



Johannes Locke.

A N
E S S A Y
C O N C E R N I N G
Human Understanding.

I N F O U R B O O K S .

Written by J O H N L O C K E , Gent.

The T W E L F T H E D I T I O N .

V O L U M E I .

E C C L E S . X I . 5 .

As thou knowest not what is the Way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child : Even so thou knowest not the Works of God who maketh all Things.

Quam bellum est velle confiteri potius nescire quod nescias, quam ista effutientem nauseare, atque ipsum sibi displicere!

Cic. de Natur. Deor. l. 1.

L O N D O N :

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M D C C X L I .

Whether he pleases to call these immediate Objects of his Mind, which his Words do, or should stand for, *Ideas* or no.

C H A P. II.

No Innate Principles in the Mind.

§. 1. **I**T is an established Opinion amongst some Men, that there are in the Understanding certain *Innate Principles*; some Primary Notions, *Κοιναι Έννοαι*, 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 the unprejudiced Readers of the Falseness of this Supposition, if I should only shew (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.

The Way shown how we come by any Knowledge, sufficient to prove it not Innate.

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. 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 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.

General Assent the great Argument.

Universal Consent proves nothing innate.

§. 3. 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 shewn, how Men may come to that Universal Agreement, in the Things they do consent in; which I presume may be done.

What is, is; and, It is impossible for the same Thing to be, and not to be, *not universally assented to.*

§. 4. 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, 'Tis impossible for the same Thing to be, and not to be;* which of all others, I think have the most allow'd Title to Innate. These have so settled a Reputation of Maxims universally received, that 'twill, 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.

Not on the Mind naturally imprinted, because not known to Children, Ideots, &c.

§. 5. For, first 'tis evident, that all *Children* and *Ideots*, 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 any thing, being nothing else, but the making certain Truths to be perceived. For to imprint any thing on the Mind, without the Mind's perceiving it, seems to me hardly intelligible. If therefore *Children* and *Ideots* 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 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 no body, 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 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, any thing 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. To avoid this, 'tis 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,

That Men know them when they come to the Use of Reason, answer'd.

who

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 Mens Reasons assists them in the Discovery of these Principles, and certainly makes them known to them.

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

§. 8. 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 allow'd 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.

'Tis false that Reason discovers them.

§. 9. 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 in it, and cannot be in the Understanding, before it is 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 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; 'tis in effect to say, that Men know, and know them not at the same time.

§. 10. 'Twill perhaps be said, that Mathematical Demonstrations, and other Truths, that are not Innate, are not assented

assented to, as soon as propos'd, wherein they are distinguish'd 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 has 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 suppos'd, that what was imprinted by Nature, as the Foundation and Guide of our Reason, should need the Use of Reason to discover it?

§. 11. 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. 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 com-

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

ing 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, 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 no body 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.

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

§. 13. 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 others, 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.

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

§. 14. 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 Logick 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 a quite distinct Province,

begins

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 will 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 shewn; or at least, how in this, or any other Sense it proves them Innate.

§. 15. 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 farther, abstracts them, and by degrees learns the Use of general Names. In this manner the Mind comes to be furnish'd 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 shews them not to be Innate. For, if we will observe, we shall find it still to be about Ideas, not Innate, but acquir'd: 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

The Steps by which the Mind attains several Truths.

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 receive 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 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 Sugar-Plums are not the same Thing.

§. 16. A Child knows not that Three and Four are equal to Seven, 'till he comes to be able to count to 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 Grounds, and by the same Means, that he knew before, that a Rod and Cherry are not the same thing; and upon the same Grounds 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 shewn 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 general 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 Weefel, 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 signify'd by One, Two and Three,

§. 17. 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 propos'd 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.

Assenting as soon as proposed and understood, proves them not Innate.

§. 18. 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 every body assents to at first hearing, and understanding the Terms, must have a Place amongst those 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 no body any more sticks at, than at this Maxim, *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 Yellowness is not Sweetness:* These and a Million of other such

If such an Assent be a Mark of Innate, then that One and Two are equal to Three; that Sweetness is not Bitterness; and a thousand the like, must be Innate.

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 Rules, *and have Assent at first hearing and understanding the Terms*, to be a Mark of Innate, they must allow, not only as many Innate Propositions 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, Figures, &c. Innate; than which, there cannot be any thing 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 shew hereafter) belongs to several Propositions, which no body was yet so extravagant as to pretend to be Innate.

§. 19. 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 look'd 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. If it be said, that these Propositions, *viz. One and One equal to Two, 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,

Innate,

Innate, whatever Proposition can be found, that receives general Assent as soon as heard and 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 more particular self-evident Propositions; and therefore 'tis 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 it is generally conceived, when it comes in its due place to be more fully considered.

§. 21. But we have not yet done with *Assenting to Propositions at first hearing and understanding their Terms*; 'tis 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 propos'd 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 propos'd 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 other 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 deny'd, that Men grow first acquainted with many of these self-evident Truths, upon their being propos'd: 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

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

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 propos'd to them, cannot refuse their Assent to.

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

§. 22. If it be said, the Understanding hath an implicit Knowledge of these Principles, but not an explicit, before the 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 Demon-

strations, 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 ingraven upon their Minds.

The Argument of dissenting on first hearing, is upon a false Supposition of no precedent Teaching.

§. 23. There is, I fear, this farther 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 any thing *de novo*; when, in truth, they are taught, and do learn something they were ignorant of before. For first it is evident, 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

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 learn'd 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 farther than they are Signs of our *Ideas*, we cannot but assent to them, as they correspond to those *Ideas* we have, but no farther than that. But the shewing 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

touched on it here, as one Reason that made me doubt of those Innate Principles.

*Not Innate,
because not
universally
assented to.*

§. 24. 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 shew these Propositions not to be Innate, if Children alone were ignorant of them.

*These Maxims
not the first
known.*

§. 25. 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 imagin'd, 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,

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 'tis plain, it knows a great many other Truths? He that will say, Children join 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. 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 any thing 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 in the Mind*, they must necessarily be the first of any thought on; the first that appear there.

And so not Innate.

§. 27. That the general Maxims we are discoursing of, are not known to *Children*, *Ideots*, 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 farther 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 'tis, 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*, *Ideots*,

Not Innate, because they appear least, where what is Innate shews itself clearest.

Savages,

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 'tis 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 Dependance on the Constitutions 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 Play-things of a little more advanced Age: And a young Savage has, perhaps, his Head fill'd 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 Sciences, 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.*

Recapitulati-
on.

first hearing.

§. 28. I know not how absurd this may seem to the Masters of Demonstration: And probably, it will hardly down with any body at first hearing. I must therefore beg a little Truce with Prejudice,

judice, 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 famed 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.*

C H A P. III.

No Innate Practical Principles.

§. 1. **I**F 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 farther removed from a title to be Innate; and the doubt of their being native Impressions on the Mind, is stronger against these 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 engraven on
the

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

the Mind; which, if any such were, they must needs be visible by themselves, and by their own Light be certain and known to every body. 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 fault, 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. 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 look'd 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 farthest towards the putting off Humanity itself, keep Faith and Rules of Justice one with another. I grant that Out-laws themselves do this one amongst another; but 'tis 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 Highwaymen, 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 Out-laws 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 and Rapine, have Innate Principles of Truth and Justice which they allow and assent to?

Object. §. 3. 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 Interpretation of their Thoughts, answered.

ters of their Thoughts. But since it is certain, that most Men's Practice, 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,* 'Tis 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 distinguish'd 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 confirm'd 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. Another Reason that makes me doubt of any Innate Practical Principles, is, That I think *there cannot any one moral Rule be propos'd, 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 its Approbation. He would be thought void of common Sense, who asked, on the one side or on the other side, to give a Reason, *Why it is im-*

Moral Rules need a Proof, ergo, not Innate.

possible

possible 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 one should do as he would be done unto*, be propos'd to one who never heard 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 propos'd it bound to make out the Truth and Reasonableness of it to him? Which plainly shews 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. That Men should keep their Compacts, is certainly a great 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 an *Hobbist* be asked why, he will answer, Because the Publick requires it, and the *Leviathan* will punish you if you do not. And if one of the old *Heathen* Philosophers had been asked, he would have answer'd, Because it was dishonest, below the Dignity of a Man, and opposite to Virtue, the highest Perfection of human Nature, to do otherwise.

§. 6. Hence naturally flows the great Variety of Opinions concerning the 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,

probation, 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 *publick 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 prophaned, 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 shews that the outward Acknowledgment Men pay them in their Words, proves not that they are Innate Principles: Nay, it proves not so much, 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 Conveniencies 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 he has order'd for the Punishment of those that transgress them.

§. 7. 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 not 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 cominended 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.

§. 1. 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 se-

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

Conscience no Proof of any Innate Moral Rule.

veral 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 Pravity 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.

Instances of Enormities practised without Remorse.

§. 9. But I cannot see how any Men should ever transgress those *moral Rules, with Confidence and Serenity*, were they Innate, and stamped upon their Mind. 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 Mother, if they die in Child-birth; or dispatch 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. (a) It is familiar among the *Mengrelians*, a People professing Christianity, to bury their Children alive without scruple. (b) There are Places where they eat their own Children. (c) The *Caribbees* were wont to geld their Children, on purpose to fat and eat them. (d) 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 kill'd too and eaten. (e) The Virtues, whereby the *Tououpinambos* believed they merited Paradise, were

(a) *Gruber* apud *Thevenot*, part 4. p. 13.

(b) *Lambert* apud *Thevenot*, p. 38.

(c) *Vossius* de *Nili Origine*, c. 18, 19.

(d) *P. Mart. Deo*.

(e) *Hist. des Incas*, l. 1.

c. 12.

I

Revenge,

Revenge, and eating abundance of their Enemies. They have not so much as the Name for God, (*f*) no Acknowledgment of any God, no Religion, no (*f*) *Lery*, c. 16. Worship, p. 231. 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 Voyages 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 Ægypto*) *vidimus sanctum unum Saraccenicum inter arenarum cumulos, ita ut ex utero matris prodiit nudum sedentem. Mos est, ut didicimus, Mahometistis, ut eos qui amentes, & sine ratione sunt, pro sanctis colant & venerentur. Insuper & eos qui cum diu vitam egerint iniquitissimam, voluntariam demum pœnitentiam & paupertatem, sanctitate venerandos deputant. Ejusmodi verò genus hominum libertatem quandam effrœnem habent, domos quas volunt intrandi, edendi, bibendi, & quod majus est, concumbendi, ex quo concubitu si proles secuta fuerit, sancta similiter habetur. His ergo hominibus, dum vivunt, magnos exhibent honores; mortuis verò vel templa vel monumenta extruunt amplissima, eosque contingere ac sepelire maximæ fortunæ ducunt loco. Audivimus hæc dicta & dicenda per interpretem à Mucrelo nostro. Insuper sanctum illum, quem eo loco vidimus, publicitus apprime commendari, eum esse Hominem sanctum, divinum ac integritate præcipuum; eo quod, nec fœminarum unquam esset, nec puerorum, sed tantummodo asellarum concubitus atque mularum.* *Peregr. Baumgarten*, l. 2. c. 1. p. 73. More of the same kind, concerning these precious Saints among the *Turks*, may be seen in *Pietro della Valle*, in his Letter of the 25th of January, 1616. 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. 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 nam'd, or Rules of Virtue to be thought on (those only excepted

*Men have
contrary Pra-
ctical Princi-
ples.*

that are absolutely necessary to hold Society together, which commonly too are neglected betwixt distinct Societies) which is not, fomewhere 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. Here, perhaps, 'twill be objected, That *Whole Nations reject several Moral Rules.* 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 *publickly 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. 'Tis 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 'tis not to be imagin'd, that a whole Society of Men should publickly 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 look'd on as the profess'd 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 lye 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 any where universally, and with publick Approbation or Allowance, transgressed, can be supposed Innate. But I have something farther to add, in answer to this Objection.

§. 12. The breaking of a Rule, say you, is no Argument that it is unknown. I grant it: But the *generally allowed Breach of it any where*, 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 natu-
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ral 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 *Mengrelia* 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 among 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 Falshood. 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 Law-maker, 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 allow'd Practice runs counter to it, is in itself evident. But these *Ideas* (which must be all of them Innate, if any thing as a Duty be so) are so far from being Innate, that 'tis 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. 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 any thing 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 under foot his most sacred Injunctions? And lastly, Whether it be possible, that whilst a Man thus openly bids defiance to this Innate Law and supreme Law-giver, all the By-standers, 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 over-turning 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 over-balance the Satisfaction any one shall propose to himself in the Breach of the Law. If therefore any thing be imprinted on the Mind of all Men as a Law, all Men must have a certain and unavoidable Knowledge, that certain and unavoidable Punishments 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

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 be here 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 this 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 the 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. 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 'tis 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 'tis like then, every System would be ready to give them us by Tale. But since no body, that I know, has ventured yet to give a Catalogue of them, they cannot blame those who doubt of the Innate Principles; since even they who require Men to believe, that there are such Innate Propositions, do not tell us what they are. 'Tis easy to foresee, that if different Men of different Sects should go about to

Those who maintain Innate practical Principles, tell us not what they are.

give us a List of those Innate Practical Principles, they would set down only such as suited their distinct Hypothesis, 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 any thing 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.

Lord Herbert's *Innate Principles examined.*

§. 15. When I had writ this, being informed that my Lord Herbert had, in his Books *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 Enquiry. In his Chapter *de Instinctu Naturali*, p. 76. edit. 1656. I met with these six Marks of his *Notitiæ Communes*: 1. *Prioritas*. 2. *Independentia*. 3. *Universalitas*. 4. *Certitudo*. 5. *Necessitas*, i. e. as he explains it, *faciunt ad hominis conversationem*. 6. *Modus conformationis*, i. e. *Affensus nullâ interposita morâ*. 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 arêtentur quæ ubique vigent veritates. Sunt enim in ipsâ mente cœlitùs descriptæ, nullisque traditionibus, sive scriptis, sive non scriptis, obnoxia*, p. 3. And, *Veritates nostræ Catholicæ, quæ tanquam indubia Dei effata in foro interiori descripta*. 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 optimam esse rationem cultûs divini*. 4. *Resipiscendum esse à peccatis*. 5. *Dari præmium vel pœnam 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 descriptæ*. For I must take leave to observe,

§. 16. *First*, That these five Propositions are either not all, or more than all, those common Notions writ 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 wouldest be done unto*: And perhaps, some hundreds of others, when well considered.

§. 17. *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 join'd 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 can 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. 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 and common Notion) *viz. Virtue is the best Worship of God; i. e. is most acceptable to him; which, if Virtue be taken, as 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 than this, *viz. That God is pleas'd 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 Principles 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 pleas'd with the doing of what he himself*

himself commands, for an Innate Moral Principle writ 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 no body yet ever put into that Rank of Innate Principles.

§. 19. 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 on 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 Exposition, 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 scarce 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, tho' we want it ourselves, but on the contrary, relieve and supply his Wants; and whenever we have done the contra-

ry, 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 which come under these two general Words made use of above, *viz. Virtutes & 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. 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 darkned, 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 own 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 is 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

Obj. *Innate Principles may be corrupted, answered.*

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 blurr'd and blotted out: If they cannot, we must find them in all Mankind alike, and they must be clear in every body: 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.

Contrary Principles in the World.

§. 21. 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 as Oppositions one to 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.

How Men commonly come by their Principles.

§. 22. 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) insfil into the unwary, and, as yet, unprejudiced Understanding, (for white Paper receives any Characters) those Doctrines they wou'd 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

Basis and Foundation, on which they build their Religion or Manners, come, by these Means, to have the Reputation of Unquestionable, Self-evident, and Innate Truths.

§. 23. To which we may add, That when Men, so instructed, are grown up, and reflect on their own Minds, they cannot find any thing 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. 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 Calling; nor be at quiet in their Minds, without some Foundation or Principles to rest their Thoughts on.* There is scarce 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 Falshood, 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. This is evidently the Case of all Children and Young Folks; 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 Foundation 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?

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Who is there, hardy enough to contend with the Reproach, which is every where prepared for these 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. 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, tho' not not always warily nor wisely, employ'd, 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, 'tis 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 Proofs 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 own Hands.

*Principles
must be exa-
mined.*

§. 27. 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

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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 any 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 scarce 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.

C H A P. IV.

Other Considerations concerning Innate Principles, both Speculative and Practical.

§. 1. **H**AD 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* them-

*Principles not
Innate, unless
their Ideas be
Innate.*

themselves are not, there can be no Knowledge, no Assent, no Mental or Verbal Propositions about them.

Ideas, especially those belonging to Principles, not born with Children.

§. 2. 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 no 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. *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 that 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 *Impossibile est idem esse, & non esse*, that makes a Child distinguish between its Mother and a Stranger: or that makes it fond of the one, and shy 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 Understanding. 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.

Identity, and Idea, not Innate.

§. 4. If *Identity* (to instance in that alone) be a native Impression; and consequently so clear

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and obvious to us, that we must needs know it even from our Cradles; I would gladly be resolv'd, by 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 Man, though they lived in 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 Sanchez's* 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 others of his Followers have: And which then shall be the true? Which *Innate*? Or are there two different *Ideas of Identity*, both *Innate*?

§. 5. Nor let any one think, that the Questions I have here propos'd about the *Identity* of Man, are bare, empty Speculations; which if they were, would be enough to shew, 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 shall 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. Let us examine that Principle of Mathematicks, viz. *That the Whole is bigger than a Part*. This, I take it, is reckon'd amongst *Whole and Part not Innate Ideas*. *Innate Principles*. I am sure it has as good a Title as any to be thought so; which yet, no body 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

and Number, I leave to be considered by those, who are the Patrons of Innate Principles.

Idea of Worship not Innate.

§. 7. That *God is to be worshipped*, is, without doubt, as great a Truth as any 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 distinct Notion of it. And, I suppose, there cannot be any thing 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.

Idea of God not Innate.

§. 8. If any *Idea* can be imagin'd 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

(a) Rhoe apud Thevenot, p. 2.

(b) Jo. de Lery, c. 16.

(c) Martiniere

$\frac{3}{2} \frac{1}{2}$.

Terry $\frac{1}{3} \frac{7}{4}$, &c.

Ovington $\frac{4}{2} \frac{8}{2}$.

(d) Relatio triplex de rebus Indicis Caaiguarum $\frac{4}{7} \frac{3}{7}$.

History, hath not Navigation discovered, in these later Ages, whole Nations at the Bay of Soldania, (a) in Brasil, (b) in Boranday, (c) and the Caribee Islands, &c. amongst whom there was to be found no Notion of a God, no Religion.

Nicholaus del Techo in literis, ex Paraquaria de Caaiguarum conversione, has these Words, (d) *Reperi eam gentem nullum nomen habere, quod Deum, & hominis animam significet, nulla sacra habet, nulla Idola.* These are Instances of Nations

where uncultivated Nature has been left to itself, without the Help of Letters and Discipline, and the Improvements of Arts and Sciences. But there are others to be found, who have enjoy'd these in a very great measure, who yet, for want of a due Application of their Thoughts this way, want the *Idea* and Knowledge of

God. 'Twill, I doubt not, be a Surprize to others, as it was to me, to find the *Siamites* of this Number. But for this, let

them consult the King of *France's* late Envoy thither, (e) who gives no better Account of the *Chineses* themselves. (f) And if we will not believe *La Loubere*, the Missionaries of *China*, even the Jesuits themselves, the great Encomiasts of the *Chineses*, do all to a Man agree, and will convince us, that the Sect of the *Litterati*, or *Learned*, keeping to the old Religion of *China*, and the ruling Party there, are all of them *Atheists*. [Vid. *Navarette* in the Collection of Voyages, Vol. I. and *Historia cultus Sinenfium*.] 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 tho' 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 Neighbours Censure, tie up Peoples Tongues; which, were the Apprehensions of Punishment or Shame taken away, would as openly proclaim their *Atheism*, as their Lives do. (2)

(e) *La Loubere du Royaume de Siam*. T. 1. c. 9. §. 15, &c. 20. §. 22, &c. 22. §. 6.

(f) *Ib. Tom. 1. c. 20. §. 4, &c. 23.*

§. 9.

(2) On this Reasoning of the Author against Innate Ideas, great Blame hath been laid; because it seems to invalidate an Argument commonly used to prove the Being of a God, *viz. Universal Consent*: To which our Author † answers, *I think that the Universal Consent of Mankind, as to the Being of a God, amounts to thus much, That the vastly greater Majority of Mankind have in all Ages of the World actually believed a God; that the Majority of the remaining Part have not actually disbelieved it; and consequently those who have actually opposed the Belief of a God, have truly been very few.* So that comparing those that have actually disbelieved, with those who have actually believed a God, their Number is so inconsiderable, that in respect of this incomparably greater Majority, of those who have owned the Belief of a God, it may be said to be the *Universal Consent* of Mankind.

† In his Third Letter to the Bishop of Worcester, p. 147, &c.

This is all the *Universal Consent* which Truth or Matter of Fact will allow; and therefore all that can be made use of to prove a God. But if any one would extend it farther, and speak deceitfully for God: If this Universality should be urged in a strict Sense, not for much the Majority, but for a general *Consent* of every one, even to a Man, in all Ages and Countries; this would make it either no Argument, or a perfectly useless and unnecessary one. For if any one deny a God, such a perfectly Universality of

§. 9. But had all Mankind, every where, a *Notion of 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 Mens Mind, any Argument against the Being of 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 shew 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

Consent is destroy'd; and if no body does deny a God, what need of Arguments to convince *Atheists*?

I would crave leave to ask your Lordship, Were there ever in the World any *Atheists* or no? If there were not, what need is there of raising a Question about the Being of a God, when no body questions it? What need of provisional Arguments against a Fault, from which Mankind are so wholly free, and which by an *Universal Consent*, they may be presumed to be secure from? If you say, (as I doubt not but you will) that there have been *Atheists* in the World, then your Lordship's *Universal Consent*, reduces itself to only a great Majority; and then make that Majority as great as you will, what I have said in the Place quoted by your Lordship, leaves it in its full Force; and I have not said one Word that does in the least *invalidate this Argument* for a God. The Argument I was upon there, was to shew, that the *Idea* of God was not *Innate*; and to my Purpose it was sufficient, if there were but a less Number found in the World, who had no *Idea* of God, than your Lordship will allow there have been of professed *Atheists*; for whatsoever is *Innate*, must be *Universal* in the strictest Sense. One Exception is a sufficient Proof against it. So that all that I said, and which was quite to another Purpose, did not at all tend, nor can be made use of, to *invalidate the Argument* for a Deity, grounded on such *Universal Consent*, as your Lordship, and all that build on it, must own; which is only a very disproportioned Majority: Such an *Universal Consent* my Argument there, neither affirms nor requires to be less than you will be pleased to allow it. Your Lordship therefore might, without any Prejudice to those Declarations of Good-will and Favour you have for the Author of the *Essay of Human Understanding*, have spared the mentioning his quoting Authors that are

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 it 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 farther; 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

are in Print, for Matters of Fact to quite another Purpose, *as going about to invalidate the Argument for a Deity, from the Universal Consent of Mankind*, since he leaves that *Universal Consent* as entire and as large as you yourself do, or can own, or suppose it. But here I have no Reason to be sorry that your Lordship has given me this Occasion for the Vindication of this Passage of my Book; if there should be any one besides your Lordship, who should so far mistake it, as to think it in the least invalidates the Argument for a God, from the Universal Consent of Mankind.

But because you question the Credibility of those Authors I have quoted, which you say were very ill chosen; I will crave leave to say, That he whom I relied on for his Testimony concerning the *Hotentots of Soldania*, was no less a Man than an Ambassador from the King of England to the Great Mogul. Of whose Relation, Monsieur *Thevenot*, no ill Judge in the Case, had so great an Esteem, that he was at the pains to translate it into *French*, and publish it in his (which is counted no injudicious) Collection of *Travels*. But to intercede with your Lordship, for a little more favourable Allowance of Credit to Sir *Thomas Roe's* Relation; *Cole*, an Inhabitant of the Country, who could speak *English*, assured * *Mr Terry*, That they of *Soldania* had no God. But if he too have the ill luck to find no Credit with you, I hope you will be a little more favourable to a Divine of the Church of *England* now living, and admit of his Testimony in confirmation of Sir *Thomas Roe's*. This worthy Gentleman, in the Relation of his Voyage to *Surat*, printed but two Years since, speaking of the same People, has these Words: † *They are sunk even below Idolatry, are destitute of both Priest and Temple, and saving a little species of Re-*

* *Terry's Voyage, p. 17, and 23.*

† *M. Ovington, p. 489.*

joicing,

and Communication with it, that it seems stranger to me, that a whole Nation of Men should be any where found so brutish, as to want the Notion of a God, than that they should be without any Notion of Numbers, or Fire.

§. 10. 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. This

joicing, which is made at the Full and New Moon, have lost all kind of Religious Devotion. Nature has so richly provided for their Convenience in this Life, that they have drowned all Sense of the God of it, and are grown quite careless of the next.

But to provide against the clearest Evidence of *Atheism* in these People, you say, *That the Account given of them, makes them not fit to be a Standard for the Sense of Mankind.* This, I think, may pass for nothing, till somebody may be found *that makes them to be a Standard for the Sense of Mankind.* All the Use I have made of them was to shew, That there were Men in the World that had no Innate Idea of God. But to keep something like an Argument going (for what will not that do?) you go near denying these *Casars* to be Men. What else do these Words signify? *A People so strangely bereft of common Sense, that they can hardly be reckon'd among Mankind, as appears by the best Accounts of the Casars of Soldania, &c.* I hope if any of them were called *Peter, James, or John*, it would be past scruple that they were Men: However, *Courwee, Wewena, and Cousteda*, and those others who had Names, that had no Places in your *Nomenclator*, would hardly pass Muster with your Lordship.

My Lord, I should not mention this, but that what you yourself say here, may be a Motive to you to consider, That what you have laid such a Stress on concerning the *general Nature of Man, as a real Being, and the Subject of Properties*, amounts to nothing for the distinguishing of *Species*, since you yourself own that there may be *Individuals wherein there is a common Nature with a particular Subsistence proper to each of them*, wherein you are so little able to know of which of the *Ranks or Sorts* they are, into which you say, *God has order'd Beings*, and which he *hat's distinguish'd by essential Properties*, that you are in doubt whether *they ought to be reckon'd among Mankind or no.*

§. 11. This is all could be inferr'd 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 farther 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 enquire 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. 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.

Suitable to GOD's Goodneſs, that all Men ſhould have an Idea of him, therefore naturally imprinted by him, anſwer'd.

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 it 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, 'Tis 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, 'Tis 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 Topick, that God hath done so, when certain Experience shews 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 shew, that a Man by the right Use of his natural Abilities, may, without any Innate Principles, attain the Knowledge of a God, and other things that concern him. God having endued Man with those Faculties of knowing which he hath, was no more obliged by his Goodness, to implant 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 farther. Had you or I been born at the Bay of *Soldania*, possibly our Thoughts and Notions had not exceeded those brutish ones of the *Hotentots* that inhabit there: And had the *Virginia King Apochancana* been educated in *England*, he had, perhaps, been 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 farther Enquiries: 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. I grant, That if there were any *Idea* 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 Dependance 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 Understanding: 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 shew.

*Ideas of GOD
various in
different Men.*

§. 14. 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. 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 urged, if it prove any native Impressions, 'twill be only this: That God imprinted on the Minds of all Men, speaking the same Language, a Name for himself,

himself, but not any *Idea*: Since those People, who agreed in the Name, at the same time, had 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 enquire; 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*, 1677, it consists properly in acknowledging no God at all.

§. 15. 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 any Thing, 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 had 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 the far 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.

§. 16. This was evidently the Case of all *Gentilism*: Nor hath even amongst *Jews*, *Christians*, and *Mahometans*, who acknowledge but one God, this Doctrine, and the care is 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 true *Ideas* of him. How many even amongst us, will be found upon Enquiry, 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

few 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 no body can imagine they were taught by a rational Man; much less that they were Characters writ 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 uncloathed; 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. 'Tis as certain, that there is a God, as that the opposite Angles, made by the Intersection of two straight Lines, are equal. There never was 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*, no more than it does the *Idea* of such Angles, *Innate*.

§. 17. 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 had 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.

§. 18. I confess, there is another *Idea* which would be of general Use for Mankind to have,

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

Idea of Sub-stance not Innate,

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 *Idea*, we might well expect it 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 particular distinct positive) *Idea*, which we take to be the *Substratum*, or Support of those *Ideas* we do know.

§. 19. Whatever then we talk of Innate, either *Speculative* or *Practical Principles*, it may, with as much Probability, be

No Propositions can be Innate, since no Ideas are Innate.

said, that a Man hath 100 *l. Sterling* in his Pocket, and yet denied that he hath either Penny, Shilling, Crown, or any 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 when 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 Assent upon Hearing cannot prove

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.

§. 20. To which let me add: If there be any *No Innate*
 Innate *Ideas*, any *Ideas* in the Mind, which the *Ideas in the*
 Mind does not actually think on; they must be *Memory.*
 lodg'd in the Memory, and from thence must be brought into View by Remembrance; *i. e.* must be known, when they are remembred, to have been Perceptions in the Mind before, unless Remembrance can be without Remembrance. For to remember, is to perceive any thing with Memory, or with a Consciousness that it was known or perceived before: Without this, whatever *Idea* comes into the Mind, is new, and not remembred: This Consciousness of its having been in the Mind before, being that which distinguishes Remembring 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 an *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 remembred, 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 never had 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 no body will say, that either of them had in his Mind any *Idea* of Colours at all. His Cataracts are couch'd, and then he has the *Ideas* (which he remembers not) of Colours, *de novo*, by his restor'd Sight, convey'd to his Mind, and that without any Conscioufness 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 reviv'd with a Conscioufness 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 no where in the Mind; and if they be in the Memory, they can be reviv'd 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.

§. 21. 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*;

Principles not Innate, because of little Use, or little Certainty.

ples; 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.

§. 22. To conclude: Some Ideas forwardly offer themselves to all Men's Understandings; some sorts of Truths result from any Ideas, as soon as the Minds 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 employ'd; *God having fitted Men with Faculties and Means to discover, receive, and retain Truths, accordingly as they are employ'd.* 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 their Search

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

of other Enquiries. Thus, that the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right ones, is a Truth as certain as any thing 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 Mathematicks itself, which are as clear and evident as this; because, in his Search of those Mathematical Truths, he stopp'd 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 Enquiry a little farther into their Causes, Ends, and admirable Contrivances, and pursue the Thought 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 employ'd, were able to make clear and evident to him. But this only by the bye, to shew 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.

Men must think and know for themselves.

§. 23. 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

has been my only Aim; and where-ever that has appeared to lead, my Thoughts have impartially followed, without minding whether the Footsteps of any other lay that way, or no. 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 Opiniatrety, 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 no body 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 any body 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 Shreads; 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.

§. 24. 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 stopt the Enquiry of the Doubtful, concerning all that was once stiled 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

*Whence the
Opinion of In-
nate Princi-
ples.*

them upon believing and taking them upon trust, without farther 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 employ'd about them.

§. 25. *To shew how the Understanding proceeds*
Conclusion. *herein, is the Design of the following Discourse;*
 which I shall proceed to, when I have first promised, 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 it is to shew the Falshood, 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 farther Enquiry 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 begg'd 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 allow'd 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,

Experience, and Observation, whether they be true or no; 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 unbiass'd Enquiry after Truth.

B O O K II.

C H A P. I.

Of Ideas, in general, and their Original.

§. 1. **E**VERY Man being conscious to himself, That he thinks; and that which his Mind is apply'd about, whilst thinking, being the *Ideas* that are

Idea is the Object of Thinking.

there; 'tis past doubt, that Men have in their Minds several *Ideas*, such as are those expressed in the Words, *Whiteness, Hardness, Sweetness, Thinking, Motion, Man, Elephant, Army, Drunkenness*, and others: It is in the first place then to be enquired, 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 shewn, whence the Understanding may get all the *Ideas* it has, and by what Ways and Degrees they come into the Mind; for which I shall appeal to every one's own Observation and Experience.

§. 2. 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 a word, from *Experience*: In that, all our Knowledge is founded;

All Ideas come from Sensation or Reflection.

and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our Observation employ'd 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.

The Objects of Sensation one Source of Ideas.

§. 3. 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.

The Operations of our Minds the other Source of them.

§. 4. Secondly. The other Fountain, from which Experience furnisheth the Understanding with *Ideas*, is the *Perception of the Operations of our own Minds* within us, as it is employ'd 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 tho' 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. 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*.

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

These, when we have taken a full Survey of them and their several Modes, Combinations, and Relations, 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. 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. 'Tis by degrees he comes to be furnished with them: And tho' the *Ideas* of obvious and familiar Qualities imprint themselves before the Memory begins to keep a Register of Time and Order, yet 'tis 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 diversly affect them, Variety of *Ideas*, whether care be taken about it or no, are imprinted on the Minds of Children. *Light and Colours* are busy at hand every where, when the Eye is but open; *Sounds*, and

Observable in Children.

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.

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

§. 7. 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 Operation 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.

Ideas of Reflection later, because they need Attention.

§. 8. And hence we see the reason, why 'tis 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 the Mind clear, distinct, lasting *Ideas*, till the Understanding turns inwards upon itself, *reflects* on its own *Operations*, and makes them the Object 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 employ'd 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

fection on what passes within them, till they come to be of riper Years; and some scarce ever at all.

§. 9. 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 enquire after the beginning of a Man's *Ideas*, is the same as to enquire 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.

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

§. 10. But whether the Soul be supposed to exist antecedent to, or coeval with, or some time after the first Rudiments or Organisation, 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

The Soul thinks not always; for this wants Proofs.

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 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 farther 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 every body assents to at first hearing, I appeal to Mankind. 'Tis doubted whether I thought all last Night, or no; the Question being about a Matter of Fact, 'tis begging it, to bring, as a Proof for it, an Hypothesis, which is the very Thing in dispute; by which way

one may prove any thing, and 'tis but supposing that all Watches, whilst the Balance beats, think, and 'tis 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 alledge 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 any thing, but to our Thoughts; and to them it is, and to them it will always be necessary, till we can think without being conscious of it.

§. 11. 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 any thing 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 Pleasure 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 any thing 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. 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, 'tis plain, is conscious of nothing of all this. Let us suppose then the Soul of *Castor*, whilst 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, as I say, suppose the Soul of *Castor* separated, during his Sleep, from his Body, to think apart: Let us suppose too, that it chuses, 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, 'tis no matter what Place it chuses 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, no body 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, 'twill 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.

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

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

§. 13. 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.

That Men dream without remembering it, in vain urged.

§. 14. 'Twill 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 dream'd 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.

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

§. 15. *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 remains 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 employ'd 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 farther, 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 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 subtlest 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 infinite 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 employ'd, at least $\frac{1}{4}$ part of its time here, as to think constantly without remembering any of those Thoughts, without doing any Good to it self 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. 'Tis 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 Perception 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.

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

IF

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, 'tis 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. 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. 'Tis 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 Impression 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 reasonable 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? 'Tis 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 any thing 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, 'tis 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. 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: 'Tis, 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 'tis 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, that it had thought.

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

§. 19. To suppose the Soul to think, and the Man 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 they 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 any thing *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 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 any thing, when I perceive it not of 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 on? If he himself be conscious of nothing, he then thought

That a Man should be busy in thinking, and yet not retain it the next Moment, very improbable.

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 'tis 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, 'tis the Affectation of knowing beyond what we perceive, that makes so much useless Dispute and Noise in the World.

No Ideas but from Sensation or Reflection, evident, if we observe Children.

§. 20. 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. 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 at-

tend

tend to it: He, I say, who considers this, will, perhaps, find reason to imagine, that a *Fœtus 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 are little or no Variety, or Change of Objects, to move the Senses.

§. 22. 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 distinguish 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. 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 produces some Perception in the Understanding. 'Tis about these Impressions made on our Senses by outward Objects, that the Mind seems first to employ itself in such Operations as we call *Perception*, *Remembering*, *Consideration*, *Reasoning*, &c.

§. 24. In time, the Mind comes to reflect on its own *Operations*, about the *Ideas* got by *Sensation*, and thereby stores itself with a new Set of *Ideas*, which I call *Ideas of Reflection*. These are the *Impressions* that are made on our *Senses* by outward Objects, that are extrinsical to the Mind; and its own *Operations*, proceeding from Powers intrinsical and proper to itself, which when reflected on by itself, become also
The Original of all our Knowledge.
 Objects

Objects of its Contemplation, are, as I have said, *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 any Thing, and the Ground-work 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.

In the Reception of simple Ideas the Understanding is for the most part passive. §. 25. 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 no: 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 diversly affect our Organs, the Mind is forced to receive the Impressions, and cannot avoid the Perceptions of those *Ideas* that are annexed to them.

C H A P. II.

Of Simple IDEAS.

Uncompounded Appearances.

§. 1. **T**HE 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