

## **John Tillotson, Self-love and the Teleology of Happiness**

Regina Dal Santo (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

**Abstract** The idea of happiness in sermons in the long eighteenth century is examined, in particular the idea of moral reformation promoted by the Latitudinarian movement, which obtained relevant importance in the Church of England after the Restoration. The analysis focuses on Archbishop John Tillotson's Sermons as they exemplify the Church's position on Man's relationship with God and happiness. His sermons describe Man as a traveller whose destination is happiness. They underline the role of reason and conscience in promoting human obedience to divine law, while insisting on self-love and its force to move the individual to moral reformation. Tillotson clearly addresses the malleable nature of Man, the part that can be educated to religion and to the promotion of sincerity and charitable activities. Seeking for happiness therefore endorses the improvement in the mores of society and potentially helps Man to gain God's favour, which was considered lost after the Great Plague and the Great Fire of 1666.

We shall reap the pleasure and satisfaction of it in our own minds, and all the other mighty advantages of it in the world, and the vast and unspeakable reward of it in the other (Tillotson, vol. 9, p. 3792; Sermon 158).

The question of happiness, where it can be found and how it can be obtained, became central in the literary output during the long eighteenth century. The year 1660 marked a watershed in the perception of pleasures and pastimes: the Caroline court brought French taste to England and, with it, the removal of Cromwellian austerity. Individual happiness became a central issue. In the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century novel, the description of the search for happiness often highlights vulnerable human nature and its limits (Norton 2012, p. 15), but the portrayal of Man that can be drawn from it stems directly from a diversified background tension which included a wide publication of essays and sermons on the topic (Norton 2012, pp. 1-4). Sermons are fundamental to the analysis of the epistemology of happiness as they were the most widely read genre of the time, and attendance of church services served as a social cohesive force, especially among London's polite society, university communities, and also in fashionable resorts such as Bath (Sykes 1934, p. 256; Rivers 2005, p. 7). The delineation of two major currents within the Church of England in the second half of the seventeenth century, Calvinism and

Arminianism, brought a scission in the idea of Man. Calvinists focused on human passivity and on the ultimate submission to grace and divine will for salvation. On the contrary, Arminianism fostered mankind's active role, considering works as essential proof of one's faith mediated by the support of divine grace (Rivers 2005, pp. 10-24). Thanks to its focus on religious morality as practice, Arminianism proved particularly influential from the 1660s onwards, whose development was encouraged by famous publications such as *Practice of Christian Duties*, better known as *The Whole Duty of Man*, published anonymously in 1658 and attributed to the Regius Professor of Divinity, Richard Allestree (1619-1681). Arminianism focused its attention on obedience and peace of mind, giving a central role to Paul's instruction to live «soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world» (*Titus* 2:11-12). Being a good Christian is at the heart of *The Whole Duty of Man*, whose author also stresses the pleasure and joy inherent in obedience to divine law, as «there is in the practice of Christian duties a great deal of present pleasure» (qtd in Rivers, 2005, p. 23). In obeying divine dictates, Man therefore accomplishes his self-fulfilment and experiences what being a Man truly is. Conversing in the seemingly opposed languages of reason and grace, faith and works, clergymen grappled with questions of morality and ethics, and their union with religion. The focus of discussion thus shifted to the subject perceiving happiness (Norton 2012, p. 3): clergymen claimed that the thirst after happiness is connatural to human nature and portrayed Man as a pilgrim who sets out on a journey in order to find happiness, though often losing his way (Tillotson 1743, vol. 8, pp. 3314, 3331; Sermon 132). In their journey, Men share «the common fate of travellers» and should «take things as we [they] find them» (vol. 1, p. 213; Sermon 8), forbearing adversities with patience and hope while doing all their best. The portrait of the happy Man that emerges from the eighteenth-century sermons is that of a person who knows himself and endeavours to obtain his greatest improvement in this life, and his salvation in the next. Prominence is given to the gratification that the individual can derive from a virtuous life: there is great pleasure in being innocent and virtuous because «that is to excel many others», and it is pleasant «to command our appetites and passions, and keep them in due order, within the bounds of reason and religion; because this is a kind of empire, this is to govern» (vol. 1, p. 299; Sermon 12).

This article examines late seventeenth-century issues concerning happiness as they emerge in the sermons of the Latitudinarian Archbishop John Tillotson (1630-1694), who is considered today as one of the most influential clergymen of the period. Tillotson synthesized and rewrote the ideas promoted by other seventeenth-century clergymen, such as William Chillingworth (1602-1644), Benjamin Whichcote (1609-1683), John Wilkins (1614-1672) and Isaac Barrow (1630-1677), presenting them in more polished language, in a logical, rational structure suitable for polite audiences. Be-

ginning with a general introduction to Latitudinarian thought, my analysis proceeds to consider Tillotson's sermons on happiness and discuss divine goodness and human frailty, ending with an analysis of the role played by self-love and education, with their ultimate correspondence to happiness. Tillotson is representative of the position that the Church of England took in response to the process of transforming happiness into a psychological notion that had started with the circulation of René Descartes' works in the first half of the century (Norton 2012, p. 6). Tillotson shifts the cornerstone of the discussion on happiness to the individual's desire for happiness. In so doing, he equates it to obedience: he captivates the audience's attention while rationally engaging their self-interest, and fosters a mild self-denial while stressing God's goodness. His sermons exemplify how the Latitudinarians «reduced Christianity to a prudential, self-regarding moral code» (Sykes 2004, p. 149).

Considering the deep connection which late seventeenth-century clergymen perceived between moral reformation and happiness, Tillotson encouraged his audience to be educated towards virtue and happiness, with an appeal to their malleability through the means of reason and the spur of self-love. Though both Wilkins and Barrow examine, respectively, the power of self-interest and the nature of self-love, Tillotson's copious reference to those egocentric passions, coupled with his educational tone, show a turning point in the evolution of the modern concept of happiness: while asserting the individual right to happiness, Tillotson reminds his audience of the possibility of a moderate but delightful enjoyment of the world that ultimately correspond to the natural fulfilment of self-interest. Tillotson changes the question 'How can I be saved?' into 'How can I be saved and happy?'. The promise of a positive future prospect, together with the possibility of improvement in this life, led to the formulation of «a teleological conception of human nature» (Müller 2009, pp. 114, 137) which was grounded on the opportunities of redemption furnished by divine goodness, the freedom of Man's will, his love for himself and his interest in the afterlife (Rivers 2005, p. 77). Tillotson wrote:

the consideration of a future happiness, and of those unspeakable and everlasting rewards which shall then be given to holiness and virtue, is certainly the most powerful motive and the most likely to prevail upon them [all temporal considerations] (Tillotson 1743, vol. 1, p. 122; Sermon 4).

Encouragement was coupled with insistent reference both to the easiness of obedience, «as all the acts of religion are reasonable and suitable to our nature» (vol. 1, p. 288; Sermon 12), and to the advantages derived from self-denial and daily examination. Though Man's final destination is after-life and eternal happiness, Tillotson pragmatically grounds the base

of the process in the present, earthly life. The collection of sermons he published in his lifetime opens with the assertion of religion's approbation of Man's desire for happiness and welfare, and ends with the praise of elevation, with the sermons on education that he had already published in 1694. All in all, the route to happiness appears as a well-defined path up a few simple steps.

The Latitudinarian movement, which after the Restoration constituted a small but active group within the Church of England, associated happiness with the reformation of manners and the consequent increase of morality (Rivers 2005, p. 73). Pulpits presented the 1688 Revolution as the product of God's infinite providence, a new – and perhaps last – chance to build up a moral reformation. «Thus hath the providence of GOD very visibly appeared in our late deliverance», Tillotson claims in a fast-sermon preached before the House of Commons in April 1690, and «there is no such way to engage the providence of GOD for us, as by real repentance and reformation; and by doing all we can» (Tillotson 1743, vol. 3, pp. 48-49; Sermon 36). The happiness of the individual depended upon the morality of the whole reign, and vice versa. As all human beings are endowed with the same rational faculties and the same desire for self-preservation, they act to improve their happiness, making cooperation among them therefore vital, fulfilling their natural desire for sociability and exercising their sympathy (Rivers 2005, p. 77):

We have the same notions of right and wrong; we are all obnoxious to one another, and may be beneficial to one another; we all love ourselves and study the advancement of our interest and happiness (Tillotson 1709, p. 445).

The reasons for the promotion of a moral reformation resided not only in the deterioration of society's ethics but also in a reaction to both strict Puritan justification by faith and the danger of lax Antinomian morality. The election of Tillotson to the See of Canterbury in 1691 signalled the temporary triumph of Latitudinarianism and brought about a significant increase in the discussion of happiness. Politically speaking, the Latitudinarians supported tolerance and comprehension between Conformists and Non-conformists and the same breadth of vision could be retraced in their doctrine. In their search for a *via media*, they defended the combination of natural and revealed religion, asserting the fundamental role played by divine grace in assisting Man's sinful nature, though a certain preparation carried out by each single layman was needed (Spellman 1992, p. 97). Struggling to avoid Catholic excesses, they insisted on salvation coming only from God who alone can «make [mankind] perfect in every good word and work» (Tillotson 1743, vol. 5, p. 978; Sermon 63). Nevertheless, they also recognised and encouraged Man's active role in building society

and the pleasure derived from doing good, though without any merit or recompense from God.

The picture of Man that can be sketched from the sermons is that of an individual divided into two opposite natures: a stable, sinful, innate one, and a malleable one that is acquired through education and reinforced by habits and that can therefore be changed by proper Christian dictates (Müller 2009, p. 97). Indeed this latter side of Man, which is guided by reason, was addressed by the Latitudinarians in their homiletics. They expected Man to rationally choose to follow religion and its obligations (Müller 2009, p. 82), a clear reminder of Article X, *Of Free Will*. Bishop Gilbert Burnet, for instance, considered choosing upon reflection as 'liberty' (Burnet 1700, p. 117). Bishop Gilbert Burnet, for instance, maintained that choosing upon reflection is 'liberty' (Burnet 1700, p. 117). God Himself judges Men in afterlife according to the degree of consciousness with which they committed a crime: God «measures the faults of men by their wills [...]; for no man is guilty, but he that is conscious to himself that he would not do what he knew he ought to do, or would do what he knew he ought not to do» (Tillotson 1743, vol. 7, pp. 1882-1883; Sermon 114). Man is the only subject responsible for his own removal from his source of happiness. His virtue is under constant trial as part of divine providential education, and it is his personal duty to prove he is responsible for the maintenance and security of his moral standard: «The Christian religion is a great happiness to the world in general, though some are so unhappy as to be the worse for it; not because religion is bad, but because they are so» (p. 2011; Sermon 119). This aspect characterised the sermons of most of the Latitudinarians who acquainted Men with the possibility of moral improvement «through reasonable persuasiveness» (Tennant 2009, p. 104), which might be identified with Tillotson's rational appeal to self-love. Their sermons presented a uniformed conception of happiness: coupled with the practice of religion and with virtue as a goal, happiness was considered as the «Art of living Well and Happily» (see Müller 2009, p. 53), a principle that was applied to all Men alike, without any specific reference to individual desires. What John Locke said of human tastes, that «[a]ll pursues good, [but] the same thing is not good to every Man alike» (Nidditch 1975, p. 268) could not be applied to sermons, where subjective tastes give place to the 'recipe' given by God in the Scriptures to quench one's 'appetite' for happiness, i.e. «to Fear the Lord and Keep his Commandments, for this is the Whole Duty of Man» (*Ecclesiastes* 12, p. 13). Morality is thus grounded in active and internal obedience to divine law (Müller 2009, p. 61), and lies at the heart of the aesthetics of virtue (Porter 2000, p. 262). The Latitudinarians stressed the idea of the benefits deriving from a morally upright life (Scholtz 1988-89, pp. 182-207), as «the foundation of all divine knowledge is in the practice of religion» (Tillotson 1743, vol. 6, p. 1390; Sermon 87). Moreover, religion satisfies one's self-interest because it includes practical

advantages from which Man can profit if he applies its dictates seriously: «some virtues plainly tend to the preservation of our health, others to the improvement and security of our estates, all to the peace and quiet of our minds» (vol. 1, p. 156; Sermon 6). The Anglican's way of living – metaphorically moving upwards towards God, and trying to reach his utmost level of perfection – led to the formulation of a 'teleology of happiness'. As Tillotson claims, Man acts as «carried forth by an innate desire of happiness, to seek his felicity in God», because he is moved by a «spring of restless motion» which «forceth him out of himself, and tosses him to and fro, till he comes to rest in something that is self-sufficient» (vol. 8, p. 3522; Sermon 162).

Educated a Puritan, Tillotson soon embraced the Anglican confession, later becoming one of the leading preachers in London. The period from 1663 to 1688 provides evidence of his popularity with records of conspicuous attendance of the city's population to his Tuesday lectures at St. Lawrence Jewry and to his Sunday services at the Society of Lincoln's Inn, where his preaching attracted «crowds of the learned and polite» (Locke 1954, p. 22). After being appointed as one of King Charles II's chaplains, he also occupied other central pulpits in the city, including St. Paul and Whitehall. His prolific output of sermons was used in guides for students and young clergymen (Rivers 2004, p. 13) and the themes he developed in them influenced the clergy during the whole eighteenth century. Tillotson was particularly attentive to the composition and language of his sermons, whose «easy and natural style was so much admired by his contemporaries»: he preferred using non-refined language, with the purpose of making religion «an integral part of everyday life» (Simon 1967, pp. 282-283). He aimed at catching the public's attention not only with his appeal to reason and a polished language, but also with the development of topics which could attract them, such as the profitability of living a pious life. This was an issue that engaged their self-love and their individual and societal interest, while challenging their idea of happiness. He knew that the promotion of a valid moral reformation could only be carried out by moving people's hearts and feelings, and he was ready to reach a compromise (Locke 1954, p. 67). Together with John Wilkins, Tillotson was one of the first clergymen to promote the idea that, leading a virtuous life in this world, Man can obtain a blissful one in the next, assuming the theory of rewards and punishments as a moral demonstration which all rational creatures could use to judge their own fate (Shapiro 1983, pp. 88-89). It is in Man's interest to prefer a virtuous course as «religion hath so great an influence upon the felicity of men that it ought to be upheld, and the veneration of it maintained, not only out of a just dread of the divine vengeance in another world, but out of regard to the temporal peace and prosperity of men» (Tillotson 1743, vol. 1, p. 105; Sermon 3). The profit derived from a good life is undeniable as it consists in the sought-after

peace of mind that is so dear to both ancient and modern philosophers alike: «Religion tends to the ease and pleasure, the peace and tranquillity of our minds; wherein happiness chiefly consists, and which all the wisdom and philosophy of the world did always aim at, as the utmost felicity of this life» (vol. 1, p. 112; Sermon 5). Though Tillotson does not mention specific enjoyments, he validates Man's right to happiness by claiming the possibility of indulging in those virtuous pleasures, as giving to the poor or having a peaceful conscience, which are natural in Man and therefore must be encouraged. To him, self-denial corresponds to self-fulfilment: in conforming to divine law, Man improves his situation and works to build his benefit in the after-life. With minimum effort he can gain happiness now and live happily ever after: «religion conduceth to the happiness of this life; and that both in respect to the inward and outward man. [...] It tends to the improvement of our understanding. It brings peace and pleasure to our minds» (vol. 1, p. 110; Sermon 4).

As in Isaac Barrow (Napier 1859, vol. 2, p. 56; Sermon 2),<sup>1</sup> Tillotson exploits discussions on happiness to sustain the theory of «dispositional innatism» (Spellman 1992, p. 82), which is defined as Men's shared capacity to be convinced of what is best for them. According to Barrow, innate ideas also include a «capacity for happiness», consisting in the «powers and faculties whereby we are capable of knowing, and loving, and obeying, and enjoying him the chief good» (Napier 1859, vol. 3, p. 147; Sermon 40). It is God who impressed the ability of distinguishing between right and wrong on the human mind, «so that no man can be ignorant of them, nor need to be mistaken about them» (vol. 6, p. 1432; Sermon 89). The evidence of this can be retraced in «the nature of a man's mind and understanding, which hath this notion of a deity born with it and stamped upon it» (vol. 1, p. 333; Sermon 1). Being conscious of his condition and dependency on God for happiness (vol. 8, p. 3574; Sermon 146), each individual can therefore form an idea of a perfect being by pondering what perfection implies (Spurr, 1988, p. 572-5 73). A detailed description of the attributes of God rationally demonstrates that «the nature of man, considered by itself, is plainly insufficient for it's [sic] own happiness» (Napier 1859, vol. 3, p. 142; Sermon 40). Tillotson claimed that no other creature or entity subject to illness and decay can meet divine prerequisites and make mankind happy, as «he made us that he might make us happy, and nothing can hinder us

1 «God our parent hath stamped on our nature some lineaments of himself, whereby we resemble him; he hath implanted in our souls some roots of piety towards him; into our frame he hath inserted some propensions to acknowledge him, and affect him; the which are excited and improved by observing the manifest footsteps of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, which occur in the works of nature and providence; to preserve and cherish these is very commendable; a man thereby keeping the precious relics of the divine image from utter defacement, retaining somewhat of his primitive worth and integrity; declaring that by ill usage he hath not quite shattered and spoiled his best faculties and inclinations».

from being so but our selves» (Tillotson 1742, vol. 3, p. 146; Sermon 40). God owns «wisdom to contrive our happiness, and power to effect it», as he knows «what is safest and best for them [men]» (vol. 3, pp. 143-144).

Tillotson thus insisted on the idea that Man's happiness lies in observing the law and in performing those actions which are required of him, showing obedience, sincerity and deliberation. He was extremely orthodox in his position, as he emphasized mankind's dependence on divine grace and focused on the idea that God's love and man's acknowledgement of one's best interest – i.e. self-love – should be the primary sources of action in life. The union of faith and a good life are central to «scripture and Christian morality» as «true faith is necessary in order to a good life, and a good life is the genuine product of a right belief» (vol. 3, p. 217; Sermon 42). To Tillotson, the word 'moral' contains the idea of being «eternal and indispensable» (vol. 8, p. 3505; Sermon 141), especially when applied to obligations descending directly from God: «GOD hath planted in our nature the desire of our own preservation and 'happiness', and into this is the force of all laws, and the reason of all our duty is at last resolved» (vol. 5, p. 1022; Sermon 66). If the commandments prescribed by God were tailored to the human capacity for understanding and following them, they should not be a grievous weight imposed on mankind's shoulders: the Scriptures – and providential events – prove that the commandments are the manifest expression of either divine goodness or displeasure, and evidence of human perfectibility through moral education. Tillotson encouraged his audience to follow divine dictates because their wisdom coincide with Man's interest: religion encompasses the knowledge of God's law and the practice of it with «a suitable life», and leads to the conclusion that the «care of our selves and our own interest is the first part of wisdom» (vol. 1, pp. 7, 12; Sermon 1). While celebrating the providential rescue of the estates of Parliament from the conspiracy of the 5th November, Tillotson underlined how religion «consults not only the eternal salvation of mens [sic] souls, but their temporal peace and security, their comfort and happiness in this world» (vol. 1, pp. 437-438; Sermon 19). In line with the Latitudinarian teleology, Tillotson presents happiness as the obtainment of the inward peace of the soul; however, he does not forget to mention the satisfaction of lower, bodily desires which correspond to outward care:

To be happy is not only to be freed from the pains and diseases of the body, but from anxiety and vexation of the spirit: not only to enjoy the pleasures of the sense, but peace of conscience, and tranquillity of mind. To be happy, is not only to be so for a little while, but as long as may be; and if it be possible, for ever (vol. 1, p. 12; Sermon 1).

In Tillotson's sermons therefore happiness and holiness coincide, as the



latter is «a state of peace and tranquillity, and the very frame and temper of happiness» (vol. 8, p. 3519; Sermon 142). Indeed, Tillotson affirms that «felicity doth naturally result from perfection» (vol. 8, p. 3320; Sermon 132), which can be retraced in the improvement of those qualities of «charity, and kindness, and compassion, which we peculiarly call humanity» that are founded on love, i.e. the very essence of the divine creator (vol. 8, p. 3312; Sermon 131). The practice of good actions was thus described as a way to move towards perfection, to emulate the infinite bounty of the Creator and to follow the example of Jesus Christ: to do good meant to «serve the temporal or spiritual good of our neighbour, and promote his present and his future happiness» (vol. 1, p. 412; Sermon 18). Time and again, Tillotson stated that education is one of the most efficient ways in which one man can be charitable to others: he can teach them the advantages of obeying divine law, and the danger from breaking it. In rescuing a strained and confused soul, the benefactor might build up a new Christian and thus enjoy the pleasure to see the result of his accomplishment.

The sermons that probably best exemplify the interrelation of obedience, knowledge of oneself, and happiness and pleasure from benevolence are the 'Six Sermons' on *Steadfastness and Resolution in Religion*, published in 1694. In addressing the young parents who are responsible for the moral and religious education of the future generations, Tillotson avers the importance of being a living example for children. Parents should daily show them how to recognize their actions with conscience and consideration, therefore perfecting their sincerity to God. Education works like a scientific experiment, in which observation and analysis of data are the first two steps to be considered. Parents should monitor the behaviour of their children in order to understand the level of proneness to evil that they have. Practically speaking, they should look after their children's well-being and happiness, providing examples of restraint and using fear to control treacherous inclinations. Reproof must be commensurate with the gravity of the sin, and cold reproofs should be used to encourage future virtue and to distance children from temptation. Parents should also provide models of conversation and politeness, and teach silence and self-control. They should acquire a right balance between knowledge and practice as well as between reason and passions, as these features are inseparable and complementary. The idea of education promoted by Tillotson is that of «training in Christian culture» (Spellman 1992, p. 61) in which Man's dependence on God and obedience to his law are paramount. In discussing temporal benefits promoted by a good Christian education, Tillotson affirms that even those temperaments that are next to desperate are «not utterly intractable to the grace of GOD and to the religious care of Parents» (Tillotson 1742, vol. 4, p. 502; Sermon 53). Morally speaking, children should be taught their duties towards God and Men. Tillotson often refers to 'government', namely self-control of various passions, in particular anger and desire, and

of one's tongue and sensual appetites. Governing one's appetites means learning sobriety, temperance, chastity and purity – these can be achieved also with the help of a moderate diet. Justice and honesty are also manly virtues that sons should learn from their fathers in order to be accepted and esteemed in society.

The most profitable way in which Man can be educated is through examples, which imply a profound knowledge of God's attributes, an attentive analysis of one's inclinations, and of the circumstances in which one lives. The highest example mankind might follow is that provided by Jesus Christ. By emulating him, Man satisfies his own nature, as Tillotson claims that «to do good is the most pleasant employment in the world. It is natural; and whatever is so is delightful» (vol. 1, p. 427). In the Scriptures, Man can find what he requires to raise himself to «the perfection of all virtue and goodness» (vol. 6, p. 1578; Sermon 98). Even though Man cannot fully understand what future happiness comprises, he perceives his role as active, because happiness «consists in our likeness to GOD, in a conformity to the moral perfections of the divine nature, which are express by the name of purity and holiness» (vol. 8, p. 332; Sermon 1320). Such a 'teleology of happiness' can therefore be considered as the means through which Tillotson encourages a moral reformation on a vast scale, which included regaining God's favour, quite evidently lost by the British population if one considered the punitive events that had happened in the mid-1660s. If true happiness corresponds to virtue which perfectly suites human nature and perfection (Müller 2009, p. 118), it can be obtained only through the awareness of one's frailty and the consequent desire for moral progress that the perception of defectiveness generates. Moreover, virtue can only be obtained through obedience to law and dominance of one's passions through self-education. Human lusts are eventually wilful acts, but they can be mortified by reflection and repentance, by keeping in mind that «every spark is dangerous, when it falls upon combustible matter» (vol. 7, p. 1945; Sermon 116). This virtuous process is based on the assumption that Man's moral responsibility is in choosing good over evil (Müller 2009, p. 161), as God created Man «a free creature, and capable of abusing his liberty, and intends this present life for a state of trial in order to another» (Tillotson 1742, vol. 8, p. 3432; Sermon 138). Nevertheless, the prescription of divine law mirrors God's goodness as He is a just, compassionate governor who does not charge the individual with anything but what his reason already tells him and to the improvement of his welfare, both temporal and eternal:

So that taking all things into consideration, the interest of our bodies and souls, **of the present and the future, of this world and the other**, religion is the most reasonable and wise, the most comfortable and com-

pendious course that any man can take in order to his own happiness (vol. 2, p. 286; Sermon 28; emphasis added by the Author).

Tillotson's teleology also implied that, while insisting on obedience, his sermons encouraged his audience to study the motives and circumstances of their actions in order to understand where their inclinations lay, to better check and control them. Thus he promoted the imperative *nosce te ipsum* in order to increase their happiness (Porter 2000, p. 261). Man would then realize that, at the core of his disposition to happiness, there is a strong belief in both God's providence and in self-love as the way in which the mind works, by cultivating one's interest with the aim of gaining eternal rewards. The individual therefore needs self-love to fulfil the ultimate wish and obtain salvation. Love is «an expression of the teleological dynamism that underlies human actions» (Pope 1991, p. 387), and Man uses it to judge his relationship with the material world. Thomas Aquinas affirmed that «to seek for one's own good and perfection is to love self» (*Summa Theologiae* I. 60. 3; see Pope 1991, p. 387). Precisely because self-love is a passion, there is nevertheless an ambiguous attitude toward self-love in sermons, a mixture of praise and refusal. Aquinas did not consider self-love either as a virtue or a vice, but advanced a distinction between 'ordinate' and 'inordinate' self-love. While inordinate self-love is often associated with sin and damnation, virtuous self-love is coupled with interest and with the happiness and pleasure deriving from upright behaviour. This compound is reflected in the discussion of charity and of the advantages that it brings both on Man and society.

The link between self-love, duty and happiness appears clear: by loving himself, Man fulfills his duty and promotes his obedience towards God, while the pleasant sensations derived from following the divine law generate pleasure and promote virtue. Self-love equates self-denial, as both consist in controlling one's passions and accepting sufferance and hardships for the sake of religion and a higher form of happiness:

It [religion] directs men to their duty by the shortest and plainest precepts of a good life; it persuades men to the obedience of these precepts, by the promise of eternal happiness, and the threatenings of eternal misery in case of obstinate disobedience; it offers us the assistance of GOD's HOLY SPIRIT, to help our weakness (vol. 7, p. 2012; Sermon 119).

Even if it was considered a concession to sinful human nature (Spellman 1987, p. 410), the appeal to the audience's desire for happiness and to their interest, providing tangible proof of the benefits they might have derived from a virtuous life, became the driving force to move Man to the hoped for moral reformation. Even the Scriptures, Tillotson admitted, describe the pleasures of heavenly happiness using «the metaphors of a feast, and

a banquet, and a marriage' to suit 'our weakness and condescension to our capacities» (Tillotson 1742, vol. 1, p. 200; Sermon 8). Moreover, insistence on innocent pleasures, as for example the pleasure of giving, increase the effect of the rational claim to Man's self-interest. Mediating between extremes, Tillotson's sermons emphasize human sinfulness while highlighting the residue of the divine, *recta ratio*, as the yardstick that illuminates the darkness, 'the candle of the Lord.' It is through a conscious use of reason and understanding that human beings can «have any comfortable possession and enjoyment of [themselves] and of that which makes [them] men» (vol. 3, p. 141; Sermon 40).

The adjective 'moderate' took on a particular significance in sermons, as Tillotson was worried by the sinful and overwhelming power of objects, while at the same time celebrating the beauties of the world and advocating the possibility of enjoying it, as the wonders of nature could only be considered «to be of little other use but for the pleasure of man» (vol. 8, p. 3419; Sermon 137). The argument from design partly justified the appeal to an innocent savouring of the world, framed by the benefit of religiously living one's earthly life and obtaining God's favour and rewards in the next. Tillotson claims that God's goodness can be perceived not only by reason, but even by the senses, as «[God] hath subjected so great part of the creation to our dominion and use» (vol. 8, p. 3547; Sermon 164). The following exclamation, which was meant to captivate the audience, could but arouse feelings of comfort and confidence in the possibility of enjoying, albeit moderately, the beauties of the world:

What an innumerable variety of creatures are there in this inferior world, which were either solely or principally made for the use and service, pleasure and delight of man! How many things are there, which serve for the necessity and support, the contentment and comfort of our lives! How many things for the refreshment and delight of our senses, and the exercise and employment of our understandings! (vol. 8, p. 3547)

Man asks himself not only how he can be saved, but how he can make the process of salvation the most pleasurable. If the world is rich and beautiful and Man was placed in it at the top of the Chain of Being, why could he not enjoy what God Himself in His infinite goodness had provided for him? Indeed, «the chief and principal end of many things is the use and service of man» (vol. 8, p. 3418; Sermon 137); only beings endowed with reason can enjoy the search into the secrets of the natural world:

The goodness of GOD is the cause, and the continuance of our beings, the foundation of our hopes, and the fountain of our happiness; our greatest comfort, and our fairest example, the chief object of our love,

and praise, and admiration, the joy and rejoicing of our hearts (vol. 8, pp. 3523-3524; Sermon 143).

In the Christian-Stoic philosophy, happiness and virtue are connected to pleasure through the practice of self-reflection. According to Patrick Müller, Latitudinarians believed in conscience as an intellectual faculty whose judgements are based on the dictates of Natural Law. In functioning as a self-reflexive faculty to understand one's duty, conscience becomes «reason translated in moral terminology» (Müller 2009, pp. 173-175). This concept appears clear in the definition that Tillotson gave of conscience: it is «the great principle of moral actions, and our guide in matter of sin and duty [...], telling us what is the law of GOD and our duty» (vol. 3, p. 85; Sermon 38). Conscience gives Man the power to distinguish between good and evil: «the judgement of a man's own mind concerning the morality of his actions» (vol. 3, p. 86). Temporal delusion is still possible, but it has to be imputed to the weakness of Man's rational faculty, which at best is «very short and imperfect» (vol. 4, p. 834; Sermon 56). «The wisdom of men» (vol. 3, p. 144; Sermon 40) colours reality in such a negative way as to make Men distrust God's providence and the fair distribution of things in this world. Tillotson acknowledges the great difficulties there exists in convincing Men of where to place their expectations for happiness, as they mistakenly believe «the great joy of the men of this world is in a plentiful harvest, and the abundance of the good things of this life», and are unmindful of what can give them «more joy or gladness to [their] heart, the favour of GOD and the 'light of his countenance'» (vol. 3, p. 154; Sermon 40). Men live in constant fear of being deprived of what they can enjoy in this world (vol. 5, p. 1060; Sermon 68) and do not understand that pure bliss consists in being at ease, free from misery, especially from the trouble that their present condition generates. They are unable to judge things properly, as they place wrong expectations on almost everything that «promiseth happiness to [them] at a distance» (vol. 3, p. 139; Sermon 40), only then to realize that their hopes were vain. Men usually move away from their happiness because «an inordinate love of the world is very pernicious to [their] souls» (vol. 2, p. 431; Sermon 34). The consequent disadvantages are the increase of material, daily cares, the temptation of forgetting one's religious duty and dependence on God, and falling prey to falsehood.

According to Tillotson, Christians have all the instruments to know themselves: the mind is able to remember past events and think of its future prospects, even eternity. Although human knowledge is often limited, because men «are satisfied of many things, the manner whereof [they] do not know» (vol. 8, p. 3370; Sermon 135), they can use their mind to know themselves: men are familiar to themselves and cannot be «strange and wonderful to [them]selves» (vol. 8, p. 3418; Sermon 137). Both «the glori-

ous faculty of reason and understanding» and conscience might contribute to the process of «reassuming humanity» (Spellman 1992, p. 68):

If we consider the mind of man yet nearer, how many arguments of divinity are there in it! That there should be at once in our understandings distinct comprehensions of such variety of objects; that it should pass in it's [sic] thoughts from heaven to earth in a moment, and retain the memory of things past, and take a prospect of the future, and look forward as far as eternity! [...] The great miracle of the world is the mind of man, and the contrivance of it an eminent instance of GOD's wisdom (Tillotson 1742, vol. 8, p. 3417; Sermon 137).

Human minds should be raised above two passions: «the fondness of life, and the slavish fears of death» (vol. 5, p. 1074; Sermon 69). Apart from God, there is «no other reasonable, no nor tolerable hypothesis and scheme of things for a wise man to rely upon, and to live and die by» (vol. 3, p. 155; Sermon 40). It is providence that directs Men's lives, and «does bid more fairly for the comfort and happiness of mankind» (vol. 3, p. 156). These are indeed the points on which Tillotson insists in his sermons: the idea that emerges is that, in order to become a faithful and joyful Christian, one should combine what is required of him in natural religion with faith in God's providence and distribution of rewards and punishments:

For instance, the belief of an invisible GOD, of a secret power and providence, that orders and governs all things, that can bless or blast us, and all our designs and undertakings, **according as we demean our selves** towards him, and **endeavour to improve** our selves to him (vol. 5, p. 982; Sermon 54; emphasis added by the Author).

Moreover, sermons warned against other limits imposed on knowledge, which are caused by «inference from the will (whether faculty or function) through interests, passions and appetites» (Griffin 1992, p. 67). Man's will varies according to the circumstances of an action; the motives that lead one to commit a crime can therefore be investigated only by Man's conscience. If the will limits the process of learning one's duties, it cannot reach the heart of Man and influence human behaviour: «Now, if there were a real contradiction in the rule, it were impossible it should be put in practice; but it is only a contradiction in our *wills*, which must thus be reconciled to the *rule*» (Tillotson 1709, p. 441).

While asserting the degeneracy of human nature, Tillotson also claimed that mortification is «not so difficult work to most persons, if they begin it betimes» (Tillotson 1742, vol. 7, pp. 1939-1940; Sermon 116). The consciousness of either one's corruption or of the possibility of improvement was eventually thought to lead members of English society to change their lives

and sincerely repent for past sins. Tillotson admitted that he perceived «a just sense of the frailty of human nature»; at the same time he also appreciated «the human resolution; but withal, a most firm persuasion of the goodness of GOD» (vol. 4, p. 838; Sermon 56). Education is a commendable way to contrast the pretences of the will because Man can become the virtuous product of the Christian environment in which he grows up.

By the happiness of a good education, and the merciful providence of GOD, a great part of many mens [sic] virtue consists in their ignorance of vice, and their being kept out of the way of great and dangerous temptations; rather in the good customs they have been bred up to, than in the deliberate choice of their wills; and rather in the happy preventions of evil, than in their resolute constancy in that which is good (vol. 1, p. 380; Sermon 16).

The benefit from acting virtuously is represented by both earthly happiness and eternal rewards. The precepts in divine law all tend to Man's advantage; what is required of Man is obedience and sincerity of heart. Tillotson encourages the audience to reason on this 'mild obligation' informing them of the importance of their inner disposition: «we must always be prepared in the resolution of our minds to deny ourselves, and to take up the cross, though we are not actually put upon this trial» (vol. 5, pp. 1045-1046; Sermon 67). At the end of his Sermon 67, Tillotson draws an interesting parallel between loving oneself and denying one's material desires and concludes that they coincide: «this which we call self-denial, is, in truth and reality, but a more commendable sort of self-love, because we do herein most effectually consult, and secure, and advance our own happiness» (vol. 5, p. 1047). Only through this union of self-love and denial can Man obtain true happiness, which is «something that is nearer and more intimate to us, than any of the things in this world; it is within thee, in thine heart, and in the very inward frame and disposition of thy mind» (vol. 8, p. 3331; Sermon 132). Based on the highest possible knowledge of oneself under the guidance of conscience, on a constant observation of one's actions, and on rational self-reflection, the 'teleology' mediates the possibility of improvement through the formulation of good habits with the blissful help of divine grace, as «[...] this life is the time of our preparation for our future state. Our souls will continue for ever what we make them in this world» (vol. 1, p. 208; Sermon 8). Man cannot believe that he can obtain happiness without sincerely trying to live a holy life, as the span of time allotted to him in this world is the only one he has to prepare himself and dispose his soul for the next. Thus, «to be happy, is to enjoy what we desire, and to live with those whom we love» (vol. 1, p. 209; Sermon 8). Distancing himself from his subjective and imperfect judgment of the world, man reaches utmost perfection of his knowledge and 'the height of

love' once he trespasses the threshold of heaven (vol. 1, p. 201).

Tillotson's sermons demonstrate how morality is therefore unavoidably linked to self-interest, «spurred on by the powerful incentives of eternal reward and punishment» (Scholtz 1988, p. 204). This implies Man's active participation, while perfection, as defined by divine law, is mitigated by a sincere obedience to it according to one's capacity, as the covenant of grace or leniency claims. Both the doctrine of work – the moral active role of individuals in reforming society – and the incitement to self-love are moved by 'the self-seeking motives of human action' and exemplify a consistent pace towards the investigation of human nature in the Restoration Church of England. Addressing the issue of happiness and self-love encouraged the growth of a powerful Protestant merchant middle-class whose major value in business dealings was prudence, «the calm faculty by which one evaluates his actions in terms of their consequences for himself» (Sams 1943, p. 322). Prudence corresponds to Tillotson's self-love that makes Man believe in future judgement, urging on him its justifiable necessity, because there is nothing «so desirable to one that must live for ever, as to be happy for ever» (Tillotson 1742, vol. 5, p. 1235; Sermon 78). The need to avoid eternal punishment is coupled with the physical and mental pleasure that the good Christian feels once he has entered a truly religious course. Religion gives constancy to Man's life; it improves human resolution and frees from guilt and worries. Pleasure therefore can be had «within the limits of virtue» (vol. 2, p. 293; Sermon 28), by avoiding extreme excess as can be found for example in covetous and voluptuous people.

Tillotson ultimately arrives at the conclusion that «the temporal felicity of man, and the ends of government can very hardly, if at all, be attained without religion» (vol. 2, pp. 250-251; Sermon 27). What Man achieves is a certain degree of «true pleasure and perfect freedom» when controls his passions and uses reason. The whole process contributes to human satisfaction and to «the pleasure of wisdom and discretion» (vol. 2, p. 282), whilst the fickleness of sensual pleasures generates disappointment. Furthermore, religion improves human health, «the life of life»:

It is not indeed so violent and transporting a pleasure, but it is pure, and even, and lasting, and hath no guilt or regret, no sorrow and trouble in it, or after it: which is a worm that infallibly breeds in all vicious and unlawful pleasures, and makes them to be bitterness in the end (vol. 2, p. 284).

In Tillotson's predication, moderate self-love therefore acquired a new ethical light, becoming the 'ennobled self-interest' that could guide London's polite and mercantile classes to moral reformation, and encouraged them to strive for perfection by 'word', i.e. by their sincerity of heart, and by 'hand', i.e. by performing good actions with honesty, energy and obedience.



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