BOOK I: OF INNATE NOTIONS

CHAPTER I

Introduction

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

An inquiry into the understanding, pleasant and useful

§2. This, therefore, being my *purpose* to inquire into the original, certainty, and extent of human knowledge; together, with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent; I shall not at present meddle with the physical consideration of the mind; or trouble myself to examine, wherein its essence consists, or by what motions of our spirits,[1] or alterations of our bodies, we come to have any sensation by our organs, or any ideas in our understandings; and whether those ideas do in their formation, any, or all of them, depend on matter or no. These are speculations, which, however curious and entertaining, I shall decline, as lying out of my way, in the design I am now upon. It shall suffice to my present purpose, to consider the discerning faculties of a man, as they are employed about the objects, which they have to do with: and I shall imagine I have not wholly misemployed myself in the thoughts I shall have on this occasion, if, in this historical, plain method,[2] I can give any account of the ways, whereby our understandings come to attain those notions of things we have, and can set down any measures of the certainty of our knowledge, or the grounds of those persuasions, which are to be found amongst men, so various, different,

Design

and wholly contradictory; and yet asserted somewhere or other with such assurance, and confidence, that he that shall take a view of the opinions of mankind, observe their opposition, and at the same time, consider the fondness, and devotion wherewith they are embraced; the resolution and eagerness, wherewith they are maintained, may perhaps have reason to suspect, that either there is no such thing as truth at all; or that mankind hath no sufficient means to attain a certain knowledge of it.

Method

§3. It is therefore worthwhile, to search out the *bounds* between opinion and knowledge; and examine by what measures, in things, whereof we have no certain knowledge, we ought to regulate our assent, and moderate our persuasions. In order whereunto, I shall pursue this following method.

First, I shall inquire into the *original* of those ideas, notions, or whatever else you please to call them, which a man observes, and is conscious to himself he has in his mind; and the ways whereby the understanding comes to be furnished with them.

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

Thirdly, I shall make some inquiry into the nature and grounds of *faith*, or *opinion*; whereby I mean that assent, which we give to any proposition as true, of whose truth yet we have no certain knowledge: and here we shall have occasion to examine the reasons and degrees of *assent*.

Useful to know the extent of our comprehension

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

Our capacity suited to our state and concerns

§5. For though the *comprehension* of our understandings, comes exceeding short of the vast extent of things; yet, we shall have cause enough to magnify the bountiful Author of our being, for that portion and degree of knowledge, he has bestowed on us, so far above all the rest of the inhabitants of this our mansion. Men have reason to be well satisfied with what God hath thought fit for them, since he has given them (as St Peter says,) πάντα πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν, whatsoever is necessary for the conveniencies of life, and information of virtue;[3] and has put within the reach of their discovery the comfortable provision for this life and the way that leads to a better. How short soever their knowledge may come of an universal, or perfect comprehension of whatsoever is, it yet secures their great concernments that they have light enough to lead them to the knowledge of their maker, and the sight of their own duties. Men may find matter sufficient to busy their heads, and employ their hands with variety, delight, and satisfaction; if they will not boldly quarrel with their own constitution, and throw away the blessings their hands are filled with, because they are not big enough to grasp everything. We shall not have much reason to complain of the narrowness of our minds, if we will but employ them about what may be of use to us; for of that they are very capable: And it will be an unpardonable, as well as childish peevishness, if we undervalue the advantages of our knowledge, and neglect to improve it to the ends for which it was given us, because there are some things that are set out of the reach of it. It will be no excuse to an idle and untoward servant, who would not attend his business by candlelight, to plead that he had not broad sunshine. The candle, that is set up in us, shines bright enough for all our purposes. The discoveries we can make with this, ought to satisfy us: and we shall then use our understandings right, when we entertain all objects in that way and proportion, that they are suited to our faculties; and upon those grounds, they are capable of being proposed to us; and not peremptorily, or intemperately require demonstration, and demand certainty, where probability only is to be had, and which is sufficient to govern all our concernments. If we will disbelieve everything, because we cannot certainly know all things; we shall do muchwhat as wisely as he, who would not use his legs, but sit still and perish, because he had no wings to fly.

Knowledge of our capacity a cure of scepticism and idleness

§6. When we know our own *strength*, we shall the better know what to undertake with hopes of success: and when we have well surveyed the *powers* of our own minds, and made some estimate what we may expect from them, we shall not

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

Occasion of this essay

§7. This was that which gave the first *rise* to this essay concerning the understanding. For I thought that the first step towards satisfying several inquiries, the mind of man was very apt to run into, was, to take a survey of our own understandings, examine our own powers, and see to what things they were adapted. Till that was done, I suspected we began at the wrong end, and in vain sought for satisfaction in a quiet and sure possession of truths, that most concerned us, while we let loose our thoughts into the vast ocean of *being*, as if all that boundless extent, were the natural and undoubted possession of our understandings, wherein there was nothing exempt from its decisions, or that escaped its comprehension. Thus men, extending their inquiries beyond their capacities, and letting their thoughts wander into those depths, where they can find no sure footing; 'tis no wonder, that they raise questions, and multiply disputes, which never coming to any clear resolution, are proper only to continue and increase their doubts, and to confirm them at last in perfect scepticism. Whereas were the capacities of our understandings well considered, the extent of our knowledge once discovered, and the horizon found, which sets the bounds between the enlightened and dark parts of things; between what is, and what is not comprehensible by us, men would perhaps with less scruple acquiesce in the avowed ignorance of the one, and employ their thoughts and discourse, with more advantage and satisfaction in the other.

What idea *stands for*

§8. Thus much I thought necessary to say concerning the occasion of this inquiry into human understanding. But, before I proceed on to what I have thought on this subject, I must here in the entrance beg pardon of my reader, for the frequent use of the word *idea*, which he will find in the following treatise. It being that term, which, I think, serves best to stand for whatsoever is the object of the understanding, when a man thinks, I have used it to express whatever is meant by *phantasm*, *notion*, *species*, or whatever it is, which the mind can be employed about in thinking; and I could not avoid frequently using it.

I presume it will be easily granted me, that there are such ideas in men's minds; everyone is conscious of them in himself, and men's words and actions will satisfy him, that they are in others.

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

CHAPTER II

No Innate Principles in the Mind

The way shown how we come by any knowledge, sufficient to prove it not innate

§1. It is an established opinion amongst some men, That there are in the understanding certain *innate principles*;[1] some primary notions, κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι,[2] characters, as it were stamped upon the mind of man, which the soul receives in its very first being; and brings into the world with it. It would be sufficient to convince unprejudiced readers of the falseness of this supposition, if I should only show (as I hope I shall in the following parts of this discourse) how men, barely by the use of their natural faculties, may attain to all the knowledge they have, without the help of any innate impressions; and may arrive at certainty, without any such original notions or principles. For I imagine anyone will easily grant, that it would be impertinent to suppose, the ideas of colours innate in a creature, to whom God hath given sight, and a power to receive them by the eyes, from external objects: and no less unreasonable would it be to attribute several truths, to the impressions of nature, and innate characters, when we may observe in ourselves faculties, fit to attain as easy and certain knowledge of them, as if they were originally imprinted on the mind.

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

General assent the great argument

§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.

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 shown, 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 ''Tis 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:[3] '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 allowed title to innate. These have so settled a reputation of maxims universally received, that 'twill, no doubt, be thought strange, if anyone 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, idiots, etc.

§5. For, first 'tis evident, that all *children* and *idiots*, have not the least apprehension or thought of them: and the want of that is enough to destroy that universal assent, which must needs be the necessary concomitant of all innate truths: it seeming to me near a contradiction, to say, that there are truths imprinted on the soul, which it perceives or understands not: Imprinting, if it signify anything, being nothing else, but the making certain truths to be perceived. For to imprint anything on the mind, without the mind's perceiving it, seems to me hardly intelligible. If therefore *children* and *idiots* have souls, have minds, with those impressions upon them, they must unavoidably perceive them, and necessarily know and assent to these truths, which since they do not, it is evident that there are no such impressions. For if they are not notions naturally imprinted, how can they be innate? And if they are notions imprinted, how can they be unknown? To say a notion is imprinted

on the mind, and yet at the same time to say, that the mind is ignorant of it, and never yet took notice of it, is to make this impression nothing. No proposition can be said to be in the mind, which it never yet knew, which it was never yet conscious of. For if any one may; then by the same reason, all propositions that are true, and the mind is capable ever of assenting to, may be said to be in the mind, and to be imprinted: since if any one can be said to be in the mind, which it never yet knew, it must be only because it is capable of knowing it; and so the mind is of all truths it ever shall know. Nay, thus truths may be imprinted on the mind, which it never did, nor ever shall know: for a man may live long, and die at last in ignorance of many truths, which his mind was capable of knowing, and that with certainty. So that if the capacity of knowing, be the natural impression contended for, all the truths a man ever comes to know, will, by this account, be every one of them, innate; and this great point will amount to no more, but only to a very improper way of speaking; which whilst it pretends to assert the contrary, says nothing different from those, who deny innate principles. For nobody, I think, ever denied, that the mind was capable of knowing several truths. The capacity they say, is innate, the knowledge acquired. But then to what end such contest for certain innate maxims? If truths can be imprinted on the understanding without being perceived, I can see no difference there can be, between any truths the mind is capable of knowing, in respect of their original: they must all be innate, or all adventitious: in vain shall a man go about to distinguish them. He therefore that talks of innate notions in the understanding, cannot (if he intend thereby any distinct sort of truths) mean such truths to be in the understanding, as it never perceived, and is yet wholly ignorant of. For if these words (*to be in the understanding*) have any propriety, they signify to be understood. So that, to be in the understanding, and, not to be understood; to be in the mind, and, never to be perceived, is all one, as to say, anything is, and is not, in the mind or understanding. If therefore these two propositions, 'whatsoever is, is'; and, 'it is impossible for the same thing to be, and not to be', are by nature imprinted, children cannot be ignorant of them: infants, and all that have souls, must necessarily have them in their understandings, know the truth of them, and assent to it.

That men know them when they come to the use of reason, answered

§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, who being prepossessed, take not the pains to examine even what they themselves say. For to apply this answer with any tolerable sense to our present purpose, it must signify one of these two things; either, that as soon as men come to the use of reason, these supposed native inscriptions come to be known, and observed by them: or else, that the use and exercise of men's 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 allowed innate, they being all discoveries made by the use of reason, and truths that a rational creature may certainly come to know, if he apply his thoughts rightly that way.

'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 be perceived by it. So that to make reason discover those truths thus imprinted, is to say, that the use of reason discovers to a man, what he knew before; and if men have those innate, impressed truths originally, and before the use of reason, and yet are always ignorant of them, till they come to the use of reason, 'tis in effect to say, that men know, and know them not at the same time.

§10. 'Twill here perhaps be said, that mathematical demonstrations, and other truths, that are not innate, are not assented to, as soon as proposed, wherein they are distinguished from these maxims, and other innate truths. I shall have occasion to speak of assent upon the first proposing, more

particularly by and by. I shall here only, and that very readily, allow, that these maxims, and mathematical demonstrations are in this different; that the one 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 supposed, that what was imprinted by nature, as the foundation and guide of our reason, should need the use of reason to discover it?

§11. 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.

The coming to the use of reason, not the time we come to know these maxims

§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 coming to the use of reason is falsely assigned, as the time of their discovery. How many instances of the use of reason, may we observe in children, long time before they have any knowledge of this maxim, 'that it is impossible for the same thing to be, and not to be'? And a great part of illiterate people, and savages, pass many years, even of their rational age, without ever thinking on this, and the like

general propositions. I grant men come not to the knowledge of these general and more abstract truths, which are thought innate, till they come to the use of reason; and I add, nor then neither. Which is so, because till after they come to the use of reason, those general abstract ideas are not framed in the mind, about which those general maxims are, which are mistaken for innate principles, but are indeed discoveries made, and verities introduced, and brought into the mind by the same way, and discovered by the same steps, as several other propositions, which nobody was ever so extravagant as to suppose innate. This I hope to make plain in the sequel of this discourse. I allow therefore a necessity, that men should come to the use of reason, before they get the knowledge of those general truths; but deny, that men's coming to the use of reason is the time of their discovery.

By this, they are not distinguished from other knowable truths

§13. In the meantime, 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 sometime 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 so frivolous, as the supposition of itself is false. For by what kind of logic will it appear, that any notion is originally by nature imprinted in the mind in its first constitution, because it comes first to be observed, and assented to, when a faculty of the mind, which has quite a distinct province, begins to exert itself? And therefore, the coming to the use of speech, if it were supposed the time, that these maxims are first assented to (which it may be with as much truth, as the time when men come to the use of reason) would be as good a proof that they were innate, as to say, they are innate because men assent to them, when they come to the use of reason. I agree then with these men of innate principles, that there is no knowledge of these general and self-evident maxims in the mind, till it comes to the exercise of reason: but I deny that the coming to the use of reason, is the precise time when

they are first taken notice of; and, if that were the precise time, I deny that it would prove them innate. All that can with any truth be meant by this proposition, that men *assent to them when they come to the use of reason*, is no more but this, that the making of general abstract ideas, and the understanding of general names, being a concomitant of the rational faculty, and growing up with it, children commonly get not those general ideas, nor learn the names that stand for them, till having for a good while exercised their reason about familiar and more particular ideas, they are by their ordinary discourse and actions with others, acknowledged to be capable of rational conversation. If assenting to these maxims, when men come to the use of reason, can be true in any other sense, I desire it may be shown; or at least, how in this, or any other sense it proves them innate.

The steps by which the mind attains several truths

§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 further, abstracts them, and by degrees learns the use of general names. In this manner the mind comes to be furnished with ideas and language, the materials about which to exercise its discursive faculty: and the use of reason becomes daily more visible, as these materials, that give it employment, increase. But though the having of general ideas, and the use of general words and reason usually grow together: yet, I see not, how this any way proves them innate. The knowledge of some truths, I confess, is very early in the mind; but in a way that shows them not to be innate. For, if we will observe, we shall find it still to be about ideas, not innate, but acquired: it being about those first, which are imprinted by external things, with which infants have earliest to do, which make the most frequent impressions on their senses. In ideas thus got, the mind discovers, that some agree, and others differ, probably as soon as it has any use of memory; as soon as it is able to retain and receive distinct ideas. But whether it be then, or not, this is certain, it does so long before it has the use of words; or comes to that, which we commonly call the *use of reason*. For a child knows as certainly, before it can speak, the difference between the ideas of sweet and bitter (*i.e.* that sweet is not bitter) as it knows afterwards (when it comes to speak) that wormwood[4] and sugar-plums,[5] 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 shown hereafter. So that the later it is before anyone 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 weasel, he must stay till time and observation have acquainted him with them; and then he will be in a capacity to know the truth of these maxims, upon the first occasion, that shall make him put together those ideas in his mind, and observe, whether they agree or disagree, according as is expressed in those propositions. And therefore it is, that a man knows that eighteen and nineteen, are equal to thirty-seven, by the same self-evidence, that he knows one and two to be equal to three: yet, a child knows this, not so soon as the other; not for want of the use of reason; but because the ideas the words eighteen, nineteen, and thirty-seven stand for, are not so soon got, as those, which are signified by one, two, and three.

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

§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 proposed in, understood: seeing all men, even children, as soon as they hear and understand the terms, assent to these propositions, they think it is sufficient to prove them innate. For since men never fail, after they have once understood the words, to acknowledge them for undoubted truths, they would infer, that certainly these propositions were first lodged in the understanding, which, without any teaching, the mind at very first proposal, immediately closes with, and assents to, and after that never doubts again.

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

§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 everybody assents to, at first hearing, and understanding the terms, must have a place amongst these innate axioms. Nor is this the prerogative of numbers alone, and propositions made about several of them: but even natural philosophy, and all the other sciences afford propositions, which are sure to meet with assent, as soon as they are understood. 'That two bodies cannot be in the same place', is a truth, that nobody any more sticks at, than at 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 propositions, as many at least, as we have distinct ideas, every man in his wits, at first hearing, and knowing what the names stand for, must necessarily assent to. If these men will be true to their own rule, and have *assent at first hearing and understanding the terms*, to be a mark of innate, they must allow, not only as many innate 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 to be, and not to be'; or that which is the foundation of it, and is the easier understood of the two, 'the same is not different': by which account, they will have legions of innate propositions of this one sort, without mentioning any other. But since no proposition can be innate, unless the ideas, about which it is, be innate, this will be, to suppose all our ideas of colours, sounds, tastes, figure, *etc.* innate; than which, there cannot be anything more opposite to reason and experience. Universal and ready assent upon hearing and understanding the terms, is (I grant)

Recapitulation

§28. I know not how absurd this may seem to the masters of demonstration: and probably, it will hardly down with anybody at first hearing. I must therefore beg a little truce with prejudice, and the forbearance of censure, till I have been heard out in the sequel of this discourse, being very willing to submit to better judgements. 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.*

CHAPTER III

No Innate Practical Principles

No moral principles so clear and so generally received, as the forementioned speculative maxims

§1. If those speculative maxims, whereof we discoursed in the foregoing chapter, have not an actual universal assent from all mankind, as we there proved, it is much more visible concerning *practical principles*, that they *come short of an universal reception*: and I think it will be hard to instance any one moral rule, which can pretend to so general and ready an assent as, 'What is, is', or to be so manifest a truth as this, 'that it is impossible for the same thing to be, and not to be'. Whereby it is evident, that they are further removed from a title to be innate; and the doubt of their being native impressions on the mind, is stronger against 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 mind; which, if any such were, they must needs be visible by themselves, and by their own light be certain and known to everybody. But this is no derogation to their truth and certainty, no more than it is to the truth or certainty of the three angles of a triangle being equal to two right ones, because it is not so evident, as 'the whole is bigger than a part'; nor so apt to be assented to at first hearing. It may suffice, that these moral rules are capable of demonstration: and therefore it is our own faults, if we come not to a certain knowledge of them. But the ignorance wherein many men are of them, and the slowness of assent, wherewith others receive them, are manifest proofs, that they are not innate, and such as offer themselves to their view without searching.

Faith and justice not owned as principles by all men

§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 looked abroad beyond the smoke of their own chimneys. Where is that practical truth, that is universally received without doubt or question, as it must be if innate? *Justice*, and keeping of contracts, is that which *most men seem to agree in.* This is a principle, which is thought to extend itself to the dens of thieves, and the confederacies of the greatest villains; and they who have gone furthest towards the putting off of humanity itself, keep faith and rules of justice one with another. I grant that outlaws themselves do this one amongst another; but '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 outlaws and robbers, who break with all the world besides, must keep faith and rules of equity amongst themselves, or else they cannot hold together. But will anyone say, that those that live by fraud and rapine, have innate principles of truth and justice which they allow and assent to?

Objection. *Though men deny them in their practice, yet they admit them in their thoughts, answered*

§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 interpreters 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 distinguished from speculative maxims. Nature, I confess, has put into man a desire of happiness, and an aversion to misery: these indeed are innate practical principles, which (as practical principles ought) do continue constantly to operate and influence all our actions, without ceasing: these may be observed in all persons and all ages, steady and universal; but these are inclinations of the appetite to good, not impressions of truth on the understanding. I deny not, that there are natural tendencies imprinted on the minds of men; and that, from the very first instances of sense and perception, there are some things, that are grateful, and others unwelcome to them; some things that they incline to, and others that they fly: but this makes nothing for innate characters on the mind, which are to be the principles of knowledge, regulating our practice. Such natural impressions on the understanding, are so far from being confirmed hereby, that this is an argument against them; since if there were certain characters, imprinted by nature on the understanding, as the principles of knowledge, we could not but perceive them constantly operate in us, and influence our knowledge, as we do those others on the will and appetite; which never cease to be the constant springs and motives of all our actions, to which, we perpetually feel them strongly impelling us.

Moral rules need a proof, ergo *not innate*

§4. Another reason that makes me doubt of any innate practical principles, is, that I think, *there cannot any one moral rule be proposed, whereof a man may not justly demand a reason*: which would be perfectly ridiculous and absurd, if they were innate, or so much as self-evident; which every innate principle must needs be, and not need any proof to ascertain its truth, nor want any reason to gain it approbation. He would be thought void of common sense, who asked on the one side, or on the other side, went to give a reason, 'why it is impossible for the same thing to be, and not to be'. It carries its own light and evidence with it, and needs no other proof: he that understands the terms, assents to it for its own sake, or else nothing will ever be able to prevail with him to do it. But should that most unshaken rule of morality, and foundation of all social virtue, 'that one should do as he would be done unto', be proposed

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 proposed it, bound to make out the truth and reasonableness of it to him? Which plainly shows it not to be innate; for if it were, it could neither want nor receive any proof; but must needs (at least, as soon as heard and understood) be received and assented to, as an unquestionable truth, which a man can by no means doubt of. So that the truth of all these moral rules, plainly depends upon some other antecedent to them, and from which they must be deduced, which could not be, if either they were innate, or so much as self-evident.

Instance in keeping compacts

§5. That men should keep their compacts,[1] is certainly a great and undeniable rule in morality: but yet, if a Christian, who has the view of happiness and misery in another life, be asked why a man must keep his word, he will *give* this as a *reason*: because God, who has the power of eternal life and death, requires it of us. But if an Hobbist be asked why; he will answer, because the public requires it, and the Leviathan[2] will punish you, if you do not. And if one of the old heathen philosophers[3] had been asked, he would have answered: because it was dishonest, below the dignity of a man, and opposite to virtue, the highest perfection of human nature, to do otherwise.

Virtue generally approved, not because innate, but because profitable

§6. Hence naturally flows the great variety of opinions, concerning moral rules, which are to be found amongst men, according to the different sorts of happiness, they have a prospect of, or propose to themselves: which could not be, if practical principles were innate, and imprinted in our minds immediately by the hand of God. I grant the existence of God, is so many ways manifest, and the obedience we owe him, so congruous to the light of reason, that a great part of mankind give testimony to the law of nature: But yet I think it must be allowed, that several moral rules, may receive from mankind, a very general approbation, without either knowing, or admitting the true ground of morality; which can only be the will and law of a God, who sees men in the dark, has in his hand rewards and punishments, and power enough to call to account the proudest offender. For God, having, by an inseparable connexion, joined *virtue* and public happiness together; and made the practice thereof, necessary to the preservation of society, and visibly *beneficial* to all, with whom the virtuous man has to do; it is no wonder, that everyone should, not only allow, but recommend, and magnify those rules to others, from whose observance of them, he is sure

to reap advantage to himself. He may, out of interest, as well as conviction, cry up that for sacred; which if once trampled on, and profaned, he himself cannot be safe nor secure. This, though it takes nothing from the moral and eternal obligation, which these rules evidently have; yet it shows that the outward acknowledgement men pay to them in their words, proves not that they are innate principles: nay, it proves not so much, as, that men assent to them inwardly in their own minds, as the inviolable rules of their own practice: since we find that self-interest and the conveniences of this life, make many men, own an outward profession and approbation of them, whose actions sufficiently prove, that they very little consider the law-giver, that prescribed these rules; nor the hell he has ordained for the punishment of those that transgress them.

Men's actions convince us, that the rule of virtue is not the r nternal principle

§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 *no* such internal veneration for these rules, nor so *full a persuasion of their certainty* and obligation. The great principle of morality, 'To do as one would be done to', is more commended, than practised. But the breach of this rule cannot be a greater vice, than to teach others, that it is no moral rule, nor obligatory, would be thought madness, and contrary to that interest men sacrifice to, when they break it themselves. Perhaps *conscience* will be urged as checking us for such breaches, and so the internal obligation and establishment of the rule be preserved.

Conscience no proof of any innate moral rule

§8. To which, I answer, that I doubt not, but without being written on their hearts, many men, may, by the same way that they come to the knowledge of other things, come to assent to several moral rules, and be convinced of their obligation. Others also may come to be of the same mind, from their education, company, and customs of their country; which *persuasion, however got, will serve to set conscience on work*, which is nothing else, but our own opinion or judgement of the moral rectitude or pravity[4] 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 minds. View but an army at the sacking of a town, and see what observation, or sense of moral principles, or what touch of conscience, for all the outrages they do. *Robberies*, *murders*, *rapes*, are the sports of men set at liberty from punishment and censure. Have there not been whole nations, and those of the most civilized people, amongst whom, the exposing their children, and leaving them in the fields, to perish by want or wild beasts, has been the practice, as little condemned or scrupled, as the begetting them? Do they not still, in some countries, put them into the same graves with their mothers, if they die in 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.* It is familiar amongst the Mingrelians,[5] a people professing Christianity, to bury their children alive without scruple.† There are places where they eat their own children.‡ The Caribes[6] were wont to geld their children, on purpose to fat and eat them.§ And Garcilasso de la Vega tells us of a people in Peru, which were wont to fat and eat the children they got on their female captives, whom they kept as concubines for that purpose; and when they were past breeding, the mothers themselves were killed too and eaten.¶ The virtues, whereby the Tououpinambos[7] believed they merited paradise, were revenge, and eating abundance of their enemies. ‖ They have not so much as the name for God, Lery (page 216). No acknowledgement of any god, no religion, no worship (page 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 Voyage of Baumgarten,[8] 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 Saracenicun inter arenarum cumulos, ita ut ex utero matris prodiit nudum sedentem. Mos est, ut didicimus, Mahometistis, ut eos qui amentes et sine ratione sunt, pro sanctis colant et venerentur. Insuper et eos qui cum diu vitam egerint inquinatissimam, voluntariam demum pœnitentiam et paupertatem, sanctitate venerandos deputant. Ejusmodi verò genus hominum libertatem quandam effrænem habent, domos quas volunt intrandi, edendi, bibendi, et quod majus est, concumbendi; ex quo concubitu, si proles secuta fuerit,

*Gruber *apud* Thevenot,[9] part 4. p. 13.
†Lambert *apud* Thevenot,[9] p. 38.
‡Vossius[10] *de Nili Origine* c. 18, 19.
§P. Mart.[11] Dec. 1.
¶*Hist. des Incas*,[12] l. 1. c. 12.
‖Lery,[13] p. 216.

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 et dicenda per interpretem à Mucrelo nostro. Insuper sanctum illum, quem eo loci vidimus, publicitus apprimè commendari, eum esse Hominem sanctum, divinum ac integritate præcipuum; eo quod, nec fæminarum unquam esset, nec puerorum, sed tantummodo asellarum concubitor atque mularum.'[14] (*Peregr.* Baumgarten, l. 2. c. 1, p. 73). More of the same kind, concerning these precious saints amongst the Turks, may be seen in Pietro della Valle,[15] 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.

Men have contrary practical principles

§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 named, or *rule* of *virtue* to be thought on (those only excepted, that are absolutely necessary to hold society together, which commonly too are neglected betwixt distinct societies) which is not, somewhere or other, *slighted* and condemned by the general fashion of *whole societies* of men, governed by practical opinions, and rules of living quite opposite to others.

Whole nations reject several moral rules

§11. Here, perhaps, 'twill be objected, that it is no argument, that the *rule* is *not known, because* it is *broken.* I grant the objection good, where men, though they transgress, yet disown not the law; where fear of shame, censure, or punishment, carries the mark of some awe it has upon them. But it is impossible to conceive, that a *whole nation* of men should all *publicly reject* and renounce, what every one of them, certainly and infallibly, knew to be a law: for so they must, who have it naturally imprinted on their minds. '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 imagined, that a whole society of men, should publicly and professedly, disown, and cast off a rule,

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

§12. The breaking of a rule, say you, is no argument that it is unknown. I grant it: but the *generally allowed breach of it anywhere*, I say, *is a proof, that it is not innate.* For example, let us take any of these rules, which being the most obvious deductions of human reason, and conformable to the natural inclination of the greatest part of men, fewest people have had the impudence to deny, or inconsideration to doubt of. If any can be thought to be naturally imprinted, none, I think, can have a fairer pretence to be innate, than this; 'parents preserve and cherish your children'. When therefore you say, that this is an innate rule, what do you mean? Either, that it is an innate principle which upon all occasions, excites and directs the actions of all men: or else, that it is a truth, which all men have imprinted on their minds, and which therefore they know, and assent to. But in neither of these senses is it innate. *First*, that it is not a principle, which influences all men's actions, is, what I have proved by the examples before cited: nor need we seek so far as Mingrelia[16] or Peru, to find instances of such as neglect, abuse, nay and destroy their children; or look on it only as the more than brutality of some savage and barbarous nations, when we remember, that it was a familiar, and uncondemned practice amongst the Greeks and Romans, to expose, without pity or remorse, their innocent infants. *Secondly*, that it is an innate truth, known to all men, is also false. For, 'parents, preserve your children', is so far from an innate truth, that it is no truth at all; it being a command, and not a proposition, and so not capable of truth or falsehood. To make it capable of being assented to as true, it must be reduced to some such

proposition as this: 'it is the duty of parents to preserve their children'. But what duty is, cannot be understood without a law; nor a law be known, or supposed without a 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 allowed practice runs counter to it, is in itself evident. But these ideas (which must be all of them innate, if anything as a duty be so) are so far from being innate, that 'tis not every studious or thinking man, much less everyone 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 anything is his duty. Ignorance or doubt of the law; hopes to escape the knowledge or power of the law-maker, or the like, may make men give way to a present appetite: but let anyone see the fault, and the rod by it, and with the transgression, a fire ready to punish it; a pleasure tempting, and the hand of the Almighty visibly held up, and prepared to take vengeance (for this must be the case, where any duty is imprinted on the mind) and then tell me, whether it be possible, for people, with such a prospect, such a certain knowledge as this, wantonly, and without scruple, to offend against a law, which they carry about them in indelible characters, and that stares them in the face, whilst they are breaking it? Whether men, at the same time that they feel in themselves the imprinted edicts of an omnipotent law-maker, can, with assurance and gaiety, slight and trample underfoot his most sacred injunctions? And lastly, whether it be possible, that whilst a man thus openly bids defiance to this innate law, and supreme law-giver, all the bystanders; yea, even the governors and rulers of the people, full of the same sense, both of the law and law-maker, should silently

connive without testifying their dislike, or laying the least blame on it? Principles of actions indeed, there are lodged in men's appetites, but these are so far from being innate moral principles, that if they were left to their full swing, they would carry men to the overturning of all morality. Moral laws are set as a curb and restraint to these exorbitant desires, which they cannot be but by rewards and punishments, that will over-balance the satisfaction anyone shall propose to himself in the breach of the law. If therefore anything be imprinted on the mind of all men as a law, all men must have a certain and unavoidable knowledge, that certain, and unavoidable punishment will attend the breach of it. For if men can be ignorant or doubtful of what is innate, innate principles are insisted on, and urged, to no purpose; truth and certainty (the things pretended) are not at all secured by them: but men are in the same uncertain, floating estate with, as without them. An evident indubitable knowledge of unavoidable punishment, great enough to make the transgression very uneligible, must accompany an innate law: unless with an innate law, they can suppose an innate gospel too. I would not 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 their very original, and something that we being ignorant of, may attain to the knowledge of, by the use and due application of our natural faculties. And I think they equally forsake the truth, who running into 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.

Those who maintain innate practical principles, tell us not what they are

§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

BOOK II: OF IDEAS

CHAPTER I

Of Ideas in General, and their Original

Idea is the object of thinking

§1. Every man being conscious to himself, that he thinks, and that which his mind is applied about, whilst thinking, being the ideas, that are there, 'tis past doubt, that men have in their minds several ideas, such as are those expressed by the words, *whiteness*, *hardness*, *sweetness*, *thinking*, *motion*, *man*, *elephant*, *army*, *drunkenness*, and others: it is in the first place then to be inquired, how he comes by them? I know it is a received doctrine, that men have native ideas, and original characters stamped upon their minds, in their very first being. This opinion I have at large examined already; and, I suppose, what I have said in the foregoing book, will be much more easily admitted, when I have shown, whence the understanding may get all the ideas it has, and by what ways and degrees they may come into the mind; for which I shall appeal to everyone's own observation and experience.

All ideas come from sensation or reflection

§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 one word, from *experience*: in that, all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employed either about *external sensible objects; or about the internal operations of our minds, perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that, which supplies our understandings with all the materials of thinking*. These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring.

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

All our ideas are of the one or the other of these

§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*.

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 anyone examine his own thoughts, and throughly 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.

Observable in children

§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 though 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 worthwhile, no doubt a child might be so ordered, as to have but a very few, even of the ordinary ideas, till he were grown up to a man. But all that are born into the world being surrounded with bodies, that perpetually and diversely affect them, variety of ideas, whether care be taken about it or no, are imprinted on the minds of children. *Light*, and *colours*, are busy at hand everywhere, when the eye is but open; *sounds*, and some *tangible qualities* fail not to solicit their proper senses, and force an entrance to the mind; but yet, I think, it will be granted easily, that if a child were kept in a place, where he never saw any other but black and white, till he were a man, he would have no more ideas of scarlet or green, than he that from his childhood never tasted an oyster, or a pineapple, 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 employed and diverted in looking abroad. Men's business in them is to acquaint themselves with what is to be found without; and so growing up in a constant attention to outward sensations, seldom make any considerable reflection on what passes within them, till they come to be of riper years; and some scarce ever at all.

The soul begins to have ideas, when it begins to perceive

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

The soul thinks not always; for this wants proofs

§10. But whether the soul be supposed to exist antecedent to, or coeval with, or some time after the first rudiments of 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 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';[2] but is not competent to any finite being, at least not to the soul of man. We know certainly by experience, that we sometimes think, and thence draw this infallible consequence, that, there is something in us, that has a power to think: but whether that substance perpetually thinks, or no, we can be no further assured, than experience informs us. For to say, that actual thinking is essential to the soul, and inseparable from it, is to beg, what is in question, and not to prove it by reason; which is necessary to be done, if it be not a self-evident proposition. But whether this, 'that the soul always thinks', be a self-evident proposition, that everybody assents to at first hearing, I appeal to mankind. '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 anything, 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 allege wrong matter of fact. How else could anyone[3] make it an *inference* of mine, *that a thing is not, because we are not sensible of it in our sleep*? I do not say there is no soul in a man, because he is not sensible of it in his sleep: but I do say, he cannot think at any time waking or sleeping, without being sensible of it. Our being sensible of it, is not necessary to anything, but to our thoughts; and to them it is, and to them it will always be necessary, till we can think without being conscious of it.

It is not always 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 anything should think, and not be conscious of it. If the *soul* doth *think in a sleeping man*, without being conscious of it, I ask, whether, during such thinking, it has any pleasure or pain, or be capable of happiness or misery? I am sure the man is not, no more than the bed or earth he lies

on. For to be happy or miserable without being conscious of it, seems to me utterly inconsistent and impossible. Or if it be possible, that the soul can, whilst the body is sleeping, have its thinking, enjoyments, and concerns, its pleasure or pain apart, which the man is not conscious of, nor partakes in: it is certain, that Socrates[4] asleep, and Socrates awake, is not the same person: but his soul when he sleeps, and Socrates the man consisting of body and soul when he is waking, are two persons; since waking Socrates, has no knowledge of, or concernment for that happiness, or misery of his soul, which it enjoys alone by itself whilst he sleeps, without perceiving anything of it; no more than he has for the happiness, or misery of a man in the Indies,[5] 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.

If a sleeping man thinks without knowing it, the sleeping and waking man are two persons

§12. The soul, during sound sleep, thinks, say these men.[6] *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,[7] whilst he is sleeping, retired from his body, which is no impossible supposition for the men I have here to do with,[8] 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 chooses for its scene of thinking, the body of another man, *v.g.* Pollux,[9] 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 chooses to think in. We have here then, the bodies of two men with only one soul between them, which we will suppose to sleep and wake by turns; and the soul still thinking in the waking man, whereof the sleeping man is never conscious, has never the least perception. I ask then, whether Castor and Pollux, thus, with only one soul between them, which thinks and perceives in one, what the other is never conscious of, nor is concerned for, are not two as distinct persons, as Castor and Hercules;[10] or, as Socrates and Plato[11] were? And whether one of them might not be very happy, and

the other very miserable? Just by the same reason, they make the soul and the man two persons, who make the soul think apart, what the man is not conscious of. For, I suppose, nobody will make identity of persons, to consist in the soul's being united to the very same numerical particles of matter: for if that be necessary to identity, '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.

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.*[12] That the soul in a sleeping man should be this moment busy a thinking, and the next moment in a waking man, not remember, nor be able to recollect one jot of all those thoughts, is very hard to be conceived, and would need some better proof than bare assertion, to make it be believed. For who can without any more ado, but being barely told so, imagine, that the greatest part of men, do, during all their lives, for several hours every day, think of something, which if they were asked, even in the middle of these thoughts, they could remember nothing at all of? Most men, I think, pass a great part of their sleep without dreaming. I once knew a man, that was bred a scholar, and had no bad memory, who told me, he had never dreamed in his life, till he had that fever, he was then newly recovered of, which was about the five or six and twentieth year of his age. I suppose the world affords more such instances: at least everyone'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 remain no footsteps of them; the looking-glass is never the better for such ideas, nor the soul for such thoughts. Perhaps it will be said,[13] that in a waking man, the materials of the body are employed, and made use of, in thinking; and that the

memory of thoughts, is retained by the impressions that are made on the brain, and the traces there left after such thinking; but that in the *thinking of the soul*, which is not perceived *in a sleeping man*, there the soul thinks apart, and *making no use* of the organs of *the body, leaves no impressions on it, and consequently no memory* of such thoughts. Not to mention again the absurdity of two distinct persons, which follows from this supposition, I answer further, that whatever ideas the mind can receive, and contemplate without the help of the body, it is reasonable to conclude, it can retain without the help of the body too, or else the soul, or any separate spirit will have but little advantage by thinking. If it has no memory of its own thoughts; if it cannot lay up them 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,[14] 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 forever, and leave no memory of themselves behind them. Nature never makes excellent things, for mean or no uses: and it is hardly to be conceived, that our infinitely wise Creator, should make so admirable a faculty, as the power of thinking, that faculty which comes nearest the excellency of his own incomprehensible being, to be so idly and uselessly employed, at least a fourth part of its time here, as to think constantly, without remembering any of those thoughts, without doing any good to itself or others, or being any way useful to any other part of the creation. If we will examine it, we shall not find, I suppose, the motion of dull and senseless matter, anywhere in the universe, made so little use of, and so wholly thrown away.

On this hypothesis the soul must have ideas not derived from sensation or reflection, of which there is no appearance

§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 perfection and order of a rational being, those who are acquainted with dreams, need not be told. This I would willingly be satisfied in, whether the soul, when it thinks thus apart, and as it were separate from the body, acts less rationally than when conjointly with it, or no: if its separate thoughts be less rational, then these men must say, that the soul owes the perfection of

rational thinking to the body: if it does not, '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.

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

§17. Those who so confidently tell us, that the soul always actually thinks, I would they would also tell us, what those ideas are,[15] 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 impressions from the body) that it should never, in its private thinking, (so private, that the man himself perceives it not) retain any of them, the very moment it wakes out of them, and then make the man glad with new discoveries. Who can find it 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 anything from the body; never bring into the waking man's view, any other ideas, but what have a tange[16] 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.

How knows anyone that the soul always thinks? For if it be not a self-evident proposition, it needs proof

§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 after, that it had thought.

That a man should be busy in thinking, and yet not retain it the next moment, very improbable

§19. To suppose the soul to think, and the man not to perceive it, is, as has been said, to make two persons in one man: and if one considers well these men's way of speaking, one should be led into a suspicion, that they do so. For 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 'tis altogether as intelligible to say, that a body is extended without parts, as that anything *thinks without being conscious of it*, or perceiving, that it does so. They who talk thus, may, with as much reason, if it be necessary to their hypothesis, say, that a man is always hungry, but that he does not always feel it: whereas hunger consists in that very sensation, as thinking consists in being conscious that one thinks. If they say, that a man is always conscious to himself of thinking; I ask, how they know it? Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a man's own mind. Can another man perceive, that I am conscious of anything, when I perceive it not myself? No man's knowledge here, can go beyond his experience. Wake a man out of a sound sleep, and ask him, what he was that moment thinking on? If he himself be conscious of nothing he then thought on, he must be a notable diviner of thoughts, that can assure him, that he was thinking: may he not with more reason assure him, he was not asleep? This is something beyond philosophy; and it cannot be less than revelation, that discovers to another, thoughts in my mind, when I can find none there myself: and they must needs have a penetrating sight, who can certainly see, that I think, when I cannot perceive it myself, and when I declare, that I do not; and yet can see, that dogs or elephants do not think, when they give all the demonstration of it imaginable, except only telling us, that they do so. This some may suspect to be a step beyond the Rosecrucians;[17] it

seeming easier to make oneself 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 attend 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 is 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*, etc.

The original of all our knowledge

§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 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 anything, and the groundwork, whereon to build all those notions, which ever he shall have naturally in this world. All those sublime thoughts, which tower above the clouds, and reach as high as heaven itself, take their rise and footing here: in all that great extent wherein the mind wanders, in those remote speculations, it may seem to be elevated with, it stirs not one jot beyond those ideas, which *sense* or *reflection*, have offered for its contemplation.

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 diversely affect our organs, the mind is forced to receive the impressions; and cannot avoid the perception of those ideas that are annexed to them.

CHAPTER II

Of Simple Ideas

Uncompounded appearances

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

Though the qualities that affect our senses, are, in the things themselves, so united and blended, that there is no separation, no distance between them; yet 'tis plain, the ideas they produce in the mind, enter by the senses simple and unmixed. For though the sight and touch often take in from the same object, at the same time, different ideas; as a man sees at once motion and colour; the hand feels softness and warmth in the same piece of wax: yet the simple ideas thus united in the same subject, are as perfectly distinct, as those that come in by different senses. The coldness and hardness, which a man feels in a piece of *ice*, being as distinct ideas in the mind, as the smell and whiteness of a lily; or as the taste of sugar, and smell of a rose: and there is nothing can be plainer to a man, than the clear and distinct perception he has of those simple ideas; which being each in itself uncompounded, contains in it nothing but *one uniform appearance*, or conception in the mind, and is not distinguishable into different ideas.

The mind can neither make nor destroy them

§2. These simple ideas, the materials of all our knowledge, are suggested and furnished to the mind, only by those two ways above mentioned, *viz. sensation* and *reflection*.[c] When the understanding is once stored with these simple ideas, it has the

relative words; one having a relation to the accomplishing the voyage intended, and the other to future use. All which relations, how they are confined to, and terminate in ideas derived from *sensation* or *reflection*, is too obvious to need any explication.

CHAPTER XXVII

Of Identity and Diversity

Wherein identity consists

§1. Another occasion the mind often takes of comparing, is, the very being of things, when considering anything as existing at any determined time and place, we compare it with itself existing at another time, and thereon form the ideas of *identity* and *diversity*. When we see anything to be in any place in any instant of time, we are sure, (be it what it will) that it is that very thing, and not another, which at that same time exists in another place, how like and undistinguishable soever it may be in all other respects: and in this consists *identity*, when the ideas it is attributed to, vary not at all from what they were that moment, wherein we consider their former existence, and to which we compare the present. For we never finding, nor conceiving it possible, that two things of the same kind should exist in the same place at the same time, we rightly conclude, that whatever exists anywhere at any time, excludes all of the same kind, and is there itself alone. When therefore we demand, whether anything be the same or no? it refers always to something that existed such a time in such a place, which 'twas certain, at that instant, was the same with itself, and no other: From whence it follows, that one thing cannot have two beginnings of existence, nor two things one beginning, it being impossible for two things of the same kind to be or exist in the same instant, in the very same place or one and the same thing in different places. That therefore that had one beginning, is the same thing, and that which had a different beginning in time and place from that, is not the same, but divers. That which has made the difficulty about this relation, has been the little care and attention used in having precise notions of the things to which it is attributed.

Identity of substances

§2. We have the ideas but of three sorts of substances; 1. God. 2. Finite intelligences. 3. *Bodies*. First, God is without beginning, eternal, unalterable, and everywhere; and therefore concerning his identity, there can be no doubt. Secondly, finite spirits having had each its determinate time and place of beginning to exist, the relation to that time and place will always determine to each of them its identity, as long as it exists.

Thirdly, the same will hold of every particle of matter, to which no addition or subtraction of matter being made, it is the same. For though these three sorts of substances, as we term them, do not exclude one another out of the same place; yet we cannot conceive but that they must necessarily each of them exclude any of the same kind out of the same place: or else the notions and names of identity and diversity would be in vain, and there could be no such distinction of substances, or anything else one from another. For example; could two bodies be in the same place at the same time, then those two parcels of matter must be one and the same, take them great or little; nay, all bodies must be one and the same. For by the same reason that two particles of matter may be in one place, all bodies may be in one place: which, when it can be supposed, takes away the distinction of identity and diversity of one and more, and renders it ridiculous. But it being a contradiction, that two or more should be one, identity and diversity are relations and ways of comparing well founded, and of use to the understanding. All other things being but modes or relations ultimately terminated in substances, the identity and diversity of each particular existence of them too will be by the same way determined: only as to things whose existence is in succession, such as are the actions of finite beings, *v.g. motion* and *thought*, both which consist in a continued train of succession, concerning their diversity, there can be no question: because each perishing the moment it begins, they cannot exist in different times, or in different places, as permanent beings can at different times exist in distant places; and therefore no motion or thought, considered as at different times, can be the same, each part thereof having a different beginning of existence.

Identity of modes

Principium individuationis

§3. From what has been said, 'tis easy to discover what is so much inquired after, the *principium individuationis*,[1] and that 'tis plain is existence itself, which determines a being of any sort to a particular time and place incommunicable to two beings of the same kind. This, though it seems easier to conceive in simple substances or modes, yet when reflected on, is not more difficult in compounded ones, if care be taken to what it is applied; *v.g.* let us suppose an atom, *i.e.* a continued body under one immutable superficies, existing in a determined time and place; 'tis

evident, that, considered in any instant of its existence, it is, in that instant, the same with itself. For being at that instant what it is, and nothing else, it is the same, and so must continue as long as its existence is continued; for so long it will be the same, and no other. In like manner, if two or more atoms be joined together into the same mass, every one of those atoms will be the same, by the foregoing rule: and whilst they exist united together, the mass, consisting of the same atoms, must be the same mass, or the same body, let the parts be never so differently jumbled: but if one of these atoms be taken away, or one new one added, it is no longer the same mass, or the same body. In the state of living creatures, their identity depends not on a mass of the same particles, but on something else. For in them the variation of great parcels of matter alters not the identity: an oak growing from a plant to a great tree, and then lopped, is still the same oak: and a colt grown up to a horse, sometimes fat, sometimes lean, is all the while the same horse; though, in both these cases, there may be a manifest change of the parts: so that truly they are not either of them the same masses of matter, though they be truly one of them the same oak, and the other the same horse. The reason whereof is, that in these two cases of a mass of matter, and a living body, *identity* is not applied to the same thing.

Identity of vegetables

§4. We must therefore consider wherein an oak differs from a mass of matter, and that seems to me to be in this; that the one is only the cohesion of particles of matter anyhow united, the other such a disposition of them as constitutes the parts of an oak; and such an organization of those parts, as is fit to receive, and distribute nourishment, so as to continue, and frame the wood, bark, and leaves, *etc.* of an oak, in which consists the vegetable life. That being then one plant, which has such an organization of parts in one coherent body, partaking of one common life, it continues to be the same plant, as long as it partakes of the same life, though that life be communicated to new particles of matter vitally united to the living plant, in a like continued organization, conformable to that sort of plants. For this organization being at any one instant in any one collection of *matter*, is in that particular concrete distinguished from all other, and is that individual life, which existing constantly from that moment both forwards and backwards, in the same continuity of insensibly succeeding parts united to the living body of the plant, it has that identity, which makes the same plant, and all the parts of it, parts of the same plant, during all the time that they exist united in that continued organization, which is fit to convey that common life to all the parts so united.

Identity of animals

§5. The case is not so much different in *brutes*, but that anyone may hence see what makes an animal, and continues it the same. Something we have like this in machines, and may serve to illustrate it. For example, what is a watch? 'Tis plain 'tis nothing but a fit organization, or construction of parts, to a certain end, which, when a sufficient force is added to it, it is capable to attain. If we would suppose this machine one continued body, all whose organized parts were repaired, increased or diminished, by a constant addition or separation of insensible parts, with one common life, we should have something very much like the body of an animal, with this difference, that in an animal the fitness of the organization, and the motion wherein life consists, begin together, the motion coming from within; but in machines, the force, coming sensibly from without, is often away when the organ is in order, and well fitted to receive it.

Identity of man

§6. This also shows wherein the identity of the same *man* consists; *viz.* in nothing but a participation of the same continued life, by constantly fleeting particles of matter, in succession vitally united to the same organized body. He that shall place the *identity* of man in anything else, but like that of other animals in one fitly organized body, taken in any one instant, and from thence continued under one organization of life in several successively fleeting particles of matter, united to it, will find it hard, to make an *embryo*, one of years, mad, and sober, the same man, by any supposition, that will not make it possible for Seth, Ismael, Socrates, Pilate, St Austin, and Cæsar Borgia,[2] to be the same man. For if the *identity* of soul alone makes the same man, and there be nothing in the nature of matter, why the same individual spirit may not be united to different bodies, it will be possible, that those men, living in distant ages, and of different tempers, may have been the same man: which way of speaking must be, from a very strange use of the word *man*, applied to an idea, out of which body and shape is excluded: and that way of speaking would agree yet worse with the notions of those philosophers,[3] who allow of transmigration, and are of opinion that the souls of men may, for their miscarriages, be detruded into the bodies of beasts, as fit habitations, with organs suited to the satisfaction of their brutal inclinations. But yet, I think, nobody, could he be sure that the soul of Heliogabalus were in one of his hogs, would yet say that hog were a *man* or Heliogabalus.[4]

Identity suited to the idea

§7. 'Tis not therefore unity of substance that comprehends all sorts of *identity*, or will determine it in every case: but to conceive,

and judge of it aright, we must consider what idea the word it is applied to, stands for: it being one thing to be the same *substance*, another the same *man*, and a third the same *person*, if *person*, *man*, and *substance*, are three names standing for three different *ideas*; for such as is the idea belonging to that name, such must be the *identity*: which, if it had been a little more carefully attended to, would possibly have prevented a great deal of that confusion, which often occurs about this matter, with no small seeming difficulties, especially concerning *personal identity*, which therefore we shall in the next place a little consider.

Same man

§8. An animal is a living organized body; and consequently, the same animal, as we have observed, is the same continued life communicated to different particles of matter, as they happen successively to be united to that organised living body. And whatever is talked of other definitions, ingenuous observation puts it past doubt, that the idea in our minds, of which the sound *man* in our mouths is the sign, is nothing else but of an animal of such a certain form: since I think I may be confident, that whoever should see a creature of his own shape and make, though it had no more reason all its life, than a *cat* or a *parrot*, would call him still a *man*; or whoever should hear a *cat* or a *parrot* discourse, reason, and philosophise, would call or think it nothing but a *cat* or a *parrot*; and say, the one was a dull irrational *man*, and the other a very intelligent rational *parrot*. A relation we have in an author of great note,[5] is sufficient to countenance the supposition of a rational *parrot*. His words* are,

'I had a mind to know from Prince Maurice's own mouth, the account of a common, but much credited story, that I had heard so often from many others of an old parrot he had in Brazil, during his government there, that spoke, and asked, and answered common questions like a reasonable creature; so that those of his train there, generally concluded it to be witchery or possession; and one of his chaplains, who lived long afterwards in Holland, would never from that time endure a parrot, but said, they all had a devil in them. I had heard many particulars of this story, and assevered by people hard to be discredited, which made me ask Prince Maurice what there was of it. He said, with his usual plainness and dryness in talk, there was something true, but a great deal false of what had been reported. I desired to know of him, what there was of the first? He told me short and coldly, that he had heard of such an old parrot when he came to Brazil;

*Memoires of what passed in *Christendom*, from 1672 to 1679, p. 57/392.

and though he believed nothing of it, and 'twas a good way off, yet he had so much curiosity as to send for it, that 'twas a very great and a very old one; and when it came first into the room where the Prince was, with a great many Dutchmen about him, it said presently, "what a company of white men are here?" They asked it what he thought that man was, pointing at the Prince? It answered, "some general or other"; when they brought it close to him, he asked it, "D'où venez-vous?" it answered, "De Marinnan." The Prince, "A qui êtes-vous?" The parrot, "A un Portugais." Prince, "Que fais-tu là?" Parrot, "Je garde les poules." The Prince laughed, and said, "Vous gardez les poules?" The parrot answered, "Oui, moi et je sais bien faire"; and made the chuck four or five times that people use to make to chickens when they call them.* I set down the words of this worthy dialogue in French, just as Prince Maurice said them to me. I asked him in what language the parrot spoke, and he said, in Brazilian. I asked whether he understood Brazilian, he said No, but he had taken care to have two interpreters by him, the one a Dutchman, that spoke Brazilian, and the other a Brazilian, that spoke Dutch; that he asked them separately and privately, and both of them agreed in telling him just the same thing that the parrot said. I could not but tell this odd story, because it is so much out of the way, and from the first hand, and what may pass for a good one; for I dare say this Prince, at least, believed himself in all he told me, having ever passed for a very honest and pious man; I leave it to naturalists[6] to reason, and to other men to believe as they please upon it; however, it is not perhaps amiss to relieve or enliven a busy scene sometimes with such digressions, whether to the purpose or no.'

I have taken care that the reader should have the story at large in the author's own words, because he seems to me not to have thought it incredible; for it cannot be imagined that so able a man as he, who had sufficiency enough to warrant all the testimonies he gives of himself, should taken so much pains, in a place where it had nothing to do, to pin so close not only on a man whom he mentions as his friend, but on a Prince, in whom he acknowledges very great honesty and piety, a story, which if he himself thought incredible, he could not but also think ridiculous. The Prince, 'tis plain, who vouches this story, and our author, who relates it

*'Whence come ye?' It answered, 'From Marinnan.' The Prince, 'To whom do you belong?' The parrot, 'To a Portuguese.' Prince, 'What do you there?' Parrot, 'I look after the chickens.' The Prince laughed and said, 'You look after the chickens?' The parrot answered, 'Yes I, and I know well enough how to do it.'

from him, both of them call this talker a parrot; and I ask anyone else, who thinks such a story fit to be told, whether if this parrot, and all of its kind, had always talked, as we have a Prince's word for it, this one did, whether, I say, they would not have passed for a race of *rational animals*; but yet whether for all that, they would have been allowed to be men, and not *parrots*? For I presume 'tis not the idea of a thinking or rational being alone, that makes the idea of a *man* in most people's sense; but of a body, so and so shaped, joined to it; and if that be the idea of a *man*, the same successive body not shifted all at once, must, as well as the same immaterial spirit, go to the making of the same *man*.

Personal identity

§9. This being premised to find wherein *personal identity* consists, we must consider what *person* stands for; which, I think, is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness, which is inseparable from thinking, and as it seems to me essential to it: it being impossible for anyone to perceive, without perceiving that he does perceive. When we see, hear, smell, taste, feel, meditate, or will anything, we know that we do so. Thus it is always as to our present sensations and perceptions: and by this everyone is to himself that which he calls *self*; it not being considered in this case, whether the same *self* be continued in the same, or divers substances. For since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and 'tis that that makes everyone to be what he calls *self*; and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things; in this alone consists *personal identity*, *i.e.* the sameness of a rational being: and as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that *person*; it is the same *self* now it was then; and 'tis by the same *self* with this present one that now reflects on it, that that action was done.

Consciousness makes personal identity

§10. But it is further inquired, whether it be the same identical substance? This, few would think they had reason to doubt of, if these perceptions, with their consciousness, always remained present in the mind, whereby the same thinking thing would be always consciously present, and, as would be thought, evidently the same to itself. But that which seems to make the difficulty, is this, that this consciousness being interrupted always by forgetfulness, there being no moment of our lives wherein we have the whole train of all our past actions before our eyes in one view: but even the best memories losing the sight of one part whilst they are viewing another; and we sometimes, and that the greatest

part of our lives, not reflecting on our past selves, being intent on our present thoughts, and in sound sleep, having no thoughts at all, or, at least, none with that consciousness which remarks our waking thoughts. I say, in all these cases, our consciousness being interrupted, and we losing the sight of our past *selves*, doubts are raised whether we are the same thinking thing; *i.e.* the same substance, or no. Which, however reasonable, or unreasonable, concerns not *personal identity* at all. The question being, what makes the same *person*, and not whether it be the same identical substance, which always thinks in the same *person*, which in this case matters not at all. Different substances, by the same consciousness, (where they do partake in it) being united into one person, as well as different bodies, by the same life are united into one animal, whose *identity* is preserved, in that change of substances, by the unity of one continued life. For it being the same consciousness that makes a man be himself to himself, *personal identity* depends on that only, whether it be annexed only to one individual substance, or can be continued in a succession of several substances. For as far as any intelligent being can repeat the idea of any past action with the same consciousness it had of it at first, and with the same consciousness it has of any present action; so far it is the same *personal self*. For it is by the consciousness it has of its present thoughts and actions, that it is *self* to *itself* now, and so will be the same *self*, as far as the same consciousness can extend to actions past or to come; and would be by distance of time, or change of substance, no more two *persons* than a man be two men, by wearing other clothes today than he did yesterday, with a long or short sleep between: the same consciousness uniting those distant actions into the same *person*, whatever substances contributed to their production.

Personal identity in change of substances

§11. That this is so, we have some kind of evidence in our very bodies, all whose particles, whilst vitally united to this same thinking conscious self, so that we feel when they are touched, and are affected by, and conscious of good or harm that happens to them, are a part of our*selves*; *i.e.* of our thinking conscious *self*. Thus the limbs of his body is to everyone a part of *himself*: he sympathises and is concerned for them. Cut off an hand, and thereby separate it from that consciousness we had of its heat, cold, and other affections, and it is then no longer a part of that which is *himself*, any more than the remotest part of matter. Thus we see the *substance*, whereof *personal self* consisted at one time, may be varied at another, without the change of personal *identity*; there being no question

about the same person, though the limbs, which but now were a part of it, be cut off.

Whether in the change of thinking substances

§12. But the question is, whether if the same substance, which thinks, be changed, it can be the same person, or remaining the same, it can be different persons.

And to this I answer, first, this can be no question at all to those, who place thought in a purely material, animal constitution,[7] void of an immaterial substance. For, whether their supposition be true or no, 'tis plain they conceive personal identity preserved in something else than identity of substance; as animal identity is preserved in identity of life, and not of substance. And therefore those, who place thinking in an immaterial substance only, before they can come to deal with these men, must show why personal identity cannot be preserved in the change of immaterial substances, or variety of particular immaterial substances, as well as animal identity is preserved in the change of material substances, or variety of particular bodies: unless they will say, 'tis one immaterial spirit that makes the same life in brutes; as it is one immaterial spirit that makes the same person in men, which the Cartesians at least will not admit, for fear of making brutes thinking things too.[8]

§13. But next, as to the first part of the question, whether if the same thinking substance (supposing immaterial substances only to think) be changed, it can be the same person? I answer, that cannot be resolved, but by those who know what kind of substances they are that do think; and whether the consciousness of past actions can be transferred from one thinking substance to another. I grant, were the same consciousness the same individual action, it could not: but it being but a present representation of a past action, why it may not be possible, that that may be represented to the mind to have been, which really never was, will remain to be shown. And therefore how far the consciousness of past actions is annexed to any individual agent, so that another cannot possibly have it, will be hard for us to determine, till we know what kind of action it is; that cannot be done without a reflex act of perception accompanying it, and how performed by thinking substances, who cannot think without being conscious of it. But that which we call the *same consciousness*, not being the same individual act, why one intellectual substance may not have represented to it, as done by itself, what it never did, and was perhaps done by some other agent; why, I say, such a representation may not possibly be without reality of matter of fact, as well as several representations in dreams are, which yet, whilst

dreaming, we take for true, will be difficult to conclude from the nature of things. And that it never is so, will by us, till we have clearer views of the nature of thinking substances, be best resolved into the goodness of God, who, as far as the happiness or misery of any of his sensible creatures is concerned in it, will not by a fatal error of theirs transfer from one to another that consciousness which draws reward or punishment with it. How far this may be an argument against those who would place thinking in a system of fleeting animal spirits,[9] I leave to be considered. But yet to return to the question before us, it must be allowed, that if the same consciousness (which, as has been shown, is quite a different thing from the same numerical figure or motion in body) can be transferred from one thinking substance to another, it will be possible, that two thinking substances may make but one person. For the same consciousness being preserved, whether in the same or different substances, the personal identity is preserved?

§14. As to the second part of the question, whether the same immaterial substance remaining, there may be two distinct persons? Which question seems to me to be built on this, whether the same immaterial being, being conscious of the actions of its past duration, may be wholly stripped of all the consciousness of its past existence, and lose it beyond the power of ever retrieving again: and so as it were beginning a new account from a new period, have a consciousness that cannot reach beyond this new state. All those who hold pre-existence,[10] are evidently of this mind, since they allow the soul to have no remaining consciousness of what it did in that pre-existent state, either wholly separate from body, or informing any other body; and if they should not, 'tis plain, experience would be against them. So that personal identity reaching no further than consciousness reaches, a pre-existent spirit not having continued so many ages in a state of silence, must needs make different persons. Suppose a Christian Platonist[11] or Pythagorean, should, upon God's having ended all his works of creation the seventh day, think his soul hath existed ever since; and should imagine it has revolved in several human bodies, as I once met with one, who was persuaded his had been the soul of Socrates, (how reasonably I will not dispute. This I know, that in the post he filled, which was no inconsiderable one, he passed for a very rational man; and the press has shown that he wanted not parts or learning) would anyone say, that he being not conscious of any of Socrates's actions or thoughts, could be the same person with Socrates? Let anyone reflect upon himself, and conclude, that he has in

himself an immaterial spirit, which is that which thinks in him, and in the constant change of his body keeps him the same; and is that which he calls himself: let him also suppose it to be the same soul that was in Nestor or Thersites, at the siege of Troy,[12] (for souls being, as far as we know anything of them in their nature, indifferent to any parcel of matter, the supposition has no apparent absurdity in it) which it may have been, as well as it is now, the soul of any other man: but he now having no consciousness of any of the actions either of Nestor or Thersites, does, or can he, conceive himself the same person with either of them? Can he be concerned in either of their actions? Attribute them to himself, or think them his own more than the actions of any other man that ever existed? So that this consciousness not reaching to any of the actions of either of those men, he is no more one *self* with either of them, than if the soul or immaterial spirit that now informs him, had been created, and began to exist, when it began to inform his present body, though it were never so true, that the same spirit that informed Nestor's or Thersites's body, were numerically the same that now informs his. For this would no more make him the same person with Nestor, than if some of the particles of matter that were once a part of Nestor, were now a part of this man; the same immaterial substance, without the same consciousness, no more making the same person by being united to any body, than the same particle of matter, without consciousness united to any body, makes the same person. But let him once find himself conscious of any of the actions of Nestor, he then finds himself the same person with Nestor.

§15. And thus we may be able, without any difficulty, to conceive the same person at the resurrection, though in a body not exactly in make or parts the same which he had here, the same consciousness going along with the soul that inhabits it. But yet the soul alone, in the change of bodies, would scarce to anyone, but to him that makes the soul the *man*, be enough to make the same *man*. For should the soul of a prince, carrying with it the consciousness of the prince's past life, enter and inform the body of a cobbler, as soon as deserted by his own soul, everyone sees he would be the same person with the prince, accountable only for the prince's actions: but who would say it was the same man? The body too goes to the making the man, and would, I guess, to everybody, determine the man in this case, wherein the soul, with all its princely thoughts about it, would not make another man: but he would be the same cobbler to everyone besides himself. I know that in the ordinary way of speaking, the same person, and the same

man, stand for one and the same thing. And indeed, everyone will always have a liberty to speak, as he pleases, and to apply what articulate sounds to what ideas he thinks fit, and change them as often as he pleases. But yet when we will inquire what makes the same *spirit*, *man*, or *person*, we must fix the ideas of *spirit*, *man*, or *person*, in our minds; and having resolved with ourselves what we mean by them, it will not be hard to determine in either of them, or the like, when it is the *same*, and when not.

Consciousness makes the same person

§16. But though the same immaterial substance or soul, does not alone, wherever it be, and in whatsoever state, make the same man; yet 'tis plain consciousness, as far as ever it can be extended, should it be to ages past, unites existences and actions, very remote in time, into the same person, as well as it does the existence and actions of the immediately preceding moment: so that whatever has the consciousness of present and past actions, is the same person to whom they both belong. Had I the same consciousness, that I saw the Ark and Noah's flood, as that I saw an overflowing of the Thames last winter, or as that I write now, I could no more doubt that I that write this now, that saw the Thames overflowed last winter, and that viewed the flood at the general deluge, was the same *self*, place that *self* in what substance you please, than that I that write this am the same *myself* now whilst I write (whether I consist of all the same substance, material or immaterial, or no) that I was yesterday. For as to this point of being the same *self*, it matters not whether this present *self* be made up of the same or other substances, I being as much concerned, and as justly accountable for any action was done a thousand years since, appropriated to me now by this self-consciousness, as I am for what I did the last moment.

Self depends on consciousness

§17. *Self* is that conscious thinking thing, (whatever substance, made up of whether spiritual, or material, simple, or compounded, it matters not) which is sensible, or conscious of pleasure and pain, capable of happiness or misery, and so is concerned for it*self*, as far as that consciousness extends. Thus everyone finds, that whilst comprehended under that consciousness, the little finger is as much a part of it*self*, as what is most so. Upon separation of this little finger, should this consciousness go along with the little finger, and leave the rest of the body, 'tis evident the little finger would be the *person*, the *same person*; and *self* then would have nothing to do with the rest of the body. As in this case, it is the consciousness that goes along with the substance, when one part is separate from another, which makes the same *person*, and constitutes this inseparable *self*: so it is in

reference to substance remote in time. That with which the *consciousness* of this present thinking thing can join itself, makes the same *person*, and is one *self* with it, and with nothing else; and so attributes to it*self*, and owns all the actions of that thing as its own, as far as that consciousness reaches, and no further; as everyone who reflects will perceive.

Object of reward and punishment

§18. In this *personal identity*, is founded all the right and justice of reward and punishment; happiness and misery being that for which everyone is concerned for *himself*, not mattering what becomes of any substance, not joined to, or affected with that consciousness. For as it is evident in the instance I gave but now, if the consciousness went along with the little finger, when it was cut off, that would be the same *self* which was concerned for the whole body yesterday, as making a part of it*self*, whose actions then it cannot but admit as its own now. Though if the same body should still live, and immediately, from the separation of the little finger, have its own peculiar consciousness, whereof the little finger knew nothing, it would not at all be concerned for it, as a part of it*self*, or could own any of its actions, or have any of them imputed to him.

§19. This may show us wherein *personal identity* consists, not in the identity of substance, but, as I have said, in the identity of *consciousness*, wherein, if Socrates and the present Mayor of Quinborough[13] agree, they are the same person: if the same Socrates, waking and sleeping do not partake of the same *consciousness*, Socrates waking and sleeping, is not the same person. And to punish Socrates waking, for what sleeping Socrates thought, and waking Socrates was never conscious of, would be no more of right, than to punish one twin for what his brother-twin did, whereof he knew nothing, because their outsides were so like, that they could not be distinguished; for such twins have been seen.

§20. But yet possibly it will still be objected, suppose I wholly lose the memory of some parts of my life, beyond a possibility of retrieving them, so that perhaps I shall never be conscious of them again; yet am I not the same person that did those actions, had those thoughts, that I was once conscious of, though I have now forgot them? To which I answer, that we must here take notice what the word *I* is applied to; which, in this case, is the man only. And the same man being presumed to be the same person, *I* is easily here supposed to stand also for the same person. But if it be possible for the same man to have distinct incommunicable consciousness at different times, it is past doubt the same man would at different times

make different persons; which, we see, is the sense of mankind in the solemnest declaration of their opinions, human laws not punishing the *mad man* for the *sober man*'s actions, nor the *sober man* for what the *mad man* did, thereby making them two persons; which is somewhat explained by our way of speaking in English, when we say such an one *is not himself*, or is *besides himself*; in which phrases it is insinuated, as if those who now, or, at least, first used them, thought, that *self* was changed, the *self*same person was no longer in that man.

Difference between identity of man and person

§21. But yet 'tis hard to conceive, that Socrates, the same individual man, should be two persons. To help us a little in this, we must consider what is meant by Socrates, or the same individual *man*.

First, it must be either the same individual, immaterial, thinking substance: in short, the same numerical soul, and nothing else.

Secondly, or the same animal, without any regard to an immaterial soul.

Thirdly, or the same immaterial spirit united to the same animal.

Now, take which of these suppositions you please, it is impossible to make personal identity to consist in anything but consciousness; or reach any further than that does.

For by the first of them, it must be allowed possible, that a man born of different women, and in distant times, may be the same man. A way of speaking, which, whoever admits, must allow it possible, for the same man to be two distinct persons, as any two that have lived in different ages, without the knowledge of one another's thoughts.

By the second and third, Socrates in this life, and after it, cannot be the same man any way, but by the same consciousness; and so making *human identity* to consist in the same thing wherein we place *personal identity*, there will be no difficulty to allow the same man to be the same person. But then they who place *human identity* in consciousness only, and not in something else, must consider how they will make the infant Socrates the same man with Socrates after the resurrection. But whatsoever to some men makes a *man*, and consequently the same individual man, wherein perhaps few are agreed, personal identity can by us be placed in nothing but consciousness, (which is that alone which makes what we call *self*) without involving us in great absurdities.

§22. But is not a man drunk and sober the same person, why else is he punished for the fact he commits when drunk, though he be never afterwards conscious of it? Just as much the same person, as a man that walks, and

does other things in his sleep, is the same person, and is answerable for any mischief he shall do in it. Human laws punish both with a justice suitable to their way of knowledge; because in these cases, they cannot distinguish certainly what is real, what counterfeit; and so the ignorance in drunkenness or sleep, is not admitted as a plea. For though punishment be annexed to personality, and personality to consciousness, and the drunkard perhaps be not conscious of what he did; yet human judicatures justly punish him; because the fact is proved against him, but want of consciousness cannot be proved for him. But in the great day,[14] wherein the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open, it may be reasonable to think, no one shall be made to answer for what he knows nothing of; but shall receive his doom, his conscience accusing or excusing him.

Consciousness alone makes self

§23. Nothing but consciousness can unite remote existences into the same person, the identity of substance will not do it. For whatever substance there is, however framed, without consciousness, there is no person: and a carcass may be a person, as well as any sort of substance be so without consciousness.

Could we suppose two distinct incommunicable consciousnesses acting the same body, the one constantly by day, the other by night; and, on the other side, the same consciousness, acting by intervals, two distinct bodies: I ask in the first case, whether the *day* and the *night-man* would not be two as distinct persons, as Socrates and Plato? And whether in the second case, there would not be one person in two distinct bodies, as much as one man is the same in two distinct clothings. Nor is it at all material to say, that this same, and this distinct *consciousness*, in the cases above-mentioned, is owing to the same and distinct immaterial substances, bringing it with them to those bodies, which, whether true or no, alters not the case: since 'tis evident the *personal identity* would equally be determined by the consciousness, whether that consciousness were annexed to some individual immaterial substance, or no. For granting, that the thinking substance in man must be necessarily supposed immaterial, 'tis evident, that immaterial thinking thing may sometimes part with its past consciousness, and be restored to it again, as appears in the forgetfulness men often have of their past actions, and the mind many times recovers the memory of a past consciousness, which it had lost for twenty years together. Make these intervals of memory and forgetfulness to take their turns regularly by day and night, and you have two persons with the same immaterial spirit, as much as in the former instance, two persons with the same body. So that *self* is not determined by

identity or diversity of substance, which it cannot be sure of, but only by identity of consciousness.

§24. Indeed it may conceive the substance whereof it is now made up, to have existed formerly, united in the same conscious being: but consciousness removed, that substance is no more it*self*, or makes no more a part of it, than any other substance, as is evident in the instance we have already given of a limb cut off, of whose heat, or cold, or other affections, having no longer any consciousness, it is no more of a man's self, than any other matter of the universe. In like manner it will be in reference to any immaterial substance, which is void of that consciousness whereby I am my*self* to my*self*: if there be any part of its existence, which I cannot upon recollection join with that present consciousness, whereby I am now my*self*, it is in that part of its existence no more my*self*, than any other immaterial being. For whatsoever any substance has thought or done, which I cannot recollect, and by my consciousness make my own thought and action, it will no more belong to me, whether a part of me thought or did it, than if it had been thought or done by any other immaterial being anywhere existing.

§25. I agree the more probable opinion is, that this consciousness is annexed to, and the affection of one individual immaterial substance.

But let men, according to their divers hypotheses, resolve of that as they please. This every intelligent being, sensible of happiness or misery, must grant, that there is something that is *himself* that he is concerned for, and would have happy; that this *self* has existed in a continued duration more than one instant, and therefore 'tis possible may exist, as it has done, months and years to come, without any certain bounds to be set to its duration; and may be the same *self*, by the same consciousness, continued on for the future. And thus, by this consciousness, he finds himself to be the *same self* which did such or such an action some years since, by which he comes to be happy or miserable now. In all which account of *self*, the same numerical substance is not considered as making the same *self*: but the same continued consciousness, in which several substances may have been united, and again separated from it, which, whilst they continued in a vital[15] union with that, wherein this consciousness then resided, made a part of that same *self*. Thus any part of our bodies vitally united to that which is conscious in us, makes a part of our*selves*: but upon separation from the vital union, by which that consciousness is communicated, that which a moment since was part of our*selves*, is now no more so, than a part of another man's *self* is a part of me; and 'tis not impossible, but in a little time may become a real part

of another person. And so we have the same numerical substance become a part of two different persons; and the same person preserved under the change of various substances. Could we suppose any spirit wholly stripped of all its memory or consciousness of past actions, as we find our minds always are of a great part of ours, and sometimes of them all, the union or separation of such a spiritual substance would make no variation of personal identity, any more than that of any particle of matter does. Any substance vitally united to the present thinking being, is a part of that very *same self* which now is: anything united to it by a consciousness of former actions, makes also a part of the *same self*, which is the same both then and now.

Person, a forensic term

§26. *Person*, as I take it, is the name for this *self*. Wherever a man finds what he calls *himself*, there I think another may say is the *same person*. It is a forensic term[16] appropriating actions and their merit; and so belongs only to intelligent agents capable of a law, and happiness and misery. This personality extends it*self* beyond present existence to what is past, only by consciousness, whereby it becomes concerned and accountable, owns and imputes to it*self* past actions, just upon the same ground, and for the same reason that it does the present. All which is founded in a concern for happiness, the unavoidable concomitant of consciousness, that which is conscious of pleasure and pain, desiring that that self, that is conscious, should be happy. And therefore whatever past actions it cannot reconcile, or appropriate to that present *self* by consciousness, it can be no more concerned in, than if they had never been done: and to receive pleasure or pain, *i.e.* reward or punishment, on the account of any such action, is all one, as to be made happy or miserable in its first being, without any demerit at all. For supposing a man punished now for what he had done in another life, whereof he could be made to have no consciousness at all, what difference is there between that punishment, and being created miserable? And therefore conformable to this, the Apostle tells us, that at the great day, when everyone shall 'receive according to his doings, the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open.'[17] The sentence shall be justified by the consciousness all persons shall have, that they *themselves*, in what bodies soever they appear, or what substances soever that consciousness adheres to, are the *same* that committed those actions, and deserve that punishment for them.

§27. I am apt enough to think I have, in treating of this subject, made some suppositions that will look strange to some readers, and possibly they are so in themselves. But yet, I think, they are such as are pardonable in

this ignorance we are in of the nature of that thinking thing that is in us, and which we look on as our*selves*. Did we know what it was, or how it was tied to a certain system of fleeting animal spirits;[18] or whether it could, or could not perform its operations of thinking and memory out of a body organized as ours is; and whether it has pleased God, that no one such spirit shall ever be united to any but one such body, upon the right constitution of whose organs its memory should depend, we might see the absurdity of some of those suppositions I have made. But taking, as we ordinarily now do (in the dark concerning these matters) the soul of a man, for an immaterial substance, independent from matter, and indifferent alike to it all, there can from the nature of things be no absurdity at all, to suppose, that the same soul may, at different times, be united to different bodies, and with them make up, for that time, one man: As well as we suppose a part of a sheep's body yesterday, should be a part of a man's body tomorrow, and in that union make a vital part of Melibœus[19] himself, as well as it did of his ram.

The difficulty from ill use of names

§28. To conclude, whatever substance begins to exist, it must, during its existence, necessarily be the same: whatever compositions of substances begin to exist, during the union of those substances, the concrete must be the same: whatsoever mode begins to exist, during its existence, it is the same: and so if the composition be of distinct substances, and different modes, the same rule holds. Whereby it will appear, that the difficulty or obscurity that has been about this matter, rather rises from the names ill used, than from any obscurity in things themselves. For whatever makes the specific idea, to which the name is applied, if that idea be steadily kept to, the distinction of anything into the same, and divers will easily be conceived, and there can arise no doubt about it.

Continued existence makes identity

§29. For supposing a rational spirit be the idea of a *man*, 'tis easy to know, what is the *same man*, *viz.* the *same spirit*, whether separate or in a body, will be the *same man*. Supposing a rational spirit vitally united to a body of a certain conformation of parts to make a *man*, whilst that rational spirit, with that vital conformation of parts, though continued in a fleeting successive body, remains, it will be the *same man*. But if to anyone the idea of a *man* be but the vital union of parts in a certain shape; as long as that vital union and shape remains, in a concrete no otherwise the same, but by a continued succession of fleeting particles, it will be the same *man*. For whatever be the composition, whereof the complex

idea is made, whenever existence makes it one particular thing under any denomination, the same existence continued, preserves it the same individual under the same denomination.[F]

CHAPTER XXVIII

Of other Relations

Proportional §1. Besides the before-mentioned occasions of time, place, and causality of comparing, or referring things one to another, there are, as I have said, infinite others, some whereof I shall mention.

First, The first I shall name, is some one simple idea; which being capable of parts or degrees, affords an occasion of comparing the subjects wherein it is to one another, in respect of that simple idea, *v.g. whiter*, *sweeter*, *bigger*, *equal*, *more*, etc. These relations depending on the equality and excess of the same simple idea, in several subjects, may be called, if one will, *proportional*; and that these are only conversant about those simple ideas received from sensation or reflection, is so evident, that nothing need be said to evince it.

Natural §2. *Secondly*, another occasion of comparing things together, or considering one thing, so as to include in that consideration some other thing, is the circumstances of their origin or beginning; which being not afterwards to be altered, make the relations depending thereon as lasting as the subjects to which they belong; *v.g. father* and *son*, *brothers*, *cousin-germans*,[1] etc. which have their relations by one community of blood, wherein they partake in several degrees; *country-men*, *i.e.* those who were born in the same country, or tract of ground; and these I call *natural relations*. Wherein we may observe, that mankind have fitted their notions and words to the use of common life, and not to the truth and extent of things. For 'tis certain, that in reality the relation is the same, betwixt the begetter, and the begotten, in the several races of other animals, as well as men: but yet 'tis seldom said, this bull is the grandfather of such a calf; or that two pigeons are cousin-germans. It is very convenient, that by distinct names these relations should be observed, and marked out in mankind, there being occasion, both in laws, and other communications one with another, to mention and take notice of men under these relations: from whence also arise the

obligations of several duties amongst men: whereas in brutes, men having very little or no cause to mind these relations, they have not thought fit to give them distinct and peculiar names. This, by the way, may give us some light into the different state and growth of languages; which being suited only to the convenience of communication, are proportioned to the notions men have, and the commerce of thoughts familiar amongst them; and not to the reality or extent of things, nor to the various respects might be found among them; nor the different abstract considerations might be framed about them. Where they had no philosophical notions, there they had no terms to express them: and 'tis no wonder men should have framed no names for those things they found no occasion to discourse of. From whence it is easy to imagine, why, as in some countries, they may not have so much as the name for a horse; and in others, where they are more careful of the pedigrees of their horses than of their own, that there they may have not only names for particular horses, but also of their several relations of kindred one to another.

§3. *Thirdly*, sometimes the foundation of considering things, with reference to one another, is some act whereby anyone comes by a moral right, power, or obligation to do something. Thus a *general* is one that hath power to command an army; and an army under a general, is a collection of armed men obliged to obey one man. A *citizen*, or a *burgher*, is one who has a right to certain privileges in this or that place. All this sort depending upon men's wills, or agreement in society, I call *instituted*, or *voluntary*, and may be distinguished from the natural, in that they are most, if not all of them, some way or other alterable, and separable from the persons, to whom they have sometimes belonged, though neither of the substances, so related, be destroyed. Now, though these are all reciprocal, as well as the rest, and contain in them a reference of two things, one to the other; yet, because one of the two things often wants a relative name, importing that reference men usually take no notice of it, and the relation is commonly overlooked, *v.g.* a *patron* and *client*, are easily allowed to be relations: but a *constable*, or *dictator*, are not so readily, at first hearing, considered as such; because there is no peculiar name for those who are under the command of a dictator, or constable, expressing a relation to either of them; though it be certain, that either of them hath a certain power over some others; and so is so far related to them, as well as a patron is to his client, or general to his army. *Instituted*

§4. *Fourthly*, there is another sort of relation, which is the conformity, *Moral*