



The Whole Duty of Man, According to the Law of Nature (Natural Law Paper)

Samuel Pufendorf

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Samuel Pufendorf's seminal work, *The Whole Duty of Man, According to the Law of Nature* (first published in Latin in 1673), was among the first to suggest a purely conventional basis for natural law. Rejecting scholasticism's metaphysical theories, Pufendorf found the source of natural law in humanity's need to cultivate sociability. At the same time, he distanced himself from Hobbes's deduction of such needs from self-interest. The result was a sophisticated theory of the conventional character of man's social persona and of all political institutions.

Pufendorf wrote this work to make his insights accessible to a wide range of readers, especially university students. As ministers, teachers, and public servants, they would have to struggle with issues of sovereignty and of the relationship between church and state that dominated the new state system of Europe in the aftermath of the Peace of Westphalia (1648).

The Whole Duty was first translated into English in 1691. The fourth edition was significantly revised—by anonymous editors—to include a great deal of the very important editorial material from Jean Barbeyrac's French editions. This was reproduced in the fifth edition from 1735 that is republished here. The English translation provides a fascinating insight into the transplantation of Pufendorf's political theory from a German absolutist milieu to an English parliamentary one.

Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694) was one of the most important figures in early-modern political thought. An exact contemporary of Locke and Spinoza, he transformed the natural law theories of Grotius and Hobbes, developed striking ideas of toleration and of the relationship between church and state, and wrote extensive political histories and analyses of the constitution of the German empire.

Jean Barbeyrac (1674–1744) was a Huguenot refugee who taught natural law successively in Berlin, Lausanne, and Amsterdam, and edited and translated into French the major natural law works of Grotius, Pufendorf, and Cumberland.

Andrew Tooke (1673–1732) was headmaster of Chaterhouse School and professor of geometry at Gresham College, London.

Ian Hunter is Australian Professorial Fellow in the Centre for the History of European Discourses, University of Queensland.

David Saunders is Professor Emeritus in the Faculty of Arts at Griffith University.

Knud Haakonssen is Professor of Intellectual History at the University of Sussex, England.

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