utter ftangers to the  
 “ human heart, and to human  
 “ affairs? Sure, they would not  
 “ thank me for fuch a fupposi-

“ tion. Yet this I must suppose;  
“ or I must believe them to be  
“ the most cruel, the most per-  
“ fidious, and the most profligate  
“ of men. Carested by  
“ those who call themselves the  
“ great; ingrossed by the forma-  
“ lities of life, intoxicated with  
“ vanity, pampered with adu-  
“ lation, dissipated in the tu-  
“ mult of business, or amidst  
“ the vicissitudes of folly, they  
“ perhaps have little need and  
“ little relish for the consola-  
“ tions of religion. But let  
“ them know, that in the so-  
“ litary scenes of life, there is  
“ many an honest and tender  
“ heart pining with incurable

## 20 A LETTER TO

“anguish, pierced with the  
“sharpest sting of disappoint-  
“ment, bereft of friends, chill-  
“ed with poverty, racked with  
“disease, scourged by the op-  
“pressor; whom nothing but  
“trust in Providence, and the  
“hope of a future retribution  
“could preserve from the ago-  
“nies of despair. And do they,  
“with sacrilegious hands, at-  
“tempt to violate this last re-  
“fuge of the miserable, and to  
“rob them of the only comfort  
“that had survived the ravages  
“of misfortune, malice, and  
“tyranny? Did it ever happen,  
“that the influence of their  
“execrable tenets disturbed the

DR. ADAM SMITH. 21

“ tranquillity of virtuous retire-  
“ ment, deepened the gloom of  
“ human distress, or aggravated  
“ the horrors of the grave? Is  
“ it possible, that this may have  
“ happened in many instances?  
“ Is it probable, that this hath  
“ happened in one single in-  
“ stance?—Ye traitors to hu-  
“ man kind, ye murderers of  
“ the human soul, how can ye  
“ answer for it to your own  
“ hearts! Surely, every spark  
“ of your generosity is extin-  
“ guished for ever, if this con-  
“ sideration do not awaken in  
“ you the keenest remorse, and  
“ make you wish in bitterness  
“ of soul—But I remonstrate in

## 22 A LETTER TO

“ vain. All this must have often  
“ occurred to you, and been as  
“ often rejected, as utterly fri-  
“ volous. Could I enforce the  
“ present topic by an appeal to  
“ your vanity, I might possibly  
“ make some impressiion. But to  
“ plead with you on the prin-  
“ ciples of BENEVOLENCE, or  
“ GENEROSITY, is to address  
“ you in a language ye do not,  
“ or will not, understand; and  
“ as to the shame of being con-  
“ victed of absurdity, ignorance,  
“ or want of candour, ye have  
“ long ago proved yourselves  
“ superior to the sense of it.—  
“ But let not the lovers of truth  
“ be discouraged. Atheism can-

“ not be of long continuance,  
 “ nor is there much danger of  
 “ it’s becoming universal. The  
 “ influence of some conspicuous  
 “ characters hath brought it too  
 “ much into fashion; which,  
 “ in a thoughtless and profligate  
 “ age, it is no difficult matter  
 “ to accomplish. But when men  
 “ have retrieved the powers of  
 “ serious reflection, they will  
 “ find it a frightful phantom;  
 “ and the mind will return  
 “ gladly and eagerly to it’s old  
 “ endearments. One thing we  
 “ certainly know; the fashion  
 “ of sceptical and metaphysical  
 “ systems passeth away. Those  
 “ unnatural productions, the

## 24 A LETTER TO

“vile effusion of a hard and  
“stupid heart, that mistakes it’s  
“own restlessness for the acti-  
“vity of genius, and it’s own  
“captiousness for sagacity of  
“understanding, may, like other  
“monsters, please awhile by  
“their singularity; but the  
“charm is soon over; and the  
“succeeding age will be asto-  
“nished to hear, that their  
“fore-fathers were deluded, or  
“amused, with such fooleries.”

You, Sir, have read the pre-  
ceding paragraph before; but  
this Letter may come into the  
hands of many, who have not.  
It is the alarum bell to the  
admirers of Mr. HUME; and  
should

should be rung in their ears, till succeeded by the last trumpet. -

And now, Sir, will you give me leave to ask you a few questions? Why all this hurry and bustle, this eagerness to gratify the pretended "impatience of the Public \*," and satisfy it, that our philosopher lived and died perfectly composed and easy? Was there, then, any suspicion, in SCOTLAND, that he might not, at times, be quite so composed and easy as he should have been? Was there any particular BOOK ever written against him, that shook his system to pieces about his ears, and re-

\* Preface to LIFE, &c.

## 26 A LETTER TO

duced it to a heap of ruins, the success and eclat of which might be supposed to have hurt his mind, and to have affected his health? Was there any AUTHOR, whose *name* his friends never dared to mention before him, and warned all strangers, that were introduced to him, against doing it, because he never failed, when by any accident it was done, to fly out into a transport of passion and swearing \*? Was

\* “I was a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper.” LIFE, p. 32. Yet even by what is said of the Reverends and Right Reverends

it deemed necessary, or expedient, on this account, that he should represent himself, and that you should represent him, to have been perfectly secure of the growth and increase of his philosophic reputation, as if no book had been written, which had impaired it; it hav-

—Bishop WARBURTON, Bishop HURD, the *Zealots* (that is, the *Christians*) and of the resolution once taken to “change his name, and settle in France,” because his writings did not meet with sufficient encouragement—by these circumstances, I say, there seems to have been something of the *irritable* in his constitution. But these are trifles. My quarry lies not this way, at present. I fly at nobler game. The atrocious wickedness of diffusing atheism through the land, is a subject which concerns every body.

## 28 A LETTER TO

ing been judged much easier to dissemble the fall of DAGON, than to *set him upon his stumps again*? I am a *South Briton*, and, consequently, not acquainted with what passes so far in the opposite quarter. You, Sir, can inform us how these things are; and likewise, when the great work of *benevolence* and *charity*, of *wisdom* and *virtue*, shall be crowned by the publication of a treatise designed to prove the SOUL'S MORTALITY, and another, to justify and recommend SELF MURDER; for which, without doubt, the present and every future age will

bles the name of the *gentle* and *amiable* author.

Upon the whole, Doctor, your meaning is good; but I think you will not succeed, this time. You would persuade us, by the example of DAVID HUME Esq; that atheism is the only cordial for low spirits, and the proper antidote against the fear of death. But, surely, he who can reflect, with complacency, on a friend thus misemploying his talents in his life, and then amusing himself with LUCIAN, WHIST, and CHARON, at his death, may smile over BABYLON in ruins; esteem the earthquake, which destroyed LISBON, an

### 30 A LETTER TO

agreeable occurrence; and congratulate the hardened PHARAOH, on his overthrow in the Red sea. Dröllery, in such circumstances, is neither more nor less than

Moody Madness, laughing wild,  
Amid severest woe.

Would we know the baneful and pestilential influences of false philosophy on the human heart? We need only contemplate them in this most deplorable instance of Mr. HUME.

These sayings, Sir, may appear harsh; but they are salutary. And if departed spirits have any knowlege of what is passing

upon earth, that person will be regarded by your friend as rendering him the truest services, who, by energy of expression, and warmth of exhortation, shall most contribute to prevent his writings from producing those effects upon mankind, which he no longer wishes they should produce. Let no man deceive himself, or be deceived by others. It is the voice of eternal TRUTH, which crieth aloud, and saith to you, Sir, and to me, and to all the world—  
*He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see*

## 32 A LETTER TO

*life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him \*.*

By way of contrast to the behaviour of Mr. HUME, at the close of a life, passed *without GOD in the world*, permit me, Sir, to lay before yourself, and the Public, the last sentiments of the truly learned, judicious, and admirable HOOKER, who had spent *his* days in the service of his Maker and Redeemer.

After this manner, therefore, spake the author of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, immediately before he expired—

“ I have lived to see, that this  
“ world is made up of pertur-

♦ JOHN iii. 36.

“ bations ;

“ bations ; and I have been long  
 “ preparing to leave it, and  
 “ gathering comfort for the  
 “ dreadful hour of making my  
 “ account with GOD, which I  
 “ now apprehend to be near.  
 “ And though I have, by his  
 “ grace, loved him in my youth,  
 “ and feared him in mine age,  
 “ and laboured to have a con-  
 “ science void of offence, to-  
 “ wards him, and towards all  
 “ men ; yet, if thou, Lord,  
 “ shouldest be extreme to mark  
 “ what I have done amiss, who  
 “ can abide it ? And therefore,  
 “ where I have failed, Lord,  
 “ shew mercy to me ; for I  
 “ plead not my righteousness,

### 34 A LETTER TO

“ but the forgiveness of my un-  
“ righteousness, through His  
“ merits, who died to purchase  
“ pardon for penitent sinners.  
“ And since I owe thee a death,  
“ Lord, let it not be terrible,  
“ and then take thine own time;  
“ I submit to it. Let not mine,  
“ O Lord, but thy will be  
“ done!----GOD hath heard my  
“ daily petitions; for I am at  
“ peace with all men, and he is  
“ at peace with me. From such  
“ blessed assurance I feel that  
“ inward joy, which this world  
“ can neither give, nor take  
“ from me. My conscience bear-  
“ eth me this witness; and this  
“ witness makes the thoughts

“ of death joyful. I could wish  
“ to live, to do the church  
“ more services; but cannot hope  
“ it; for my days are past, as a  
“ shadow that returns not.”

His worthy Biographer adds  
—“ More he would have spo-  
“ ken, but his spirits failed  
“ him; and, after a short con-  
“ flict between nature and death,  
“ a quiet sigh put a period to  
“ his last breath, and so, he fell  
“ asleep----And now he seems  
“ to rest like Lazarus in Abra-  
“ ham's bosom. Let me here  
“ draw his curtain, till, with  
“ the most glorious company of  
“ the Patriarchs and Apostles,

### 36 A LETTER TO :

“ and the most noble army of  
“ Martyrs and Confessors, this  
“ most learned, most humble;  
“ most holy man shall also  
“ awake to receive an eternal  
“ tranquillity, and with it a  
“ greater degree of glory, than  
“ common Christians shall be  
“ made partakers of.”

DOCTOR SMITH, when the hour of his departure hence shall arrive, will copy the example of the BELIEVER, or the INFIDEL, as it liketh him best. I must freely own, I have no opinion of that reader's *head*, or *heart*, who will not exclaim, as I find myself obliged to do—

DR. ADAM SMITH. 37

*Let ME die the death of the  
Righteous, and let MY last end be  
like his!*

I am, Sir,

Your very sincere

Well-wisher, and

Humble Servant,

One of the People called CHRISTIANS.

## POSTSCRIPT.

AS it is possible, Sir, nay, probable, that this little tract, because it is a little one, may be perused by many, who have not leisure or inclination to go through large volumes, and yet wish to know what Mr. HUME'S philosophical system is; I shall here subjoin a short, but comprehensive summary of the doctrines which compose it, drawn up, some few years ago, by a learned gentleman, for his amusement, with proper references to those parts of our philosopher's works, where such

## POSTSCRIPT. 39

doctrines were to be found. And though I never heard, the compiler had the thanks of Mr. HUME for so doing, yet neither could I ever find, that he or his friends disputed the fidelity and accuracy with which it was done.

### A SUMMARY OF MR. HUME'S DOCTRINES, METAPHYSICAL AND MORAL.

#### OF THE SOUL.

That the soul of man is not the same this moment, that it was the last ; that we know not what it is ; that it is not one, but many things ; and that it is nothing at all.

## 49 POSTSCRIPT.

That in this soul is the agency of all the causes that operate throughout the sensible creation; and yet that in this soul there is neither power nor agency, nor any idea of either.

That matter and motion may often be regarded as the cause of thought.

### OF THE UNIVERSE.

That the external world does not exist, or at least, that its existence may reasonably be doubted.

That the universe exists in the mind, and that the mind does not exist.

That

## POSTSCRIPT. 41

That the universe is nothing but a heap of perceptions, without a substance.

That though a man could bring himself to believe, yea, and have reason to believe, that every thing in the universe proceeds from some cause; yet it would be unreasonable for him to believe, that the universe itself proceeds from a cause.

### OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

That the perfection of human knowledge is to doubt.

That we ought to doubt of every thing, yea, of our doubts themselves, and therefore, the utmost that philosophy can do,

G

## 42 P O S T S C R I P T.

is to give us a doubtful solution of doubtful doubts\*.

That the human understanding, acting alone, does entirely subvert itself, and prove by argument, that by argument nothing can be proved.

That man, in all his perceptions, actions, and volitions, is a mere passive machine, and has no separate existence of his own, being entirely made up of other things, of the existence of which he is by no means certain; and yet, that the nature of all things

\* The fourth section of Mr. HUME's *Essays on the Human Understanding*, is called, *Sceptical doubts concerning the operations of the human understanding*; and the fifth section bears this title, *Sceptical solution of these doubts*.

## POSTSCRIPT. 43

depends so much upon man, that two and two could not be equal to four, nor fire produce heat, nor the sun light, without an act of the human understanding.

### OF GOD.

That it is unreasonable to believe GOD to be infinitely wise and good, while there is any evil or disorder in the universe.

That we have no good reason to think the universe proceeds from a cause.

That as the existence of the external world is questionable, we are at a loss to find arguments by which we may prove

#### 44 P O S T S C R I P T.

the existence of the Supreme Being, or any of his attributes.

That when we speak of Power, as an attribute of any being, GOD himself not excepted, we use words without meaning.

That we can form no idea of power, nor of any being endued with power, *much less* of one endued with infinite power; and that we can never have reason to believe, that any object, or quality of any object exists, of which we cannot form an idea\*.

\* The poor prodigal *Gentile*, in the parable, was hardly reduced to feed upon *such husks* as these. How good and how joyful

## POSTSCRIPT. 45

### OF THE MORALITY OF HUMAN ACTIONS.

That every human action is necessary, and could not have been different from what it is.

That moral, intellectual, and corporeal virtues are nearly of the same kind—In other words, that to want honesty, and to want understanding, and to want a leg, are equally the objects of moral disapprobation.

That adultery must be practised, if men would obtain all

a thing must it be, for one, that has been so reduced, to return to the house of his heavenly Father, where *there is bread enough, and to spare—to know the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, whom he hath sent!*

## 46 P O S T S C R I P T.

the advantages of life ; that, if generally practised, it would in time cease to be scandalous ; and that, if practised secretly and frequently, it would by degrees come to be thought no crime at all.

Lastly, as the soul of man, according to Mr. HUME, becomes every moment a different being, the consequence must be, that the crimes committed by him at one time, cannot be imputable to him at another \*.

\* “ My *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the BEST.” LIFE, p. 16.

## POSTSCRIPT. 47

I believe, DoCTOR SMITH, the reader is now fully prepared to enter into the spirit of your concluding sentence, which therefore shall be mine.

“ I have always considered  
“ Mr. HUME, both in his life-  
“ time, and since his death, as  
“ approaching as nearly to the  
“ idea of A PERFECTLY WISE  
“ AND VIRTUOUS MAN, as  
“ perhaps the nature of human  
“ frailty will permit.”

T H E E N D.









