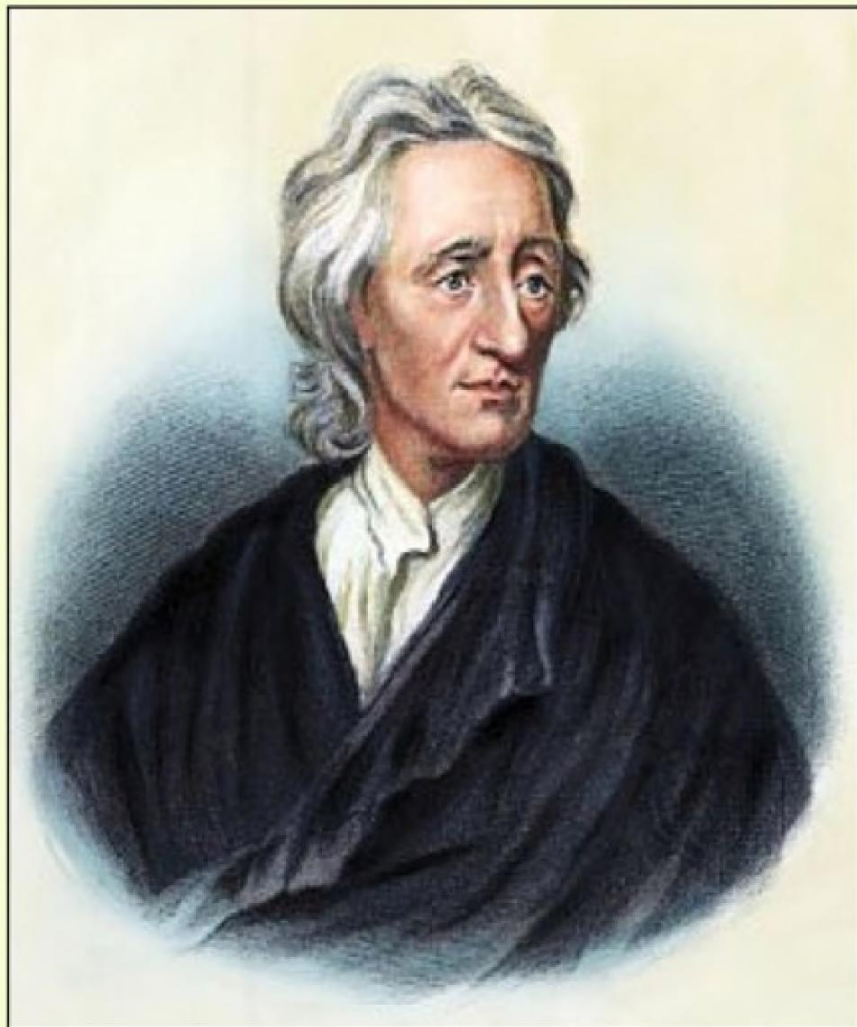


An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding (Complete)

John Locke



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is not that I think any name, how great soever, set at the beginning of a book, will be able to cover the faults that are to be found in it. Things in print must stand and fall by their own worth, or the reader's fancy. But there being nothing more to be desired for truth than a fair unprejudiced hearing, nobody is more likely to procure me that than your lordship, who are allowed to have got so intimate an acquaintance with her, in her more retired recesses. Your lordship is known to have so far advanced your speculations in the most abstract and general knowledge of things, beyond the ordinary reach or common methods, that your allowance and approbation of the design of this Treatise will at least preserve it from being condemned without reading, and will prevail to have those parts a little weighed, which might otherwise perhaps be thought to deserve no consideration, for being somewhat out of the common road. The imputation of Novelty is a terrible charge amongst those who judge of men's heads, as they do of their perukes, by the fashion, and can allow none to be right but the received doctrines. Truth scarce ever yet carried it by vote anywhere at its first appearance: new opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason but because they are not already common. But truth, like gold, is not the less so for being newly brought out of the mine. It is trial and examination must give it price, and not any antique fashion; and though it be not yet current by the public stamp, yet it may, for all that, be as old as nature, and is certainly not the less genuine. Your lordship can give great and convincing instances of this, whenever you please to oblige the public with some of those large and comprehensive discoveries you have made of truths hitherto unknown, unless to some few, from whom your lordship has been pleased not wholly to conceal them. This alone were a sufficient reason, were there no other, why I should dedicate this Essay to your lordship; and its having some little correspondence with some parts of that nobler and vast system of the sciences your lordship has made so new, exact, and instructive a draught of, I think it glory enough, if your lordship permit me to boast, that here and there I have

fallen into some thoughts not wholly different from yours. If your lordship think fit that, by your encouragement, this should appear in the world, I hope it may be a reason, some time or other, to lead your lordship further; and you will allow me to say, that you here give the world an earnest of something that, if they can bear with this, will be truly worth their expectation.

This, my lord, shows what a present I here make to your lordship; just such as the poor man does to his rich and great neighbour, by whom the basket of flowers or fruit is not ill taken, though he has more plenty of his own growth, and in much greater perfection. Worthless things receive a value when they are made the offerings of respect, esteem, and gratitude: these you have given me so mighty and peculiar reasons to have, in the highest degree, for your lordship, that if they can add a price to what they go along with, proportionable to their own greatness, I can with confidence brag, I here make your lordship the richest present you ever received. This I am sure, I am under the greatest obligations to seek all occasions to acknowledge a long train of favours I have received from your lordship; favours, though great and important in themselves, yet made much more so by the forwardness, concern, and kindness, and other obliging circumstances, that never failed to accompany them. To all this you are pleased to add that which gives yet more weight and relish to all the rest: you vouchsafe to continue me in some degrees of your esteem, and allow me a place in your good thoughts, I had almost said friendship. This, my lord, your words and actions so constantly show on all occasions, even to others when I am absent, that it is not vanity in me to mention what everybody knows: but it would be want of good manners not to acknowledge what so many are witnesses of, and every day tell me I am indebted to your lordship for. I wish they could as easily assist my gratitude, as they convince me of the great and growing engagements it has to your lordship. This I am sure, I should write of the UNDERSTANDING without having any, if I were not extremely sensible of them, and did not lay hold on this

opportunity to testify to the world how much I am obliged to be, and how much I am,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most humble and most obedient servant,

JOHN LOCKE

2 Dorset Court, 24th of May, 1689

THE EPISTLE TO THE READER

READER,

I have put into thy hands what has been the diversion of some of my idle and heavy hours. If it has the good luck to prove so of any of thine, and thou hast but half so much pleasure in reading as I had in writing it, thou wilt as little think thy money, as I do my pains, ill bestowed.

Mistake not this for a commendation of my work; nor conclude, because I was pleased with the doing of it, that therefore I am fondly taken with it now it is done. He that hawks at larks and sparrows has no less sport, though a much less considerable quarry, than he that flies at nobler game: and he is little acquainted with the subject of this treatise—the UNDERSTANDING—who does not know that, as it is the most elevated faculty of the soul, so it is employed with a greater and more constant delight than any of the other. Its searches after truth are a sort of hawking and hunting, wherein the very pursuit makes a great part of the pleasure. Every step the mind takes in its progress towards Knowledge makes some discovery, which is not only new, but the best too, for the time at least.

For the understanding, like the eye, judging of objects

only by its own sight, cannot but be pleased with what it discovers, having less regret for what has escaped it, because it is unknown. Thus he who has raised himself above the alms-basket, and, not content to live lazily on scraps of begged opinions, sets his own thoughts on work, to find and follow truth, will (whatever he lights on) not miss the hunter's satisfaction; every moment of his pursuit will reward his pains with some delight; and he will have reason to think his time not ill spent, even when he cannot much boast of any great acquisition.

This, Reader, is the entertainment of those who let loose their own thoughts, and follow them in writing; which thou oughtest not to envy them, since they afford thee an opportunity of the like diversion, if thou wilt make use of thy own thoughts in reading. It is to them, if they are thy own, that I refer myself: but if they are taken upon trust from others, it is no great matter what they are; they are not following truth, but some meaner consideration; and it is not worth while to be concerned what he says or thinks, who says or thinks only as he is directed by another. If thou judgest for thyself I know thou wilt judge candidly, and then I shall not be harmed or offended, whatever be thy censure. For though it be certain that there is nothing in this Treatise of the truth whereof I am not fully persuaded, yet I consider myself as liable to mistakes as I can think thee, and know that this book must stand or fall with thee, not by any opinion I have of it, but thy own.

If thou findest little in it new or instructive to thee, thou art not to blame me for it. It was not meant for those that had already mastered this subject, and made a thorough acquaintance with their own understandings; but for my own information, and the satisfaction of a few friends, who acknowledged themselves not to have sufficiently considered it.

Were it fit to trouble thee with the history of this Essay, I should tell thee, that five or six friends meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from

this, found themselves quickly at a stand, by the difficulties that rose on every side. After we had awhile puzzled ourselves, without coming any nearer a resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course; and that before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what OBJECTS our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with. This I proposed to the company, who all readily assented; and thereupon it was agreed that this should be our first inquiry. Some hasty and undigested thoughts, on a subject I had never before considered, which I set down against our next meeting, gave the first entrance into this Discourse; which having been thus begun by chance, was continued by intreaty; written by incoherent parcels; and after long intervals of neglect, resumed again, as my humour or occasions permitted; and at last, in a retirement where an attendance on my health gave me leisure, it was brought into that order thou now seest it.

This discontinued way of writing may have occasioned, besides others, two contrary faults, viz., that too little and too much may be said in it. If thou findest anything wanting, I shall be glad that what I have written gives thee any desire that I should have gone further. If it seems too much to thee, thou must blame the subject; for when I put pen to paper, I thought all I should have to say on this matter would have been contained in one sheet of paper; but the further I went the larger prospect I had; new discoveries led me still on, and so it grew insensibly to the bulk it now appears in. I will not deny, but possibly it might be reduced to a narrower compass than it is, and that some parts of it might be contracted, the way it has been writ in, by catches, and many long intervals of interruption, being apt to cause some repetitions. But to confess the truth, I am now too lazy, or too busy, to make it shorter. I am not ignorant how little I herein consult my own reputation, when I knowingly let it go with a fault, so apt to disgust the most judicious, who are always the nicest readers. But they who know sloth is apt to content itself with any excuse, will pardon me if mine has

prevailed on me, where I think I have a very good one. I will not therefore allege in my defence, that the same notion, having different respects, may be convenient or necessary to prove or illustrate several parts of the same discourse, and that so it has happened in many parts of this: but waiving that, I shall frankly avow that I have sometimes dwelt long upon the same argument, and expressed it different ways, with a quite different design. I pretend not to publish this Essay for the information of men of large thoughts and quick apprehensions; to such masters of knowledge I profess myself a scholar, and therefore warn them beforehand not to expect anything here, but what, being spun out of my own coarse thoughts, is fitted to men of my own size, to whom, perhaps, it will not be unacceptable that I have taken some pains to make plain and familiar to their thoughts some truths which established prejudice, or the abstractedness of the ideas themselves, might render difficult. Some objects had need be turned on every side; and when the notion is new, as I confess some of these are to me; or out of the ordinary road, as I suspect they will appear to others, it is not one simple view of it that will gain it admittance into every understanding, or fix it there with a clear and lasting impression. There are few, I believe, who have not observed in themselves or others, that what in one way of proposing was very obscure, another way of expressing it has made very clear and intelligible; though afterwards the mind found little difference in the phrases, and wondered why one failed to be understood more than the other. But everything does not hit alike upon every man's imagination.

We have our understandings no less different than our palates; and he that thinks the same truth shall be equally relished by every one in the same dress, may as well hope to feast every one with the same sort of cookery: the meat may be the same, and the nourishment good, yet every one not be able to receive it with that seasoning; and it must be dressed another way, if you will have it go down with some, even of strong constitutions. The truth is, those who advised me to publish it, advised me, for this reason, to publish it as it is:

and since I have been brought to let it go abroad, I desire it should be understood by whoever gives himself the pains to read it. I have so little affection to be in print, that if I were not flattered this Essay might be of some use to others, as I think it has been to me, I should have confined it to the view of some friends, who gave the first occasion to it. My appearing therefore in print being on purpose to be as useful as I may, I think it necessary to make what I have to say as easy and intelligible to all sorts of readers as I can. And I had much rather the speculative and quick-sighted should complain of my being in some parts tedious, than that any one, not accustomed to abstract speculations, or prepossessed with different notions, should mistake or not comprehend my meaning.

It will possibly be censured as a great piece of vanity or insolence in me, to pretend to instruct this our knowing age; it amounting to little less, when I own, that I publish this Essay with hopes it may be useful to others. But, if it may be permitted to speak freely of those who with a feigned modesty condemn as useless what they themselves write, methinks it savours much more of vanity or insolence to publish a book for any other end; and he fails very much of that respect he owes the public, who prints, and consequently expects men should read, that wherein he intends not they should meet with anything of use to themselves or others: and should nothing else be found allowable in this Treatise, yet my design will not cease to be so; and the goodness of my intention ought to be some excuse for the worthlessness of my present.

It is that chiefly which secures me from the fear of censure, which I expect not to escape more than better writers. Men's principles, notions, and relishes are so different, that it is hard to find a book which pleases or displeases all men. I acknowledge the age we live in is not the least knowing, and therefore not the most easy to be satisfied.

If I have not the good luck to please, yet nobody ought to

be offended with me. I plainly tell all my readers, except half a dozen, this Treatise was not at first intended for them; and therefore they need not be at the trouble to be of that number. But yet if any one thinks fit to be angry and rail at it, he may do it securely, for I shall find some better way of spending my time than in such kind of conversation. I shall always have the satisfaction to have aimed sincerely at truth and usefulness, though in one of the meanest ways. The commonwealth of learning is not at this time without master-builders, whose mighty designs, in advancing the sciences, will leave lasting monuments to the admiration of posterity: but every one must not hope to be a Boyle or a Sydenham; and in an age that produces such masters as the great Huygenius and the incomparable Mr. Newton, with some others of that strain, it is ambition enough to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge;—which certainly had been very much more advanced in the world, if the endeavours of ingenious and industrious men had not been much cumbered with the learned but frivolous use of uncouth, affected, or unintelligible terms, introduced into the sciences, and there made an art of, to that degree that Philosophy, which is nothing but the true knowledge of things, was thought unfit or incapable to be brought into well-bred company and polite conversation.

Vague and insignificant forms of speech, and abuse of language, have so long passed for mysteries of science; and hard and misapplied words, with little or no meaning, have, by prescription, such a right to be mistaken for deep learning and height of speculation, that it will not be easy to persuade either those who speak or those who hear them, that they are but the covers of ignorance, and hindrance of true knowledge.

To break in upon the sanctuary of vanity and ignorance will be, I suppose, some service to human understanding; though so few are apt to think they deceive or are deceived

in the use of words; or that the language of the sect they are of has any faults in it which ought to be examined or corrected, that I hope I shall be pardoned if I have in the Third Book dwelt long on this subject, and endeavoured to make it so plain, that neither the inveterateness of the mischief, nor the prevalency of the fashion, shall be any excuse for those who will not take care about the meaning of their own words, and will not suffer the significancy of their expressions to be inquired into.

I have been told that a short Epitome of this Treatise, which was printed in 1688, was by some condemned without reading, because INNATE

IDEAS were denied in it; they too hastily concluding, that if innate ideas were not supposed, there would be little left either of the notion or proof of spirits. If any one take the like offence at the entrance of this Treatise, I shall desire him to read it through; and then I hope he will be convinced, that the taking away false foundations is not to the prejudice but advantage of truth, which is never injured or endangered so much as when mixed with, or built on, falsehood. In the Second Edition I added as followeth:— The bookseller will not forgive me if I say nothing of this New Edition, which he has promised, by the correctness of it, shall make amends for the many faults committed in the former. He desires too, that it should be known that it has one whole new chapter concerning Identity, and many additions and amendments in other places. These I must inform my reader are not all new matter, but most of them either further confirmation of what I had said, or explications, to prevent others being mistaken in the sense of what was formerly printed, and not any variation in me from it.

I must only except the alterations I have made in Book II. chap. xxi.

What I had there written concerning Liberty and the Will, I thought deserved as accurate a view as I am capable of; those subjects having in all ages exercised the learned part of

the world with questions and difficulties, that have not a little perplexed morality and divinity, those parts of knowledge that men are most concerned to be clear in.

Upon a closer inspection into the working of men's minds, and a stricter examination of those motives and views they are turned by, I have found reason somewhat to alter the thoughts I formerly had concerning that which gives the last determination to the Will in all voluntary actions.

This I cannot forbear to acknowledge to the world with as much freedom and readiness; as I at first published what then seemed to me to be right; thinking myself more concerned to quit and renounce any opinion of my own, than oppose that of another, when truth appears against it.

For it is truth alone I seek, and that will always be welcome to me, when or from whencesoever it comes. But what forwardness soever I have to resign any opinion I have, or to recede from anything I have writ, upon the first evidence of any error in it; yet this I must own, that I have not had the good luck to receive any light from those exceptions I have met with in print against any part of my book, nor have, from anything that has been urged against it, found reason to alter my sense in any of the points that have been questioned. Whether the subject I have in hand requires often more thought and attention than cursory readers, at least such as are prepossessed, are willing to allow; or whether any obscurity in my expressions casts a cloud over it, and these notions are made difficult to others' apprehensions in my way of treating them; so it is, that my meaning, I find, is often mistaken, and I have not the good luck to be everywhere rightly understood.

Of this the ingenious author of the Discourse Concerning the Nature of Man has given me a late instance, to mention no other. For the civility of his expressions, and the candour that belongs to his order, forbid me to think that he would have closed his Preface with an insinuation, as if in what I had said, Book II. ch. xxvii, concerning the third rule which

men refer their actions to, I went about to make virtue vice and vice virtue, unless he had mistaken my meaning; which he could not have done if he had given himself the trouble to consider what the argument was I was then upon, and what was the chief design of that chapter, plainly enough set down in the fourth section and those following. For I was there not laying down moral rules, but showing the original and nature of moral ideas, and enumerating the rules men make use of in moral relations, whether these rules were true or false: and pursuant thereto I tell what is everywhere called virtue and vice; which "alters not the nature of things," though men generally do judge of and denominate their actions according to the esteem and fashion of the place and sect they are of.

If he had been at the pains to reflect on what I had said, Bk. I. ch. ii. sect. 18, and Bk. II. ch. xxviii. sect. 13, 14, 15 and 20, he would have known what I think of the eternal and unalterable nature of right and wrong, and what I call virtue and vice. And if he had observed that in the place he quotes I only report as a matter of fact what OTHERS

call virtue and vice, he would not have found it liable to any great exception. For I think I am not much out in saying that one of the rules made use of in the world for a ground or measure of a moral relation is—that esteem and reputation which several sorts of actions find variously in the several societies of men, according to which they are there called virtues or vices. And whatever authority the learned Mr.

Lowde places in his Old English Dictionary, I daresay it nowhere tells him (if I should appeal to it) that the same action is not in credit, called and counted a virtue, in one place, which, being in disrepute, passes for and under the name of vice in another. The taking notice that men bestow the names of 'virtue' and 'vice' according to this rule of Reputation is all I have done, or can be laid to my charge to have done, towards the making vice virtue or virtue vice. But the good man does well, and as becomes his calling, to be watchful in such points, and to take the alarm even at

expressions, which, standing alone by themselves, might sound ill and be suspected.

'Tis to this zeal, allowable in his function, that I forgive his citing as he does these words of mine (ch. xxviii. sect. II): "Even the exhortations of inspired teachers have not feared to appeal to common repute, Philip, iv. 8;" without taking notice of those immediately preceding, which introduce them, and run thus: "Whereby even in the corruption of manners, the true boundaries of the law of nature, which ought to be the rule of virtue and vice, were pretty well preserved. So that even the exhortations of inspired teachers," &c. By which words, and the rest of that section, it is plain that I brought that passage of St. Paul, not to prove that the general measure of what men called virtue and vice throughout the world was the reputation and fashion of each particular society within itself; but to show that, though it were so, yet, for reasons I there give, men, in that way of denominating their actions, did not for the most part much stray from the Law of Nature; which is that standing and unalterable rule by which they ought to judge of the moral rectitude and gravity of their actions, and accordingly denominate them virtues or vices. Had Mr. Lowde considered this, he would have found it little to his purpose to have quoted this passage in a sense I used it not; and would I imagine have spared the application he subjoins to it, as not very necessary. But I hope this Second Edition will give him satisfaction on the point, and that this matter is now so expressed as to show him there was no cause for scruple.

Though I am forced to differ from him in these apprehensions he has expressed, in the latter end of his preface, concerning what I had said about virtue and vice, yet we are better agreed than he thinks in what he says in his third chapter (p. 78) concerning "natural inscription and innate notions." I shall not deny him the privilege he claims (p. 52), to state the question as he pleases, especially when he states it so as to leave nothing in it contrary to what I

have said. For, according to him, "innate notions, being conditional things, depending upon the concurrence of several other circumstances in order to the soul's exerting them," all that he says for "innate, imprinted, impressed notions" (for of innate IDEAS he says nothing at all), amounts at last only to this—that there are certain propositions which, though the soul from the beginning, or when a man is born, does not know, yet "by assistance from the outward senses, and the help of some previous cultivation," it may AFTERWARDS come certainly to know the truth of; which is no more than what I have affirmed in my First Book. For I suppose by the "soul's exerting them," he means its beginning to know them; or else the soul's 'exerting of notions' will be to me a very unintelligible expression; and I think at best is a very unfit one in this, it misleading men's thoughts by an insinuation, as if these notions were in the mind before the 'soul exerts them,' i. e. before they are known;—whereas truly before they are known, there is nothing of them in the mind but a capacity to know them, when the 'concurrence of those circumstances,' which this ingenious author thinks necessary 'in order to the soul's exerting them,' brings them into our knowledge.

P. 52 I find him express it thus: 'These natural notions are not so imprinted upon the soul as that they naturally and necessarily exert themselves (even in children and idiots) without any assistance from the outward senses, or without the help of some previous cultivation.' Here, he says, they 'exert themselves,' as p. 78, that the 'soul exerts them.'

When he has explained to himself or others what he means by 'the soul's exerting innate notions,' or their 'exerting themselves;' and what that 'previous cultivation and circumstances' in order to their being exerted are—he will I suppose find there is so little of controversy between him and me on the point, bating that he calls that 'exerting of notions'

which I in a more vulgar style call 'knowing,' that I have reason to think he brought in my name on this occasion only

out of the pleasure he has to speak civilly of me; which I must gratefully acknowledge he has done everywhere he mentions me, not without conferring on me, as some others have done, a title I have no right to.

There are so many instances of this, that I think it justice to my reader and myself to conclude, that either my book is plainly enough written to be rightly understood by those who peruse it with that attention and indifferency, which every one who will give himself the pains to read ought to employ in reading; or else that I have written mine so obscurely that it is in vain to go about to mend it. Whichever of these be the truth, it is myself only am affected thereby; and therefore I shall be far from troubling my reader with what I think might be said in answer to those several objections I have met with, to passages here and there of my book; since I persuade myself that he who thinks them of moment enough to be concerned whether they are true or false, will be able to see that what is said is either not well founded, or else not contrary to my doctrine, when I and my opposer come both to be well understood.

If any other authors, careful that none of their good thoughts should be lost, have published their censures of my Essay, with this honour done to it, that they will not suffer it to be an essay, I leave it to the public to value the obligation they have to their critical pens, and shall not waste my reader's time in so idle or ill-natured an employment of mine, as to lessen the satisfaction any one has in himself, or gives to others, in so hasty a confutation of what I have written.

The booksellers preparing for the Fourth Edition of my Essay, gave me notice of it, that I might, if I had leisure, make any additions or alterations I should think fit. Whereupon I thought it convenient to advertise the reader, that besides several corrections I had made here and there, there was one alteration which it was necessary to mention, because it ran through the whole book, and is of consequence to be rightly understood. What I thereupon said

was this:— CLEAR and DISTINCT ideas are terms which, though familiar and frequent in men's mouths, I have reason to think every one who uses does not perfectly understand. And possibly 'tis but here and there one who gives himself the trouble to consider them so far as to know what he himself or others precisely mean by them. I have therefore in most places chose to put DETERMINATE or DETERMINED, instead of CLEAR and DISTINCT, as more likely to direct men's thoughts to my meaning in this matter. By those denominations, I mean some object in the mind, and consequently determined, i. e. such as it is there seen and perceived to be. This, I think, may fitly be called a determinate or determined idea, when such as it is at any time objectively in the mind, and so determined there, it is annexed, and without variation determined, to a name or articulate sound, which is to be steadily the sign of that very same object of the mind, or determinate idea.

To explain this a little more particularly. By DETERMINATE, when applied to a simple idea, I mean that simple appearance which the mind has in its view, or perceives in itself, when that idea is said to be in it: by DETERMINED, when applied to a complex idea, I mean such an one as consists of a determinate number of certain simple or less complex ideas, joined in such a proportion and situation as the mind has before its view, and sees in itself, when that idea is present in it, or should be present in it, when a man gives a name to it. I say SHOULD be, because it is not every one, nor perhaps any one, who is so careful of his language as to use no word till he views in his mind the precise determined idea which he resolves to make it the sign of. The want of this is the cause of no small obscurity and confusion in men's thoughts and discourses.

I know there are not words enough in any language to answer all the variety of ideas that enter into men's discourses and reasonings. But this hinders not but that when any one uses any term, he may have in his mind a determined idea, which he makes it the sign of, and to which

he should keep it steadily annexed during that present discourse. Where he does not, or cannot do this, he in vain pretends to clear or distinct ideas: it is plain his are not so; and therefore there can be expected nothing but obscurity and confusion, where such terms are made use of which have not such a precise determination.

Upon this ground I have thought determined ideas a way of speaking less liable to mistakes, than clear and distinct: and where men have got such determined ideas of all that they reason, inquire, or argue about, they will find a great part of their doubts and disputes at an end; the greatest part of the questions and controversies that perplex mankind depending on the doubtful and uncertain use of words, or (which is the same) indetermined ideas, which they are made to stand for. I have made choice of these terms to signify, (1) Some immediate object of the mind, which it perceives and has before it, distinct from the sound it uses as a sign of it. (2) That this idea, thus determined, i.e. which the mind has in itself, and knows, and sees there, be determined without any change to that name, and that name determined to that precise idea. If men had such determined ideas in their inquiries and discourses, they would both discern how far their own inquiries and discourses went, and avoid the greatest part of the disputes and wranglings they have with others.

Besides this, the bookseller will think it necessary I should advertise the reader that there is an addition of two chapters wholly new; the one of the Association of Ideas, the other of Enthusiasm. These, with some other larger additions never before printed, he has engaged to print by themselves, after the same manner, and for the same purpose, as was done when this Essay had the second impression.

In the Sixth Edition there is very little added or altered. The greatest part of what is new is contained in the twenty-first chapter of the second book, which any one, if he thinks it worth while, may, with a very little labour, transcribe into the margin of the former edition.

ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

INTRODUCTION.

1. An Inquiry into the Understanding pleasant and useful.

Since it is the UNDERSTANDING that sets man above the rest of sensible beings, and gives him all the advantage and dominion which he has over them; it is certainly a subject, even for its nobleness, worth our labour to inquire into. The understanding, like the eye, whilst it makes us see and perceive all other things, takes no notice of itself; and it requires an art and pains to set it at a distance and make it its own object. But whatever be the difficulties that lie in the way of this inquiry; whatever it be that keeps us so much in the dark to ourselves; sure I am that all the light we can let in upon our minds, all the acquaintance we can make with our own understandings, will not only be very pleasant, but bring us great advantage, in directing our thoughts in the search of other things.

2. Design.

This, therefore, being my purpose—to inquire into the original, certainty, and extent of HUMAN KNOWLEDGE, together with the grounds and degrees of BELIEF, OPINION, and ASSENT;—I shall not at present meddle with the physical consideration of the mind; or trouble myself to examine wherein its essence consists; or by what motions of our spirits or alterations of our bodies we come to have any SENSATION by our organs, or any IDEAS in our understandings; and whether those ideas do in their formation, any or all of them, depend on matter or not. These are speculations which, however curious and entertaining, I shall decline, as lying out of my way in the design I am now upon. It shall suffice to my present purpose, to consider the discerning faculties of a man, as

they are employed about the objects which they have to do with.

And I shall imagine I have not wholly misemployed myself in the thoughts I shall have on this occasion, if, in this historical, plain method, I can give any account of the ways whereby our understandings come to attain those notions of things we have; and can set down any measures of the certainty of our knowledge; or the grounds of those persuasions which are to be found amongst men, so various, different, and wholly contradictory; and yet asserted somewhere or other with such assurance and confidence, that he that shall take a view of the opinions of mankind, observe their opposition, and at the same time consider the fondness and devotion wherewith they are embraced, the resolution and eagerness wherewith they are maintained, may perhaps have reason to suspect, that either there is no such thing as truth at all, or that mankind hath no sufficient means to attain a certain knowledge of it.

3. Method.

It is therefore worth while to search out the bounds between opinion and knowledge; and examine by what measures, in things whereof we have no certain knowledge, we ought to regulate our assent and moderate our persuasion. In order whereunto I shall pursue this following method:— First, I shall inquire into the original of those ideas, notions, or whatever else you please to call them, which a man observes, and is conscious to himself he has in his mind; and the ways whereby the understanding comes to be furnished with them.

Secondly, I shall endeavour to show what knowledge the understanding hath by those ideas; and the certainty, evidence, and extent of it.

Thirdly, I shall make some inquiry into the nature and grounds of FAITH or OPINION: whereby I mean that assent which we give to any proposition as true, of whose truth yet

we have no certain knowledge. And here we shall have occasion to examine the reasons and degrees of ASSENT.

4. Useful to know the Extent of our Comprehension.

If by this inquiry into the nature of the understanding, I can discover the powers thereof; how far they reach; to what things they are in any degree proportionate; and where they fail us, I suppose it may be of use to prevail with the busy mind of man to be more cautious in meddling with things exceeding its comprehension; to stop when it is at the utmost extent of its tether; and to sit down in a quiet ignorance of those things which, upon examination, are found to be beyond the reach of our capacities. We should not then perhaps be so forward, out of an affectation of an universal knowledge, to raise questions, and perplex ourselves and others with disputes about things to which our understandings are not suited; and of which we cannot frame in our minds any clear or distinct perceptions, or whereof (as it has perhaps too often happened) we have not any notions at all. If we can find out how far the understanding can extend its view; how far it has faculties to attain certainty; and in what cases it can only judge and guess, we may learn to content ourselves with what is attainable by us in this state.

5. Our Capacity suited to our State and Concerns.

For though the comprehension of our understandings comes exceeding short of the vast extent of things, yet we shall have cause enough to magnify the bountiful Author of our being, for that proportion and degree of knowledge he has bestowed on us, so far above all the rest of the inhabitants of this our mansion. Men have reason to be well satisfied with what God hath thought fit for them, since he hath given them (as St. Peter says) [words in Greek], whatsoever is necessary for the conveniences of life and information of virtue; and has put within the reach of their discovery, the comfortable provision for this life, and the way that leads to a better. How short soever their knowledge

may come of an universal or perfect comprehension of whatsoever is, it yet secures their great concernments, that they have light enough to lead them to the knowledge of their Maker, and the sight of their own duties.

Men may find matter sufficient to busy their heads, and employ their hands with variety, delight, and satisfaction, if they will not boldly quarrel with their own constitution, and throw away the blessings their hands are filled with, because they are not big enough to grasp everything. We shall not have much reason to complain of the narrowness of our minds, if we will but employ them about what may be of use to us; for of that they are very capable. And it will be an unpardonable, as well as childish peevishness, if we undervalue the advantages of our knowledge, and neglect to improve it to the ends for which it was given us, because there are some things that are set out of the reach of it.

It will be no excuse to an idle and untoward servant, who would not attend his business by candle light, to plead that he had not broad sunshine. The Candle that is set up in us shines bright enough for all our purposes. The discoveries we can make with this ought to satisfy us; and we shall then use our understandings right, when we entertain all objects in that way and proportion that they are suited to our faculties, and upon those grounds they are capable of being proposed to us; and not peremptorily or intemperately require demonstration, and demand certainty, where probability only is to be had, and which is sufficient to govern all our concernments. If we will disbelieve everything, because we cannot certainly know all things, we shall do much what as wisely as he who would not use his legs, but sit still and perish, because he had no wings to fly.

6. Knowledge of our Capacity a Cure of Scepticism and Idleness.

When we know our own strength, we shall the better know what to undertake with hopes of success; and when we have well surveyed the POWERS of our own minds, and

made some estimate what we may expect from them, we shall not be inclined either to sit still, and not set our thoughts on work at all, in despair of knowing anything; nor on the other side, question everything, and disclaim all knowledge, because some things are not to be understood. It is of great use to the sailor to know the length of his line, though he cannot with it fathom all the depths of the ocean. It is well he knows that it is long enough to reach the bottom, at such places as are necessary to direct his voyage, and caution him against running upon shoals that may ruin him. Our business here is not to know all things, but those which concern our conduct. If we can find out those measures, whereby a rational creature, put in that state in which man is in this world, may and ought to govern his opinions, and actions depending thereon, we need not to be troubled that some other things escape our knowledge.

7. Occasion of this Essay.

This was that which gave the first rise to this Essay concerning the understanding. For I thought that the first step towards satisfying several inquiries the mind of man was very apt to run into, was, to take a survey of our own understandings, examine our own powers, and see to what things they were adapted. Till that was done I suspected we began at the wrong end, and in vain sought for satisfaction in a quiet and sure possession of truths that most concerned us, whilst we let loose our thoughts into the vast ocean of Being; as if all that boundless extent were the natural and undoubted possession of our understandings, wherein there was nothing exempt from its decisions, or that escaped its comprehension. Thus men, extending their inquiries beyond their capacities, and letting their thoughts wander into those depths where they can find no sure footing, it is no wonder that they raise questions and multiply disputes, which, never coming to any clear resolution, are proper only to continue and increase their doubts, and to confirm them at last in perfect scepticism. Whereas, were the capacities of our understandings well considered, the extent of our knowledge

once discovered, and the horizon found which sets the bounds between the enlightened and dark parts of things; between what is and what is not comprehensible by us, men would perhaps with less scruple acquiesce in the avowed ignorance of the one, and employ their thoughts and discourse with more advantage and satisfaction in the other.

8. What Idea stands for.

Thus much I thought necessary to say concerning the occasion of this inquiry into human Understanding. But, before I proceed on to what I have thought on this subject, I must here in the entrance beg pardon of my reader for the frequent use of the word IDEA, which he will find in the following treatise. It being that term which, I think, serves best to stand for whatsoever is the OBJECT of the understanding when a man thinks, I have used it to express whatever is meant by PHANTASM, NOTION, SPECIES, or WHATEVER IT IS WHICH THE MIND CAN BE EMPLOYED ABOUT IN THINKING; and I could not avoid frequently using it. I presume it will be easily granted me, that there are such IDEAS in men's minds: every one is conscious of them in himself; and men's words and actions will satisfy him that they are in others.

Our first inquiry then shall be,—how they come into the mind. BOOK I

NEITHER PRINCIPLES NOR IDEAS ARE INNATE

CHAPTER I. NO INNATE SPECULATIVE PRINCIPLES.

1. The way shown how we come by any Knowledge, sufficient to prove it not innate.

It is an established opinion amongst some men, that there are in the understanding certain INNATE PRINCIPLES;

some primary notions, KOIVAI EVVOIAI, characters, as it were stamped upon the mind of man; which the soul receives in its very first being, and brings into the world with it. It would be sufficient to convince unprejudiced readers of the falseness of this supposition, if I should only show (as I hope I shall in the following parts of this Discourse) how men, barely by the use of their natural faculties may attain to all the knowledge they have, without the help of any innate impressions; and may arrive at certainty, without any such original notions or principles. For I imagine any one will easily grant that it would be impertinent to suppose the ideas of colours innate in a creature to whom God hath given sight, and a power to receive them by the eyes from external objects: and no less unreasonable would it be to attribute several truths to the impressions of nature, and innate characters, when we may observe in ourselves faculties fit to attain as easy and certain knowledge of them as if they were originally imprinted on the mind.

But because a man is not permitted without censure to follow his own thoughts in the search of truth, when they lead him ever so little out of the common road, I shall set down the reasons that made me doubt of the truth of that opinion, as an excuse for my mistake, if I be in one; which I leave to be considered by those who, with me, dispose themselves to embrace truth wherever they find it.

2. General Assent the great Argument.

There is nothing more commonly taken for granted than that there are certain PRINCIPLES, both SPECULATIVE and PRACTICAL, (for they speak of both), universally agreed upon by all mankind: which therefore, they argue, must needs be the constant impressions which the souls of men receive in their first beings, and which they bring into the world with them, as necessarily and really as they do any of their inherent faculties.

3. Universal Consent proves nothing innate.

This argument, drawn from universal consent, has this misfortune in it, that if it were true in matter of fact, that there were certain truths wherein all mankind agreed, it would not prove them innate, if there can be any other way shown how men may come to that universal agreement, in the things they do consent in, which I presume may be done.

4. "What is is," and "It is possible for the same Thing to be and not to be," not universally assented to.

But, which is worse, this argument of universal consent, which is made use of to prove innate principles, seems to me a demonstration that there are none such: because there are none to which all mankind give an universal assent. I shall begin with the speculative, and instance in those magnified principles of demonstration, "Whatsoever is, is," and "It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be"; which, of all others, I think have the most allowed title to innate. These have so settled a reputation of maxims universally received, that it will no doubt be thought strange if any one should seem to question it. But yet I take liberty to say, that these propositions are so far from having an universal assent, that there are a great part of mankind to whom they are not so much as known.

5. Not on Mind naturally imprinted, because not known to Children, Idiots, &c.

For, first, it is evident, that all children and idiots have not the least apprehension or thought of them. And the want of that is enough to destroy that universal assent which must needs be the necessary concomitant of all innate truths: it seeming to me near a contradiction to say, that there are truths imprinted on the soul, which it perceives or understands not: imprinting, if it signify anything, being nothing else but the making certain truths to be perceived. For to imprint anything on the mind without the mind's perceiving it, seems to me hardly intelligible. If therefore children and idiots have souls, have minds, with those impressions upon them, THEY must unavoidably perceive

them, and necessarily know and assent to these truths; which since they do not, it is evident that there are no such impressions. For if they are not notions naturally imprinted, how can they be innate? and if they are notions imprinted, how can they be unknown? To say a notion is imprinted on the mind, and yet at the same time to say, that the mind is ignorant of it, and never yet took notice of it, is to make this impression nothing. No proposition can be said to be in the mind which it never yet knew, which it was never yet conscious of. For if any one may, then, by the same reason, all propositions that are true, and the mind is capable ever of assenting to, may be said to be in the mind, and to be imprinted: since, if any one can be said to be in the mind, which it never yet knew, it must be only because it is capable of knowing it; and so the mind is of all truths it ever shall know. Nay, thus truths may be imprinted on the mind which it never did, nor ever shall know; for a man may live long, and die at last in ignorance of many truths which his mind was capable of knowing, and that with certainty. So that if the capacity of knowing be the natural impression contended for, all the truths a man ever comes to know will, by this account, be every one of them innate; and this great point will amount to no more, but only to a very improper way of speaking; which, whilst it pretends to assert the contrary, says nothing different from those who deny innate principles.

For nobody, I think, ever denied that the mind was capable of knowing several truths. The capacity, they say, is innate; the knowledge acquired. But then to what end such contest for certain innate maxims?

If truths can be imprinted on the understanding without being perceived, I can see no difference there can be between any truths the mind is CAPABLE of knowing in respect of their original: they must all be innate or all adventitious: in vain shall a man go about to distinguish them.

He therefore that talks of innate notions in the

understanding, cannot (if he intend thereby any distinct sort of truths) mean such truths to be in the understanding as it never perceived, and is yet wholly ignorant of. For if these words "to be in the understanding" have any propriety, they signify to be understood. So that to be in the understanding, and not to be understood; to be in the mind and never to be perceived, is all one as to say anything is and is not in the mind or understanding. If therefore these two propositions, "Whatsoever is, is," and "It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be," are by nature imprinted, children cannot be ignorant of them: infants, and all that have souls, must necessarily have them in their understandings, know the truth of them, and assent to it.

6. That men know them when they come to the Use of Reason answered.

To avoid this, it is usually answered, that all men know and assent to them, WHEN THEY COME TO THE USE OF REASON; and this is enough to prove them innate. I answer:

7. Doubtful expressions, that have scarce any signification, go for clear reasons to those who, being prepossessed, take not the pains to examine even what they themselves say. For, to apply this answer with any tolerable sense to our present purpose, it must signify one of these two things: either that as soon as men come to the use of reason these supposed native inscriptions come to be known and observed by them; or else, that the use and exercise of men's reason, assists them in the discovery of these principles, and certainly makes them known to them.

8. If Reason discovered them, that would not prove them innate.

If they mean, that by the use of reason men may discover these principles, and that this is sufficient to prove them innate; their way of arguing will stand thus, viz. that whatever truths reason can certainly discover to us, and

make us firmly assent to, those are all naturally imprinted on the mind; since that universal assent, which is made the mark of them, amounts to no more but this,—that by the use of reason we are capable to come to a certain knowledge of and assent to them; and, by this means, there will be no difference between the maxims of the mathematicians, and theorems they deduce from them: all must be equally allowed innate; they being all discoveries made by the use of reason, and truths that a rational creature may certainly come to know, if he apply his thoughts rightly that way.

9. It is false that Reason discovers them.

But how can these men think the use of reason necessary to discover principles that are supposed innate, when reason (if we may believe them) is nothing else but the faculty of deducing unknown truths from principles or propositions that are already known? That certainly can never be thought innate which we have need of reason to discover; unless, as I have said, we will have all the certain truths that reason ever teaches us, to be innate. We may as well think the use of reason necessary to make our eyes discover visible objects, as that there should be need of reason, or the exercise thereof, to make the understanding see what is originally engraven on it, and cannot be in the understanding before it be perceived by it. So that to make reason discover those truths thus imprinted, is to say, that the use of reason discovers to a man what he knew before: and if men have those innate impressed truths originally, and before the use of reason, and yet are always ignorant of them till they come to the use of reason, it is in effect to say, that men know and know them not at the same time.

10. No use made of reasoning in the discovery of these two maxims.

It will here perhaps be said that mathematical demonstrations, and other truths that are not innate, are not assented to as soon as proposed, wherein they are distinguished from these maxims and other innate truths. I

shall have occasion to speak of assent upon the first proposing, more particularly by and by. I shall here only, and that very readily, allow, that these maxims and mathematical demonstrations are in this different: that the one have need of reason, using of proofs, to make them out and to gain our assent; but the other, as soon as understood, are, without any the least reasoning, embraced and assented to. But I withal beg leave to observe, that it lays open the weakness of this subterfuge, which requires the use of reason for the discovery of these general truths: since it must be confessed that in their discovery there is no use made of reasoning at all. And I think those who give this answer will not be forward to affirm that the knowledge of this maxim, "That it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be," is a deduction of our reason. For this would be to destroy that bounty of nature they seem so fond of, whilst they make the knowledge of those principles to depend on the labour of our thoughts. For all reasoning is search, and casting about, and requires pains and application. And how can it with any tolerable sense be supposed, that what was imprinted by nature, as the foundation and guide of our reason, should need the use of reason to discover it?

11. And if there were this would prove them not innate.

Those who will take the pains to reflect with a little attention on the operations of the understanding, will find that this ready assent of the mind to some truths, depends not, either on native inscription, or the use of reason, but on a faculty of the mind quite distinct from both of them, as we shall see hereafter. Reason, therefore, having nothing to do in procuring our assent to these maxims, if by saying, that "men know and assent to them, when they come to the use of reason," be meant, that the use of reason assists us in the knowledge of these maxims, it is utterly false; and were it true, would prove them not to be innate.

12. The coming of the Use of Reason not the Time we come to know these Maxims.

If by knowing and assenting to them "when we come to the use of reason," be meant, that this is the time when they come to be taken notice of by the mind; and that as soon as children come to the use of reason, they come also to know and assent to these maxims; this also is false and frivolous. First, it is false; because it is evident these maxims are not in the mind so early as the use of reason; and therefore the coming to the use of reason is falsely assigned as the time of their discovery.

How many instances of the use of reason may we observe in children, a long time before they have any knowledge of this maxim, "That it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be?" And a great part of illiterate people and savages pass many years, even of their rational age, without ever thinking on this and the like general propositions. I grant, men come not to the knowledge of these general and more abstract truths, which are thought innate, till they come to the use of reason; and I add, nor then neither. Which is so, because, till after they come to the use of reason, those general abstract ideas are not framed in the mind, about which those general maxims are, which are mistaken for innate principles, but are indeed discoveries made and verities introduced and brought into the mind by the same way, and discovered by the same steps, as several other propositions, which nobody was ever so extravagant as to suppose innate. This I hope to make plain in the sequel of this Discourse. I allow therefore, a necessity that men should come to the use of reason before they get the knowledge of those general truths; but deny that men's coming to the use of reason is the time of their discovery.

13. By this they are not distinguished from other knowable Truths.

In the mean time it is observable, that this saying that men know and assent to these maxims "when they come to the use of reason," amounts in reality of fact to no more but this, —that they are never known nor taken notice of before the use of reason, but may possibly be assented to some time

after, during a man's life; but when is uncertain. And so may all other knowable truths, as well as these which therefore have no advantage nor distinction from other by this note of being known when we come to the use of reason; nor are thereby proved to be innate, but quite the contrary.

14. If coming to the Use of Reason were the Time of their Discovery, it would not prove them innate.

But, secondly, were it true that the precise time of their being known and assented to were, when men come to the use of reason; neither would that prove them innate. This way of arguing is as frivolous as the supposition itself is false. For, by what kind of logic will it appear that any notion is originally by nature imprinted in the mind in its first constitution, because it comes first to be observed and assented to when a faculty of the mind, which has quite a distinct province, begins to exert itself? And therefore the coming to the use of speech, if it were supposed the time that these maxims are first assented to, (which it may be with as much truth as the time when men come to the use of reason,) would be as good a proof that they were innate, as to say they are innate because men assent to them when they come to the use of reason. I agree then with these men of innate principles, that there is no knowledge of these general and self-evident maxims in the mind, till it comes to the exercise of reason: but I deny that the coming to the use of reason is the precise time when they are first taken notice of; and if that were the precise time, I deny that it would prove them innate. All that can with any truth be meant by this proposition, that men 'assent to them when they come to the use of reason,' is no more but this,—that the making of general abstract ideas, and the understanding of general names, being a concomitant of the rational faculty, and growing up with it, children commonly get not those general ideas, nor learn the names that stand for them, till, having for a good while exercised their reason about familiar and more particular ideas, they are, by their ordinary discourse and actions with others, acknowledged to be capable of rational

conversation. If assenting to these maxims, when men come to the use of reason, can be true in any other sense, I desire it may be shown; or at least, how in this, or any other sense, it proves them innate.

15. The Steps by which the Mind attains several Truths.

The senses at first let in PARTICULAR ideas, and furnish the yet empty cabinet, and the mind by degrees growing familiar with some of them, they are lodged in the memory, and names got to them. Afterwards, the mind proceeding further, abstracts them, and by degrees learns the use of general names. In this manner the mind comes to be furnished with ideas and language, the MATERIALS about which to exercise its discursive faculty. And the use of reason becomes daily more visible, as these materials that give it employment increase. But though the having of general ideas and the use of general words and reason usually grow together, yet I see not how this any way proves them innate. The knowledge of some truths, I confess, is very early in the mind; but in a way that shows them not to be innate. For, if we will observe, we shall find it still to be about ideas, not innate, but acquired; it being about those first which are imprinted by external things, with which infants have earliest to do, which make the most frequent impressions on their senses. In ideas thus got, the mind discovers that some agree and others differ, probably as soon as it has any use of memory; as soon as it is able to retain and perceive distinct ideas. But whether it be then or no, this is certain, it does so long before it has the use of words; or comes to that which we commonly call "the use of reason." For a child knows as certainly before it can speak the difference between the ideas of sweet and bitter (i.e. that sweet is not bitter), as it knows afterwards (when it comes to speak) that wormwood and sugarplums are not the same thing.

16. Assent to supposed innate truths depends on having clear and distinct ideas of what their terms mean, and not on their innateness.

A child knows not that three and four are equal to seven, till he comes to be able to count seven, and has got the name and idea of equality; and then, upon explaining those words, he presently assents to, or rather perceives the truth of that proposition. But neither does he then readily assent because it is an innate truth, nor was his assent wanting till then because he wanted the use of reason; but the truth of it appears to him as soon as he has settled in his mind the clear and distinct ideas that these names stand for. And then he knows the truth of that proposition upon the same ground and by the same means, that he knew before that a rod and a cherry are not the same thing; and upon the same ground also that he may come to know afterwards "That it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be," as shall be more fully shown hereafter. So that the later it is before any one comes to have those general ideas about which those maxims are; or to know the signification of those generic terms that stand for them; or to put together in his mind the ideas they stand for; the later also will it be before he comes to assent to those maxims;—whose terms, with the ideas they stand for, being no more innate than those of a cat or a weasel he must stay till time and observation have acquainted him with them; and then he will be in a capacity to know the truth of these maxims, upon the first occasion that shall make him put together those ideas in his mind, and observe whether they agree or disagree, according as is expressed in those propositions. And therefore it is that a man knows that eighteen and nineteen are equal to thirty-seven, by the same self-evidence that he knows one and two to be equal to three: yet a child knows this not so soon as the other; not for want of the use of reason, but because the ideas the words eighteen nineteen, and thirty-seven stand for, are not so soon got, as those which are signified by one, two, and three.

17. Assenting as soon as proposed and understood, proves them not innate.

This evasion therefore of general assent when men come

to the use of reason, failing as it does, and leaving no difference between those supposed innate and other truths that are afterwards acquired and learnt, men have endeavoured to secure an universal assent to those they call maxims, by saying, they are generally assented to as soon as proposed, and the terms they are proposed in understood: seeing all men, even children, as soon as they hear and understand the terms, assent to these propositions, they think it is sufficient to prove them innate.

For, since men never fail after they have once understood the words, to acknowledge them for undoubted truths, they would infer, that certainly these propositions were first lodged in the understanding, which, without any teaching, the mind, at the very first proposal immediately closes with and assents to, and after that never doubts again.

18. If such an Assent be a Mark of Innate, then "that one and two are equal to three, that Sweetness if not Bitterness," and a thousand the like, must be innate.

In answer to this, I demand whether ready assent given to a proposition, upon first hearing and understanding the terms, be a certain mark of an innate principle? If it be not, such a general assent is in vain urged as a proof of them: if it be said that it is a mark of innate, they must then allow all such propositions to be innate which are generally assented to as soon as heard, whereby they will find themselves plentifully stored with innate principles. For upon the same ground, viz. of assent at first hearing and understanding the terms, that men would have those maxims pass for innate, they must also admit several propositions about numbers to be innate; and thus, that one and two are equal to three, that two and two are equal to four, and a multitude of other the like propositions in numbers, that everybody assents to at first hearing and understanding the terms, must have a place amongst these innate axioms. Nor is this the prerogative of numbers alone, and propositions made about several of them; but even natural philosophy, and all the other sciences, afford propositions which are sure to meet with

assent as soon as they are understood. That "two bodies cannot be in the same place" is a truth that nobody any more sticks at than at these maxims, that "it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be," that "white is not black," that "a square is not a circle," that "bitterness is not sweetness." These and a million of such other propositions, as many at least as we have distinct, ideas of, every man in his wits, at first hearing, and knowing, what the names stand for, must necessarily assent to. If these men will be true to their own rule, and have assent at first hearing and understanding the terms to be a mark of innate, they must allow not only as many innate proposition as men have distinct ideas, but as many as men can make propositions wherein different ideas are denied one of another. Since every proposition wherein one different idea is denied of another, will as certainly find assent at first hearing and understanding the terms as this general one, "It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be," or that which is the foundation of it and is the easier understood of the two, "The same is not different"; by which account they will have legions of innate propositions of this one sort, without mentioning any other But, since no proposition can be innate unless the *ideas* about which it is be innate, this will be to suppose all our ideas of colours, sounds, tastes, figure, &c., innate, than which there cannot be anything more opposite to reason and experience. Universal and ready assent upon hearing and understanding the terms is, I grant, a mark of self-evidence; but self-evidence, depending not on innate impressions, but on something else, (as we shall show hereafter,) belongs to several propositions which nobody was yet so extravagant as to pretend to be innate.

19. Such less general Propositions known before these universal Maxims.

Nor let it be said, that those more particular self-evident propositions, which are assented to at first hearing, as that "one and two are equal to three," that "green is not red," &c., are received as the consequences of those more universal

propositions which are looked on as innate principles; since any one, who will but take the pains to observe what passes in the understanding, will certainly find that these, and the like less general propositions, are certainly known, and firmly assented to by those who are utterly ignorant of those more general maxims; and so, being earlier in the mind than those (as they are called) first principles, cannot owe to them the assent wherewith they are received at first hearing.

20. One and one equal to Two, &c., not general nor useful answered.

If it be said, that these propositions, viz. "two and two are equal to four," "red is not blue," &c., are not general maxims nor of any great use, I answer, that makes nothing to the argument of universal assent upon hearing and understanding. For, if that be the certain mark of innate, whatever propositions can be found that receives general assent as soon as heard understood, that must be admitted for an innate proposition as well as this maxim, "That it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be," they being upon this ground equal. And as to the difference of being more general, that makes this maxim more remote from being innate; those general and abstract ideas being more strangers to our first apprehensions than those of more particular self-evident propositions; and therefore it is longer before they are admitted, and assented to by the growing understanding. And as to the usefulness of these magnified maxims, that perhaps will not be found so great as is generally conceived, when it comes in its due place to be more fully considered.

21. These Maxims not being known sometimes till proposed, proves them not innate.

But we have not yet done with "assenting to propositions at first hearing and understanding their terms." It is fit we first take notice that this, instead of being a mark that they are innate, is a proof of the contrary; since it supposes that several, who understand and know other things, are ignorant of these principles till they are proposed to them; and that one may be unacquainted with these truths till he hears them from others. For, if they were innate, what need they be proposed in order to gaining assent, when, by being in the understanding, by a natural and original impression, (if there were any such,) they could not but be known before? Or doth the proposing them print them clearer in the mind than nature did? If so, then the consequence will be, that a man knows them better after he has been thus taught them than he did before. Whence it will follow that these principles may be made more evident to us by others' teaching than nature has made them by impression: which will ill agree with the opinion of innate principles, and give but little authority to them; but, on the contrary, makes them unfit to be the foundations of all our other knowledge; as they are pretended to be. This cannot be denied, that men grow first acquainted with many of these self-evident truths upon their being proposed: but it is clear that whosoever does so, finds in himself that he then begins to know a proposition, which he knew not before, and which from thenceforth he never questions; not because it was innate, but because the consideration of the nature of the things contained in those words would not suffer him to think otherwise, how, or whensoever he is brought to reflect on them. And if whatever is assented to at first hearing and understanding the terms must pass for an innate principle, every well-grounded observation, drawn from particulars into a general rule, must be innate. When yet it is certain that not all, but only

sagacious heads, light at first on these observations, and reduce them into general propositions: not innate but collected from a preceding acquaintance and reflection on particular instances. These, when observing men have made them, unobserving men, when they are proposed to them cannot refuse their assent to.

22. Implicitly known before proposing, signifies that the Mind is capable of understanding them, or else signifies nothing.

If it be said, the understanding hath an IMPLICIT knowledge of these principles, but not an EXPLICIT, before this first hearing (as they must who will say "that they are in the understanding before they are known,") it will be hard to conceive what is meant by a principle imprinted on the understanding implicitly, unless it be this,—that the mind is capable of understanding and assenting firmly to such propositions. And thus all mathematical demonstrations, as well as first principles, must be received as native impressions on the mind; which I fear they will scarce allow them to be, who find it harder to demonstrate a proposition than assent to it when demonstrated. And few mathematicians will be forward to believe, that all the diagrams they have drawn were but copies of those innate characters which nature had engraven upon their minds.

23. The Argument of assenting on first hearing, is upon a false supposition of no precedent teaching.

There is, I fear, this further weakness in the foregoing argument, which would persuade us that therefore those maxims are to be thought innate, which men admit at first hearing; because they assent to propositions which they are not taught, nor do receive from the force of any argument or demonstration, but a bare explication or understanding of the terms.

Under which there seems to me to lie this fallacy, that men are supposed not to be taught nor to learn anything DE

NOVO; when, in truth, they are taught, and do learn something they were ignorant of before. For, first, it is evident that they have learned the terms, and their signification; neither of which was born with them. But this is not all the acquired knowledge in the case: the ideas themselves, about which the proposition is, are not born with them, no more than their names, but got afterwards. So that in all propositions that are assented to at first hearing, the terms of the proposition, their standing for such ideas, and the ideas themselves that they stand for, being neither of them innate, I would fain know what there is remaining in such propositions that is innate. For I would gladly have any one name that proposition whose terms or ideas were either of them innate. We BY DEGREES get ideas and names, and LEARN their appropriated connexion one with another; and then to propositions made in such, terms, whose signification we have learnt, and wherein the agreement or disagreement we can perceive in our ideas when put together is expressed, we at first hearing assent; though to other propositions, in themselves as certain and evident, but which are concerning ideas not so soon or so easily got, we are at the same time no way capable of assenting. For, though a child quickly assents to this proposition, "That an apple is not fire," when by familiar acquaintance he has got the ideas of those two different things distinctly imprinted on his mind, and has learnt that the names apple and fire stand for them; yet it will be some years after, perhaps, before the same child will assent to this proposition, "That it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be"; because that, though perhaps the words are as easy to be learnt, yet the signification of them being more large, comprehensive, and abstract than of the names annexed to those sensible things the child hath to do with, it is longer before he learns their precise meaning, and it requires more time plainly to form in his mind those general ideas they stand for. Till that be done, you will in vain endeavour to make any child assent to a proposition made up of such general terms; but as soon as ever he has got those ideas, and learned their names, he forwardly closes with the one as well as the other of the

forementioned propositions: and with both for the same reason; viz. because he finds the ideas he has in his mind to agree or disagree, according as the words standing for them are affirmed or denied one of another in the proposition. But if propositions be brought to him in words which stand for ideas he has not yet in his mind, to such propositions, however evidently true or false in themselves, he affords neither assent nor dissent, but is ignorant.

For words being but empty sounds, any further than they are signs of our ideas, we cannot but assent to them as they correspond to those ideas we have, but no further than that. But the showing by what steps and ways knowledge comes into our minds; and the grounds of several degrees of assent, being; the business of the following Discourse, it may suffice to have only touched on it here, as one reason that made me doubt of those innate principles.

24. Not innate because not universally assented to.

To conclude this argument of universal consent, I agree with these defenders of innate principles,—that if they are innate, they must needs have universal assent. For that a truth should be innate and yet not assented to, is to me as unintelligible as for a man to know a truth and be ignorant of it at the same time. But then, by these men's own confession, they cannot be innate; since they are not assented to by those who understand not the terms; nor by a great part of those who do understand them, but have yet never heard nor thought of those propositions; which, I think, is at least one half of mankind. But were the number far less, it would be enough to destroy universal assent, and thereby show these propositions not to be innate, if children alone were ignorant of them.

25. These Maxims not the first known.

But that I may not be accused to argue from the thoughts of infants, which are unknown to us, and to conclude from what passes in their understandings before they express it; I

say next, that these two general propositions are not the truths that first possess the minds of children, nor are antecedent to all acquired and adventitious notions: which, if they were innate, they must needs be. Whether we can determine it or no, it matters not, there is certainly a time when children begin to think, and their words and actions do assure us that they do so. When therefore they are capable of thought, of knowledge, of assent, can it rationally be supposed they can be ignorant of those notions that nature has imprinted, were there any such? Can it be imagined, with any appearance of reason, that they perceive the impressions from things without, and be at the same time ignorant of those characters which nature itself has taken care to stamp within? Can they receive and assent to adventitious notions, and be ignorant of those which are supposed woven into the very principles of their being, and imprinted there in indelible characters, to be the foundation and guide of all their acquired knowledge and future reasonings? This would be to make nature take pains to no purpose; or at least to write very ill; since its characters could not be read by those eyes which saw other things very well: and those are very ill supposed the clearest parts of truth, and the foundations of all our knowledge, which are not first known, and without which the undoubted knowledge of several other things may be had. The child certainly knows, that the nurse that feeds it is neither the cat it plays with, nor the blackmoor it is afraid of: that the wormseed or mustard it refuses, is not the apple or sugar it cries for: this it is certainly and undoubtedly assured of: but will any one say, it is by virtue of this principle, "That it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be," that it so firmly assents to these and other parts of its knowledge? Or that the child has any notion or apprehension of that proposition at an age, wherein yet, it is plain, it knows a great many other truths? He that will say, children join in these general abstract speculations with their sucking-bottles and their rattles, may perhaps, with justice, be thought to have more passion and zeal for his opinion, but less sincerity and truth, than one of that age.

26. And so not innate.

Though therefore there be several general propositions that meet with constant and ready assent, as soon as proposed to men grown up, who have attained the use of more general and abstract ideas, and names standing for them; yet they not being to be found in those of tender years, who nevertheless know other things, they cannot pretend to universal assent of intelligent persons, and so by no means can be supposed innate;—it being impossible that any truth which is innate (if there were any such) should be unknown, at least to any one who knows anything else. Since, if they are innate truths, they must be innate thoughts: there being nothing a truth in the mind that it has never thought on. Whereby it is evident, if there be any innate truths, they must necessarily be the first of any thought on; the first that appear.

27. Not innate, because they appear least, where what is innate shows itself clearest.

That the general maxims we are discoursing of are not known to children, idiots, and a great part of mankind, we have already sufficiently proved: whereby it is evident they have not an universal assent, nor are general impressions. But there is this further argument in it against their being innate: that these characters, if they were native and original impressions, should appear fairest and clearest in those persons in whom yet we find no footsteps of them; and it is, in my opinion, a strong presumption that they are not innate, since they are least known to those in whom, if they were innate, they must needs exert themselves with most force and vigour. For children, idiots, savages, and illiterate people, being of all others the least corrupted by custom, or borrowed opinions; learning and education having not cast their native thoughts into new moulds; nor by superinducing foreign and studied doctrines, confounded those fair characters nature had written there; one might reasonably imagine that in THEIR minds these innate notions should lie open fairly to every one's view, as it is certain the thoughts

of children do. It might very well be expected that these principles should be perfectly known to naturals; which being stamped immediately on the soul, (as these men suppose,) can have no dependence on the constitution or organs of the body, the only confessed difference between them and others. One would think, according to these men's principles, that all these native beams of light (were there any such) should, in those who have no reserves, no arts of concealment, shine out in their full lustre, and leave us in no more doubt of their being there, than we are of their love of pleasure and abhorrence of pain. But alas, amongst children, idiots, savages, and the grossly illiterate, what general maxims are to be found? what universal principles of knowledge? Their notions are few and narrow, borrowed only from those objects they have had most to do with, and which have made upon their senses the frequentest and strongest impressions. A child knows his nurse and his cradle, and by degrees the playthings of a little more advanced age; and a young savage has, perhaps, his head filled with love and hunting, according to the fashion of his tribe. But he that from a child untaught, or a wild inhabitant of the woods, will expect these abstract maxims and reputed principles of science, will, I fear find himself mistaken. Such kind of general propositions are seldom mentioned in the huts of Indians: much less are they to be found in the thoughts of children, or any impressions of them on the minds of naturals. They are the language and business of the schools and academies of learned nations accustomed to that sort of conversation or learning, where disputes are frequent; these maxims being suited to artificial argumentation and useful for conviction, but not much conducing to the discovery of truth or advancement of knowledge. But of their small use for the improvement of knowledge I shall have occasion to speak more at large, l.4, c. 7.

28. Recapitulation.

I know not how absurd this may seem to the masters of demonstration. And probably it will hardly go down with

anybody at first hearing. I must therefore beg a little truce with prejudice, and the forbearance of censure, till I have been heard out in the sequel of this Discourse, being very willing to submit to better judgments. And since I impartially search after truth, I shall not be sorry to be convinced, that I have been too fond of my own notions; which I confess we are all apt to be, when application and study have warmed our heads with them.

Upon the whole matter, I cannot see any ground to think these two speculative Maxims innate: since they are not universally assented to; and the assent they so generally find is no other than what several propositions, not allowed to be innate, equally partake in with them: and since the assent that is given them is produced another way, and comes not from natural inscription, as I doubt not but to make appear in the following Discourse. And if THESE "first principles" of knowledge and science are found not to be innate, no OTHER speculative maxims can (I suppose), with better right pretend to be so.

CHAPTER II. NO INNATE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

1. No moral Principles so clear and so generally received as the forementioned speculative Maxims.

If those speculative Maxims, whereof we discoursed in the foregoing chapter, have not an actual universal assent from all mankind, as we there proved, it is much more visible concerning PRACTICAL Principles, that they come short of an universal reception: and I think it will be hard to instance any one moral rule which can pretend to so general and ready an assent as, "What is, is"; or to be so manifest a truth as this, that "It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be." Whereby it is evident that they are further removed from a title to be innate; and the doubt of their being native impressions on the mind is stronger against

those moral principles than the other. Not that it brings their truth at all in question. They are equally true, though not equally evident. Those speculative maxims carry their own evidence with them: but moral principles require reasoning and discourse, and some exercise of the mind, to discover the certainty of their truth. They lie not open as natural characters engraved on the mind; which, if any such were, they must needs be visible by themselves, and by their own light be certain and known to everybody. But this is no derogation to their truth and certainty; no more than it is to the truth or certainty of the three angles of a triangle being equal to two right ones because it is not so evident as "the whole is bigger than a part," nor so apt to be assented to at first hearing. It may suffice that these moral rules are capable of demonstration: and therefore it is our own faults if we come not to a certain knowledge of them. But the ignorance wherein many men are of them, and the slowness of assent wherewith others receive them, are manifest proofs that they are not innate, and such as offer themselves to their view without searching.

2. Faith and Justice not owned as Principles by all Men.

Whether there be any such moral principles, wherein all men do agree, I appeal to any who have been but moderately conversant in the history of mankind, and looked abroad beyond the smoke of their own chimneys. Where is that practical truth that is universally received, without doubt or question, as it must be if innate? JUSTICE, and keeping of contracts, is that which most men seem to agree in. This is a principle which is thought to extend itself to the dens of thieves, and the confederacies of the greatest villains; and they who have gone furthest towards the putting off of humanity itself, keep faith and rules of justice one with another. I grant that outlaws themselves do this one amongst another: but it is without receiving these as the innate laws of nature. They practise them as rules of convenience within their own communities: but it is impossible to conceive that he embraces justice as a practical principle who acts fairly

with his fellow-highwayman, and at the same time plunders or kills the next honest man he meets with Justice and truth are the common ties of society; and therefore even outlaws and robbers, who break with all the world besides, must keep faith and rules of equity amongst themselves; or else they cannot hold together. But will any one say, that those that live by fraud or rapine have innate principles of truth and justice which they allow and assent to?

3. Objection: though Men deny them in their Practice, yet they admit them in their Thoughts answered.

Perhaps it will be urged, that the tacit assent of their minds agrees to what their practice contradicts. I answer, first, I have always thought the actions of men the best interpreters of their thoughts. But, since it is certain that most men's practices, and some men's open professions, have either questioned or denied these principles, it is impossible to establish an universal consent, (though we should look for it only amongst grown men,) without which it is impossible to conclude them innate. Secondly, it is very strange and unreasonable to suppose innate practical principles, that terminate only in contemplation.

Practical principles, derived from nature, are there for operation, and must produce conformity of action, not barely speculative assent to their truth, or else they are in vain distinguished from speculative maxims. Nature, I confess, has put into man a desire of happiness and an aversion to misery: these indeed are innate practical principles which (as practical principles ought) DO continue constantly to operate and influence all our actions without ceasing: these may be observed in all persons and all ages, steady and universal; but these are INCLINATIONS

OF THE APPETITE to good, not impressions of truth on the understanding.

I deny not that there are natural tendencies imprinted on the minds of men; and that from the very first instances of

sense and perception, there are some things that are grateful and others unwelcome to them; some things that they incline to and others that they fly: but this makes nothing for innate characters on the mind, which are to be the principles of knowledge regulating our practice. Such natural impressions on the understanding are so far from being confirmed hereby, that this is an argument against them; since, if there were certain characters imprinted by nature on the understanding, as the principles of knowledge, we could not but perceive them constantly operate in us and influence our knowledge, as we do those others on the will and appetite; which never cease to be the constant springs and motives of all our actions, to which we perpetually feel them strongly impelling us.

4. Moral Rules need a Proof, ERGO not innate.

Another reason that makes me doubt of any innate practical principles is, that I think THERE CANNOT ANY ONE MORAL RULE BE PROPOSED WHEREOF A MAN MAY NOT JUSTLY DEMAND A REASON: which would be perfectly ridiculous and absurd if they were innate; or so much as self-evident, which every innate principle must needs be, and not need any proof to ascertain its truth, nor want any reason to gain it approbation. He would be thought void of common sense who asked on the one side, or on the other side went to give a reason WHY "it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be." It carries its own light and evidence with it, and needs no other proof: he that understands the terms assents to it for its own sake or else nothing will ever be able to prevail with him to do it. But should that most unshaken rule of morality and foundation of all social virtue, "That should do as he would be done unto," be proposed to one who never heard of it before, but yet is of capacity to understand its meaning; might he not without any absurdity ask a reason why? And were not he that proposed it bound to make out the truth and reasonableness of it to him? Which plainly shows it not to be innate; for if it were it could neither want nor receive any

proof; but must needs (at least as soon as heard and understood) be received and assented to as an unquestionable truth, which a man can by no means doubt of. So that the truth of all these moral rules plainly depends upon some other antecedent to them, and from which they must be DEDUCED; which could not be if either they were innate or so much as self-evident.

5. Instance in keeping Compacts That men should keep their compacts is certainly a great and undeniable rule in morality. But yet, if a Christian, who has the view of happiness and misery in another life, be asked why a man must keep his word, he will give this as a reason:—Because God, who has the power of eternal life and death, requires it of us. But if a Hobbist be asked why? he will answer:—Because the public requires it, and the Leviathan will punish you if you do not. And if one of the old philosophers had been asked, he would have answered:—Because it was dishonest, below the dignity of a man, and opposite to virtue, the highest perfection of human nature, to do otherwise.

6. Virtue generally approved not because innate, but because profitable.

Hence naturally flows the great variety of opinions concerning moral rules which are to be found among men, according to the different sorts of happiness they have a prospect of, or propose to themselves; which could not be if practical principles were innate, and imprinted in our minds immediately by the hand of God. I grant the existence of God is so many ways manifest, and the obedience we owe him so congruous to the light of reason, that a great part of mankind give testimony to the law of nature: but yet I think it must be allowed that several moral rules may receive from mankind a very general approbation, without either knowing or admitting the true ground of morality; which can only be the will and law of a God, who sees men in the dark, has in his hand rewards and punishments, and power enough to call to account the proudest offender. For, God having, by an

inseparable connexion, joined virtue and public happiness together, and made the practice thereof necessary to the preservation of society, and visibly beneficial to all with whom the virtuous man has to do; it is no wonder that every one should not only allow, but recommend and magnify those rules to others, from whose observance of them he is sure to reap advantage to himself. He may, out of interest as well as conviction, cry up that for sacred, which, if once trampled on and profaned, he himself cannot be safe nor secure.

This, though it takes nothing from the moral and eternal obligation which these rules evidently have, yet it shows that the outward acknowledgment men pay to them in their words proves not that they are innate principles: nay, it proves not so much as that men assent to them inwardly in their own minds, as the inviolable rules of their own practice; since we find that self-interest, and the conveniences of this life, make many men own an outward profession and approbation of them, whose actions sufficiently prove that they very little consider the Lawgiver that prescribed these rules; nor the hell that he has ordained for the punishment of those that transgress them.

7. Men's actions convince us, that the Rule of Virtue is not their internal Principle.

For, if we will not in civility allow too much sincerity to the professions of most men, but think their actions to be the interpreters of their thoughts, we shall find that they have no such internal veneration for these rules, nor so full a persuasion of their certainty and obligation. The great principle of morality, 'To do as one would be done to,' is more commended than practised. But the breach of this rule cannot be a greater vice, than to teach others, that it is no moral rule, nor obligatory, would be thought madness, and contrary to that interest men sacrifice to, when they break it themselves. Perhaps CONSCIENCE will be urged as checking us for such breaches, and so the internal obligation and establishment of the rule be preserved.

8. Conscience no Proof of any innate Moral Rule.

To which I answer, that I doubt not but, without being written on their hearts, many men may, by the same way that they come to the knowledge of other things, come to assent to several moral rules, and be convinced of their obligation. Others also may come to be of the same mind, from their education, company, and customs of their country; which persuasion, however got, will serve to set conscience on work; which is nothing else but our own opinion or judgment of the moral rectitude or gravity of our own actions; and if conscience be a proof of innate principles, contraries may be innate principles; since some men with the same bent of conscience prosecute what others avoid.

9. Instances of Enormities practised without Remorse.

But I cannot see how any men should ever transgress those moral rules, with confidence and serenity, were they innate, and stamped upon their minds. View but an army at the sacking of a town, and see what observation or sense of moral principles, or what touch of conscience for all the outrages they do. Robberies, murders, rapes, are the sports of men set at liberty from punishment and censure. Have there not been whole nations, and those of the most civilized people, amongst whom the exposing their children, and leaving them in the fields to perish by want or wild beasts has been the practice; as little condemned or scrupled as the begetting them? Do they not still, in some countries, put them into the same graves with their mothers, if they die in childbirth; or despatch them, if a pretended astrologer declares them to have unhappy stars? And are there not places where, at a certain age, they kill or expose their parents, without any remorse at all? In a part of Asia, the sick, when their case comes to be thought desperate, are carried out and laid on the earth before they are dead; and left there, exposed to wind and weather, to perish without assistance or pity. It is familiar among the Mingrelians, a people professing Christianity, to bury their children alive without scruple. There are places where they eat their own

children. The Caribbees were wont to geld their children, on purpose to fat and eat them. And Garcilasso de la Vega tells us of a people in Peru which were wont to fat and eat the children they got on their female captives, whom they kept as concubines for that purpose, and when they were past breeding, the mothers themselves were killed too and eaten. The virtues whereby the Tououpinambos believed they merited paradise, were revenge, and eating abundance of their enemies. They have not so much as a name for God, and have no religion, no worship. The saints who are canonized amongst the Turks, lead lives which one cannot with modesty relate. A remarkable passage to this purpose, out of the voyage of Baumgarten, which is a book not every day to be met with, I shall set down at large, in the language it is published in.

Ibi (sc. prope Belbes in Aegypto) vidimus sanctum unum Saracenicum inter arenarum cumulos, ita ut ex utero matris prodiit nudum sedentem. Mos est, ut didicimus, Mahometistis, ut eos, qui amentes et sine ratione sunt, pro sanctis colant et venerentur. Insuper et eos, qui cum diu vitam egerint inquinatissimam, voluntariam demum poenitentiam et paupertatem, sanctitate venerandos deputant. Ejusmodi vero genus hominum libertatem quandam effrenem habent, domos quos volunt intrandi, edendi, bibendi, et quod majus est, concumbendi; ex quo concubitu, si proles secuta fuerit, sancta similiter habetur. His ergo hominibus dum vivunt, magnos exhibent honores; mortuis vero vel templa vel monumenta extruunt amplissima, eosque contingere ac sepelire maximae fortunae ducunt loco.

Audivimus haec dicta et dicenda per interpretem a Mucrelo nostro.

Insuper sanctum ilium, quern eo loco vidimus, publicitus apprime commendari, eum esse hominem sanctum, divinum ac integritate praecipuum; eo quod, nec faminarum unquam esset, nec puerorum, sed tantummodo asellarum concubitor atque mularum. (Peregr. Baumgarten, 1. ii. c. i. p.

73.)

Where then are those innate principles of justice, piety, gratitude, equity, chastity? Or where is that universal consent that assures us there are such inbred rules? Murders in duels, when fashion has made them honourable, are committed without remorse of conscience: nay, in many places innocence in this case is the greatest ignominy. And if we look abroad to take a view of men as they are, we shall find that they have remorse, in one place, for doing or omitting that which others, in another place, think they merit by.

10. Men have contrary practical Principles.

He that will carefully peruse the history of mankind, and look abroad into the several tribes of men, and with indifferency survey their actions, will be able to satisfy himself, that there is scarce that principle of morality to be named, or, rule of virtue to be thought on, (those only excepted that are absolutely necessary to hold society together, which commonly too are neglected betwixt distinct societies,) which is not, somewhere or other, slighted and condemned by the general fashion of whole societies of men, governed by practical opinions and rules of living quite opposite to others.

11. Whole Nations reject several Moral Rules.

Here perhaps it will be objected, that it is no argument that the rule is not known, because it is broken. I grant the objection good where men, though they transgress, yet disown not the law; where fear of shame, censure, or punishment, carries the mark of some awe it has upon them. But it is impossible to conceive that a whole nation of men should all publicly reject and renounce what every one of them certainly and infallibly knew to be a law; for so they must who have it naturally imprinted on their minds. It is possible men may sometimes own rules of morality which in their private thoughts they do not believe to be true, only to

keep themselves in reputation and esteem amongst those who are persuaded of their obligation. But it is not to be imagined that a whole society of men should publicly and professedly disown and cast off a rule which they could not in their own minds but be infallibly certain was a law; nor be ignorant that all men they should have to do with knew it to be such: and therefore must every one of them apprehend from others all the contempt and abhorrence due to one who professes himself void of humanity: and one who, confounding the known and natural measures of right and wrong, cannot but be looked on as the professed enemy of their peace and happiness. Whatever practical principle is innate, cannot but be known to every one to be just and good. It is therefore little less than a contradiction to suppose, that whole nations of men should, both in their professions and practice, unanimously and universally give the lie to what, by the most invincible evidence, every one of them knew to be true, right, and good. This is enough to satisfy us that no practical rule which is anywhere universally, and with public approbation or allowance, transgressed, can be supposed innate.—But I have something further to add in answer to this objection.

12. The generally allowed breach of a rule proof that it is not innate.

The breaking of a rule, say you, is no argument that it is unknown. I grant it: but the **GENERALLY ALLOWED** breach of it anywhere, I say, is a proof that it is not innate. For example: let us take any of these rules, which, being the most obvious deductions of human reason, and conformable to the natural inclination of the greatest part of men, fewest people have had the impudence to deny or inconsideration to doubt of. If any can be thought to be naturally imprinted, none, I think, can have a fairer pretence to be innate than this: "Parents, preserve and cherish your children." When, therefore, you say that this is an innate rule, what do you mean? Either that it is an innate principle which upon all occasions excites and directs the actions of all men; or else,

that it is a truth which all men have imprinted on their minds, and which therefore they know and assent to. But in neither of these senses is it innate. FIRST, that it is not a principle which influences all men's actions, is what I have proved by the examples before cited: nor need we seek so far as the Mingrelia or Peru to find instances of such as neglect, abuse, nay, and destroy their children; or look on it only as the more than brutality of some savage and barbarous nations, when we remember that it was a familiar and uncondemned practice amongst the Greeks and Romans to expose, without pity or remorse, their innocent infants. SECONDLY, that it is an innate truth, known to all men, is also false. For, "Parents preserve your children," is so far from an innate truth, that it is no truth at all: it being a command, and not a proposition, and so not capable of truth or falsehood. To make it capable of being assented to as true, it must be reduced to some such proposition as this: "It is the duty of parents to preserve their children." But what duty is, cannot be understood without a law; nor a law be known or supposed without a lawmaker, or without reward and punishment; so that it is impossible that this, or any other, practical principle should be innate, i.e. be imprinted on the mind as a duty, without supposing the ideas of God, of law, of obligation, of punishment, of a life after this, innate: for that punishment follows not in this life the breach of this rule, and consequently that it has not the force of a law in countries where the generally allowed practice runs counter to it, is in itself evident. But these ideas (which must be all of them innate, if anything as a duty be so) are so far from being innate, that it is not every studious or thinking man, much less every one that is born, in whom they are to be found clear and distinct; and that one of them, which of all others seems most likely to be innate, is not so, (I mean the idea of God,) I think, in the next chapter, will appear very evident to any considering man.

13. If men can be ignorant of what is innate, certainty is not described by innate principles.

From what has been said, I think we may safely conclude that whatever practical rule is in any place generally and with allowance broken, cannot be supposed innate; it being impossible that men should, without shame or fear, confidently and serenely, break a rule which they could not but evidently know that God had set up, and would certainly punish the breach of, (which they must, if it were innate,) to a degree to make it a very ill bargain to the transgressor. Without such a knowledge as this, a man can never be certain that anything is his duty. Ignorance or doubt of the law, hopes to escape the knowledge or power of the law-maker, or the like, may make men give way to a present appetite; but let any one see the fault, and the rod by it, and with the transgression, a fire ready to punish it; a pleasure tempting, and the hand of the Almighty visibly held up and prepared to take vengeance, (for this must be the case where any duty is imprinted on the mind,) and then tell me whether it be possible for people with such a prospect, such a certain knowledge as this, wantonly, and without scruple, to offend against a law which they carry about them in indelible characters, and that stares them in the face whilst they are breaking it? Whether men, at the same time that they feel in themselves the imprinted edicts of an Omnipotent Law-maker, can, with assurance and gaiety, slight and trample underfoot his most sacred injunctions? And lastly, whether it be possible that whilst a man thus openly bids defiance to this innate law and supreme Lawgiver, all the bystanders, yea, even the governors and rulers of the people, full of the same sense both of the law and Law-maker, should silently connive, without testifying their dislike or laying the least blame on it? Principles of actions indeed there are lodged in men's appetites; but these are so far from being innate moral principles, that if they were left to their full swing they would carry men to the overturning of all morality. Moral laws are set as a curb and restraint to these exorbitant desires, which they cannot be but by rewards and punishments that will overbalance the satisfaction any one shall propose to himself in the breach of the law.

If, therefore, anything be imprinted on the minds of all men as a law, all men must have a certain and unavoidable knowledge that certain and unavoidable punishment will attend the breach of it. For if men can be ignorant or doubtful of what is innate, innate principles are insisted on, and urged to no purpose; truth and certainty (the things pretended) are not at all secured by them; but men are in the same uncertain floating estate with as without them. An evident indubitable knowledge of unavoidable punishment, great enough to make the transgression very uneligible, must accompany an innate law; unless with an innate law they can suppose an innate Gospel too. I would not here be mistaken, as if, because I deny an innate law I thought there were none but positive laws. There is a great deal of difference between an innate law, and a law of nature between something imprinted on our minds in their very original, and something that we, being ignorant of, may attain to the knowledge of, by the use and due application of our natural faculties.

And I think they equally forsake the truth who, running into contrary extremes, either affirm an innate law, or deny that there is a law knowable by the light of nature, i.e. without the help of positive revelation.

14. Those who maintain innate practical Principles tell us not what they are.

The difference there is amongst men in their practical principles is so evident that I think I need say no more to evince, that it will be impossible to find any innate moral rules by this mark of general assent; and it is enough to make one suspect that the supposition of such innate principles is but an opinion taken up at pleasure; since those who talk so confidently of them are so sparing to tell us WHICH

THEY ARE. This might with justice be expected from those men who lay stress upon this opinion; and it gives occasion to distrust either their knowledge or charity, who, declaring that God has imprinted on the minds of men the

foundations of knowledge and the rules of living, are yet so little favourable to the information of their neighbours, or the quiet of mankind, as not to point out to them which they are, in the variety men are distracted with. But, in truth, were there any such innate principles there would be no need to teach them. Did men find such innate propositions stamped on their minds, they would easily be able to distinguish them from other truths that they afterwards learned and deduced from them; and there would be nothing more easy than to know what, and how many, they were. There could be no more doubt about their number than there is about the number of our fingers; and it is like then every system would be ready to give them us by tale. But since nobody, that I know, has ventured yet to give a catalogue of them, they cannot blame those who doubt of these innate principles; since even they who require men to believe that there are such innate propositions, do not tell us what they are. It is easy to foresee, that if different men of different sects should go about to give us a list of those innate practical principles, they would set down only such as suited their distinct hypotheses, and were fit to support the doctrines of their particular schools or churches; a plain evidence that there are no such innate truths. Nay, a great part of men are so far from finding any such innate moral principles in themselves, that, by denying freedom to mankind, and thereby making men no other than bare machines, they take away not only innate, but all moral rules whatsoever, and leave not a possibility to believe any such, to those who cannot conceive how anything can be capable of a law that is not a free agent. And upon that ground they must necessarily reject all principles of virtue, who cannot put MORALITY and MECHANISM together, which are not very easy to be reconciled or made consistent.

15. Lord Herbert's innate Principles examined.

When I had written this, being informed that my Lord Herbert had, in his book *De Veritate*, assigned these innate principles, I presently consulted him, hoping to find in a

man of so great parts, something that might satisfy me in this point, and put an end to my inquiry. In his chapter *De Instinctu Naturali*, I met with these six marks of his *Notitiae Communes*:—1. *Prioritas*. 2. *Independentia*. 3. *Universalitas*. 4.

Certitudo. 5. *Necessitas*, i. e. as he explains it, *faciunt ad hominis conservationem*. 6. *Modus conformationis*, i.e. *Assensus nulla interposita mora*. And at the latter end of his little treatise *De Religione Laici*, he says this of these innate principles: *Adeo ut non uniuscujusvis religionis confinio arcentur quae ubique vigent veritates. Sunt enim in ipsa mente caelitus descriptae, nullisque traditionibus, sive scriptis, sive non scriptis, obnoxiae*, p.3 And *Veritates nostrae catholicae, quae tanquam indubia Dei emata in foro interiori descriptae*.

Thus, having given the marks of the innate principles or common notions, and asserted their being imprinted on the minds of men by the hand of God, he proceeds to set them down, and they are these:—1. *Esse aliquod supremum numen*. 2. *Numen illud coli debere*. 3. *Virtutem cum pietate conjunctam optimum esse rationem cultus divini*. 4. *Resipiscendum esse a peccatis*. 5. *Dari praemium vel paenam post hanc vitam transactam*. Though I allow these to be clear truths, and such as, if rightly explained, a rational creature can hardly avoid giving his assent to, yet I think he is far from proving them innate impressions in *foro interiori descriptae*. For I must take leave to observe:— 16. These five either not all, or more than all, if there are any.

First, that these five propositions are either not all, or more than all, those common notions written on our minds by the finger of God; if it were reasonable to believe any at all to be so written. Since there are other propositions which, even by his own rules, have as just a pretence to such an original, and may be as well admitted for innate principles, as at least some of these five he enumerates, viz. 'Do as thou wouldst be done unto.' And perhaps some hundreds of others, when well considered.

17. The supposed marks wanting.

Secondly, that all his marks are not to be found in each of his five propositions, viz. his first, second, and third marks agree perfectly to neither of them; and the first, second, third, fourth, and sixth marks agree but ill to his third, fourth, and fifth propositions. For, besides that we are assured from history of many men, nay whole nations, who doubt or disbelieve some or all of them, I cannot see how the third, viz. "That virtue joined with piety is the best worship of God," can be an innate principle, when the name or sound virtue, is so hard to be understood; liable to so much uncertainty in its signification; and the thing it stands for so much contended about and difficult to be known.

And therefore this cannot be but a very uncertain rule of human practice, and serve but very little to the conduct of our lives, and is therefore very unfit to be assigned as an innate practical principle.

18. Of little use if they were innate.

For let us consider this proposition as to its meaning, (for it is the sense, and not sound, that is and must be the principle or common notion,) viz. "Virtue is the best worship of God," i.e. is most acceptable to him; which, if virtue be taken, as most commonly it is, for those actions which, according to the different opinions of several countries, are accounted laudable, will be a proposition so far from being certain, that it will not be true. If virtue be taken for actions conformable to God's will, or to the rule prescribed by God—which is the true and only measure of virtue when virtue is used to signify what is in its own nature right and good—then this proposition, "That virtue is the best worship of God," will be most true and certain, but of very little use in human life: since it will amount to no more but this, viz.

"That God is pleased with the doing of what he commands";—which a man may certainly know to be true, without knowing what it is that God doth command; and so

be as far from any rule or principle of his actions as he was before. And I think very few will take a proposition which amounts to no more than this, viz. "That God is pleased with the doing of what he himself commands," for an innate moral principle written on the minds of all men, (however true and certain it may be,) since it teaches so little. Whosoever does so will have reason to think hundreds of propositions innate principles; since there are many which have as good a title as this to be received for such, which nobody yet ever put into that rank of innate principles.

19. Scarce possible that God should engrave principles in words of uncertain meaning.

Nor is the fourth proposition (viz. "Men must repent of their sins") much more instructive, till what those actions are that are meant by sins be set down. For the word peccata, or sins, being put, as it usually is, to signify in general ill actions that will draw punishment upon the doers, what great principle of morality can that be to tell us we should be sorry, and cease to do that which will bring mischief upon us; without knowing what those particular actions are that will do so?

Indeed this is a very true proposition, and fit to be inculcated on and received by those who are supposed to have been taught WHAT actions in all kinds ARE sins: but neither this nor the former can be imagined to be innate principles; nor to be of any use if they were innate, unless the particular measures and bounds of all virtues and vices were engraven in men's minds, and were innate principles also, which I think is very much to be doubted. And therefore, I imagine, it will scarcely seem possible that God should engrave principles in men's minds, in words of uncertain signification, such as VIRTUES and SINS, which amongst different men stand for different things: nay, it cannot be supposed to be in words at all, which, being in most of these principles very general names, cannot be understood but by knowing the particulars comprehended under them. And in the practical instances, the measures

must be taken from the knowledge of the actions themselves, and the rules of them,—abstracted from words, and antecedent to the knowledge of names; which rules a man must know, what language soever he chance to learn, whether English or Japan, or if he should learn no language at all, or never should understand the use of words, as happens in the case of dumb and deaf men. When it shall be made out that men ignorant of words, or untaught by the laws and customs of their country, know that it is part of the worship of God not to kill another man; not to know more women than one not to procure abortion; not to expose their children; not to take from another what is his, though we want it ourselves, but on the contrary, relieve and supply his wants; and whenever we have done the contrary we ought to repent, be sorry, and resolve to do so no more;—when I say, all men shall be proved actually to know and allow all these and a thousand other such rules, all of which come under these two general words made use of above, viz.

virtutes et peccata virtues and sins, there will be more reason for admitting these and the like, for common notions and practical principles. Yet, after all, universal consent (were there any in moral principles) to truths, the knowledge whereof may be attained otherwise, would scarce prove them to be innate; which is all I contend for.

20. Objection, Innate Principles may be corrupted, answered.

Nor will it be of much moment here to offer that very ready but not very material answer, viz. that the innate principles of morality may, by education, and custom, and the general opinion of those amongst whom we converse, be darkened, and at last quite worn out of the minds of men.

Which assertion of theirs, if true, quite takes away the argument of universal consent, by which this opinion of innate principles is endeavoured to be proved; unless those men will think it reasonable that their private persuasions, or that of their party, should pass for universal consent;—a

thing not unfrequently done, when men, presuming themselves to be the only masters of right reason, cast by the votes and opinions of the rest of mankind as not worthy the reckoning. And then their argument stands thus:—"The principles which all mankind allow for true, are innate; those that men of right reason admit, are the principles allowed by all mankind; we, and those of our mind, are men of reason; therefore, we agreeing, our principles are innate";—which is a very pretty way of arguing, and a short cut to infallibility.

For otherwise it will be very hard to understand how there be some principles which all men do acknowledge and agree in; and yet there are none of those principles which are not, by depraved custom and ill education, blotted out of the minds of many men: which is to say, that all men admit, but yet many men do deny and dissent from them. And indeed the supposition of SUCH first principles will serve us to very little purpose; and we shall be as much at a loss with as without them, if they may, by any human power—such as the will of our teachers, or opinions of our companions—be altered or lost in us: and notwithstanding all this boast of first principles and innate light, we shall be as much in the dark and uncertainty as if there were no such thing at all: it being all one to have no rule, and one that will warp any way; or amongst various and contrary rules, not to know which is the right. But concerning innate principles, I desire these men to say, whether they can or cannot, by education and custom, be blurred and blotted out; if they cannot, we must find them in all mankind alike, and they must be clear in everybody; and if they may suffer variation from adventitious notions, we must then find them clearest and most perspicuous nearest the fountain, in children and illiterate people, who have received least impression from foreign opinions. Let them take which side they please, they will certainly find it inconsistent with visible matter of fact and daily observation.

21. Contrary Principles in the World.

I easily grant that there are great numbers of opinions

which, by men of different countries, educations, and tempers, are received and embraced as first and unquestionable principles; many whereof, both for their absurdity as well oppositions to one another, it is impossible should be true. But yet all those propositions, how remote soever from reason are so sacred somewhere or other, that men even of good understanding in other matters, will sooner part with their lives, and whatever is dearest to them, than suffer themselves to doubt, or others to question, the truth of them.

22. How men commonly come by their Principles.

This, however strange it may seem, is that which every day's experience confirms; and will not, perhaps, appear so wonderful, if we consider the ways and steps by which it is brought about; and how really it may come to pass, that doctrines that have been derived from no better original than the superstition of a nurse, or the authority of an old woman, may, by length of time and consent of neighbours, grow up to the dignity of PRINCIPLES in religion or morality. For such, who are careful (as they call it) to principle children well, (and few there be who have not a set of those principles for them, which they believe in,) instil into the unwary, and as yet unprejudiced, understanding, (for white paper receives any characters,) those doctrines they would have them retain and profess. These being taught them as soon as they have any apprehension; and still as they grow up confirmed to them, either by the open profession or tacit consent of all they have to do with; or at least by those of whose wisdom, knowledge, and piety they have an opinion, who never suffer those propositions to be otherwise mentioned but as the basis and foundation on which they build their religion and manners, come, by these means, to have the reputation of unquestionable, self-evident, and innate truths.

23. Principles supposed innate because we do not remember when we began to hold them.

To which we may add, that when men so instructed are grown up, and reflect on their own minds, they cannot find anything more ancient there than those opinions, which were taught them before their memory began to keep a register of their actions, or date the time when any new thing appeared to them; and therefore make no scruple to conclude, that those propositions of whose knowledge they can find in themselves no original, were certainly the impress of God and nature upon their minds, and not taught them by any one else. These they entertain and submit to, as many do to their parents with veneration; not because it is natural: nor do children do it where they are not so taught; but because, having been always so educated, and having no remembrance of the beginning of this respect, they think it is natural.

24. How such principles come to be held.

This will appear very likely, and almost unavoidable to come to pass, if we consider the nature of mankind and the constitution of human affairs; wherein most men cannot live without employing their time in the daily labours of their callings; nor be at quiet in their minds without SOME

foundation or principle to rest their thoughts on. There is scarcely any one so floating and superficial in his understanding, who hath not some revered propositions, which are to him the principles on which he bottoms his reasonings, and by which he judgeth of truth and falsehood, right and wrong; which some, wanting skill and leisure, and others the inclination, and some being taught that they ought not to examine, there are few to be found who are not exposed by their ignorance, laziness, education, or precipitancy, to TAKE THEM UPON TRUST.

25. Further explained.

This is evidently the case of all children and young folk; and custom, a greater power than nature, seldom failing to make them worship for divine what she hath inured them to

bow their minds and submit their understandings to, it is no wonder that grown men, either perplexed in the necessary affairs of life, or hot in the pursuit of pleasures, should not seriously sit down to examine their own tenets; especially when one of their principles is, that principles ought not to be questioned. And had men leisure, parts, and will, who is there almost that dare shake the foundations of all his past thoughts and actions, and endure to bring upon himself the shame of having been a long time wholly in mistake and error? Who is there hardy enough to contend with the reproach which is everywhere prepared for those who dare venture to dissent from the received opinions of their country or party? And where is the man to be found that can patiently prepare himself to bear the name of whimsical, sceptical, or atheist; which he is sure to meet with, who does in the least scruple any of the common opinions? And he will be much more afraid to question those principles, when he shall think them, as most men do, the standards set up by God in his mind, to be the rule and touchstone of all other opinions. And what can hinder him from thinking them sacred, when he finds them the earliest of all his own thoughts, and the most revered by others?

26. A worship of idols.

It is easy to imagine how, by these means, it comes to pass that men worship the idols that have been set up in their minds; grow fond of the notions they have been long acquainted with there; and stamp the characters of divinity upon absurdities and errors; become zealous votaries to bulls and monkeys, and contend too, fight, and die in defence of their opinions. *Dum solos credit habendos esse deos, quos ipse colit.* For, since the reasoning faculties of the soul, which are almost constantly, though not always warily nor wisely employed, would not know how to move, for want of a foundation and footing, in most men, who through laziness or avocation do not, or for want of time, or true helps, or for other causes, cannot penetrate into the principles of knowledge, and trace truth to its fountain and original, it is

natural for them, and almost unavoidable, to take up with some borrowed principles; which being reputed and presumed to be the evident proofs of other things, are thought not to need any other proof themselves.

Whoever shall receive any of these into his mind, and entertain them there with the reverence usually paid to principles, never venturing to examine them, but accustoming himself to believe them, because they are to be believed, may take up, from his education and the fashions of his country, any absurdity for innate principles; and by long poring on the same objects, so dim his sight as to take monsters lodged in his own brain for the images of the Deity, and the workmanship of his hands.

27. Principles must be examined.

By this progress, how many there are who arrive at principles which they believe innate may be easily observed, in the variety of opposite principles held and contended for by all sorts and degrees of men. And he that shall deny this to be the method wherein most men proceed to the assurance they have of the truth and evidence of their principles, will perhaps find it a hard matter any other way to account for the contrary tenets, which are firmly believed, confidently asserted, and which great numbers are ready at any time to seal with their blood. And, indeed, if it be the privilege of innate principles to be received upon their own authority, without examination, I know not what may not be believed, or how any one's principles can be questioned. If they may and ought to be examined and tried, I desire to know how first and innate principles can be tried; or at least it is reasonable to demand the MARKS and CHARACTERS whereby the genuine innate principles may be distinguished from others: that so, amidst the great variety of pretenders, I may be kept from mistakes in so material a point as this. When this is done, I shall be ready to embrace such welcome and useful propositions; and till then I may with modesty doubt; since I fear universal consent, which is the only one produced, will scarcely prove a sufficient mark to direct my

choice, and assure me of any innate principles.

From what has been said, I think it past doubt, that there are no practical principles wherein all men agree; and therefore none innate.

CHAPTER III. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING INNATE PRINCIPLES, BOTH SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL.

1. Principles not innate, unless their Ideas be innate Had those who would persuade us that there are innate principles not taken them together in gross, but considered separately the parts out of which those propositions are made, they would not, perhaps, have been so forward to believe they were innate. Since, if the IDEAS which made up those truths were not, it was impossible that the PROPOSITIONS made up of them should be innate, or our knowledge of them be born with us. For, if the ideas be not innate, there was a time when the mind was without those principles; and then they will not be innate, but be derived from some other original. For, where the ideas themselves are not, there can be no knowledge, no assent, no mental or verbal propositions about them.

2. Ideas, especially those belonging to Principles, not born with children

If we will attentively consider new-born children, we shall have little reason to think that they bring many ideas into the world with them.

For, bating perhaps some faint ideas of hunger, and thirst, and warmth, and some pains, which they may have felt in the womb, there is not the least appearance of any settled

ideas at all in them; especially of IDEAS ANSWERING THE TERMS WHICH MAKE UP THOSE UNIVERSAL PROPOSITIONS THAT ARE ESTEEMED INNATE PRINCIPLES. One may perceive how, by degrees, afterwards, ideas come into their minds; and that they get no more, nor other, than what experience, and the observation of things that come in their way, furnish them with; which might be enough to satisfy us that they are not original characters stamped on the mind.

3. Impossibility and Identity not innate ideas "It is impossible for the same thing to be, and not to be," is certainly (if there be any such) an innate PRINCIPLE. But can any one think, or will any one say, that "impossibility" and "identity" are two innate IDEAS? Are they such as all mankind have, and bring into the world with them? And are they those which are the first in children, and antecedent to all acquired ones? If they are innate, they must needs be so. Hath a child an idea of impossibility and identity, before it has of white or black, sweet or bitter? And is it from the knowledge of this principle that it concludes, that wormwood rubbed on the nipple hath not the same taste that it used to receive from thence? Is it the actual knowledge of IMPOSSIBLE EST IDEM ESSE, ET NON ESSE, that makes a child distinguish between its mother and a stranger; or that makes it fond of the one and flee the other? Or does the mind regulate itself and its assent by ideas that it never yet had? Or the understanding draw conclusions from principles which it never yet knew or understood? The names IMPOSSIBILITY and IDENTITY stand for two ideas, so far from being innate, or born with us, that I think it requires great care and attention to form them right in our understandings. They are so far from being brought into the world with us, so remote from the thoughts of infancy and childhood, that I believe, upon examination it will be found that many grown men want them.

4. Identity, an Idea not innate.

If IDENTITY (to instance that alone) be a native

impression, and consequently so clear and obvious to us that we must needs know it even from our cradles, I would gladly be resolved by any one of seven, or seventy years old, whether a man, being a creature consisting of soul and body, be the same man when his body is changed? Whether Euphorbus and Pythagoras, having had the same soul, were the same men, though they lived several ages asunder? Nay, whether the cock too, which had the same soul, were not the same, with both of them? Whereby, perhaps, it will appear that our idea of SAMENESS is not so settled and clear as to deserve to be thought innate in us. For if those innate ideas are not clear and distinct, so as to be universally known and naturally agreed on, they cannot be subjects of universal and undoubted truths, but will be the unavoidable occasion of perpetual uncertainty. For, I suppose every one's idea of identity will not be the same that Pythagoras and thousands of his followers have. And which then shall be true? Which innate? Or are there two different ideas of identity, both innate?

5. What makes the same man?

Nor let any one think that the questions I have here proposed about the identity of man are bare empty speculations; which, if they were, would be enough to show, that there was in the understandings of men no innate idea of identity. He that shall with a little attention reflect on the resurrection, and consider that divine justice will bring to judgment, at the last day, the very same persons, to be happy or miserable in the other, who did well or ill in this life, will find it perhaps not easy to resolve with himself, what makes the same man, or wherein identity consists; and will not be forward to think he, and every one, even children themselves, have naturally a clear idea of it.

6. Whole and Part not innate ideas.

Let us examine that principle of mathematics, viz. THAT THE WHOLE

IS BIGGER THAN A PART. This, I take it, is reckoned amongst innate principles. I am sure it has as good a title as any to be thought so; which yet nobody can think it to be, when he considers the ideas it comprehends in it, WHOLE and PART, are perfectly relative; but the positive ideas to which they properly and immediately belong are extension and number, of which alone whole and part are relations. So that if whole and part are innate ideas, extension and number must be so too; it being impossible to have an idea of a relation, without having any at all of the thing to which it belongs, and in which it is founded.

Now, whether the minds of men have naturally imprinted on them the ideas of extension and number, I leave to be considered by those who are the patrons of innate principles.

7. Idea of Worship not innate.

That GOD IS TO BE WORSHIPPED, is, without doubt, as great a truth as any that can enter into the mind of man, and deserves the first place amongst all practical principles. But yet it can by no means be thought innate, unless the ideas of GOD and WORSHIP are innate. That the idea the term worship stands for is not in the understanding of children, and a character stamped on the mind in its first original, I think will be easily granted, by any one that considers how few there be amongst grown men who have a clear and distinct notion of it. And, I suppose, there cannot be anything more ridiculous than to say, that children have this practical principle innate, "That God is to be worshipped," and yet that they know not what that worship of God is, which is their duty. But to pass by this.

8. Idea of God not innate.

If any idea can be imagined innate, the idea of GOD may, of all others, for many reasons, be thought so; since it is hard to conceive how there should be innate moral principles, without an innate idea of a Deity.

Without a notion of a law-maker, it is impossible to have a notion of a law, and an obligation to observe it. Besides the atheists taken notice of amongst the ancients, and left branded upon the records of history, hath not navigation discovered, in these later ages, whole nations, at the bay of Soldania, in Brazil, and in the Caribbee islands, &c., amongst whom there was to be found no notion of a God, no religion?

Nicholaus del Techo, in *Literis ex Paraquaria*, de *Caiguarum Conversione*, has these words: *Reperi eam gentem nullum nomen habere quod Deum, et hominis animam significet; nulla sacra habet, nulla idola.*

And perhaps, if we should with attention mind the lives and discourses of people not so far off, we should have too much reason to fear, that many, in more civilized countries, have no very strong and clear impressions of a Deity upon their minds, and that the complaints of atheism made from the pulpit are not without reason. And though only some profligate wretches own it too barefacedly now; yet perhaps we should hear more than we do of it from others, did not the fear of the magistrate's sword, or their neighbour's censure, tie up people's tongues; which, were the apprehensions of punishment or shame taken away, would as openly proclaim their atheism as their lives do.

9. The name of God not universal or obscure in meaning.

But had all mankind everywhere a notion of a God, (whereof yet history tells us the contrary,) it would not from thence follow, that the idea of him was innate. For, though no nation were to be found without a name, and some few dark notions of him, yet that would not prove them to be natural impressions on the mind; no more than the names of fire, or the sun, heat, or number, do prove the ideas they stand for to be innate; because the names of those things, and the ideas of them, are so universally received and known amongst mankind. Nor, on the contrary, is the want of such a name, or the absence of such a notion out of men's minds,

any argument against the being of a God; any more than it would be a proof that there was no loadstone in the world, because a great part of mankind had neither a notion of any such thing nor a name for it; or be any show of argument to prove that there are no distinct and various species of angels, or intelligent beings above us, because we have no ideas of such distinct species, or names for them. For, men being furnished with words, by the common language of their own countries, can scarce avoid having some kind of ideas of those things whose names those they converse with have occasion frequently to mention to them. And if they carry with it the notion of excellency, greatness, or something extraordinary; if apprehension and concernment accompany it; if the fear of absolute and irresistible power set it on upon the mind,—the idea is likely to sink the deeper, and spread the further; especially if it be such an idea as is agreeable to the common light of reason, and naturally deducible from every part of our knowledge, as that of a God is. For the visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of the creation, that a rational creature, who will but seriously reflect on them, cannot miss the discovery of a Deity. And the influence that the discovery of such a Being must necessarily have on the minds of all that have but once heard of it is so great, and carries such a weight of thought and communication with it, that it seems stranger to me that a whole nation of men should be anywhere found so brutish as to want the notion of a God, than that they should be without any notion of numbers, or fire.

10. Ideas of God and idea of Fire.

The name of God being once mentioned in any part of the world, to express a superior, powerful, wise, invisible Being, the suitableness of such a notion to the principles of common reason, and the interest men will always have to mention it often, must necessarily spread it far and wide; and continue it down to all generations: though yet the general reception of this name, and some imperfect and unsteady

notions conveyed thereby to the unthinking part of mankind, prove not the idea to be innate; but only that they who made the discovery had made a right use of their reason, thought maturely of the causes of things, and traced them to their original; from whom other less considering people having once received so important a notion, it could not easily be lost again.

11. Idea of God not innate.

This is all could be inferred from the notion of a God, were it to be found universally in all the tribes of mankind, and generally acknowledged, by men grown to maturity in all countries. For the generality of the acknowledging of a God, as I imagine, is extended no further than that; which, if it be sufficient to prove the idea of God innate, will as well prove the idea of fire innate; since I think it may be truly said, that there is not a person in the world who has a notion of a God, who has not also the idea of fire. I doubt not but if a colony of young children should be placed in an island where no fire was, they would certainly neither have any notion of such a thing, nor name for it, how generally soever it were received and known in all the world besides; and perhaps too their apprehensions would be as far removed from any name, or notion, of a God, till some one amongst them had employed his thoughts to inquire into the constitution and causes of things, which would easily lead him to the notion of a God; which having once taught to others, reason, and the natural propensity of their own thoughts, would afterwards propagate, and continue amongst them.

12. Suitable to God's goodness, that all Men should have an idea of Him, therefore naturally imprinted by Him, answered.

Indeed it is urged, that it is suitable to the goodness of God, to imprint upon the minds of men characters and notions of himself, and not to leave them in the dark and doubt in so grand a concernment; and also, by that means, to secure to himself the homage and veneration due from so intelligent a creature as man; and therefore he has done it.

This argument, if it be of any force, will prove much more than those who use it in this case expect from it. For, if we may conclude that God hath done for men all that men shall judge is best for them, because it is suitable to his goodness so to do, it will prove, not only that God has imprinted on the minds of men an idea of himself, but that he hath plainly stamped there, in fair characters, all that men ought to know or believe of him; all that they ought to do in obedience to his will; and that he hath given them a will and affections conformable to it. This, no doubt, every one will think better for men, than that they should, in the dark, grope after knowledge, as St. Paul tells us all nations did after God (Acts xvii. 27); than that their wills should clash with their understandings, and their appetites cross their duty. The Romanists say it is best for men, and so suitable to the goodness of God, that there should be an infallible judge of controversies on earth; and therefore there is one. And I, by the same reason, say it is better for men that every man himself should be infallible. I leave them to consider, whether, by the force of this argument, they shall think that every man IS so. I think it a very good argument to say,—the infinitely wise God hath made it so; and therefore it is best. But it seems to me a little too much confidence of our own wisdom to say,—'I think it best; and therefore God hath made it so.' And in the matter in hand, it will be in vain to

argue from such a topic, that God hath done so, when certain experience shows us that he hath not. But the goodness of God hath not been wanting to men, without such original impressions of knowledge or ideas stamped on the mind; since he hath furnished man with those faculties which will serve for the sufficient discovery of all things requisite to the end of such a being; and I doubt not but to show, that a man, by the right use of his natural abilities, may, without any innate principles, attain a knowledge of a God, and other things that concern him. God having endued man with those faculties of knowledge which he hath, was no more obliged by his goodness to plant those innate notions in his mind, than that, having given him reason, hands, and materials, he should build him bridges or houses,—which some people in the world, however of good parts, do either totally want, or are but ill provided of, as well as others are wholly without ideas of God and principles of morality, or at least have but very ill ones; the reason in both cases being, that they never employed their parts, faculties, and powers industriously that way, but contented themselves with the opinions, fashions, and things of their country, as they found them, without looking any further. Had you or I been born at the Bay of Soldania, possibly our thoughts and notions had not exceeded those brutish ones of the Hottentots that inhabit there. And had the Virginia king Apochancana been educated in England, he had been perhaps as knowing a divine, and as good a mathematician as any in it; the difference between him and a more improved Englishman lying barely in this, that the exercise of his faculties was bounded within the ways, modes, and notions of his own country, and never directed to any other or further inquiries. And if he had not any idea of a God, it was only because he pursued not those thoughts that would have led him to it.

13. Ideas of God various in different Men.

I grant that if there were any ideas to be found imprinted on the minds of men, we have reason to expect it should be the notion of his Maker, as a mark God set on his own

workmanship, to mind man of his dependence and duty; and that herein should appear the first instances of human knowledge. But how late is it before any such notion is discoverable in children? And when we find it there, how much more does it resemble the opinion and notion of the teacher, than represent the true God? He that shall observe in children the progress whereby their minds attain the knowledge they have, will think that the objects they do first and most familiarly converse with are those that make the first impressions on their understandings; nor will he find the least footsteps of any other.

It is easy to take notice how their thoughts enlarge themselves, only as they come to be acquainted with a greater variety of sensible objects; to retain the ideas of them in their memories; and to get the skill to compound and enlarge them, and several ways put them together. How, by these means, they come to frame in their minds an idea men have of a Deity, I shall hereafter show.

14. Contrary and inconsistent ideas of God under the same name.

Can it be thought that the ideas men have of God are the characters and marks of himself, engraven in their minds by his own finger, when we see that, in the same country, under one and the same name, men have far different, nay often contrary and inconsistent ideas and conceptions of him? Their agreeing in a name, or sound, will scarce prove an innate notion of him.

15. Gross ideas of God.

What true or tolerable notion of a Deity could they have, who acknowledged and worshipped hundreds? Every deity that they owned above one was an infallible evidence of their ignorance of Him, and a proof that they had no true notion of God, where unity, infinity, and eternity were excluded. To which, if we add their gross conceptions of corporeity, expressed in their images and representations of

their deities; the amours, marriages, copulations, lusts, quarrels, and other mean qualities attributed by them to their gods; we shall have little reason to think that the heathen world, i.e. the greatest part of mankind, had such ideas of God in their minds as he himself, out of care that they should not be mistaken about him, was author of. And this universality of consent, so much argued, if it prove any native impressions, it will be only this:—that God imprinted on the minds of all men speaking the same language, a NAME for himself, but not any IDEA; since those people who agreed in the name, had, at the same time, far different apprehensions about the thing signified. If they say that the variety of deities worshipped by the heathen world were but figurative ways of expressing the several attributes of that incomprehensible Being, or several parts of his providence, I answer: what they might be in the original I will not here inquire; but that they were so in the thoughts of the vulgar I think nobody will affirm.

And he that will consult the voyage of the Bishop of Beryte, c. 13, (not to mention other testimonies,) will find that the theology of the Siamites professedly owns a plurality of gods: or, as the Abbe de Choisy more judiciously remarks in his *Journal du Voyage de Siam*, 107/177, it consists properly in acknowledging no God at all. 16. Idea of God not innate although wise men of all nations come to have it.

If it be said, that wise men of all nations came to have true conceptions of the unity and infinity of the Deity, I grant it. But then this,

First, excludes universality of consent in anything but the name; for those wise men being very few, perhaps one of a thousand, this universality is very narrow.

Secondly, it seems to me plainly to prove, that the truest and best notions men have of God were not imprinted, but acquired by thought and meditation, and a right use of their faculties: since the wise and considerate men of the world,

by a right and careful employment of their thoughts and reason, attained true notions in this as well as other things; whilst the lazy and inconsiderate part of men, making far the greater number, took up their notions by chance, from common tradition and vulgar conceptions, without much beating their heads about them. And if it be a reason to think the notion of God innate, because all wise men had it, virtue too must be thought innate; for that also wise men have always had.

17. Odd, low, and pitiful ideas of God common among men.

This was evidently the case of all Gentilism. Nor hath even amongst Jews, Christians, and Mahometans, who acknowledged but one God, this doctrine, and the care taken in those nations to teach men to have true notions of a God, prevailed so far as to make men to have the same and the true ideas of him. How many even amongst us, will be found upon inquiry to fancy him in the shape of a man sitting in heaven; and to have many other absurd and unfit conceptions of him? Christians as well as Turks have had whole sects owning and contending earnestly for it,—that the Deity was corporeal, and of human shape: and though we find few now amongst us who profess themselves Anthropomorphites, (though some I have met with that own it,) yet I believe he that will make it his business may find amongst the ignorant and uninstructed Christians many of that opinion. Talk but with country people, almost of any age, or young people almost of any condition, and you shall find that, though the name of God be frequently in their mouths, yet the notions they apply this name to are so odd, low, and pitiful, that nobody can imagine they were taught by a rational man; much less that they were characters written by the finger of God himself. Nor do I see how it derogates more from the goodness of God, that he has given us minds unfurnished with these ideas of himself, than that he hath sent us into the world with bodies unclothed; and that there is no art or skill born with us. For, being fitted

with faculties to attain these, it is want of industry and consideration in us, and not of bounty in him, if we have them not. It is as certain that there is a God, as that the opposite angles made by the intersection of two straight lines are equal. There was never any rational creature that set himself sincerely to examine the truth of these propositions that could fail to assent to them; though yet it be past doubt that there are many men, who, having not applied their thoughts that way, are ignorant both of the one and the other. If any one think fit to call this (which is the utmost of its extent) UNIVERSAL CONSENT, such an one I easily allow; but such an universal consent as this proves not the idea of God, any more than it does the idea of such angles, innate.

18. If the Idea of God be not innate, no other can be supposed innate.

Since then though the knowledge of a God be the most natural discovery of human reason, yet the idea of him is not innate, as I think is evident from what has been said; I imagine there will be scarce any other idea found that can pretend to it. Since if God hath set any impression, any character, on the understanding of men, it is most reasonable to expect it should have been some clear and uniform idea of Himself; as far as our weak capacities were capable to receive so incomprehensible and infinite an object. But our minds being at first void of that idea which we are most concerned to have, it is a strong presumption against all other innate characters. I must own, as far as I can observe, I can find none, and would be glad to be informed by any other.

19. Idea of Substance not innate.

I confess there is another idea which would be of general use for mankind to have, as it is of general talk as if they had it; and that is the idea of SUBSTANCE; which we neither have nor can have by sensation or reflection. If nature took care to provide us any ideas, we might well expect they

should be such as by our own faculties we cannot procure to ourselves; but we see, on the contrary, that since, by those ways whereby other ideas are brought into our minds, this is not, we have no such clear idea at all; and therefore signify nothing by the word SUBSTANCE but only an uncertain supposition of we know not what, i. e. of something whereof we have no idea, which we take to be the substratum, or support, of those ideas we do know.

20. No Propositions can be innate, since no Ideas are innate.

Whatever then we talk of innate, either speculative or practical, principles, it may with as much probability be said, that a man hath 100

pounds sterling in his pocket, and yet denied that he hath there either penny, shilling, crown, or other coin out of which the sum is to be made up; as to think that certain PROPOSITIONS are innate when the IDEAS

about which they are can by no means be supposed to be so. The general reception and assent that is given doth not at all prove, that the ideas expressed in them are innate; for in many cases, however the ideas came there, the assent to words expressing the agreement or disagreement of such ideas, will necessarily follow. Every one that hath a true idea of GOD and WORSHIP, will assent to this proposition, 'That God is to be worshipped,' when expressed in a language he understands; and every rational man that hath not thought on it to-day, may be ready to assent to this proposition to-morrow; and yet millions of men may be well supposed to want one or both those ideas to-day. For, if we will allow savages, and most country people, to have ideas of God and worship, (which conversation with them will not make one forward to believe,) yet I think few children can be supposed to have those ideas, which therefore they must begin to have some time or other; and then they will also begin to assent to that proposition, and make very little question of it ever after. But such an assent upon hearing, no

more proves the IDEAS to be innate, than it does that one born blind (with cataracts which will be couched to-morrow) had the innate ideas of the sun, or light, or saffron, or yellow; because, when his sight is cleared, he will certainly assent to this proposition, "That the sun is lucid, or that saffron is yellow." And therefore, if such an assent upon hearing cannot prove the ideas innate, it can much less the PROPOSITIONS made up of those ideas. If they have any innate ideas, I would be glad to be told what, and how many, they are.

21. No innate Ideas in the Memory.

To which let me add: if there be any innate ideas, any ideas in the mind which the mind does not actually think on, they must be lodged in the memory; and from thence must be brought into view by remembrance; i. e.

must be known, when they are remembered, to have been perceptions in the mind before; unless remembrance can be without remembrance. For, to remember is to perceive anything with memory, or with a consciousness that it was perceived or known before. Without this, whatever idea comes into the mind is new, and not remembered; this consciousness of its having been in the mind before, being that which distinguishes remembering from all other ways of thinking. Whatever idea was never PERCEIVED by the mind was never in the mind. Whatever idea is in the mind, is, either an actual perception, or else, having been an actual perception, is so in the mind that, by the memory, it can be made an actual perception again. Whenever there is the actual perception of any idea without memory, the idea appears perfectly new and unknown before to the understanding. Whenever the memory brings any idea into actual view, it is with a consciousness that it had been there before, and was not wholly a stranger to the mind. Whether this be not so, I appeal to every one's observation. And then I desire an instance of an idea, pretended to be innate, which (before any impression of it by ways hereafter to be mentioned) any one could revive and remember, as an idea

he had formerly known; without which consciousness of a former perception there is no remembrance; and whatever idea comes into the mind without THAT consciousness is not remembered, or comes not out of the memory, nor can be said to be in the mind before that appearance.

For what is not either actually in view or in the memory, is in the mind no way at all, and is all one as if it had never been there. Suppose a child had the use of his eyes till he knows and distinguishes colours; but then cataracts shut the windows, and he is forty or fifty years perfectly in the dark; and in that time perfectly loses all memory of the ideas of colours he once had. This was the case of a blind man I once talked with, who lost his sight by the small-pox when he was a child, and had no more notion of colours than one born blind. I ask whether any one can say this man had then any ideas of colours in his mind, any more than one born blind? And I think nobody will say that either of them had in his mind any ideas of colours at all. His cataracts are couched, and then he has the ideas (which he remembers not) of colours, DE NOVO, by his restored sight, conveyed to his mind, and that without any consciousness of a former acquaintance. And these now he can revive and call to mind in the dark. In this case all these ideas of colours which, when out of view, can be revived with a consciousness of a former acquaintance, being thus in the memory, are said to be in the mind. The use I make of this is,—that whatever idea, being not actually in view, is in the mind, is there only by being in the memory; and if it be not in the memory, it is not in the mind; and if it be in the memory, it cannot by the memory be brought into actual view without a perception that it comes out of the memory; which is this, that it had been known before, and is now remembered. If therefore there be any innate ideas, they must be in the memory, or else nowhere in the mind; and if they be in the memory, they can be revived without any impression from without; and whenever they are brought into the mind they are remembered, i. e. they bring with them a perception of their not being wholly new to it. This being a constant and

distinguishing difference between what is, and what is not in the memory, or in the mind;—that what is not in the memory, whenever it appears there, appears perfectly new and unknown before; and what is in the memory, or in the mind, whenever it is suggested by the memory, appears not to be new, but the mind finds it in itself, and knows it was there before.

By this it may be tried whether there be any innate ideas in the mind before impression from sensation or reflection. I would fain meet with the man who, when he came to the use of reason, or at any other time, remembered any of them; and to whom, after he was born, they were never new. If any one will say, there are ideas in the mind that are NOT in the memory, I desire him to explain himself, and make what he says intelligible.

22. Principles not innate, because of little use or little certainty.

Besides what I have already said, there is another reason why I doubt that neither these nor any other principles are innate. I that am fully persuaded that the infinitely wise God made all things in perfect wisdom, cannot satisfy myself why he should be supposed to print upon the minds of men some universal principles; whereof those that are pretended innate, and concern SPECULATION, are of no great use; and those that concern PRACTICE, not self-evident; and neither of them distinguishable from some other truths not allowed to be innate. For, to what purpose should characters be graven on the mind by the finger of God, which are not clearer there than those which are afterwards introduced, or cannot be distinguished from them? If any one thinks there are such innate ideas and propositions, which by their clearness and usefulness are distinguishable from all that is adventitious in the mind and acquired, it will not be a hard matter for him to tell us WHICH

THEY ARE; and then every one will be a fit judge whether they be so or no. Since if there be such innate ideas

and impressions, plainly different from all other perceptions and knowledge, every one will find it true in himself. Of the evidence of these supposed innate maxims, I have spoken already: of their usefulness I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter.

23. Difference of Men's Discoveries depends upon the different Application of their Faculties.

To conclude: some ideas forwardly offer themselves to all men's understanding; and some sorts of truths result from any ideas, as soon as the mind puts them into propositions: other truths require a train of ideas placed in order, a due comparing of them, and deductions made with attention, before they can be discovered and assented to. Some of the first sort, because of their general and easy reception, have been mistaken for innate: but the truth is, ideas and notions are no more born with us than arts and sciences; though some of them indeed offer themselves to our faculties more readily than others; and therefore are more generally received: though that too be according as the organs of our bodies and powers of our minds happen to be employed; God having fitted men with faculties and means to discover, receive, and retain truths, according as they are employed. The great difference that is to be found in the notions of mankind is, from the different use they put their faculties to. Whilst some (and those the most) taking things upon trust, misemploy their power of assent, by lazily enslaving their minds to the dictates and dominion of others, in doctrines which it is their duty carefully to examine, and not blindly, with an implicit faith, to swallow; others, employing their thoughts only about some few things, grow acquainted sufficiently with them, attain great degrees of knowledge in them, and are ignorant of all other, having never let their thoughts loose in the search of other inquiries. Thus, that the three angles of a triangle are quite equal to two right ones is a truth as certain as anything can be, and I think more evident than many of those propositions that go for principles; and yet there are millions, however expert in

other things, who know not this at all, because they never set their thoughts on work about such angles. And he that certainly knows this proposition may yet be utterly ignorant of the truth of other propositions, in mathematics itself, which are as clear and evident as this; because, in his search of those mathematical truths, he stopped his thoughts short and went not so far. The same may happen concerning the notions we have of the being of a Deity. For, though there be no truth which a man may more evidently make out to himself than the existence of a God, yet he that shall content himself with things as he finds them in this world, as they minister to his pleasures and passions, and not make inquiry a little further into their causes, ends, and admirable contrivances, and pursue the thoughts thereof with diligence and attention, may live long without any notion of such a Being. And if any person hath by talk put such a notion into his head, he may perhaps believe it; but if he hath never examined it, his knowledge of it will be no perfecter than his, who having been told, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones, takes it upon trust, without examining the demonstration; and may yield his assent as a probable opinion, but hath no knowledge of the truth of it; which yet his faculties, if carefully employed, were able to make clear and evident to him. But this only, by the by, to show how much OUR

KNOWLEDGE DEPENDS UPON THE RIGHT USE OF
THOSE POWERS NATURE HATH

BESTOWED UPON US, and how little upon SUCH
INNATE PRINCIPLES AS ARE IN

VAIN SUPPOSED TO BE IN ALL MANKIND FOR
THEIR DIRECTION; which all men could not but know if
they were there, or else they would be there to no purpose.
And which since all men do not know, nor can distinguish
from other adventitious truths, we may well conclude there
are no such.

24. Men must think and know for themselves.

What censure doubting thus of innate principles may deserve from men, who will be apt to call it pulling up the old foundations of knowledge and certainty, I cannot tell;—I persuade myself at least that the way I have pursued, being conformable to truth, lays those foundations surer. This I am certain, I have not made it my business either to quit or follow any authority in the ensuing Discourse. Truth has been my only aim; and wherever that has appeared to lead, my thoughts have impartially followed, without minding whether the footsteps of any other lay that way or not. Not that I want a due respect to other men's opinions; but, after all, the greatest reverence is due to truth: and I hope it will not be thought arrogance to say, that perhaps we should make greater progress in the discovery of rational and contemplative knowledge, if we sought it in the fountain, IN THE CONSIDERATION OF

THINGS THEMSELVES; and made use rather of our own thoughts than other men's to find it. For I think we may as rationally hope to see with other men's eyes, as to know by other men's understandings. So much as we ourselves consider and comprehend of truth and reason, so much we possess of real and true knowledge. The floating of other men's opinions in our brains, makes us not one jot the more knowing, though they happen to be true. What in them was science, is in us but opiniatrey; whilst we give up our assent only to reverend names, and do not, as they did, employ our own reason to understand those truths which gave them reputation. Aristotle was certainly a knowing man, but nobody ever thought him so because he blindly embraced, and confidently vented the opinions of another. And if the taking up of another's principles, without examining them, made not him a philosopher, I suppose it will hardly make anybody else so. In the sciences, every one has so much as he really knows and comprehends. What he believes only, and takes upon trust, are but shreds; which, however well in the whole piece, make no considerable addition to his stock who gathers them. Such borrowed wealth, like fairy money, though it were gold in the hand from which he received it,

will be but leaves and dust when it comes to use.

25. Whence the Opinion of Innate Principles.

When men have found some general propositions that could not be doubted of as soon as understood, it was, I know, a short and easy way to conclude them innate. This being once received, it eased the lazy from the pains of search, and stopped the inquiry of the doubtful concerning all that was once styled innate. And it was of no small advantage to those who affected to be masters and teachers, to make this the principle of principles,—**THAT PRINCIPLES MUST NOT BE QUESTIONED.** For, having once established this tenet,—that there are innate principles, it put their followers upon a necessity of receiving **SOME** doctrines as such; which was to take them off from the use of their own reason and judgment, and put them on believing and taking them upon trust without further examination: in which posture of blind credulity, they might be more easily governed by, and made useful to some sort of men, who had the skill and office to principle and guide them. Nor is it a small power it gives one man over another, to have the authority to be the dictator of principles, and teacher of unquestionable truths; and to make a man swallow that for an innate principle which may serve to his purpose who teacheth them. Whereas had they examined the ways whereby men came to the knowledge of many universal truths, they would have found them to result in the minds of men from the being of things themselves, when duly considered; and that they were discovered by the application of those faculties that were fitted by nature to receive and judge of them, when duly employed about them.

26. Conclusion.

To show **HOW** the understanding proceeds herein is the design of the following Discourse; which I shall proceed to when I have first premised, that hitherto,—to clear my way to those foundations which I conceive are the only true ones, whereon to establish those notions we can have of our own

knowledge,—it hath been necessary for me to give an account of the reasons I had to doubt of innate principles. And since the arguments which are against them do, some of them, rise from common received opinions, I have been forced to take several things for granted; which is hardly avoidable to any one, whose task is to show the falsehood or improbability of any tenet;—it happening in controversial discourses as it does in assaulting of towns; where, if the ground be but firm whereon the batteries are erected, there is no further inquiry of whom it is borrowed, nor whom it belongs to, so it affords but a fit rise for the present purpose. But in the future part of this Discourse, designing to raise an edifice uniform and consistent with itself, as far as my own experience and observation will assist me, I hope to erect it on such a basis that I shall not need to shore it up with props and buttresses, leaning on borrowed or begged foundations: or at least, if mine prove a castle in the air, I will endeavour it shall be all of a piece and hang together. Wherein I warn the reader not to expect undeniable cogent demonstrations, unless I may be allowed the privilege, not seldom assumed by others, to take my principles for granted; and then, I doubt not, but I can demonstrate too. All that I shall say for the principles I proceed on is, that I can only appeal to men's own unprejudiced experience and observation whether they be true or not; and this is enough for a man who professes no more than to lay down candidly and freely his own conjectures, concerning a subject lying somewhat in the dark, without any other design than an unbiassed inquiry after truth.

BOOK II OF IDEAS

CHAPTER I. OF IDEAS IN GENERAL, AND THEIR ORIGINAL.

1. Idea is the Object of Thinking.

Every man being conscious to himself that he thinks; and

that which his mind is applied about whilst thinking being the IDEAS that are there, it is past doubt that men have in their minds several ideas,—such as are those expressed by the words whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thinking, motion, man, elephant, army, drunkenness, and others: it is in the first place then to be inquired, HOW HE COMES BY THEM?

I know it is a received doctrine, that men have native ideas, and original characters, stamped upon their minds in their very first being.

This opinion I have at large examined already; and, I suppose what I have said in the foregoing Book will be much more easily admitted, when I have shown whence the understanding may get all the ideas it has; and by what ways and degrees they may come into the mind;—for which I shall appeal to every one's own observation and experience.

2. All Ideas come from Sensation or Reflection.

Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas:—How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the MATERIALS of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from EXPERIENCE. In that all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employed either, about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understandings with all the MATERIALS of thinking. These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring.

3. The Objects of Sensation one Source of Ideas First, our Senses, conversant about particular sensible objects, do convey into the mind several distinct perceptions of things, according to those various ways wherein those objects do

affect them. And thus we come by those IDEAS we have of yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, hard, bitter, sweet, and all those which we call sensible qualities; which when I say the senses convey into the mind, I mean, they from external objects convey into the mind what produces there those perceptions. This great source of most of the ideas we have, depending wholly upon our senses, and derived by them to the understanding, I call SENSATION.

4. The Operations of our Minds, the other Source of them.

Secondly, the other fountain from which experience furnisheth the understanding with ideas is,—the perception of the operations of our own mind within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got;—which operations, when the soul comes to reflect on and consider, do furnish the understanding with another set of ideas, which could not be had from things without. And such are perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing, and all the different actings of our own minds;—which we being conscious of, and observing in ourselves, do from these receive into our understandings as distinct ideas as we do from bodies affecting our senses. This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself; and though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called INTERNAL SENSE. But as I call the other Sensation, so I call this REFLECTION, the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself. By reflection then, in the following part of this discourse, I would be understood to mean, that notice which the mind takes of its own operations, and the manner of them, by reason whereof there come to be ideas of these operations in the understanding. These two, I say, viz. external material things, as the objects of SENSATION, and the operations of our own minds within, as the objects of REFLECTION, are to me the only originals from whence all our ideas take their beginnings. The term OPERATIONS here I use in a large sense, as comprehending not barely the actions of the mind

about its ideas, but some sort of passions arising sometimes from them, such as is the satisfaction or uneasiness arising from any thought.

5. All our Ideas are of the one or of the other of these.

The understanding seems to me not to have the least glimmering of any ideas which it doth not receive from one of these two. EXTERNAL OBJECTS

furnish the mind with the ideas of sensible qualities, which are all those different perceptions they produce in us; and THE MIND furnishes the understanding with ideas of its own operations.

These, when we have taken a full survey of them, and their several modes, and the compositions made out of them we shall find to contain all our whole stock of ideas; and that we have nothing in our minds which did not come in one of these two ways. Let any one examine his own thoughts, and thoroughly search into his understanding; and then let him tell me, whether all the original ideas he has there, are any other than of the objects of his senses, or of the operations of his mind, considered as objects of his reflection. And how great a mass of knowledge soever he imagines to be lodged there, he will, upon taking a strict view, see that he has not any idea in his mind but what one of these two have imprinted;—though perhaps, with infinite variety compounded and enlarged by the understanding, as we shall see hereafter.

6. Observable in Children.

He that attentively considers the state of a child, at his first coming into the world, will have little reason to think him stored with plenty of ideas, that are to be the matter of his future knowledge. It is BY

DEGREES he comes to be furnished with them. And though the ideas of obvious and familiar qualities imprint themselves before the memory begins to keep a register of

time or order, yet it is often so late before some unusual qualities come in the way, that there are few men that cannot recollect the beginning of their acquaintance with them. And if it were worth while, no doubt a child might be so ordered as to have but a very few, even of the ordinary ideas, till he were grown up to a man. But all that are born into the world, being surrounded with bodies that perpetually and diversely affect them, variety of ideas, whether care be taken of it or not, are imprinted on the minds of children.

Light and colours are busy at hand everywhere, when the eye is but open; sounds and some tangible qualities fail not to solicit their proper senses, and force an entrance to the mind;—but yet, I think, it will be granted easily, that if a child were kept in a place where he never saw any other but black and white till he were a man, he would have no more ideas of scarlet or green, than he that from his childhood never tasted an oyster, or a pine-apple, has of those particular relishes.

7. Men are differently furnished with these, according to the different Objects they converse with.

Men then come to be furnished with fewer or more simple ideas from without, according as the objects they converse with afford greater or less variety; and from the operations of their minds within, according as they more or less reflect on them. For, though he that contemplates the operations of his mind, cannot but have plain and clear ideas of them; yet, unless he turn his thoughts that way, and considers them *ATTENTIVELY*, he will no more have clear and distinct ideas of all the operations of his mind, and all that may be observed therein, than he will have all the particular ideas of any landscape, or of the parts and motions of a clock, who will not turn his eyes to it, and with attention heed all the parts of it. The picture, or clock may be so placed, that they may come in his way every day; but yet he will have but a confused idea of all the parts they are made up of, till he applies himself with attention, to consider them each in particular.

8. Ideas of Reflection later, because they need Attention.

And hence we see the reason why it is pretty late before most children get ideas of the operations of their own minds; and some have not any very clear or perfect ideas of the greatest part of them all their lives. Because, though they pass there continually, yet, like floating visions, they make not deep impressions enough to leave in their mind clear, distinct, lasting ideas, till the understanding turns inward upon itself, reflects on its own operations, and makes them the objects of its own contemplation. Children when they come first into it, are surrounded with a world of new things which, by a constant solicitation of their senses, draw the mind constantly to them; forward to take notice of new, and apt to be delighted with the variety of changing objects. Thus the first years are usually employed and diverted in looking abroad. Men's business in them is to acquaint themselves with what is to be found without; and so growing up in a constant attention to outward sensations, seldom make any considerable reflection on what passes within them, till they come to be of riper years; and some scarce ever at all.

9. The Soul begins to have Ideas when it begins to perceive.

To ask, at what TIME a man has first any ideas, is to ask, when he begins to perceive;—HAVING IDEAS, and PERCEPTION, being the same thing.

I know it is an opinion, that the soul always thinks, and that it has the actual perception of ideas in itself constantly, as long as it exists; and that actual thinking is as inseparable from the soul as actual extension is from the body; which if true, to inquire after the beginning of a man's ideas is the same as to inquire after the beginning of his soul. For, by this account, soul and its ideas, as body and its extension, will begin to exist both at the same time.

10. The Soul thinks not always; for this wants Proofs.

But whether the soul be supposed to exist antecedent to, or coeval with, or some time after the first rudiments of organization, or the beginnings of life in the body, I leave to be disputed by those who have better thought of that matter. I confess myself to have one of those dull souls, that doth not perceive itself always to contemplate ideas; nor can conceive it any more necessary for the soul always to think, than for the body always to move: the perception of ideas being (as I conceive) to the soul, what motion is to the body; not its essence, but one of its operations. And therefore, though thinking be supposed never so much the proper action of the soul, yet it is not necessary to suppose that it should be always thinking, always in action. That, perhaps, is the privilege of the infinite Author and Preserver of all things, who "never slumbers nor sleeps"; but is not competent to any finite being, at least not to the soul of man. We know certainly, by experience, that we **SOMETIMES** think; and thence draw this infallible consequence,—that there is something in us that has a power to think.

But whether that substance **PERPETUALLY** thinks or no, we can be no further assured than experience informs us. For, to say that actual thinking is essential to the soul, and inseparable from it, is to beg what is in question, and not to prove it by reason;—which is necessary to be done, if it be not a self-evident proposition. But whether this, "That the soul always thinks," be a self-evident proposition, that everybody assents to at first hearing, I appeal to mankind. It is doubted whether I thought at all last night or no. The question being about a matter of fact, it is begging it to bring, as a proof for it, an hypothesis, which is the very thing in dispute: by which way one may prove anything, and it is but supposing that all watches, whilst the balance beats, think, and it is sufficiently proved, and past doubt, that my watch thought all last night. But he that would not deceive himself, ought to build his hypothesis on matter of fact, and make it out by sensible experience, and not presume on matter of fact, because of his hypothesis, that is, because he supposes it to be so; which way of proving amounts to this,

that I must necessarily think all last night, because another supposes I always think, though I myself cannot perceive that I always do so.

But men in love with their opinions may not only suppose what is in question, but allege wrong matter of fact. How else could any one make it an inference of mine, that a thing is not, because we are not sensible of it in our sleep? I do not say there is no SOUL in a man, because he is not sensible of it in his sleep; but I do say, he cannot THINK at any time, waking or sleeping, without being sensible of it. Our being sensible of it is not necessary to anything but to our thoughts; and to them it is; and to them it always will be necessary, till we can think without being conscious of it.

11. It is not always conscious of it.

I grant that the soul, in a waking man, is never without thought, because it is the condition of being awake. But whether sleeping without dreaming be not an affection of the whole man, mind as well as body, may be worth a waking man's consideration; it being hard to conceive that anything should think and not be conscious of it. If the soul doth think in a sleeping man without being conscious of it, I ask whether, during such thinking, it has any pleasure or pain, or be capable of happiness or misery? I am sure the man is not; no more than the bed or earth he lies on. For to be happy or miserable without being conscious of it, seems to me utterly inconsistent and impossible. Or if it be possible that the SOUL can, whilst the body is sleeping, have its thinking, enjoyments, and concerns, its pleasures or pain, apart, which the MAN is not conscious of nor partakes in,—it is certain that Socrates asleep and Socrates awake is not the same person; but his soul when he sleeps, and Socrates the man, consisting of body and soul, when he is waking, are two persons: since waking Socrates has no knowledge of, or concernment for that happiness or misery of his soul, which it enjoys alone by itself whilst he sleeps, without perceiving anything of it; no more than he has for the happiness or misery of a man in the Indies, whom he knows not. For, if

we take wholly away all consciousness of our actions and sensations, especially of pleasure and pain, and the concernment that accompanies it, it will be hard to know wherein to place personal identity.

12. If a sleeping Man thinks without knowing it, the sleeping and waking Man are two Persons.

The soul, during sound sleep, thinks, say these men. Whilst it thinks and perceives, it is capable certainly of those of delight or trouble, as well as any other perceptions; and IT must necessarily be CONSCIOUS

of its own perceptions. But it has all this apart: the sleeping MAN, it is plain, is conscious of nothing of all this. Let us suppose, then, the soul of Castor, while he is sleeping, retired from his body; which is no impossible supposition for the men I have here to do with, who so liberally allow life, without a thinking soul, to all other animals.

These men cannot then judge it impossible, or a contradiction, that the body should live without the soul; nor that the soul should subsist and think, or have perception, even perception of happiness or misery, without the body. Let us then, I say, suppose the soul of Castor separated during his sleep from his body, to think apart. Let us suppose, too, that it chooses for its scene of thinking the body of another man, v. g. Pollux, who is sleeping without a soul. For, if Castor's soul can think, whilst Castor is asleep, what Castor is never conscious of, it is no matter what PLACE it chooses to think in. We have here, then, the bodies of two men with only one soul between them, which we will suppose to sleep and wake by turns; and the soul still thinking in the waking man, whereof the sleeping man is never conscious, has never the least perception. I ask, then, whether Castor and Pollux, thus with only one soul between them, which thinks and perceives in one what the other is never conscious of, nor is concerned for, are not two as distinct PERSONS as Castor and Hercules, or as Socrates and Plato were?

And whether one of them might not be very happy, and the other very miserable? Just by the same reason, they make the soul and the man two persons, who make the soul think apart what the man is not conscious of.

For, I suppose nobody will make identity of persons to consist in the soul's being united to the very same numerical particles of matter.

For if that be necessary to identity, it will be impossible, in that constant flux of the particles of our bodies, that any man should be the same person two days, or two moments, together.

13. Impossible to convince those that sleep without dreaming, that they think.

Thus, methinks, every drowsy nod shakes their doctrine, who teach that the soul is always thinking. Those, at least, who do at any time SLEEP

WITHOUT DREAMING, can never be convinced that their thoughts are sometimes for four hours busy without their knowing of it; and if they are taken in the very act, waked in the middle of that sleeping contemplation, can give no manner of account of it.

14. That men dream without remembering it, in vain urged.

It will perhaps be said,—That the soul thinks even in the soundest sleep, but the MEMORY retains it not. That the soul in a sleeping man should be this moment busy a thinking, and the next moment in a waking man not remember nor be able to recollect one jot of all those thoughts, is very hard to be conceived, and would need some better proof than bare assertion to make it be believed. For who can without any more ado, but being barely told so, imagine that the greatest part of men do, during all their lives, for several hours every day, think of something, which if they were asked, even in the middle of these thoughts,

they could remember nothing at all of? Most men, I think, pass a great part of their sleep without dreaming. I once knew a man that was bred a scholar, and had no bad memory, who told me he had never dreamed in his life, till he had that fever he was then newly recovered of, which was about the five or six and twentieth year of his age. I suppose the world affords more such instances: at least every one's acquaintance will furnish him with examples enough of such as pass most of their nights without dreaming.

15. Upon this Hypothesis, the Thoughts of a sleeping Man ought to be most rational.

To think often, and never to retain it so much as one moment, is a very useless sort of thinking; and the soul, in such a state of thinking, does very little, if at all, excel that of a looking-glass, which constantly receives variety of images, or ideas, but retains none; they disappear and vanish, and there remain no footsteps of them; the looking-glass is never the better for such ideas, nor the soul for, such thoughts. Perhaps it will be said, that in a waking MAN the materials of the body are employed, and made use of, in thinking; and that the memory of thoughts is retained by the impressions that are made on the brain, and the traces there left after such thinking; but that in the thinking of the SOUL, which is not perceived in a sleeping man, there the soul thinks apart, and making no use of the organs of the body, leaves no impressions on it, and consequently no memory of such thoughts. Not to mention again the absurdity of two distinct persons, which follows from this supposition, I answer, further,—That whatever ideas the mind can receive and contemplate without the help of the body, it is reasonable to conclude it can retain without the help of the body too; or else the soul, or any separate spirit, will have but little advantage by thinking. If it has no memory of its own thoughts; if it cannot lay them up for its own use, and be able to recall them upon occasion; if it cannot reflect upon what is past, and make use of its former experiences, reasonings, and contemplations, to what, purpose does it

think? They who make the soul a thinking thing, at this rate, will not make it a much more noble being than those do whom they condemn, for allowing it to be nothing but the subtilist parts of matter. Characters drawn on dust, that the first breath of wind effaces; or impressions made on a heap of atoms, or animal spirits, are altogether as useful, and render the subject as noble, as the thoughts of a soul that perish in thinking; that, once out of sight, are gone for ever, and leave no memory of themselves behind them. Nature never makes excellent things for mean or no uses: and it is hardly to be conceived that our infinitely wise Creator should make so admirable a faculty as the power of thinking, that faculty which comes nearest the excellency of his own incomprehensible being, to be so idly and uselessly employed, at least a fourth part of its time here, as to think constantly, without remembering any of those thoughts, without doing any good to itself or others, or being any way useful to any other part of the creation. If we will examine it, we shall not find, I suppose, the motion of dull and senseless matter, any where in the universe, made so little use of and so wholly thrown away.

16. On this Hypothesis, the Soul must have Ideas not derived from Sensation or Reflection, of which there is no Appearance.

It is true, we have sometimes instances of perception whilst we are asleep, and retain the memory of those thoughts: but how extravagant and incoherent for the most part they are; how little conformable to the perfection and order of a rational being, those who are acquainted with dreams need not be told. This I would willingly be satisfied in,—whether the soul, when it thinks thus apart, and as it were separate from the body, acts less rationally than when conjointly with it, or no. If its separate thoughts be less rational, then these men must say, that the soul owes the perfection of rational thinking to the body: if it does not, it is a wonder that our dreams should be, for the most part, so frivolous and irrational; and that the soul should retain none

of its more rational soliloquies and meditations.

17. If I think when I know it not, nobody else can know it.

Those who so confidently tell us that the soul always actually thinks, I would they would also tell us, what those ideas are that are in the soul of a child, before or just at the union with the body, before it hath received any by sensation. The dreams of sleeping men are, as I take it, all made up of the waking man's ideas; though for the most part oddly put together. It is strange, if the soul has ideas of its own that it derived not from sensation or reflection, (as it must have, if it thought before it received any impressions from the body,) that it should never, in its private thinking, (so private, that the man himself perceives it not,) retain any of them the very moment it wakes out of them, and then make the man glad with new discoveries. Who can find it reason that the soul should, in its retirement during sleep, have so many hours' thoughts, and yet never light on any of those ideas it borrowed not from sensation or reflection; or at least preserve the memory of none but such, which, being occasioned from the body, must needs be less natural to a spirit? It is strange the soul should never once in a man's whole life recall over any of its pure native thoughts, and those ideas it had before it borrowed anything from the body; never bring into the waking man's view any other ideas but what have a tang of the cask, and manifestly derive their original from that union. If it always thinks, and so had ideas before it was united, or before it received any from the body, it is not to be supposed but that during sleep it recollects its native ideas; and during that retirement from communicating with the body, whilst it thinks by itself, the ideas it is busied about should be, sometimes at least, those more natural and congenial ones which it had in itself, underived from the body, or its own operations about them: which, since the waking man never remembers, we must from this hypothesis conclude either that the soul remembers something that the man does not; or else that memory belongs only to such ideas as are derived from the body, or

the mind's operations about them.

18. How knows any one that the Soul always thinks? For if it be not a self-evident Proposition, it needs Proof.

I would be glad also to learn from these men who so confidently pronounce that the human soul, or, which is all one, that a man always thinks, how they come to know it; nay, how they come to know that they themselves think, when they themselves do not perceive it. This, I am afraid, is to be sure without proofs, and to know without perceiving. It is, I suspect, a confused notion, taken up to serve an hypothesis; and none of those clear truths, that either their own evidence forces us to admit, or common experience makes it impudence to deny. For the most that can be said of it is, that it is possible the soul may always think, but not always retain it in memory. And I say, it is as possible that the soul may not always think; and much more probable that it should sometimes not think, than that it should often think, and that a long while together, and not be conscious to itself, the next moment after, that it had thought.

19. That a Man should be busy in Thinking, and yet not retain it the next moment, very improbable.

To suppose the soul to think, and the man not to perceive it, is, as has been said, to make two persons in one man. And if one considers well these men's way of speaking, one should be led into a suspicion that they do so. For those who tell us that the SOUL always thinks, do never, that I remember, say that a MAN always thinks. Can the soul think, and not the man? Or a man think, and not be conscious of it? This, perhaps, would be suspected of jargon in others. If they say the man thinks always, but is not always conscious of it, they may as well say his body is extended without having parts. For it is altogether as intelligible to say that a body is extended without parts, as that anything thinks without being conscious of it, or perceiving that it does so. They who talk thus may, with as much reason, if it be necessary to their hypothesis, say that a

man is always hungry, but that he does not always feel it; whereas hunger consists in that very sensation, as thinking consists in being conscious that one thinks. If they say that a man is always conscious to himself of thinking, I ask, How they know it?

Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a man's own mind. Can another man perceive that I am conscious of anything, when I perceive it not myself? No man's knowledge here can go beyond his experience. Wake a man out of a sound sleep, and ask him what he was that moment thinking of. If he himself be conscious of nothing he then thought on, he must be a notable diviner of thoughts that can assure him that he was thinking.

May he not, with more reason, assure him he was not asleep? This is something beyond philosophy; and it cannot be less than revelation, that discovers to another thoughts in my mind, when I can find none there myself. And they must needs have a penetrating sight who can certainly see that I think, when I cannot perceive it myself, and when I declare that I do not; and yet can see that dogs or elephants do not think, when they give all the demonstration of it imaginable, except only telling us that they do so. This some may suspect to be a step beyond the Rosicrucians; it seeming easier to make one's self invisible to others, than to make another's thoughts visible to me, which are not visible to himself. But it is but defining the soul to be "a substance that always thinks," and the business is done. If such definition be of any authority, I know not what it can serve for but to make many men suspect that they have no souls at all; since they find a good part of their lives pass away without thinking. For no definitions that I know, no suppositions of any sect, are of force enough to destroy constant experience; and perhaps it is the affectation of knowing beyond what we perceive, that makes so much useless dispute and noise in the world.

20. No ideas but from Sensation and Reflection, evident, if we observe Children.

I see no reason, therefore, to believe that the soul thinks before the senses have furnished it with ideas to think on; and as those are increased and retained, so it comes, by exercise, to improve its faculty of thinking in the several parts of it; as well as, afterwards, by compounding those ideas, and reflecting on its own operations, it increases its stock, as well as facility in remembering, imagining, reasoning, and other modes of thinking.

21. State of a child on the mother's womb.

He that will suffer himself to be informed by observation and experience, and not make his own hypothesis the rule of nature, will find few signs of a soul accustomed to much thinking in a new-born child, and much fewer of any reasoning at all. And yet it is hard to imagine that the rational soul should think so much, and not reason at all, And he that will consider that infants newly come into the world spend the greatest part of their time in sleep, and are seldom awake but when either hunger calls for the teat, or some pain (the most importunate of all sensations), or some other violent impression on the body, forces the mind to perceive and attend to it;—he, I say, who considers this, will perhaps find reason to imagine that a FOETUS in the mother's womb differs not much from the state of a vegetable, but passes the greatest part of its time without perception or thought; doing very little but sleep in a place where it needs not seek for food, and is surrounded with liquor, always equally soft, and near of the same temper; where the eyes have no light, and the ears so shut up are not very susceptible of sounds; and where there is little or no variety, or change of objects, to move the senses.

22. The mind thinks in proportion to the matter it gets from experience to think about.

Follow a child from its birth, and observe the alterations that time makes, and you shall find, as the mind by the senses comes more and more to be furnished with ideas, it comes to be more and more awake; thinks more, the more it

has matter to think on. After some time it begins to know the objects which, being most familiar with it, have made lasting impressions. Thus it comes by degrees to know the persons it daily converses with, and distinguishes them from strangers; which are instances and effects of its coming to retain and distinguish the ideas the senses convey to it. And so we may observe how the mind, BY DEGREES, improves in these; and ADVANCES to the exercise of those other faculties of enlarging, compounding, and abstracting its ideas, and of reasoning about them, and reflecting upon all these; of which I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter.

23. A man begins to have ideas when he first has sensation. What sensation is.

If it shall be demanded then, WHEN a man BEGINS to have any ideas, I think the true answer is,—WHEN HE FIRST HAS ANY SENSATION. For, since there appear not to be any ideas in the mind before the senses have conveyed any in, I conceive that ideas in the understanding are coeval with SENSATION; WHICH IS SUCH AN IMPRESSION OR MOTION MADE IN SOME PART

OF THE BODY, AS MAKES IT BE TAKEN NOTICE OF IN THE UNDERSTANDING.

24. The Original of all our Knowledge.

The impressions then that are made on our sense by outward objects that are extrinsical to the mind; and its own operations about these impressions, reflected on by itself, as proper objects to be contemplated by it, are, I conceive, the original of all knowledge. Thus the first capacity of human intellect is,—that the mind is fitted to receive the impressions made on it; either through the senses by outward objects, or by its own operations when it reflects on them. This is the first step a man makes towards the discovery of anything, and the groundwork whereon to build all those notions which ever he shall have naturally in this

world. All those sublime thoughts which tower above the clouds, and reach as high as heaven itself, take their rise and footing here: in all that great extent wherein the mind wanders, in those remote speculations it may seem to be elevated with, it stirs not one jot beyond those ideas which SENSE or REFLECTION have offered for its contemplation.

25. In the Reception of simple Ideas, the Understanding is for the most part passive.

In this part the understanding is merely passive; and whether or no it will have these beginnings, and as it were materials of knowledge, is not in its own power. For the objects of our senses do, many of them, obtrude their particular ideas upon our minds whether we will or not; and the operations of our minds will not let us be without, at least, some obscure notions of them. No man can be wholly ignorant of what he does when he thinks. These simple ideas, when offered to the mind, the understanding can no more refuse to have, nor alter when they are imprinted, nor blot them out and make new ones itself, than a mirror can refuse, alter, or obliterate the images or ideas which the objects set before it do therein produce. As the bodies that surround us do diversely affect our organs, the mind is forced to receive the impressions; and cannot avoid the perception of those ideas that are annexed to them.

CHAPTER II. OF SIMPLE IDEAS.

1. Uncompounded Appearances.

The better to understand the nature, manner, and extent of our knowledge, one thing is carefully to be observed concerning the ideas we have; and that is, that some of them, are SIMPLE and some COMPLEX.

Though the qualities that affect our senses are, in the things themselves, so united and blended, that there is no

separation, no distance between them; yet it is plain, the ideas they produce in the mind enter by the senses simple; and unmixed. For, though the sight and touch often take in from the same object, at the same time, different ideas;—as a man sees at once motion and colour; the hand feels softness and warmth in the same piece of wax: yet the simple ideas thus united in the same subject, are as perfectly distinct as those that come in by different senses. The coldness and hardness which a man feels in a piece of ice being as distinct ideas in the mind as the smell and whiteness of a lily; or as the taste of sugar, and smell of a rose. And there is nothing can be plainer to a man than the clear and distinct perception he has of those simple ideas; which, being each in itself uncompounded, contains in it nothing but ONE UNIFORM APPEARANCE, OR CONCEPTION IN THE MIND, and is not distinguishable into different ideas.

2. The Mind can neither make nor destroy them.

These simple ideas, the materials of all our knowledge, are suggested and furnished to the mind only by those two ways above mentioned, viz. sensation and reflection. When the understanding is once stored with these simple ideas, it has the power to repeat, compare, and unite them, even to an almost infinite variety, and so can make at pleasure new complex ideas. But it is not in the power of the most exalted wit, or enlarged understanding, by any quickness or variety of thought, to INVENT or FRAME one new simple idea in the mind, not taken in by the ways before mentioned: nor can any force of the understanding DESTROY those that are there. The dominion of man, in this little world of his own understanding being much what the same as it is in the great world of visible things; wherein his power, however managed by art and skill, reaches no farther than to compound and divide the materials that are made to his hand; but can do nothing towards the making the least particle of new matter, or destroying one atom of what is already in being. The same inability will every one find in

himself, who shall go about to fashion in his understanding one simple idea, not received in by his senses from external objects, or by reflection from the operations of his own mind about them. I would have any one try to fancy any taste which had never affected his palate; or frame the idea of a scent he had never smelt: and when he can do this, I will also conclude that a blind man hath ideas of colours, and a deaf man true distinct notions of sounds.

3. Only the qualities that affect the senses are imaginable.

This is the reason why—though we cannot believe it impossible to God to make a creature with other organs, and more ways to convey into the understanding the notice of corporeal things than those five, as they are usually counted, which he has given to man—yet I think it is not possible for any MAN to imagine any other qualities in bodies, howsoever constituted, whereby they can be taken notice of, besides sounds, tastes, smells, visible and tangible qualities. And had mankind been made but with four senses, the qualities then which are the objects of the fifth sense had been as far from our notice, imagination, and conception, as now any belonging to a sixth, seventh, or eighth sense can possibly be;—which, whether yet some other creatures, in some other parts of this vast and stupendous universe, may not have, will be a great presumption to deny. He that will not set himself proudly at the top of all things, but will consider the immensity of this fabric, and the great variety that is to be found in this little and inconsiderable part of it which he has to do with, may be apt to think that, in other mansions of it, there may be other and different intelligent beings, of whose faculties he has as little knowledge or apprehension as a worm shut up in one drawer of a cabinet hath of the senses or understanding of a man; such variety and excellency being suitable to the wisdom and power of the Maker. I have here followed the common opinion of man's having but five senses; though, perhaps, there may be justly counted more;—but either supposition serves equally to my present purpose.

CHAPTER III. OF SIMPLE IDEAS OF SENSE.

1. Division of simple ideas.

The better to conceive the ideas we receive from sensation, it may not be amiss for us to consider them, in reference to the different ways whereby they make their approaches to our minds, and make themselves perceivable by us.

FIRST, then, There are some which come into our minds BY ONE SENSE ONLY.

SECONDLY, There are others that convey themselves into the mind BY MORE SENSES THAN ONE.

THIRDLY, Others that are had from REFLECTION ONLY.

FOURTHLY, There are some that make themselves way, and are suggested to the mind BY ALL THE WAYS OF SENSATION AND REFLECTION.

We shall consider them apart under these several heads.

Ideas of one Sense.

There are some ideas which have admittance only through one sense, which is peculiarly adapted to receive them. Thus light and colours, as white, red, yellow, blue; with their several degrees or shades and mixtures, as green, scarlet, purple, sea-green, and the rest, come in only by the eyes. All kinds of noises, sounds, and tones, only by the ears. The several tastes and smells, by the nose and palate. And if these organs, or the nerves which are the conduits to convey

them from without to their audience in the brain,—the mind's presence-room (as I may so call it)—are any of them so disordered as not to perform their functions, they have no postern to be admitted by; no other way to bring themselves into view, and be perceived by the understanding.

The most considerable of those belonging to the touch, are heat and cold, and solidity: all the rest, consisting almost wholly in the sensible configuration, as smooth and rough; or else, more or less firm adhesion of the parts, as hard and soft, tough and brittle, are obvious enough.

2. Few simple Ideas have Names.

I think it will be needless to enumerate all the particular simple ideas belonging to each sense. Nor indeed is it possible if we would; there being a great many more of them belonging to most of the senses than we have names for. The variety of smells, which are as many almost, if not more, than species of bodies in the world, do most of them want names. Sweet and stinking commonly serve our turn for these ideas, which in effect is little more than to call them pleasing or displeasing; though the smell of a rose and violet, both sweet, are certainly very distinct ideas. Nor are the different tastes, that by our palates we receive ideas of, much better provided with names. Sweet, bitter, sour, harsh, and salt are almost all the epithets we have to denominate that numberless variety of relishes, which are to be found distinct, not only in almost every sort of creatures, but in the different parts of the same plant, fruit, or animal. The same may be said of colours and sounds. I shall, therefore, in the account of simple ideas I am here giving, content myself to set down only such as are most material to our present purpose, or are in themselves less apt to be taken notice of though they are very frequently the ingredients of our complex ideas; amongst which, I think, I may well account solidity, which therefore I shall treat of in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV. IDEA OF SOLIDITY.

1. We receive this Idea from Touch.

The idea of SOLIDITY we receive by our touch: and it arises from the resistance which we find in body to the entrance of any other body into the place it possesses, till it has left it. There is no idea which we receive more constantly from sensation than solidity. Whether we move or rest, in what posture soever we are, we always feel something under us that supports us, and hinders our further sinking downwards; and the bodies which we daily handle make us perceive that, whilst they remain between them, they do, by an insurmountable force, hinder the approach of the parts of our hands that press them. THAT WHICH THUS HINDERS THE APPROACH OF TWO BODIES, WHEN THEY ARE MOVED ONE TOWARDS ANOTHER, I CALL SOLIDITY. I will not dispute whether this acceptance of the word solid be nearer to its original signification than that which mathematicians use it in. It suffices that I think the common notion of solidity will allow, if not justify, this use of it; but if any one think it better to call it IMPENETRABILITY, he has my consent. Only I have thought the term solidity the more proper to express this idea, not only because of its vulgar use in that sense, but also because it carries something more of positive in it than impenetrability; which is negative, and is perhaps more a consequence of solidity, than solidity itself. This, of all other, seems the idea most intimately connected with, and essential to body; so as nowhere else to be found or imagined, but only in matter. And though our senses take no notice of it, but in masses of matter, of a bulk sufficient to cause a sensation in us: yet the mind, having once got this idea from such grosser sensible bodies, traces it further, and considers it, as well as figure, in the minutest particle of matter that can exist; and finds it inseparably inherent in body, wherever or however modified.

2. Solidity fills Space.

This is the idea which belongs to body, whereby we conceive it to fill space. The idea of which filling of space is,

16. Powers belonging to Agents.

It is plain then that the will is nothing but one power or ability, and FREEDOM another power or ability so that, to ask, whether the will has freedom, is to ask whether one power has another power, one ability another ability; a question at first sight too grossly absurd to make a dispute, or need an answer. For, who is it that sees not that powers belong only to agents, and are attributes only of substances, and not of powers themselves? So that this way of putting the question (viz. whether the will be free) is in effect to ask, whether the will be a substance, an agent, or at least to suppose it, since freedom can properly be attributed to nothing else. If freedom can with any propriety of speech be applied to power, it may be attributed to the power that is in a man to produce, or forbear producing, motion in parts of his body, by choice or preference; which is that which denominates him free, and is freedom itself. But if any one should ask, whether freedom were free, he would be suspected not to understand well what he said; and he would be thought to deserve Midas's ears, who, knowing that rich was a denomination for the possession of riches, should demand whether riches themselves were rich.

17. How the will instead of the man is called free.

However, the name FACULTY, which men have given to this power called the will, and whereby they have been led into a way of talking of the will as acting, may, by an appropriation that disguises its true sense, serve a little to palliate the absurdity; yet the will, in truth, signifies nothing but a power or ability to prefer or choose: and when the will, under the name of a faculty, is considered as it is, barely as an ability to do something, the absurdity in saying it is free, or not free, will easily discover itself. For, if it be reasonable to suppose and talk of faculties as distinct beings that can act, (as we do, when we say the will orders, and the will is

free,) it is fit that we should make a speaking faculty, and a walking faculty, and a dancing faculty, by which these actions are produced, which are but several modes of motion; as well as we make the will and understanding to be faculties, by which the actions of choosing and perceiving are produced, which are but several modes of thinking. And we may as properly say that it is the singing faculty sings, and the dancing faculty dances, as that the will chooses, or that the understanding conceives; or, as is usual, that the will directs the understanding, or the understanding obeys or obeys not the will: it being altogether as proper and intelligible to say that the power of speaking directs the power of singing, or the power of singing obeys or disobeys the power of speaking.

18. This way of talking causes confusion of thought.

This way of talking, nevertheless, has prevailed, and, as I guess, produced great confusion. For these being all different powers in the mind, or in the man, to do several actions, he exerts them as he thinks fit: but the power to do one action is not operated on by the power of doing another action. For the power of thinking operates not on the power of choosing, nor the power of choosing on the power of thinking; no more than the power of dancing operates on the power of singing, or the power of singing on the power of dancing, as any one who reflects on it will easily perceive. And yet this is it which we say when we thus speak, that the will operates on the understanding, or the understanding on the will.

19. Powers are relations, not agents.

I grant, that this or that actual thought may be the occasion of volition, or exercising the power a man has to choose; or the actual choice of the mind, the cause of actual thinking on this or that thing: as the actual singing of such a tune may be the cause of dancing such a dance, and the actual dancing of such a dance the occasion of singing such a tune. But in all these it is not one POWER that operates on another: but it is

the mind that operates, and exerts these powers; it is the man that does the action; it is the agent that has power, or is able to do. For powers are relations, not agents: and that which has the power or not the power to operate, is that alone which is or is not free, and not the power itself. For freedom, or not freedom, can belong to nothing but what has or has not a power to act.

20. Liberty belongs not to the Will.

The attributing to faculties that which belonged not to them, has given occasion to this way of talking: but the introducing into discourses concerning the mind, with the name of faculties, a notion of THEIR operating, has, I suppose, as little advanced our knowledge in that part of ourselves, as the great use and mention of the like invention of faculties, in the operations of the body, has helped us in the knowledge of physic. Not that I deny there are faculties, both in the body and mind: they both of them have their powers of operating, else neither the one nor the other could operate. For nothing can operate that is not able to operate; and that is not able to operate that has no power to operate. Nor do I deny that those words, and the like, are to have their place in the common use of languages that have made them current. It looks like too much affectation wholly to lay them by: and philosophy itself, though it likes not a gaudy dress, yet, when it appears in public, must have so much complacency as to be clothed in the ordinary fashion and language of the country, so far as it can consist with truth and perspicuity. But the fault has been, that faculties have been spoken of and represented as so many distinct agents. For, it being asked, what it was that digested the meat in our stomachs? it was a ready and very satisfactory answer to say, that it was the DIGESTIVE FACULTY. What was it that made anything come out of the body? the EXPULSIVE FACULTY. What moved? the MOTIVE FACULTY. And so in the mind, the INTELLECTUAL FACULTY, or the understanding, understood; and the ELECTIVE FACULTY, or the will, willed or commanded. This is, in short, to say,

that the ability to digest, digested; and the ability to move, moved; and the ability to understand, understood. For faculty, ability, and power, I think, are but different names of the same things: which ways of speaking, when put into more intelligible words, will, I think, amount to thus much;—That digestion is performed by something that is able to digest, motion by something able to move, and understanding by something able to understand. And, in truth, it would be very strange if it should be otherwise; as strange as it would be for a man to be free without being able to be free.

21. But to the Agent, or Man.

To return, then, to the inquiry about liberty, I think the question is not proper, **WHETHER THE WILL BE FREE**, but **WHETHER A MAN BE FREE**. Thus, I think,

First, That so far as any one can, by the direction or choice of his mind, preferring the existence of any action to the non-existence of that action, and vice versa, make IT to exist or not exist, so far HE is free. For if I can, by a thought directing the motion of my finger, make it move when it was at rest, or vice versa, it is evident, that in respect of that I am free: and if I can, by a like thought of my mind, preferring one to the other, produce either words or silence, I am at liberty to speak or hold my peace: and as far as this power reaches, of acting or not acting, by the determination of his own thought preferring either, so far is a man free. For how can we think any one freer, than to have the power to do what he will? And so far as any one can, by preferring any action to its not being, or rest to any action, produce that action or rest, so far can he do what he will. For such a preferring of action to its absence, is the willing of it: and we can scarce tell how to imagine any being freer, than to be able to do what he wills. So that in respect of actions within the reach of such a power in him, a man seems as free as it is possible for freedom to make him.

22. In respect of willing, a Man is not free.