

William Brown Galloway

Not much attention, if any, has been paid to Galloway's account of Mandeville's views. William Brown Galloway M.A. (from Glasgow) conducted Moral Philosophy Class in Glasgow University during portion of Session 1836-37. From 1849-1888 [William Brown Galloway](#) was incumbent and vicar of St Mark's, Regent's Park, London.

His account appeared in his book *Philosophy and religion, with their mutual bearings comprehensively considered, and satisfactorily determined, on clear and scientific principles* (1837), pp. 357-366, and pp. 524-544. See below, together with Galloway's remarks on Adam Smith.

1. *Philosophy and Religion*, Chapter XXIV: 'Of the Moral sentiments of Men.

Galloway on Mandeville. (p. 357-66).

There exist to an incalculable extent in the world fictitious virtue and fictitious moral sentiments. These have been admirably exposed, and most truly analysed, by *Mandeville* in his *Fable of the Bees*, — a work which has been unjustly condemned, and unfairly represented as subversive of good morals ; but which displays, on the contrary, a deep, close, and thorough knowledge of human nature and of the world, holding to just ridicule the proud panegyrics which some have composed on human virtue and human nature,* [Galloway's note: *Mandeville* appears under a mistake with regard to the drift of *Shaftesbury's* Treatise, and treats his book as if designed to panegyrisse the *existing state* of morals among men. Whereas *Shaftesbury* professedly represents human nature as it *ought* to be, rather than as it *is*: and *Mandeville*, as it *is*, not as it *ought* to be.] laying open the deceitfulness of the human heart, and detecting the mean and contemptible materials, which often make so noble and so false a show, and on which so many hollow pretensions are founded to high moral dignity and popular admiration. But while he has written with a tincture of ridicule, and in a satirical vein, it is unjust to say that his work is a mere satire. It is a true and just exposure of that which has the name and semblance of virtue in the world. Nor is his book written, as many have supposed, to show *that* there is no real distinction between virtue and vice ; but to evince that that which is *called* virtue, is very often, nay, in the majority of cases, not virtue at all, but a mere imitation of it, formed of ingredients which may equally consist with vice, and lead to crime. That there is such a thing as real virtue, he nowhere denies; but he asserts, and proves most thoroughly, that what passes current for it in the world is not virtue at all; that is, it is not derived from virtuous principle, though it often assumes the appearance, and always claims the praise. My reader can form little idea of his acute analysis of fictitious or counterfeit virtue, without reading the work itself, which will abundantly repay an attentive perusal. But perhaps some little view of the principles of the work may be expected to be here afforded.

Assuming, then, as undeniably existing in man the emotions of pity and gratitude, as well as anger, pride, grief, and fear, Dr. *Mandeville* considers them as mere feelings or passions, sometimes even weaknesses, — at all events not constituting virtue, nor becoming virtues till governed by principle, but existing also in the vicious, and the gratification of which may be quite selfish, nay, may even lead to crimes; as in the case

where pity sometimes weakens the virtue of women. Virtue, according to him, consists in something higher than the mere gratification of natural passions and inclinations. In that there may be nothing disinterested, and there is frequently much that is weak and injudicious. There is, he repeatedly affirms, no virtue without self-denial, [N.B. In addition to Galloway and in order to understand the Christian (*ergo* Mandeville's and Galloway's) notion of 'no (personal) virtue without self-denial', John Abernethy's (1680-1740) sermon 'Of Self-denial' in *Sermons on various subjects*, vol. I. (1748-51), pp.1-23, might be of use.] and no real self-denial where one passion is denied merely to gratify another; as when avarice is sacrificed to gratify pride with the praise of generosity, or ease to obtain the reward of glory, or pleasure bartered for the praise of sanctity and the possession of spiritual power, or anger for the praise of moderation and politeness, or the love of riches and the desire of power to the love of ease and indolence, under the specious mask of contentment and frugality. The desire of being well thought of, and complacency in the consciousness of men's good opinion, are principles not essentially virtuous; but, on the contrary, it is necessary for a good man to learn to refuse their indulgence, and to adhere to virtue, religion, truth, though men should censure, despise, and laugh at him for his conduct. Whatever superstructure therefore is raised upon the mere foundation of the love of praise and complacency in it, cannot be entitled to be called virtue, Mandeville does not condemn a natural and moderate pleasure in the approbation of others, but denies that it will constitute virtue. What is done for no higher object than to obtain that pleasure, he regards as done for the mere gratification of pride and vanity, — weaknesses which may perhaps be useful, but which cannot be called virtuous motives of conduct, however loud and lofty their pretensions to be so regarded. If this very reasonable proposition be admitted, and applied to the actual state of the world, things will be found much as Mandeville has represented them. As the world goes, "The moral virtues", or what pass for such, "are the political offspring which flattery has begot upon pride." Such is this author's proposition, in which the reader may take the word "political" not merely as referring to the positive constitution or actual government of any country, but rather to that artificial state which society assumes under the influence of government, commerce, and fashion. This interpretation will be found justified by the general spirit of the work.

A remarkable corroboration of *Mandeville's* opinion may be found in a writer who certainly had no thought of giving it. "In Britain," says Mr. *Combe*, "the great object of the labouring classes, is to live and gratify the inferior propensities; of the mercantile and manufacturing population to gratify Acquisitiveness and *Self-esteem*; of the more intelligent class of gentlemen, to gratify *Self-esteem* and *Love of Approbation*, by attaining political, literary, or philosophical eminence; and of another portion to gratify *Love of Approbation* by supremacy in fashion."* [note Galloway: *Const. of Man*, sect. iii.; Galloway refers to George Combe (1788-1858), *The Constitution of Man* (1828).]

Pride and vanity are weaknesses with which all are in some degree chargeable, and there is in them a strong tendency to grow. Intermingling their symptoms, perhaps even unobserved at first, with the genuine principles of virtue, they flourish by degrees upon the sap which ought to have fed the native leaves and branches of that fair and delicate plant, till at length, suppressing or supplanting its natural growth, they spread their green but fatal luxuriance over the dead and withering stems,

which yet seem to a careless eye as if the supposititious verdure were their own.

With regard to *Mandeville's* other proposition, that private vices are public benefits, which has so often been reprobated as dangerously licentious, the reader ought perhaps to peruse the work before he judges so hardly of it. An author sometimes states a proposition in the form of a paradox in order to attract notice; but the meaning of his proposition is sufficiently explained throughout his work, being no more than that the luxurious pleasures of individuals, though selfish, and directed by no virtuous motive, but often much the reverse, encourage commerce, support navigation, employ industry, excite ingenuity, promote the arts, and advance the temporal greatness, wealth, and worldly prosperity of nations; Providence thus bringing good out of evil. In like manner we see that the opposition of parties in the state, which is plainly founded on envy, selfish ambition, or desire of personal emolument, has, nevertheless, the effect of preventing waste of the public funds, or gross mismanagement of the national business ; so that what is only the barefaced mockery of patriotism, produces much the same effect on the public affairs, which that rare virtue would aim at accomplishing. But the author meant not to affirm that the wealthy state where vice abounds, affords a greater amount of real happiness to the people, than is found in a poor but virtuous nation. On the contrary, he states it as his opinion, that if nations would be content with less worldly power, wealth, and luxury, they would be better and happier with such a moderate degree of these, as a virtuous people may attain. "I lay it down," says he, "as a first principle, that in all societies, great or small, it is the duty of every member of it to be good, that virtue ought to be encouraged, vice discountenanced, the laws obeyed, and the transgressors punished. After this I affirm, that if we consult history both ancient and modern, and take a view of what has passed in the world, we shall find that human nature, since the fall of Adam, has always been the same, and that the strength and frailties of it have been ever conspicuous in one part of the globe or other, without any regard to ages, climate, or religion. I never said nor imagined that a man could not be virtuous as well in a rich and mighty kingdom, as in the most pitiful commonwealth; but I own it is my sense that no society can be raised into such a rich and mighty kingdom, or, so raised, subsist in their wealth and power for any considerable time, without the vices of man. This I imagine is sufficiently proved throughout the book; and as human nature still continues the same, as it has always been for many thousand years, we have no great reason to expect a future change in it while the world endures. Now I cannot see what immorality there is in showing a man the origin and power of those passions, which so often, even unknowingly to himself, hurry him away from his reason; or that there is any impiety in putting him upon his guard against himself and the secret stratagems of self-love, and teaching him the difference between such actions as proceed from a victory over the passions, and those that are only the result of a conquest which one passion obtains over another ; that is, between real and counterfeited virtue." "When I say that societies cannot be raised to wealth and power, and the top of earthly glory without vices, I don't think that, by so saying, I bid men be vicious, any more than I bid them be quarrelsome or covetous, when I affirm that the profession of the law could not be maintained in such numbers and splendour, if there was not abundance of too selfish and litigious people. --- If I have shown the way to worldly greatness, I have always without hesitation preferred the road that leads to virtue."* [note Galloway: Fable of the Bees. Remark T. Vol. 1. pp. 256, 257, 258.]

The tendency of this, and of all *Mandeville's* reasoning, is simply to show, that the world at present is radically at variance with God, with virtue, and with the best interests of man; a truth which we have seen acknowledged by a writer of great phrenological celebrity. But although this truth has been long known, being taught both by accurate observation, and by the authority of God himself, Mr. *Combe* is in hope that this state of matters will be entirely altered by teaching the same fact *phrenologically*, and by unfolding methodically, at the same time, the extent and obligation of the natural laws ; which were yet all known before, though not systematically arranged in books, or at least not arranged on this particular system. Rare effect of method, peculiar classification, and new arrangement! The man who is of a cool and very philosophical temperament himself, may perhaps believe this ; but whoever has known the strength of human passions, and the difficulty of regulating them, — whoever has felt this in his own bosom, — will never, never be satisfied with such vain and baseless expectations. I do not undervalue the ability and the many excellences of Mr. *Combe's* work. If it contribute in any degree to " convince men of their sin and misery," that is certainly the first step towards reformation : but more than human power is necessary to restore man from depravity to holiness, and in so far as Mr. *Combe* has insinuated a denial of the needful agency of God's Spirit for man's regeneration, and has flattered men with the hope that all vice and misery may be removed from this world by the mere instrumentality of their own disproportioned organs, he has only dangerously deceived them with an opinion equally injurious to religion, and false in philosophy. *Mandeville* teaches a truer doctrine : it is his opinion "That there is no solid principle to go by but the Christian Religion, though few embrace it with sincerity."* [Note Galloway: Fable of the Bees, vol.ii. p. 98.]

2. *Philosophy and religion*, Chapter XXIV: 'Of the Moral sentiments of Men.

Galloway on Adam Smith (p. 354-56.)

A large portion of society have their moral sentiments and emotions extended and regulated by the principle of sympathy. Of these Dr. *Adam Smith* is the amiable and illustrious representative. The theory of this great philosopher presupposes the existence of some sort of emotions, arising from pain or pleasure affecting self as joy, grief, gratitude, resentment, — which, by the principle of sympathy, are afterwards regulated, and extended to cases in which we have no personal interest. The feeling of sympathy is one of the most engaging features of a well constituted mind. Its origin must, in the first instance, be sought in the homogeneous nature and feelings of men. For, our minds being constituted in the same manner, possessing similar organs, similar susceptibilities of pain and pleasure, similar emotions of joy and sorrow, and similar outward expressions of inward emotion, it is easy for us to understand the joys and sorrows of others, and natural to enter into their feelings, by conceiving their circumstances vividly as if they were our own. The emotion which arises in our minds on this conception, is allied to theirs, and has received the name of sympathy. Nor is there any bond of humanity, of social regard, of mutual love, so engaging, so amiable as this, which sheds a charm over human intercourse, harmonizing what might otherwise have been discordant, transfusing, as it were, one feeling soul through the vast body of human nature, affording consolation in sorrow, and adding grace and loveliness to the solemn

dignity of virtue. Beneath its softening influence, morality ceases to be a system of dry detail and cold severity, righteousness becomes a living principle, and benevolence a holy pleasure. But, as a standard of morals, sympathy is totally inadequate, because it is a fluctuating principle, and easily accommodates itself to different, and sometimes to erroneous, modes of thinking and of acting: and therefore it requires to be itself controlled and directed, lest, sympathizing with the vicious feelings of other minds, we should turn the force of this principle against the interests of virtue. Dr. *Smith* seems to have intended his work, not merely as a theory of the origin of our moral sentiments, but as a standard of their rectitude. We have remarked its inadequacy to this, but nevertheless, it is certainly, to a very great extent, the standard used by the world. The reader of that acute and elegant theory would do well to attend to this distinction, between the standard used, and that which ought to be used. For, by this means, Dr. *Smith's* of the influence of society on the moral sentiments of men, — the principle by which, as water when unconfined seeks one common level, so individual feelings in the world are equalized and regulated, by the height of the general current of human sentiment and emotion.

3. *Philosophy and religion*, Appendix IV.

Galloway: *Of Mandeville, Smith, Malthus, and the prospects of Britain.*

In speaking of *Mandeville's* philosophy, I have given one of his illustrations of the wise system of Providence in bringing good out of evil, on which I beg to make one or two observations. These being of a political nature, could not so well be introduced into the body of the work. The illustration which I allude to is regarding the opposition of parties in the state, which, says *Mandeville*, is plainly founded on selfish interest, selfish ambition, or selfish vanity, and yet has the effect of preventing waste of the public funds, or gross mismanagement of the national business; so that what is only the barefaced mockery of patriotism, produces much the same effect, which that rare virtue would aim at accomplishing.* [See above, 1].

This principle, so far as here stated, is strictly true; but from these selfish principles we look for nothing more than negative good: that is, they will check waste, and prevent mismanagement. But true patriotism alone will achieve that which is of great, solid, lasting, and positive good to any country. Nevertheless much is accomplished if waste and mismanagement be prevented; for, under such a government, a virtuous and contented people may live in peace and security. But when those selfish principles acquire, by the prevalence of one party, so complete an ascendancy as no longer to operate as a check, but to have the entire sway, then, of course, we no longer look for the benefit of the principle, because the principle itself is subverted.

It is probably known to my reader that *Mandeville* has been treated with much severity, and that Dr. *Adam Smith* is among those who have most strongly reprobated him. Therefore a word concerning Dr. *Smith*. I have called him an amiable and illustrious philosopher. He is amiable, as the word is commonly used, as having written a beautiful

theory of moral sentiments ; of which the merits and defects and proper place in philosophy have already been told.* [See above, 2] He is illustrious chiefly as the author of the " Wealth of Nations," a work of wonderful talent and information, the principles of which have both raised this country to an unparalleled height of worldly wealth and greatness, and prepared its certain downfall by sapping the foundations of British society. For there he unguardedly teaches that all labour is unproductive except that which is employed in the production of wealth ; and it is proposed as the great, the only, end of a nation to amass wealth. He has indeed most truly shown that the wealth of a country consists not merely in money, but in the annual produce of its land and labour: and even as the measure of value he adopts not money but the labour of the poor, — a principle which he might take from *Mandeville*, who very plainly states it in these words, "There is no intrinsic worth in money but what is alterable with the times, and, whether a guinea goes for £20, or for a shilling, it is as I have hinted before, the labour of the poor, and not the high or low value that is set on gold or silver, which all the comforts of life must flow from." *[Note Galloway: *Fable of the Bees*, vol. i. p. 344-5]. This principle, indeed, is as old as the days of *Aristotle*; I have, however, a reason for thinking that *Smith* got it from *Mandeville*, who probably saw it by his own original reflection. But the author of the *Fable of the Bees* does not consider it as the whole business of a nation to employ the labours of the poor, and strain them to the uttermost for the mere amassing of wealth, — to regard men, in short, as mere tools to be used, through the division of labour, for enriching the manufacturer and merchant, and to be regarded by their rulers, by their masters, by their very parents, in no other light. On the contrary, he saw that this had its limits, and prefers a poor and virtuous nation to that height of worldly wealth and glory, which it is the great object of *Smith* to recommend. That author states no limits to his system of production and increase of commerce and manufactures; and accordingly the system is working on without any apparent limits, and men are employed as mere tools for making money. And as the masters consider this to be all, so do the workmen. The whole race is for gain, selfish gain. Their very children are regarded, not with the fondness of parental affection, but as mere tools for more gain, shut up from morning to night in manufactories, and growing up in the ignorance of all duty, and of all religion ! So much so that, between the selfishness of the masters and the selfishness of the parents, the state has to interfere with enactments for the health of the children ; and yet so tremendous is the impetus of the principle, that these very enactments are resisted and cried out against! Never mind health, morals, religion ! — Down with the Church, we can buy religion cheaper! — the value of every thing is what it will bring in the market ! The clergy are unproductive labourers, or at the best they may be ranked as tradesmen, who work only for money, and therefore had best be paid by the job ! Yes, every thing is becoming sordid and mercenary. Money ! money is every thing ! Never mind though the morals or the religious principles of your children should be endangered, but place them where they will get most money! It is of little use to teach your son the solid wisdom of sound morals, true religion, and practical virtue ; he will pick up enough of these by the bye : teach him to make money ! — Take little pains to teach your daughters the quiet and unostentatious virtues of domestic life, but let them acquire those things which make a show in the world, and which more far more marketable!

It is true that Dr. *Smith* did not contemplate these consequences ; but nevertheless they are the consequences of that system of feeling and thinking, of which

his book is the truest exposition. Let wealth be the great, the only, aim of nations, of societies, of manufacturers, of fathers, and of children : all labour which does not tend to that is unproductive : — let men be viewed in this light, and selfishness becomes all in all, and the whole bonds of society are resolved into the accurate balancing of profit and loss, and the very entertainments of hospitality are given and received according to accurately kept accounts of this kind, and even friendship itself is amenable to no other rule !

How far these principles are working in society let the present aspect of the times witness. I do not charge all the evil resulting from them upon Dr. *Smith*, for the seeds of it are in human nature, and even in the Apostle's day "the love of money was the root of all evil." But I affirm that *Smith's* book on the *Wealth of Nations*, in connection with the modern mechanical improvements, has given a systematic form, a regular organization, and prodigious impetus to the evil, such as has never been known in any former age of the world. So much so that the money market is felt to be the very pulse of society.

But that system of seemingly infinite production has its limits, and there are other things also to be observed for the welfare of a nation. Accordingly Mr. *Malthus* has called the attention of the public to the laws which regulate the increase and maintenance of population, a most important subject, which *Smith* has neglected in his exclusive zeal for the production of wealth. The principles of *Malthus* are partly to be found in some previous writers ; but he has given them greater precision, greater certainty, greater prominence, and greater copiousness of illustration ; and his work is, perhaps, the most valuable and truly useful which has been written in the range of Political Science.

And now the tables of births, deaths, and marriages have become another sort of pulse of society, and with a great many people nothing will go down but statistics ; for men are determined to look to any thing rather than to the moral and religious principles of the people, though these are the very happiness, the very hope, the very light, the very strength, the very nourishment, the very breath, the very life of society, and the breaking up of them, as demonstrated in a late awful example, is the reign of misery and terror, the power of darkness, the paroxysm of feverish delirium, the hour of social dissolution and internal convulsion. But *Mandeville*, yes, even the much abused *Mandeville*, knew and taught the importance of true moral and religious principles, and insisted both on the necessity of instilling them into the people, and on the uselessness, nay, positive injury, of all other kinds of knowledge apart from this, as tending only to make the people discontented, and to give them the power of doing evil : for, as knowledge is power, knowledge existing in a bad man makes him doubly dangerous. "It is the sabbath," says he, " the most useful day in seven, that is set apart for Divine service and religious exercise, as well as resting from bodily labour : and it is a duty incumbent on all magistrates, to take particular care of that day. The poor more especially, and their children should be made to go to church on it, both in the fore and afternoon, because they have no time on any other. By precept and example they ought to be encouraged and used to it from their very infancy ; the wilful neglect of it ought to be counted scandalous ; and if downright compulsion might seem too harsh, and perhaps impracticable, all diversions at least ought to be strictly prohibited, and the poor hindered from every amusement abroad, that might allure or draw them from it."* [Note Galloway: *Fable of the Bees*, vol. i. p. 346] But now the religious instructors of the people are made their jest and abhorrence, through this sordid mercantile principle, which has

even invaded the venerable fabric of the church, and numbers among its votaries some of the clergy themselves. (...)