

Now, in the present state, all which we enjoy, and a great part of what we suffer, is put in our own power. For pleasure and pain are the consequences of our actions; and we are endowed by the Author of our Nature with capacities of foreseeing these consequences. We find by experience He does not so much as preserve our lives, exclusively of our own care and attention, to provide ourselves with and to make use of that sustenance by which He has appointed our lives shall be preserved, and without which He has appointed they shall not be preserved at all. And in general we foresee that the external things, which are the objects of our various passions, can neither be obtained nor enjoyed without exerting ourselves in such and such manners; but by thus exerting ourselves we obtain and enjoy these objects in which our natural good consists, or by this means God gives us the possession and enjoyment of them. I know not that we have any one kind or degree of enjoyment, but by the means of our own actions. And by prudence and care we may, for the most part, pass our days in tolerable ease and quiet; or, on the contrary, we may, by rashness, ungoverned passion, wilfulness, or even by negligence, make ourselves as miserable as ever we please. And many do please to make themselves extremely miserable —i.e., to do what they know beforehand will render them so.

—JOSEPH BUTLER, *The Analogy of Religion*.