

special advantage. This forms another example of a great and general good wrought out for society—while each component member is intently set only on a distinct and specific good for himself—a high interest, which could not have been confided to human virtue; but which has been skilfully extracted from the workings of human selfishness. In as far as truth and justice prevail in the world, not by the operation of principle but of policy, in so far the goodness of man has no share in it: but so beneficent a result out of such unpromising materials, speaks all the more emphatically both for the wisdom and the goodness of God.

4. But in this there is no singularity. Other examples can be named of God placing us in such circumstances, as to enlist even our selfishness on the side of virtuous conduct; or implanting such special affections as do, by their own impulse, lead to that conduct, although virtuousness is not in all our thoughts. We are often so actuated, as to do what is best for society, at the very time that the good of society is forming no part of our concern; and our footsteps are often directed in that very path, which a moral regard to the greatest happiness of the species would dictate—without any moral purpose having been conceived, or any moral principle been in exercise within us. It is thus that our resentment operates as a check on the injuriousness of others, although our single aim be the protection of our own interests—not