AN ESSAY CONCERNING
HUMAN UNDERSTANDING
BY
JOHN LOCKE
COLLATED AND ANNOTATED, WITH
PROLEGOMENA, BIOGRAPHICAL, CRITICAL, AND HISTORICAL,
BY
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From the painting at Christ Church, Oxford
BOOK I

NEITHER PRINCIPLES NOR IDEAS ARE INNATE
CHAPTER I.

NO INNATE SPECULATIVE PRINCIPLES.

1. It is an established opinion amongst some men, that there are in the understanding certain innate principles; some primary notions, kouwai ενεργεία, 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. The way shown how we come by any

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1 Locke does not name the ‘men’ of ‘innate principles’ whose opinion he proceeds to criticize; nor does he quote their words in evidence of what they intended by the opinion. He says (ch. ii. § 15) that after he had argued objections to the ‘established opinion,’ his attention was directed to the arguments in its defence in the De Veritate of Lord Herbert, which thereupon he proceeds to controvert. From the first, Descartes, with whose writings he was early familiar, was probably in his view. According to Descartes there are three sources of ideas: ‘Entre ces idées, les nées semblent être nées avec moi; les autres être étrangères et venir de dehors; et les autres être-faites et inventées par moi-même.’ ( Méd. iii. 7.) But even the ‘idées nées avec moi’ of Descartes were not regarded by him as in consciousness until ‘experience’ had evoked them from latency—a position which Locke’s argument always fails to reach. Though Locke nowhere names More, Hale, or Cudworth, he might have found expressions of theirs which, on a superficial view, appear to countenance the sort of innateness which he attributes to the ‘established opinion.’ See Hume’s Inquiry concerning Human Understanding, in Note A, on ‘innate ideas,’ and Locke’s ‘loose sense of the word idea.’

4 The impossibility of resolving the intellectual necessities, which govern and constitute knowledge and existence, into transitory data of sense; or of explaining, by means of nature and its evolutions, the spiritual elements in human experience, which connect man with the supernatural, the infinite, the divine—has suggested that those elements, presupposed by experience, must have been innate, or born with the mind; thus potentially belonging to it, antecedently to all acquired knowledge. This hypothesis has found expression in many forms; and it has waxed or waned, as the spiritual or the sensuous was most developed in the consciousness of the philosopher or of the age. Locke assails it in its crudest form, in which it is countenanced by no eminent advocate; according to which the ideas and principles which ultimately constitute knowledge are supposed to be held con sciscère, from birth, or even before it, in every human mind, being thus ‘stamped’ on us from the beginning, and ‘brought into the world’ with us. It is easy to refute this; for it can be shown that there are no principles of which all men are aware as soon
sufficient to convince unprejudiced readers of the falseness of this supposition, if I should only show (as I hope I shall in the following parts of this Discourse) how men, barely by the use of their natural faculties, may attain to all the knowledge they have, without the help of any innate impressions; and may arrive at certainty, without any such original notions or principles. For I imagine any one will easily grant that it would be impertinent to suppose the ideas of colours innate in a creature to whom God hath given sight, and a power to receive them by the eyes from external objects: and no less unreasonable would it be to attribute several truths to the impressions of nature, and innate characters, when we may observe in ourselves faculties fit to attain as easy and certain knowledge of them as if they were originally imprinted on the mind.

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

2. 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 as they are born, or even in which all mankind are agreed when they are adult. That data of experience are needed, to awaken what must otherwise be the slumbering potentialities of man's spiritual being; and that human knowledge is the issue of sense when sense is combined with latent intellect, is an interpretation of the 'established opinion,' which Locke does not fairly contemplate.

1 'Constant impressions,' i.e. of which there is a conscious impression in all human beings from birth, and about which all, even infants and idiots, are agreed.

Conscious consent on the part of every human being cannot be alleged on behalf of any abstract principle, as Locke is easily able to show. There is no proposition which some one has not been found to deny. A better criterion of the supernatural or divine, in man and in the universe, than this of 'universal consent,' which Locke makes so much of, is found, when it is shown,—that the full and adequate exercise of our faculties in experience necessarily presupposes principles of which the mass of mankind may be only dimly conscious, or wholly unconscious. Locke ignores the main issue; and when he explains his meaning is found nearer than he supposes to those who hold the innateness of reason in experience.

He acknowledges innateness of faculty. Also that knowledge involves and is based upon what is self-evident is a prominent lesson of the Fourth Book. 'That there can be any knowledge without self-evident propositions,' he assures Stillingfleet that he is so far from denying, 'that I am accused by your lordship for requiring more such in demonstration than you think necessary' (Third Letter, p. 264). 'I contend for the usefulness and necessity of self-evident propositions in all certainty, whether of intuition or demonstration' (p. 286).

2 'That make self-evident propositions necessary to certainty, and found all knowledge or certainty in them' (p. 340).

3 These two, called by logicians the principles of identity and of contradiction, are again treated of in Bk. IV. ch. vii, where his distinction between consciousness of them at birth, which he denies, and the gradual discovery of them at a later age, is drawn.
These have so settled a reputation of maxims universally received, that it will no doubt be thought strange if any one should seem to question it. But yet I take liberty to say, that these propositions are so far from having an universal assent, that there are a great part of mankind to whom they are not so much as known.

5. For, first, it is evident, that all children and idiots have not the least apprehension or thought of them. And the want of that is enough to destroy that universal assent which must needs be the necessary concomitant of all innate truths: it seeming to me near a contradiction to say, that there are truths imprinted on the soul, which it perceives or understands not: imprinting, if it signify anything, being nothing else but the making certain truths to be perceived. For to imprint anything on the mind without the mind's perceiving it, seems to me hardly intelligible. If therefore children and idiots have souls, have minds, with those impressions upon them, they must unavoidably perceive them, and necessarily know and assent to these truths; which since they do not, it is evident that there are no such impressions. For if they are not notions naturally imprinted, how can they be innate? and if they are notions imprinted, how can they be unknown? To say a notion is imprinted on the mind, and yet at the same time to say, that the mind is ignorant of it, and never yet took notice of it, is to make this impression nothing. No proposition can be said to be in the mind which it never yet knew, which it was never yet conscious of. For if any one may, then, by the same

of their self-evidence, which he recognises, is illustrated. The second of the two is the axiom of axioms with Aristotle, itself indemonstrable because presupposed in all proof.

1. 'Assent,' i.e. actual or conscious, not potential or unconscious, although the whole question turns upon the latter. In Bk. IV, he confines 'assent' to judgments of probability exclusively, thus contrasting it with 'knowledge' or absolute certainty.

2. The argument in this section assumes that ideas cannot be held mentally in a latent or unconscious state, that there cannot be impressions made on the mind without accompanying consciousness of them, a mental impression and a consciousness of it being regarded as identical. That there may be conditions, implied in the constitution of reason, to which our ideas, when they do emerge in consciousness, must conform, by necessity of reason, is a conception foreign to his view. Locke argues that no idea can be said to be 'in the mind' of which that mind is not either actually perceptive, or through memory capable of becoming perceptible.

3. Locke never asks, as Kant afterwards did, what this 'capacity,' which he allows to be latent or innate, necessarily implies.

4. Not so; if the primitive necessities which constitute reason in us and in the universe can be distinguished by marks from the empirical generalisations of sense, and from generalised sense data. Not so; if there are ideas (concepts) which, by an intellectual necessity, on certain occasions in experience, form themselves in us, without our forming them by tentative generalisation. The question still remains—What does a capacity of having experience imply?
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42 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. 1

6. To avoid this, it is usually answered, that all men know and assent to them, when they come to the use of reason; and this is enough to prove them innate. I answer:

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

8. If 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

1 Universal consent may mean that any who do think such propositions intelligently must think them in one and the same way; not that every human being does in fact think them with conscious intelligence. In any other meaning universal consent could be no criterion of reason being innate or latent in us, and in the universe; for there are no propositions to which all human beings, including infants, give conscious consent.

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43 difference between the maxims of the mathematicians, and theorems they deduce from them: all must be equally allowed innate; they being all discoveries made by the use of reason, and truths that a rational creature may certainly come to know, if he apply his thoughts rightly that way.

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

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

1 As Leibniz held, who argued that all arithmetic and all geometry are virtually innate, and may (with effort) be found in the mind; as Plato showed when he made Socrates oblige a child to admit abstract truths without telling him anything. The innate knowledge of Plato and Leibniz is characterised, not by its independence of, and priority to, mental development in the individual, but by its intuited necessity and universality after it has been awakened into consciousness, in the exercise of intuitive and discursive reason.

2 Not so; if the criterion of innateness is sought, not in the process, but in the intellectual characteristics of the product.

3 The unconscious presence of principles which can be proved (by philosophical analysis) to be virtually presupposed in our certainties, and even in our assent to probability, is here overlooked.
in procuring our assent to these maxims, if by saying, that
"men know and assent to them, when they come to the use
of reason," be meant, that the use of reason assists us in
the knowledge of these maxims, it is utterly false; and were it
true, would prove them not to be innate.

12. If by knowing and assenting to them "when we come
to the use of reason," be meant, that this is the time when
they come to be taken notice of by the mind; and that as
soon as children come to the use of reason, they come also
to know and assent to these maxims; this also is false and
frivolous. First, it is false; because it is evident these
maxims are not in the mind so early as the use of reason;
and therefore the coming to the use of reason is falsely
assigned as the time of their discovery. How many instances
of the use of reason may we observe in children, a long time
before they have any knowledge of this maxim, "That it is
impossible for the same thing to be and not to be," 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
with these, is not innate.

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And if there were this would prove them not innate.

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1 That is, they are self-evidently true, but not what Locke means by
innate; for he here argues that self-evidence in a principle is no proof of
its innateness.

2 Reason, i.e. reasoning, which is not needed for discovering the truth
of self-evident mathematical axioms.

3 On the contrary, philosophical reasoning and analysis are needed for
quickening into distinct consciousness, in their abstract form, those conscious
principles of reason which are logically presupposed in all reasoning and infer-
ence. This must in the nature of the case be posterior, not anterior, to the
exercise of intellect in experience.

4 Rather intellectual necessity to per-
ceive, of which only the developed intel-
ligence becomes conscious. "Assent" here
again used for rational perception,
instead of the presumed probability to
which the term is confined in Br. IV,
ch. xxi. § 14, 17, in which the truths
referred to are shown to be perceived
at first sight, by bare intuition," as soon
as the mind, sufficiently educated to per-
cieve them, "turns its view that way." Truths thus intuited (not inferred) are
there presented by Locke as the founda-
tion of "all the certainty and evidence
of all our knowledge"—as "known by
a superior and higher evidence than reasonings," and generalisation by cal-
culated experiments. They are at first apprehended as embodied in
concrete instances, and then in their abstract expression.

1 That is, if their being "innate"
means, as with Locke it does, that we
were all born with a conscious know-
ledge of them, and in their abstract
expression too; his own fundamental
principle being, that we are born
destitute of all knowledge and belief,
so that his task is, to show how we
gradually acquire more or less of both.

2 Though it is only gradually, and
by dint of abstract thinking, that the
plain in the sequel of this Discourse. I allow therefore, a necessity that men should come to the use of reason before they get the knowledge of those general truths; but deny that men's coming to the use of reason is the time of their discovery.

13. In the mean time it is observable, that this saying, that men know and assent to these maxims 1 when they come to the use of reason,' amounts in reality of fact to no more but this,—that they are never known nor taken notice of before the use of reason, but may possibly be assented to some time after, during a man's life; but when is uncertain. And so may all other knowable truths, as well as these; which therefore have no advantage nor distinction from others by this note of being known when we come to the use of reason; nor are thereby proved to be innate, but quite the contrary.

14. But, secondly, were it true that the precise time of their being known and assented to were, when men come to conscious apprehension of those abstract axioms of identity and contradiction is reached, in the individual mind,—yet when one does realize them, it is with a sense of their absolute intellectual necessity, which is wanting in the case of tentative inductions from experience. And this it is that makes them be regarded as somehow innate in the reason that is also innate in things, thus making real inference, deductive and inductive, possible.

1 Their 'note' is not properly alleged to consist in their becoming known as soon as one comes to the use of reason; for they are to be tested by the fact that, as soon as there is consciousness of them, there is an involved perception of their absolute necessity,—in contrast to the conditional necessity of generalizations which depend merely upon the custom of experience.

2 Throughout this whole argument it is forgotten that in this matter the question of interest in philosophy is not one of time at all,—not of when individuals become aware of what, if apprehended, is seen to be self-evidently true. The philosophical question about innateness, as Shaftesbury well puts it, really is whether the constitution of man be such that, being adult and grown up, certain ideas do not 'infallibly and necessarily spring up in consciousness.' And Locke grants this when he replies,—that there are certain propositions which, though the soul from the beginning, when a man is born, does not (consciously) know, yet, by assistance from the outward senses, and the help of some previous cultivation, it may afterwards come self-evidently, or with a demonstrable necessity, to know of, is no more than what I have affirmed in my First Book. Innateness, as argued by Locke, means original conscious possession of such truths, without the laborious intellectual effort that must be put forth before they are recognized in their philosophical abstraction.

It is the need for this effort that he wants to show. He is really arguing, throughout the First Book, for the exercise of individual judgment, and against blind submission to dogmas. Hume hardly sees this when he pronounces the discussion 'frivolous, if by innate Locke meant contemporary to our birth;' nor is it worth while to inquire at what time thinking begins, whether before, at, or after our birth.' (Inquiry, Note A.)

1 He still refers indefinitely to these men of innate principles.' Here, too, the very maxims that are denied to be 'innate' are expressly called 'self-evident.'

2 The axioms of identity and contradiction, which Locke takes as his examples of speculative principles alleged to be consciously innate, are of all others the most abstract, and therefore among the latest, to be recognized by the mind, which must nevertheless
men come to the use of reason, can be true in any other sense, I desire it may be shown; or at least, how in this, or any other sense, it proves them innate.

15. The senses at first let in particular ideas, and furnish the yet empty cabinet, and the mind by degrees growing have always virtually assumed their truth. It is this unconscious assumption that his opponents offer, as evidence of the principles named being 'universally' assented to,—in a potential or implied assent.

1 In this and the two following sentences Locke anticipates his own account, in the Second Book, of the origin and elaboration of ideas, which are all at first particular, their generalisations being moreover only accidental. The 'empty cabinet' represents the mind before its latent faculties have been quickened into exercise in experience. The 'sheet of blank paper' and the 'waxed tablet' are misleading metaphors, which, after Aristotle and others, he elsewhere employs. In his endeavour to emphasise the difference between the continuous effort involved in the formation of human knowledge, and the perfect knowledge eternally present in the Supreme Mind,—thus enforcing his favourite lesson of an active private judgment in man,—he fails to see that to attribute to human knowledge innate elements, and also data of experience, is not contradictory, since all knowledge may involve both elements. But Locke might have unconsciously in view what his favourite Hume thus expresses:—'The matter of knowledge there is between the angels of God and the children of men, this difference—angels already have full and complete knowledge in the highest degree that can be imparted to them; men, if we view them in their spring, are at first without understanding or knowledge at all. Nevertheless, from this utter vacuity, they grow by degrees, till they come at length to be even as the angels themselves are. That which agreeeth to the one now, the other shall attain unto in the end; they are not so far disjoined and severed but that they come at length to meet. The soul of man being therefore at the first as a book wherein nothing is, and yet all things may be imprinted, we are to search by what steps and degrees it riseth into perfection of knowledge.' (Essayes, Polit. Bk. I. § 6.) Leibniz takes the analogy of the marble to illustrate the latent presence in experience of ideas and principles which are influential without being recognised:—'Je me suis servi aussi de la comparaison d'une pierre de marbre qui a des veines plutôt que d'une pierre de marbre tout unie ou de tablettes vides, c'est-à-dire de ce qui s'appelle tabula rasa chez les philosophes. Car si l'on raisonne avec ces tablettes vides, les vérités seraient en nous comme la figure d'Hercule est dans un marbre quand le marbre est tout à fait indifférént à recevoir ou cette figure ou quelque autre. Mais s'il y avait des veines dans le pierre qui marquassaient la figure d'Hercule préféremment à d'autres figures, cette pierre y serait plus déterminée, et Hercule y serait comme iné en quelque façon, quoiqu'il failût du travail pour découvrir ces veines, et pour les nettoyer par la polissure, en retranchant ce qui les empêche de paraître. C'est ainsi que les idées et les vérités nous sont innées, comme des inclinations, des dispositions, des habitudes, ou des virtualités naturelles, et non pas comme des actions; quoique ces virtualités soient toujours accompagnées de quelques actions, souvent insensibles, qui y répondent.' (Neuvenus Essais, Avant Propos.)

1 The process of human experience is here described as presenting three stages—perception or acquisition, retention, and elaboration of its material.

2 But the intellectual authority of a principle when evolved does not depend upon its natural genesis or evolution. That a judgment should arise in one's consciousness under natural law does not disprove its intrinsie necessity and universality, which reflective analysis may detect after it has thus arisen.

3 'Les idées qui viennent des sens,' says Leibniz, 'sont confuses, et les vérités qui en dépendent le sont aussi, au moins en partie; au lieu que les idées intellectuelles, et les vérités qui en dépendent sont distinctes, et ni les unes ni les autres n'ont point leur origine des sens; quoi qu'il soit vrai que nous n'y penserions jamais sans les sens.' (Neuvenus Essais, I. 1.)

4 That 'sweet is not bitter' involves recognition, in data of sense, of the abstract principle, that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be at the same time. It is true that this concrete embodiment of it in a particular example is more evident to an uneducated mind than the highly abstract maxim or axiom which
16. A child knows not that three and four are equal to seven, till he comes to be able to count seven, and has got the name and idea of equality; and then, upon explaining those words, he presently assents to, or rather perceives the truth of that proposition. But neither does he then readily assent because it is an innate truth, nor was his assent wanting till then because he wanted the use of reason; but the truth of it appears to him as soon as he has settled in his mind the clear and distinct ideas that these names stand for. And then he knows the truth of that proposition upon the same grounds and by the same means, that he knew before that a rod and a 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 any one comes to have those general ideas about which those maxims are; or to know the signification of those general terms that stand for them; or to put together in his mind the ideas they stand for; the later also will it be before he comes to assent to those maxims;—whose terms, with the ideas they stand for, being no more innate than those of a cat or a 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 selves-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,

the embodiment logically presupposes, when its principle remains unexpressed in words or in consciousness, like an unexpressed premise in ordinary reasoning.

1 In Bk. IV. ch. ii. § 1, and ch. vii. § 9, as well as in other places, the need of time, and the active continuous exercise of our faculties, as conditions indispensable to a conscious intuition of the self-evidence of these and other truths, are insisted on.

2 They are thus distinguished from inductive generalisations, which presuppose calculated observations, and after all are only probabilities that may be modified by unexpected conditions.

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

18. 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, Bitter-
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Chap. I.

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, must be innate. Nor is this the prerogative of numbers alone, and propositions made about several of them; but even natural philosophy, and all the other sciences, afford propositions which are sure to meet with assent as soon as they are understood. That 'two bodies cannot be in the same place' is a truth that nobody any more sticks at than at these maxims, that 'it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be,' that 'white is not black,' that 'a square is not a circle,' that 'bitterness is not sweetness.' These and a million of such other propositions, as many at least as we have distinct ideas of, every man in his wits, at first hearing, and knowing what the names stand for, must necessarily assent to.

If these men will be true to their own rule, and have assent at first hearing and understanding the terms to be a mark of innate, they must allow not only as many innate 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

1 The proposition, *the sweet is not the bitter*, is not innate, says Leibniz, according to the proper meaning of the term innate truth. 'Car les sentiments de douleur et de l'amer viennent des sens externes. Ainsi est un conclusion *malée* (hybride conclusio), ou l'axiome est appliqué à une vérité sensible' (*Note*).

2 Again, he contrasts self-evident maxims with empirical generalisations, while denying that the former are 'innate,' because, on the one hand, not patent in the consciousness of all, and, on the other hand, incapable of being latent, inasmuch as for the mind to possess an idea or a principle of which it is unconscious is assumed to be a contradiction in terms. Here Leibniz asks, why, since acquired knowledge may, as Locke acknowledges, be latent in memory,—why may not nature have in like manner included in the primary constitution of the mind ideas on which the constitution of knowledge necessarily depends? For a reference to memory cf. ch. iii, § 30.

3 There is here again confusion of the perceived truth of an intellectual principle in its most abstract form, and perception of the truth of propositions which ultimately depend upon it, as well as perception of its variable and contingent embodiments. This is further exaggerated by Hume, when he asserts that, 'if innate be equivalent to natural, then all the perceptions and ideas of the mind must be allowed to be innate' (*Inquiry, Note A*)—at least if this be taken in the sense Hume seems to intend.

4 As Leibniz says, all arithmetic and all geometry are virtually innate or in the mind.

Chap. I.

for the same thing to be and not to be,' or that which is the foundation of it, and is the easier understood of the two, 'The same is not different'; by which account they will have legions of innate propositions of this sort, without mentioning any other. But, since no proposition can be innate unless the ideas about which it is innate, this will be to suppose all our ideas of colours, sounds, tastes, figure, &c., innate, than which there cannot be anything more opposite to reason and experience.* Universal and ready assent upon hearing and understanding the terms is, I grant, a mark of self-evidence; but self-evidence, depending not on innate impressions, but on something else, (as we shall show hereafter) belongs to several propositions which nobody was yet so extravagant as to pretend to be innate.*

19. Nor let it be said, that those more particular self-evident propositions, which are assented to at first hearing, as that 'one and two are equal to three,' that 'green is not red,' &c., are received as the consequences of those more universal propositions which are looked on as innate principles; since any one, who will but take the pains to observe what passes in the understanding, will certainly find that these, and the like less general propositions, are certainly known, and firmly assented to by those who are utterly ignorant of those more general maxims; and so, being earlier in the mind than those (as they are called) first principles, cannot owe

* Cf. Bk. IV, ch. ii, § 1, &c. Again, so far from identifying them in a common condemnation, he contrasts 'innate' and 'self-evident'—rejecting innateness of knowledge, because 'we are all born ignorant of everything'; and arguing for self-evidence, as that on which all the certainty of all our knowledge ultimately depends, and which, in the intellectually awakened mind, is 'perceived' as the eye perceives light, only by being directed towards it.

* But they are not 'first' because soonest apprehended by the individual mind, but because presupposed in the nature of things, or in reason, and so first in logical order.
to them the assent wherewith they are received at first hearing.

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

21. But we have not yet done with 'assenting to propositions at first hearing and understanding their terms.' It is fit we first take notice that this, instead of being a mark that they are innate, is a proof of the contrary; since it supposes that several, who understand and know other things, are ignorant

1 Notwithstanding, the 'more general' are so presupposed logically in the less general and particular propositions, that the former (though often only latent or unconsciously held) could not be denied without involving denial of the latter. We rest on them as we rest on suppressed sumpations in enthymemes, in which the force of the conclusion is determined by what is suppressed or latent.

2 In Locke's meaning of innateness or apriority.

3 That a human understanding of the innate, or of any part of it, must be a growth,—the issue of labour and a tentative experience, and that none of it is born with us, is the lesson intended by Locke in this controversy against innate ideas and principles.

4 See Bk. IV. ch. vii. The reason of the less general truths is found in the more abstract, and in that sense the more simple, which, as Leibniz puts it, are in us virtually and before all apprehension. Yet they form the soul and tissue of our knowledge, being as necessary to it as the muscles and sinews are for walking, though we may not actually think of either, and do not distinguish them by abstraction till we have become philosophical.
not all, but only sagacious heads, light at first on these observations, and reduce them into general propositions: not innate, but collected from a preceding acquaintance and reflection on particular instances. These, when observing men have made them, unobserving men, when they are proposed to them, cannot refuse their assent to.]

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

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

23. There is, I fear, this further weakness in the foregoing argument, which would persuade us that therefore those maxims are to be thought innate, which men admit at first hearing; because they assent to propositions which they are not taught, nor do receive from the force of any argument or demonstration, but a bare explication or understanding of the terms. Under which there seems to me to lie this fallacy, that men are supposed not to be taught nor to learn anything de novo; when, in truth, they are taught, and do learn something they were ignorant of before. For, first, it is evident that they have learned the terms, and their signification; neither of which was born with them. But this is not all the acquired knowledge in the case: the ideas themselves, about which the proposition is, are not born with them, no more than their names, but got afterwards. So that in all propositions that are assented to at first hearing, the terms of the proposition, their standing for such ideas, and the ideas themselves that they stand for, being neither of them innate, I would fain know what there is remaining in such propositions that is innate. For I would gladly have any one name that proposition whose terms or ideas were either of them innate. We by degrees get ideas and names, and learn their appropriated connexion one with another; and then to propositions made in such terms, whose signification we have learnt, and wherein the agreement or disagreement we can perceive in our ideas when put together is expressed, we at first hearing assent; though to other propositions, in themselves as certain and evident, but which are concerning ideas not so soon or so easily got, we are at the same time no way capable of assenting. For, though a child quickly assents to this proposition, 'That an apple is not fire,' when by familiar acquaintance he has got the ideas of those two different things distinctly impressed on his mind, and has learnt that the names apple and fire stand for them; yet it will be some years after, perhaps, before the same child will assent to this proposition, 'That it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be'; because that, though perhaps the words are as easy to be learnt, yet the signification of them being more large, comprehensive, and abstract than of the names annexed to those sensible things the child hath to do with, it is longer before he learns their precise meaning, and it requires more time plainly to form in his mind those general ideas they stand for. Till that be done, you will in vain endeavour to make any child assent to a proposition made up of such general terms; but as soon as ever he has got those ideas, and learned their names, he forwardly closes with the one as well as the other of the formentioned propositions: and with both for the same reason; viz. because he finds the ideas he has in his mind to agree or disagree, according as the words standing for them are affirmed or denied one of another in the proposition. But if propositions be brought to him in words which stand for ideas he has not yet in his mind, to such propositions, however evidently true or false in themselves, he affords

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

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1 That is, 'had engraven consciously at birth, which no one worth arguing against would maintain. Cf. Bk. IV. ch. ii. § 7, on the intuitive evidence of each step in every mathematical or other demonstration. Locke himself argues in Bk. IV. for the perceived intellectual necessity of all mathematical truths, and of the existence of God,—or as we should say, their latent in- nateness.'
neither assent nor dissent, but is ignorant. For words being but empty sounds, any further than they are signs of our ideas, we cannot but assent to them as they correspond to those ideas we have, but no further than that. But the showing by what steps and ways knowledge comes into our minds; and the grounds of several degrees of assent, being the business of the following Discourse, it may suffice to have only touched on it here, as one reason that made me doubt of those innate principles.

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

1 Here and elsewhere Locke persists in taking for granted, that the 'innateness' of ideas and of knowledge is being maintained by his adversaries in a sense that is inconsistent with much that is innate being consciously apprehended only late in life, progressing by steps, and in all cases dependent upon development of the mind, and accumulation of experience. The 'steps and ways' of knowledge, and the 'grounds of assent,' described in the sequel, need not have been thus put in antagonism to the ultimate principles for which the philosopher seeks (the only innateness worth discussing), though Locke, in his controversial temper, presented them in the light of contradictions.

2 But it is a 'universal assent' that needs to be elicited and verified by a philosophical analysis of our complex experience.

3 Conscious assent, as he reiterates, is with him of the essence of innateness, and must be given by all (including infants) to all principles, however abstract, for which innateness can be claimed. It is easy, on this assumption, to show, either that there are no innate principles, or that, if there are, it is superfluous to vindicate their truth,—as, ex hypothesi, every human being from birth is, and must be, conscious that they are true.

4 Not if 'innate' means necessarily latent in an experience in which even children in a degree participate. Yet

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

Locke himself says that 'we are born free, as we are born rational, not that' (Tr. of Gost. II. § 61).
with their sucking-bottles and their rattles, may perhaps, with
justice, be thought to have more passion and zeal for his
opinion, but less sincerity and truth, than one of that age 1.

26. Though therefore there be several general propositions
that meet with constant and ready assent, as soon as proposed
to men grown up, who have attained the use of more general
and abstract ideas, and names standing for them; yet they
not being to be found in those of tender years, who never-
thess know other things, they cannot pretend to universal
assent of intelligent persons, and so by no means can be sup-
posed innate;—it being impossible that any truth which is
innate (if there were any such) should be unknown, at least to
any one who knows anything else. Since, if they are innate
truths, they must be innate thoughts: there being nothing
a truth in the mind that it has never thought on 2. Whereby
it is evident, if there be any innate truths, they must necessarily
be the first of any thought on; the first that appear 3.

27. That the general maxims we are discoursing of are not
known to children, idiots, and a great part of mankind, we have
already sufficiently proved: whereby it is evident they have
not an universal assent, nor are general impressions. But there
is this further argument in it against their being innate: that
these characters, if they were native original impressions,
should appear fairest and clearest in those persons in whom
yet we find no footsteps of them; and it is, in my opinion, a
strong presumption that they are not innate, since they are
least known to those in whom, if they were innate, they must
needs exert themselves with most force and vigour. For
children, idiots, savages 1, and illiterate people, being of all
others the least corrupted by custom, or borrowed opinions;
learning and education having not cast their native thoughts
into new moulds; nor by superinducing foreign and studied
doctrines, confounded those fair characters nature had written
there; one might reasonably imagine that in their minds these
innate notions should lie open fairly to every one's view, as it
is certain the thoughts of children do 2. It might very well be
expected that these principles should be perfectly known to
naturals; which being stamped immediately on the soul, (as
these men suppose,) can have no dependence on the constitu-
tion or organs of the body, the only confessed difference
between them and others. One would think, according to
these men's principles, that all these native beams of light
(were there any such) should, in those who have no reserves,
no arts of concealment, shine out in their full lustre, and leave
us in no more doubt of their being there, than we are of their
love of pleasure and abhorrence of pain. But alas, amongst
children, idiots, savages, and the grossly illiterate, what general
maxims are to be found? What universal principles of know-
ledge? Their notions are few and narrow, borrowed only from
those objects they have had most to do with, and which have
made upon their senses the frequentest and strongest impres-
sions. A child knows his nurse and his cradle, and by degrees
the playthings of a little more advanced age; and a young
savage has, perhaps, his head filled with love and hunting,

1 But the concrete judgments which
children see the truth of could not be true if the abstract principles of iden-
tity and contradiction were false. They
are therefore latent, and in that sense
innate, in the concrete judgments;—
and not useless either, for science would
become chaos, and reasoning about
what is real impossible, in the absence
of some absolute principles of reason
in us and in things.

2 This reasoning, as Leibniz shows,
proves too much: for if all the truths
on which experience depends must be
present to the consciousness of each
person, we should be deprived not
only of those ultimate abstractions
(which many have never actually
realised in consciousness), but also of
ideas of which we once thought, but
ever ceased to think; while, if truths
are not necessarily conscious thoughts,
but only natural aptitudes, there is no
obstacle to our possessing some such
of which we have never actually
thought, and may never actually think.

3 Again, Locke's controversial con-
ception of innateness, as implying con-
scious apprehension of the principles and
ideas which are needed to harmonize
experience. The other sort of innate-

1 'Savages': savages, in the early
editions, here and afterwards.

2 The opposite conclusion follows
when 'innate' is otherwise under-
stood. Those principles which are
latent in the mind of man, and in the
nature of things, become patent in the
consciousness of individuals, through
reflex attention given to them. But
'infants, idiots, savages, and illiterate
people' do not rise to this; they direct
any attention which they exert to
their own bodies and the external
world. The abstract truths of logic
and of mathematics are, in a sense, in us,
and in the nature of things—because
in apprehending them we apprehend
their self-evidence; yet we need
exercise of the intellectual faculty to
rise into this intuitive perception of
their truth. Children may be less
perverted from truth, by accidental as-
association and the hardening of custom,
than adults are, while they are never-
thess unif, as philosophers, to realise
the ultimate truths on which knowl-
edge and life depend.
Chap. I. according to the fashion of his tribe. But he that from a child untaught, or a wild inhabitant of the woods, will expect these abstract maxims and reputed principles of science, will, I fear, find himself mistaken. Such kind of general propositions are seldom mentioned in the huts of Indians: much less are they to be found in the thoughts of children, or any impressions of them on the minds of naturals. They are the language and business of the schools and academies of learned nations, accustomed to that sort of conversation or learning, where disputes are frequent; these maxims being suited to artificial argumentation and useful for conviction, but not much conducing to the discovery of truth or advancement of knowledge.

But of their small use for the improvement of knowledge I shall have occasion to speak more at large, l. 4, c. 7.

Recapitulation.

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

Upon the whole matter, I cannot see any ground to think these two speculative Maxims innate: since they are not universally assented to; and the assent they so generally find is no other than what several propositions, not allowed to be innate, equally partake in with them: and since the assent that is given them is produced another way, and comes not from natural inscription, as I doubt not but to make appear

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There can be no finality in human philosophy.

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1 In refusing to start in speculation with abstract 'first' principles, or to allow that all men start with them, Locke seemed to himself to be leading away from the 'vast ocean of Being' into the familiar facts of ordinary experience. But philosophy, thus led, in the end raised its old questions in a new form, when it inquired with Kant as to the foundation of scientific experience, which Hegel saw in the divine essence of things—the absolute Idea.

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2 Which treats of 'maxims,' or axioms.

3 Through intuition, aided, more or less, by elaborative thinking, as explained in Bk. IV.
CHAPTER II.

NO INNATE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES.

I. If those speculative Maxims, whereof we discoursed in the foregoing chapter, have not an actual universal assent from all mankind, as we there proved, it is much more visible concerning practical Principles, that they come short of an universal reception: and I think it will be hard to instance any one moral rule which can pretend to so general and ready an assent as, 'What is, is'; or to be so manifest a truth as this, that 'It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be.' Whereby it is evident that they are further removed from a title to be innate; and the doubt of their being native impressions on the mind is stronger against those moral principles than the other. Not that it brings their truth at all in question. They are equally true, though not equally evident. Those speculative maxims carry their own evidence with them: but moral principles require reasoning and discourse, and some exercise of the mind, to discover the certainty of their truth. They lie not open as natural characters 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.'

1 In this chapter Locke passes from the abstract principles of speculative knowledge—interesting to the philosophic few, to the principles of morality and conduct—more interesting to the mass of mankind. In this, as in the previous argument, when he concludes against innateness, he asserts self-evidence.

2 It has been remarked that 'the argument for common sense,'—i.e. on behalf of the theoretical and practical principles latent in man—is of principal importance 'in reference to the practical principles.' The speculative axioms, 'from their converse being absolutely incogitable, sufficiently guard themselves.' (Hamilton's Reid, p. 734.)

No Innate Practical Principles.

Locke reiterates the difference between an 'innate' law, consciously impressed upon the mind in its first original, and an intellectual necessity in the reason of things, which, although at first ignorant of, we may realise in its self-evidence, 'by the due application of our natural faculties.' In this last category Locke himself puts 'the eternal and unalterable nature of right and wrong.

The demonstrable character of the conclusions of abstract morality, determined by the eternity and immutability of abstract ethical distinctions, was a favourite speculation with Locke, which Molyneux, in his correspondence, thus urged him to develop into an ethical system:—'One thing I must needs insist on to you, which is, that you would think of obliging the world with a Treatise on Morals, drawn up according to the hints you frequently give in your Essay of being demonstrable according to mathematical method. This is most certainly true; but then the task must be undertaken only by so clear and distinct a thinker as you are, and there is nothing I should more ardently wish for than to see it.' (Molyneux to Locke, August, 1662.) Locke thus replies:—'Though by the view I had of moral ideas, when I was considering that subject, I thought I saw that morality might be demonstratively made out, yet whether I am able so to make it out is another question. Every one could not have demonstrated what Mr. Newton's book hath shown to be demonstrable.'

Good sir,' rejoins Molyneux, 'let me renew my requests; for believe me, sir, I will be one of the most useful and glorious undertakings that can employ you. The touches you give is many places of your book on this subject are wonderfully curious. Be as large as 'tis possible on this subject, and by all means let it be in English. He that reads the 45th section on your 109th page (1st ed., now Bk. II. ch. xxi. § 70) will be inflamed to read more of the same kind from the same incomparable pen.' Locke in the end excused himself, on grounds of age and health, from the formidable enterprise. 'The Gospel,' he adds, 'contains so perfect a body of Ethics that reason may be excused from that inquiry, since she may find man's duty clearer and easier in revelation than in herself. This is the excuse of a man who, having a sufficient rule of his actions, is content therewith, and thinks he may employ the little time and strength he has in other researches wherein he is more in the dark.' Locke's thesis, that morality is as demonstrable as mathematics, is held by Cumberland, De Legibus Naturae, ch. i. §§ 7, 8; iv. § 4. See also Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers, vii. ch. 2.

1 Without searching' suggests Locke's moral purpose in this controversy against innateness—that it tends 'to ease the lazy of the pains of search,' and to leave the individual the slave of prejudices, under cover of their being 'innate principles,' given at our birth, without trouble on our part.
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 it is without receiving these as the innate laws of nature. They practise them as rules of convenience within their own communities: but it is impossible to conceive that he embraces justice as a practical principle, who acts fairly with his fellow-highwayman, and at the same time plunders or kills the next honest man he meets with. Justice and truth are the common ties of society; and therefore even outlaws and robbers, who break with all the world besides, must keep faith and rules of equity amongst themselves; or else they cannot hold together. But will any one say, that those that live by fraud or rapine have innate principles of truth and justice which they allow and assent to?

3. 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

1 That diversity of belief is greater in regard to fundamental principles of action than in the case of the abstract principles of identity and contradiction, does not prove want of self-evidence in the former, but only that owing to the greater complexity of practical principles, and their affinity with our passions, 'more pain of search' is needed to enable the individual to recognise the self-evidence that is latent.

2 But might not all, by due development of their latent reason, be made to see the self-evident morality involved in contract-keeping; thus showing that our mind is not originally like white paper, in the sense of being equally disposed to accept any propositions regarding conduct; and disproving the hypothesis that antecedent to human custom and constitution, or to special revelation, there was nothing absolutely good or bad?

3 As put by Locke himself, 'it is every man's duty to be just, whether there is any such thing as a just man in the world or no.' (Conduct of Understanding, § 94.)

interpreted of their thoughts. But, since it is certain that most men's practices, and some men's open professions, have either questioned or denied these principles, it is impossible to establish an universal consent, (though we should look for it only amongst grown men,) without which it is impossible to conclude them innate. Secondly, it is very strange and unreasonable to suppose innate practical principles, that terminate only in contemplation. Practical principles, derived from nature, are there for operation, and must produce conformity of action, not barely speculative assent to their truth, or else they are in vain distinguished from speculative maxims. Nature, I confess, has put into man a desire of happiness and an aversion to misery; these indeed are innate practical principles which (as practical principles ought) do continue constantly to operate and influence all our actions without ceasing: these may be observed in all persons and all ages, steady and universal; but these are inclinations of the appetite to good, not impressions of truth on the understanding. I deny not that there are natural tendencies imprinted on the minds of men; and that from the very first instances of sense and perception, there are some things that are grateful and others unwelcome to them; some things that they incline to and others that they fly: but this makes nothing for innate characters on the mind, which are to be the principles of knowledge regulating our practice. Such natural impressions on the understanding are so far from being confirmed hereby, that this is an argument against

1 In our natural desire for the continuance and return of felt pleasure, and our aversion from felt uneasiness, Locke finds an example of a tendency which he allows to be innate, because practically operative as soon as there is any consciousness of either. Whether this innate tendency is the supreme motive of human action is considered in the sequel (e.g. Bk. ii. ch. xxi). Moreover, men often mistake or differ in their applications even of this acknowledged innate tendency, and in their estimates of remote as compared with near and obvious rewards and punishments, but this difference of judgment is not inconsistent with the innateness of the tendency.

2 Men have a natural tendency to what delights and from what pains them. This universal observation has established past doubt. But that the soul has such a tendency to what is morally good and from evil has not fallen under my observation, and therefore I cannot grant it. (MS. Marginalia Lochiana, 1699.)
them; since, if there were certain characters imprinted by nature on the understanding, as the principles of knowledge, we could not but perceive them constantly operate in us and influence our knowledge, as we do those others on the will and appetite; which never cease to be the constant springs and motives of all our actions, to which we perpetually feel them strongly impelling us.

4. Another reason that makes me doubt of any innate practical principles is, that I think there cannot be any 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 therefore no proof to ascertain its truth, nor want any reason to gain its approbation. He would be thought void of common sense who asked on the one side, or on the other side went to a reason why 'tis 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

1 All that was (in Locke's sense) 'innate' would also be self-evident; but what is self-evident is not therefore innate, if innate means consciously recognised at birth.

2 The 'common sense,' or common reason, is here taken by Locke as the evidence and guarantee of the abstract logical axiom of contradiction. 'There is here,' says Hamilton, 'a confession, the importance of which has been observed neither by Locke nor his antagonists. Had Locke not ... been led astray in the pursuit of an ignis fatuus—in his refutation of the Cartesian theory of Innate Ideas, which certainly is impugned by him neither Descartes nor the representatives of his school ever dreamt of holding—he would have seen that, in thus appealing to common sense, he was, in fact, surrendering his thesis—that all our knowledge is an educt from experience. For in admitting, as he here virtually does, that experience must ultimately ground its procedure on the laws of intellect, he admits that intellect contains principles of judgment on which experience, being dependent, cannot possibly be their precursor or their cause.' (Hamilton's Reid, pp. 784, 5.) This depends on whether Locke does or does not include in 'experience' its own necessary presuppositions, which are held unconsciously in ordinary experience, but which it is the office of speculative philosophy (neglected by Locke) to articulate into distinct consciousness.

who never heard of it before, but yet is of capacity to understand its meaning; might he not without any absurdity ask a reason why? And were not he that proposed it bound to make out the truth and reasonableness of it to him? Which plainly shows it not to be innate; for if it were it could neither want nor receive any proof; but must needs (at least as soon as heard and understood) be received and assented to as an unquestionable truth, which a man can by no means doubt of. So that the truth of all these moral rules plainly depends upon some other antecedent to them, and from which they must be deduced; which could not be if either they were innate or so much as self-evident.

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

6. Hence naturally flows the great variety of opinions concerning moral rules which are to be found among men, according to the different sorts of happiness they have a prospect of, or propose to themselves; which could not be if practical principles were innate, and imprinted in our minds immediately by the hand of God. I grant the existence of God is so many ways manifest, and the obedience we owe
him so congruous to the light of reason, that a great part of mankind give testimony to the law of nature: but yet I think it must be allowed that several moral rules may receive from mankind a very general approbation, without either knowing or admitting the true ground of morality; which can only be the will and law of a God, who sees men in the dark, has in his hand rewards and punishments, and power enough to call to account the proudest offender. For, God having, by an inseparable connexion, joined virtue and public happiness together, and made the practice thereof necessary to the preservation of society, and visibly beneficial to all with whom the virtuous man has to do; it is no wonder that every one should not only allow, but recommend and magnify those rules to others, from whose observance of them he is sure to reap advantage to himself. He may, out of interest as well as conviction, cry up that for sacred, which, if once trampled on and profaned, he himself cannot be safe nor secure. This, though it takes nothing from the moral and eternal obligation which these rules evidently have, yet it shows that the outward acknowledging men pay to them in their words proves not that they are innate principles: nay, it proves not so much as that men assent to them inwardly in their own minds, as the inviolable rules of their own practice; since we find that self-interest, and the conveniences of this life, make many men own an outward profession and approbation of them, whose actions sufficiently prove that they very little consider the Lawgiver that prescribed these rules; nor the hell that he has ordained for the punishment of those that transgress them.

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

8. To which I answer, that I doubt not but, without being written on their hearts, many men may, by the same way that they come to the knowledge of other things, come to assent to several moral rules, and be convinced of their obligation. Others also may come to be of the same mind, from their education, company, and customs of their country; which persuasion, however got, will serve to set conscience on work; which is nothing else but [our own opinion or judgment of the moral rectitude or pravity of our own actions]; and if conscience be a proof of innate principles, contraries may be 1

1 That a Christian, a Hobbist, and a Heathen should give different reasons for observing a moral rule does not disprove the obligation of that rule, antecedently to the intermediate principles on which they ground it. Locke is apt to rest content with premises which are short of the ultimate ones for which the philosopher craves; but he recognizes in many passages the conception of ethical law, eternal and divine, superior to custom and to the judgments of human conscience. 'Truth and keeping of faith,' he says, 'belong to men as men, and not merely as members of society.' (Tr. of Government, ii. 14.)

2 Moral obligation, which is eternal and grounded on reason, is thus distinguished from the contingency of an individual recognition of, and conformity to, what is in itself thus obligatory. In what follows it only appears that men are not actually as good as they know they ought to be. His argument, that immoral practice without reproach of conscience proves that the law transgressed cannot be innate, or consciously acknowledged by all.

1 In first three editions—Our own opinion of our own actions. Locke's 'conscience' is individual and variable, and thus distinguished from the abstract relations of eternal and immutable morality. When Thomas Burnet asked him, 'What those laws are that we ought to obey, or how we can know them without revelation, unless you take in natural conscience for a distinction of good and evil, or another idea of God than what you have given us?' he replied—'It is not conscience that makes the distinction of good and evil, conscience only judging of an action by that which it takes to be [eternal] rule of good and evil, acquits or condemns it. But where is it, he asks, 'I so much as mention, much less assert, an arbitrary difference of good and evil.' Again, 'I call not conscience practical principles. Produce the place where I so represent it. He who confounds the judgment made with the rule or law upon which it is made may perhaps talk so. Conscience is not the law of nature, but judging by that which is (by it taken to be the law.)' (Marginalia Lockiana.)
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 childbirth; or despatch them, if a pretended astrologer declares them to have unhappy stars? And are there not places where, at a certain age, they kill or expose their parents, without any remorse at all? In a part of Asia, the sick, when their case comes to be thought desperate, are carried out and laid on the earth before they are dead; and left there, exposed to wind and weather, to perish without assistance or pity.

1 If moral ideas or moral rules (which are the moral principles I deny to be innate) are innate, I say children must actually know them as well as men. But if by moral principles you mean a faculty to find out in time the moral difference of actions—besides, that this is an improper way of speaking, to call a power principles, I never denied such a power to be innate, but that which I denied was that any idea or concretion of ideas was innate. (MarginaliaLochiana.) In what follows, the fallibility of conscience, as a guide in concrete morality, or as a spontaneous revelation of eternal and immutable principles to the individual, is argued, from the various and self-contradictory moral judgments of men.

2 The custom of infanticide has been vindicated, on the ground that human life is valuable, and its destruction criminal, only after it has lasted long enough to be possessed of self-conscious intelligence.

3 Extreme old age was regarded as a return of infancy.

4 Gruber, apud Thevenot, part iv. p. 19. The reference here and elsewhere is to the collection of travels, in two folios, entitled Relations des divers Voyages curieux, par M. Melchisedec Thevenot, of which some account is given in the appendix to the History of Navigation, prefixed to Churchill’s Collection of Voyages (1704)—by some attributed to Locke, and contained in the 1814 edition of his Works, vol. x. P. 357.

5 It is familiar among the Mingrelians, a people professing Christianity, to bury their children alive without scruple. There are places where they eat their own children. The Caribbees were wont to geld their children, on purpose to fat and eat them. And Garcilasso de la Vega tells us of a people in Peru which were wont to fat and eat the children they got on their female captives, whom they kept as concubines for that purpose, and when they were past breeding, the mothers themselves were killed too and eaten. The virtues whereby the Tououpinambos believed they merited paradise, were revenge, and eating abundance of their enemies. They have not so much as a name for God, and have no religion, no worship. The saints who are canonized amongst the Turks, lead lives which one cannot with modesty relate. A remarkable passage to this purpose, out of the voyage of Baumgarten, which is a book not every day to be met with, I shall set down at large, in the language it is published in. Ibi (sc. prope Belbes in Aegypto) vidimus sanctum unum Saracenum inter arenarum cunulos, ita ut ex utero matris prodiit nudum sedentem. Mos est, ut didicimus, Mahometistas, ut eos, qui amentes et sine ratione sunt, pro sanctis colant et venerentur. Insuper et eos, qui cum diu vitam aegrit inquinatissem, voluntariam demum potestatem et sapientiam, sanctitatem venerandos deputant. Ejusmodi vero genus hominum libertatem quandam effrenem habent, domos quos volunt intrandi, edendi, bibendi, et quod majus est, concumbendi; ex quo concubitus, si proles secuta fuerit, sancta similitur habitatur. His ergo hominibus dum vivunt, magnos exhibent honoris; mortuis vero vel templum vel monumentum extrano amplissima, essque contingere ac separare maxima fortuna ducent loco. Audvivimus hae dicta et dicenda per interpretem a Murelo nostro. Insuper sanctum illum, quem eo loco vidimus, publicius apprimi commendari, eum esse hominem sanctum.

1 Lambert apud Thevenot, p. 38.
2 Vossius, De Nill Origine, c. 16, 19.
3 P. Mart, Dec. x.
4 Hist. des Invas, l. ii. c. 12.
5 Lery, c. 16, 216, 231.
6 A German nobleman, whose travels in Egypt, Arabia, and Palestine in 1507 contain much information that at the time was new and curious concerning the history, manners, and religion of these countries. His journal of his travels, in Latin, was corrected by Joseph Scaliger, and first appeared in English in Churchill's Collection.
No Innate Practical Principles.

Chap. II.  

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

11. Here perhaps it will be objected, that it is no argument that the rule is not known, because it is broken. I grant the objection good where men, though they transgress, yet disown not the law; where fear of shame, censure, or punishment carries the mark of some awe it has upon them. But it is impossible to conceive that a whole nation of men should all publicly reject and renounce whatsoever one of them certainly and infallibly knew to be a law; for so they must who have it naturally imprinted on their minds. It is possible men may sometimes own rules of morality which in their private thoughts they do not believe to be true, only to keep themselves in reputation and esteem amongst those who are persuaded of their obligation. But it is not to be imagined that a whole society of men should publicly and professedly disown and cast off a rule which they could not in their own minds but be infallibly certain was a law; nor be ignorant that all men they should have to do with knew it to be such; and therefore must every one of them apprehend from others all the contempt and abhorrence due to one who professes himself void of humanity: and one who, confounding the known and natural measures of right and wrong, cannot but be looked on as the professed enemy of their peace and happiness. Whatever practical principle is innate, cannot but be known to every one to be just and good. It is therefore little less than a contradiction to suppose, that whole nations of men should, both in their professions and practice, unanimously and universally give the lie to what, by the most invincible evidence, every one of them knew to be true, right, and good. This is enough to satisfy us that no practical rule which is anywhere universally, and with public approbation or allowance, transgressed, can be supposed innate.—But I have something further to add in answer to this objection.

12. The 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

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1 'Whatever may be affirmed of the nature of any whole nation may likewise be affirmed of all mankind; as all the properties of bread are in a loaf, and also in a piece cut out of it.' (MS. note by Tyrrell in his copy of the Essay.)
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being impossible that men should, without shame or fear, confidently and serenely, break a rule which they could not but evidently know that God had set up, and would certainly punish the breach of, (which they must, if it were innate,) to a degree to make it a very ill bargain to the transgressor. Without such a knowledge as this, a man can never be certain that anything is his duty. Ignorance or doubt of the law, hopes to escape the knowledge or power of the law-maker, or the like, may make men give way to a present appetite; but let any one see the fault, and the rod by it, and with the transgression, a fire ready to punish it; a pleasure tempting, and the hand of the Almighty visibly held up and prepared to take vengeance, (for this must be the case where any duty is imprinted on the mind,) and then tell me whether it be possible for people with such a prospect, such a certain knowledge as this, wantonly, and without scruple, to offend against a law which they carry about them in indelible characters, and that stares them in the face whilst they are breaking it? Whether men, at the same time that they feel in themselves the imprinted edicts of an Omnipotent Law-maker, can, with assurance and gaiety, slight and trample underfoot his most sacred injunctions? And lastly, whether it be possible that whilst a man thus openly bids defiance to this innate law and supreme Lawgiver, all the bystanders, yea, even the governors and rulers of the people, full of the same sense both of the law and Law-maker, should silently connive, without testifying their dislike or laying the least blame on it? Principles of actions indeed there are lodged in men's appetites; but these are so far from being innate moral principles, that if they were left to their full swing they would carry men to the overturning of all morality. Moral laws are set as a curb and restraint to these exorbitant desires, which they cannot be but by rewards and punishments that will overbalance the satisfaction any one shall propose to himself in the breach of the law. If, therefore, anything be imprinted on the minds of all men as a law, all men must have a certain and unavoidable knowledge that certain and unavoidable punishment will attend the breach of it. For if men can be ignorant or doubtful of what is innate, innate principles are
insisted on, and urged to no purpose; truth and certainty (the things pretended) are not at all secured by them; but men are in the same uncertain floating estate with as without them. An evident indubitable knowledge of unavoidable punishment, great enough to make the transgression very uneligible, must accompany an innate law; unless with an innate law they can suppose an innate Gospel too. I would not here be mistaken, as if, because I deny an innate law, I thought there were none but positive laws. There is a great deal of difference between an innate law, and a law of nature; between something imprinted on our minds in their very original, and something that we, being ignorant of, may attain to the knowledge of, by the use and due application of our natural faculties. And I think they equally forsake the truth who, running into contrary extremes, either affirm an innate law, or deny that there is a law knowable by the light of nature, i.e. without the help of positive revelation.

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

1 Thus Locke distinguishes 'innate law,' which he argues against, from the eternal and immutable moral law of nature, which he acknowledges (cf. Bk. II. ch. xxviii. §§ 7, 8, as in the successive editions of the Essay. In a letter to Tyrrell (August 4, 1691, see Lord King's 'Life'), he tries to remove misunderstandings as to what he intended by 'the law of nature,' as part of the revealed divine law,—the consideration of which he regards as irrelevant, when he is not designing to treat of the [absolute and universal] grounds of true morality, which is necessary to true and perfect happiness, but was only trying to show 'whence men had got their moral ideas, and what they were.' 'I only report as matters of fact what others call virtue and vice.' is his reply to Lowde's charge of 'subverting the eternal and immutable nature of moral distinctions.' The facts of human life may thus conceal the abstract laws with which they are at variance; for the eternal laws of morality do not put men under physical necessity actually to obey them, but only under moral obligation. Locke's admiration of Hooker may have influenced him in his recognition of 'that law which, as laid up in the bosom of God, they call eternal.' See Eccles. Hist. Bk. I. 3. Note how Locke contrasts 'innate' and 'natural.'

which they are. This might with justice be expected from those men who lay stress upon this opinion; and it gives occasion to distrust either their knowledge or charity, who, declaring that God has imprinted on the minds of men the foundations of knowledge and the rules of living, are yet so little favourable to the information of their neighbours, or the quiet of mankind, as not to point out to them which they are, in the variety men are distracted with. But, in truth, were there any such innate principles there would be no need to teach them. Did men find such innate propositions stamped on their minds, they would easily be able to distinguish them from other truths that they afterwards learned and deduced from them; and there would be nothing more easy than to know what, and how many, they were. There could be no more doubt about their number than there is about the number of our fingers; and it is like then every system would be ready to give them us by tale. But since nobody, that I know, has ventured yet to give a catalogue of them, they cannot blame those who doubt of these innate principles; since even they who require men to believe that there are such innate propositions, do not tell us what they are.

1 To detect and to express in their abstract generality and harmony the principles in which the universe, and thus the sciences, are harmonised, is the ideal towards which philosophy is perpetually struggling; although inadequate capacity and experience now, perhaps for ever, hinder the philosopher from attaining a clear and distinct understanding of the universe, in the full light of the reason according to which it is constituted. Nevertheless human intellect remains restless in the isolation of the special sciences, notwithstanding their relative lucidity.
No Innate Practical Principles,

common notions, and asserted their being imprinted on the minds of men by the hand of God, he proceeds to set them down, and they are these:

1. Esse aliquod supremum numerum.
2. Nominum illud colit devere.
3. Virtutem cum pictate conjunctam optimam esse rationem cultus divini.
4. Resipiscendum esse a peccatis.
5. Dari praeum vel panum post hanc vitam transactam.

Though I allow these to be clear truths, and preceding chapter, is thus not the only,

1. In thus distinguishing 'morality' and 'mechanism,' Locke recognizes the inadequacy of a merely physical interpretation of morality, and leaves room for the supremacy of moral and spiritual reality over that reality which is only sensuous and physical.

2. The De Veritate, pront distinguat a Revolutione, a Verissim, a Possibilit, et a Falso of Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1581–1648), appeared in 1644, at Paris and London. To the third edition (London, 1649) are annexed two tracts—De Consent Errore and De Religione Laici. The speculations of this remarkable thinker deserve the careful study of every critical reader of Locke's Essay, not only on account of this explicit reference to them, but as a significant phenomenon in the history of English philosophy. They had

before Locke attracted the attention of Descartes (Œuvres, ed. Par. viii. 138, 168), Gassendi (Op. iii. 411), and Culverwell in his Light of Nature.

That Locke should have been thus ignorant of the De Veritate shows his comparative indifference to books, and to the philosophical opinions of others. Lord Herbert tried to place English Deism on a philosophical basis, as the universal religion, constituted by the 'innate principles' here mentioned, which seemed to him to make external or miraculous revelation superfluous. Yet miracles might be a means of evoking and consolidating spiritual ideas and principles otherwise latent in men, even on Lord Herbert's hypothesis.

3. The 'universal consent,' of which Locke makes so much in this and the

an inductive generalisation, however numerous, cannot show that it is universally necessary; for we are not intellectually obliged to conceive that what has happened must always in like manner happen. . . . That day follows night is seen not to be a necessary or eternal truth, when we consider that the earth and sun themselves (on which this succession depends) have no necessary existence, and that a time may come when the whole solar system will cease to exist—at least, in its present form. . . . The original proof of truths of reason comes from the necessities of reason, while other truths are dependent on what we happen to observe. How great soever may be the number of observed instanes of an inductive generalisation, we can never be absolutely certain of its universality, unless we discern its intellectual necessity. The senses may verify generalisations, but cannot demonstrate their eternal and unconditional certainty.' (See Nouveaux Essais, Avant-Propos.) But while the innate (not in Locke's sense) principles of speculation are thus guarded by their perceived necessity, innate moral principles are those rather which only good men cannot reject.

The five propositions which follow are by Lord Herbert, not as the result of an exhaustive analysis of the 'natural instincts,' or constituents of the Common Reason, but only as examples of those among them which constitute the catholic religion of mankind.
such as, if rightly explained, a rational creature can hardly avoid giving his assent to; yet I think he is far from proving them innate impressions in foro interiori descriptae. For I must take leave to observe:—

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

17. Secondly, that all his marks are not to be found in each of his five propositions, viz. his first, second, and third marks agree perfectly to neither of them; and the first, second, third, fourth, and sixth marks agree but ill to his third, fourth, and fifth propositions. For, besides that we are assured from history of many men, nay whole nations, who doubt or disbelieve some or all of them¹, I cannot see how the third, viz. 'That virtue joined with piety is the best worship of God,' can be an innate principle, when the name or sound virtue, is so hard to be understood; liable to so much uncertainty in its signification; and the thing it stands for so much contended about and difficult to be known². And therefore this cannot be a very uncertain rule of human practice, and serve but very little to the conduct of our lives, and is therefore very unfit to be assigned as an innate practical principle.

18. For let us consider this proposition as to its meaning, (for it is the sense, and not sound, that is and must be the principle or common notion,) viz. 'Virtue is the best worship of God,' i.e. is most acceptable to him; which, if virtue be taken, as most commonly it is, for those actions which, according to the different opinions of several countries, are accounted laudable, will be a proposition so far from being certain, that it will not be true. If virtue be taken for actions conformable to God's will, or to the rule prescribed by God—which is the true and only measure of virtue [when virtue is used to signify what is in its own nature right and good]—then this proposition, 'That virtue is the best worship of God,' will be most true and certain, but of very little use in human life: since it will amount to no more but this, viz. 'That God is pleased with the doing of what he commands';—which a man may certainly know to be true, without knowing what it is that God doth command; and so be as far from any rule or principle of his actions as he was before. And I think very few will take a proposition which amounts to no more than this, viz. 'That God is pleased with the doing of what he himself commands,' for an innate moral principle written on the minds of all men, (however true and certain it may be,) since it teaches so little³. Whosoever does so will have reason to think hundreds of propositions innate principles; since there are many which have as good a title as this to be received for such, which nobody yet ever put into that rank of innate principles.

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

¹ As already remarked, Locke looks too much for express recognition, and overlooks indirect signs of the presence of unconscious or semi-conscious beliefs. He is besides uncritically credulous of reports, by travellers and others, even less critical than he was himself.

² This is his often repeated assumption,—that innate principles always presuppose innate ideas, inasmuch as they must be otherwise propositions containing meaningless terms. He grants that connections of ideas, after experience has given the ideas, may be seen to be necessary.

³ Added in second edition.

⁴ The 'emptiness' of the ultimate, and therefore highly abstract, principles which are called 'innate' is one of his objections to their being recognised by a practical philosopher like himself. They cannot, per se, inform the mind of anything that happens.

³ Because a philosopher seeks for the most comprehensive categories of thought; but not primarily for all the conclusions that may be evolved from them, or that are determined by them, as applied presuppositions in concrete inferences.
No Innate Practical Principles.

20. Nor will it be of much moment here to offer that very ready but not very material answer, viz. that the innate principles of morality may, by education, and custom, and the general opinion of those amongst whom we converse, be darkened, and at last quite worn out of the minds of men. Which assertion of theirs, if true, quite takes away the argument of universal consent, by which this opinion of innate principles is endeavoured to be proved; unless those men will think it reasonable that their private persuasions, or that of their party, should pass for universal consent;—a thing not unfrequently done, when men, presuming themselves to be the only masters of right reason, cast by the votes and opinions of the rest of mankind as not worthy the reckoning. And then their argument stands thus:—The principles which all mankind allow for true, are innate; those that men of right reason admit, are the principles allowed by all mankind; we, and those of our mind, are men of reason; therefore, we agreeing, our principles are innate;—which is a very pretty way of arguing, and a short cut to infallibility. For otherwise it will be very hard to understand how there be some principles which all men do acknowledge and agree in; and yet there are none of those principles which are not, by depraved custom and ill education, blotted out of the minds of many men: which is to say, that all men admit, but yet many men do deny and dissent from them. And indeed the supposition of such first principles will serve us to very little purpose; and we shall be as much at a loss with as without them, if they may, by any human power—such as the will of our teachers, or opinions of our companions—be altered or lost in us: and notwithstanding all this boast of first principles and innate light, we shall be as much in the dark and uncertainty as if there were no such thing at all: it being all one to have no rule, and one that will warp any way; or amongst various and contrary rules, not to know which is the right. But concerning innate principles, I desire these men to say, whether they can or cannot, by education and custom, be blurred and blotted out; if they cannot, we must find them in all mankind

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*All truths, whether intellectually necessary or (for us) contingent, are reached by the exercise of our faculties in experience; and not antecedently to, but in dependence on, the presentation of data in external or internal sense.*
lives, and whatever is dearest to them, than suffer themselves to doubt, or others to question, the truth of them.

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

23. To which we may add, that when men so instructed are grown up, and reflect on their own minds, they cannot find anything more ancient there than those opinions, which were taught them before their memory began to keep a register of their actions, or date the time when any new thing appeared to them; and therefore make no scruple to conclude, that the propositions of whose knowledge they can find in themselves no original, were certainly the impress of God and nature upon their minds, and not taught them by any one else. These

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1 The tabula rasa metaphor. It is apt to suggest that we are merely passive or receptive in the acquisition of experience; and that experience is simple, and therefore incapable of critical analysis.

2 But without perception of their intellectual necessity. Note here once more the motif of Locke's attack on innate principles—to explode prejudices, dispel empty phrases, and substitute rational insight for blind dependence on authority.
they entertain and submit to, as many do to their parents with veneration; not because it is natural; nor do children do it where they are not so taught; but because, having been always so educated, and having no remembrance of the beginning of this respect, they think it is natural.

24. This will appear very likely, and almost unavoidable to come to pass, if we consider the nature of mankind and the constitution of human affairs; wherein most men cannot live without employing their time in the daily labours of their callings; nor be at quiet in their minds without some foundation or principle to rest their thoughts on. There is scarcely any one so floating and superficial in his understanding, who hath not some reverenced propositions, which are to him the principles on which he bottoms his reasonings, and by which he judgeth of truth and falsehood, right and wrong; which some, wanting skill and leisure, and others the inclination, and some being taught that they ought not to examine, there are few to be found who are not exposed by their ignorance, laziness, education, or precipitancy, to take them upon trust.

25. This is evidently the case of all children and young folk; and custom, a greater power than nature, seldom failing to make them worship for divine what she hath inured them to bow their minds and submit their understandings to, it is no wonder that grown men, either perplexed in the necessary affairs of life, or hot in the pursuit of pleasures, should not seriously sit down to examine their own tenets; especially when one of their principles is, that principles ought not to be questioned. And had men leisure, parts, and will, who is there almost that dare shake the foundations of all his past thoughts and actions, and endure to bring upon himself the

1 The felt need for something fixed and persistent on which to rest, in a continually changing and hazardous world, originated philosophy and sustains religion.

2 Hume afterwards, like the Greek sceptics, sought to resolve all judgments about matters of fact into the natural issue of custom, thus making it the supreme (physical) cause in determining our sense of the true, the beautiful, and the good.

3 Note the antithesis here between premises accepted blindly, and that criticism of premises which his argument against innate ideas and principles was meant to encourage. Cf. Bk. IV, ch. xx. § 1.

4 A reference to the idola of Bacon, those phantoms of the human mind, which we are apt to prefer to the "ideas of the divine mind" that are expressed in the laws of nature. Non leve quiddam interesse inter humanae mentis idola, et divinae mentis ideas. Nov. Organ. i. aph. 23. See relative notes in Dr. Fowler’s edition. This is one of the few allusions to Bacon in the Essay. His idola, as they are unreal ideas and false principles, are false gods; and we (so far) find the true God in finding the genuine principles of physical and moral experience, and (so far) worship God by living in harmony with them.

5 That is to say, indolent persons, who live thus, cannot become philosophers; the genuine principles of reason remain for them latent. They are thus ready to accept spurious ones in the form of their own prejudices.
No Innate Practical Principles.

A sufficient mark to direct my choice, and assure me of any innate principles.

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

1 Although a conscious "universal agreement" is necessarily the test of innateness, in Locke's meaning of 'innate,' it is not the only, nor indeed a possible, test of virtual innateness. Cf. Leibniz, and Reid, ut supra; also Kant's test of principles that are not mere generalisations from contingent data, but derived to the mind from its own operation,—which he finds in our consciousness of their intellectual necessity and universality.
CHAPTER III.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING INNATE PRINCIPLES, BOTH SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL.

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

2. If we will attentively consider new-born children, we shall have little reason to think that they bring many ideas into the world with them. For, bating perhaps some faint ideas of hunger, and thirst, and warmth, and some pains, which they may have felt in the womb, there is not the least appearance of any settled ideas at all in them; especially of ideas, especially those belonging to Principles, not born with Children.

1 Intelligible propositions, in short, presuppose intelligible terms. The world had been perplexed, he implies, by being asked to believe propositions in which the terms were void of meaning. Hence Locke's hostility to innate propositions, as inconsistent with genuine insight, and with the consciousness which he assumes to be essential to an 'idea.' But, as one of his earliest critics remarks, 'we call ideas innate, not because we are born with an actual notion of all the particulars in our minds, but with a natural faculty to know them, as soon as the things implied in the words that stand for them are presented to the understanding; and a natural and unavoidable determination to judge them true, as soon as we know the things themselves, or the words by which they are signified to others.' (Lee, Anti-Scepticism, Bk. I. ch. iv.)

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

1 Although 'universal' propositions are a priori and ultimate in rerum natura, they are not a priori in the time of their conscious apprehension. Their a priority is not in time, but as conditions of the constitution of our experience of what is real, and therefore of the nature of things. The argument which runs through the First Book continually overlooks this distinction—especially in what follows.

2 The human mind proceeds towards universal or 'first' principles rather than from them, in gradually becoming conscious of the logical and metaphysical conditions that in ordinary experience are unconsciously presupposed as necessary.
6. Let us examine that principle of mathematics, viz. that the whole is bigger than a part. This, I take it, is reckoned amongst innate principles. I am sure it has as good a title as any to be thought so; yet nobody can think it to be true, when he considers [that] the ideas it comprehends in it, whole and part, are perfectly relative; but the positive ideas to which they properly and immediately belong are extension and number, of which alone whole and part are relations. So that if whole and part are innate ideas, extension and number must be so too; it being impossible to have an idea of a relation, without having any at all of the thing to which it belongs, and in which it is founded. Now, whether the minds of men have naturally imprinted on them the ideas of extension and number, I leave to be considered by those who are the patrons of innate principles.

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

8. If any idea can be imagined innate, the idea of God may, of all others, for many reasons, be thought so; since it is not innate.

1 The allusion is to the Pythagorean teaching about the transmigration of souls. Locke deals with the idea of 'identity,' more fully under our complex ideas, Bk. II. ch. xxvii. See Bp. Butler's Dissertation on Personal Identity (1735), and Perronet's Vindication (1736), for a criticism and a defense of Locke, whose idea of sameness in persons has continued to be matter of controversy since.

2 Locke puzzled himself about the meaning which should be expressed by the terms 'identity,' 'same,' &c. Cf. Bk. II. ch. xxvii. See Bp. Butler's Dissertation on Personal Identity (1735), and Perronet's Vindication (1736), for a criticism and a defense of Locke, whose idea of sameness in persons has continued to be matter of controversy since.

3 Lord Herbert assumed it to be innate. We may be long unconscious of an idea which, when it does rise into consciousness, is perceived to be necessary and universal.

4 That the idea of God is to be regarded as innate might be maintained on other grounds than those
hard to conceive how there should be innate moral principles, without an innate idea of a Deity. Without a notion of a law-maker, it is impossible to have a notion of a law, and an obligation to observe it. Besides the atheists taken notice of amongst the ancients, and left branded upon the records of history, hath not navigation discovered, in these later ages, conceived by Locke, and in another sense of innateness than his. It is easy to show, as he does in the sequel, that the idea is obscured in many minds, and that it takes many unworthy forms. But if faith in God is virtually implied in the fundamental assumption of the constant supremacy of Order or Reason in the universe, to which man, as intelligent and responsible, responds, then the existence of God is virtually, if unconsciously, assumed even in the faith in physical or natural law, with the ideas and principles therein presupposed, on which all common life and science of nature depend—a faith which is the basis of natural religion; while faith in the ultimate supremacy of spiritual order and moral purpose, with their presupposed moral ideas, is the basis of spiritual or supernatural religion. Atheism is thus that negation of reason, in the universe and in us, which logically should become the speechless scepticism with which Plato deals. The necessary presuppositions of physical science, and still more the necessary presuppositions of morality, are virtually presuppositions of God’s existence, as the immanent ever active Reason that is at once the beginning and the end of philosophy as well as of religion. This whole question about innate, in the sense of presupposed absolute, principles, thus becomes the religious question in its ultimate intellectual form. But this is not Locke’s point of view. With him the existence of God is a thesis to be proved; not a presupposition, apart from which nothing else can be proved—the ultimate ground of any explanation of the phenomena of the universe into which we are born, and of us who are born into it.

For Locke’s account of man’s idea and knowledge of God, in addition to §§8–18 in this chapter, see Bk. II. ch. xv. §§2, 12; xxii. §§5, 33–35; Bk. IV. ch. 1; also Letter to Collins, June 29, 1704, as to how far we can interpret the universe ultimately in terms of human consciousness.

9 Locke is apt to accept without criticism the crude reports of travellers, who were often unable to interpret the languages of the nations they described, and, thus, with an uncharacteristic deference to authority, he maintains that whole nations exist to whom the ideas of God and a future life are strange. Yet while, on this ground, he here denies the innateness of these ideas, he elsewhere seeks to show that God’s existence is demonstrable—‘as certain as any conclusion in pure mathematics’ (Bk. IV. ch. x). Moreover, he nowhere takes sufficient account of the very different degrees in which the complex idea of God is developed in different persons, and of the various phases assumed by this, the deepest and most comprehensive of all the presuppositions of our real experience. To presuppose the rationality of experience, as all reasoning about reality must do, is to presuppose the immanent existence or presence of God.

whole nations, at the bay of Soldania, in Brazil, [in Boranday,] and in the Caribbean islands, &c., amongst whom there was to be found no notion of a God, no religion? Nicholas del Techo, in Literis ex Paraguay, de Caiguarum Conversione, has these words: Reperi eam gentem nullum nomen habere quod Deum, et hominiis animam significet; nulla sacra habit, nulla idola. [These are instances of nations where uncultivated nature has been left to itself, without the help of letters and discipline, and the improvements of arts and sciences. But there are others to be found who have enjoyed these in a very great measure, who yet, for want of a due application of their thoughts this way, want the idea and knowledge of God. It will, I doubt not, be a surprise to others, as it was to me, to find the Siamesites of this number. But for this, let them consult the King of France’s late envoy thither, who gives no better account of the Chinese themselves. And if we will not believe La Loubère, the missionaries of China, even the Jesuits themselves, the great encomiasts of the Chinese, do all to a man agree, and will convince us, that the sect of the literati, or learned, keeping to the old religion of China, and the ruling party there, are all of them.

1 Roe, in Thevenot’s Relation de divers Voyages Curieux. Sir Thomas Roe, a distinguished diplomatist, was King James’s ambassador to the Great Mogul in 1614–18. The report of his experience there appeared in 1606, as an appendix to the translation of Pietro della Valle’s travels, and again in Churchill’s Collection. He died in 1644.

2 Jo. de Lery, p. 16, who travelled in Brazil in the end of the sixteenth century, and wrote a history of that country.

3 Added in fourth edition. Martinire. Terry, Voyage to the Mogul, 1645; and Ovington’s. (Ovington’s Voyage to Surat in 1695.)

4 Nicholas de Techo, a Jesuit missionary, who wrote an account of Paraguay and other countries in South America, where he lived for twenty-five years. He reports many particulars of the customs of the savage Indians, in his Letters from Paraguay, and to the conversion of the Indians of that South American province. See Churchill’s Collection, vol. iv.

5 This and the next three sentences added in fourth edition. Locke again trusts too much to the statements of strangers imperfectly acquainted with the native languages, ignorant too of the sciences of comparative religion and comparative philology, and thus apt to misinterpret the imperfectly developed and inarticulate beliefs of savages.

6 La Loubère, Du Royaume de Siam, tom. i. c. c. 9, 15; c. 20, §§ 22, 23; c. 29, §§ 6, and c. 32. M. de la Loubère (1642–1729) was the envoy of Louis XIV to Siam in 1687.

7 This and the next sentence added in Coste’s French Version.
98 Essay concerning Human Understanding.

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chap. III.

atheists. Vid. Navarette\(^1\) in the Collection of Voyages, vol. i., and Historia Cultus Sinensium.] And perhaps, if we should with attention mind the lives and discourses of people not so far off, we should have too much reason to fear, that many, in more civilized countries, have no very strong and clear impressions of a Deity upon their minds, and that the complaints of atheism made from the pulpit are not without reason. And though only some profligate wretches own it too barefacedly now; yet perhaps we should hear more than we do of it from others, did not the fear of the magistrate’s sword, or their neighbour’s censure, tie up people’s tongues; which, were the apprehensions of punishment or shame taken away, would as openly proclaim their atheism as their lives do.\(^2\)

9. But had all mankind everywhere a notion of a God, (whereof yet history tells us the contrary,) it would not from thence follow, that the idea of him was innate. For, though no nation were to be found without a name, and some few

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\(^1\) A Dominican friar, sent in 1646 by his order as a missionary to the Philippine Islands, and afterwards to China, where he spent more than twenty years in the service of Christianity. His learned account of the Chinese, in Spanish, appears in a translation in Churchill’s Collection.

\(^2\) ‘I think’ (Locke afterwards says, in his Third Letter to Stillingfleet, p. 447). ‘I think that the “universal consent” of mankind as to the being of a God amounts to this much—that the vastly greater majority have, in all ages of the world, actually believed a God; that the majority of the remaining part have not actually disbelieved it; and all those who have actually opposed the belief of a God have truly been very few... This is all the universal consent which truth of matter of fact will allow, and therefore all that can be made use of to prove a God... But a consent of every man, even to a man, in all ages and countries, this would make it either no argument or an unnecessary one. For, if anyone deny a God, such perfect universality of consent is destroyed; and if nobody does deny a God, what need of arguments to convince atheists? What need of arguments against a faith from which mankind are so wholly free? If you say (as I doubt not but you will) that they have had atheists in the world, then your lordship’s “universal consent” reduces itself to only a great majority; and I have not said one word that does in the least invalidate this argument for a God. The argument I was upon there was, to show that the idea of God was not innate; and to my purpose this sufficed—if there were but a less number found who had no idea of God than your lordship will allow there to have been of professed atheists; for whatever is innate must be universal in the strictest sense; one exception is a sufficient proof against it.’—This argument is good against the explicit, but not against the implicit innateness of the ideas of God and religion.—Locke elsewhere argues against toleration of atheists.

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Other proofs against Innate Principles. 99

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dark notions of him\(^3\), yet that would not prove them to be natural impressions on the mind; no more than the names of fire, or the sun, heat, or number, do prove the ideas they stand for to be innate; because the names of those things, and the ideas of them, are so universally received and known amongst mankind. Nor, on the contrary, is the want of such a name, or the absence of such a notion out of men’s minds, any argument against the being of a God; any more than it would be a proof that there was no loadstone in the world, because a great part of mankind had neither a notion of any such thing nor a name for it; or be any show of argument to prove that there are no distinct and various species of angels, or intelligent beings above us, because we have no ideas of such distinct species, or names for them. For, men being furnished with words, by the common language of their own countries, can scarce avoid having some kind of ideas of those things whose names those they converse with have occasion frequently to mention to them. And if they carry with it the notion of excellency, greatness, or something extraordinary; if apprehension and concernment accompany it; if the fear of absolute and irresistible power set it on upon the mind,—the idea is likely to sink the deeper, and spread the further; especially if it be such an idea as is agreeable to the common light of reason\(^4\), and naturally deductible from every part of our knowledge, as that of a God is. For the visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of the creation, that a rational creature, who will but seriously reflect on them, cannot miss the discovery of a Deity.

And the influence that the discovery of such a Being must necessarily have on the minds of all that have but once heard of it is so great, and carries such a weight of thought and communication with it, that it seems stranger to me that

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\(^1\) For the origin and constitution of the complex idea of God, see Bk. II. ch. xxiii. §§ 33-35. The idea is found in every various stages of development, and with Locke himself is external and mechanical, excluding immanence in the actuality of the world of experience. It is the deistic idea, in short.

\(^2\) ‘Common light of reason’ is elsewhere ‘intuition’ (Bk. IV. ch. ii. § 2), ‘natural revelation’ (Bk. IV. ch. xix. § 4), and ‘the candle of the Lord set up by God Himself in men’s minds’ (ch. iii. 20).
a whole nation of men should be anywhere found so brutish as to want the notion of a God, than that they should be without any notion of numbers, or fire 1.

10. The name of God being once mentioned in any part of the world, to express a superior, powerful, wise, invisible Being, the suitableness of such a notion to the principles of common reason, and the interest men will always have to mention it often, must necessarily spread it far and wide; and continue it down to all generations: though yet the general reception of this name, and some imperfect and unsteady notions conveyed thereby to the unthinking part of mankind, prove not the idea to be innate; but only that they who made the discovery had made a right use of their reason, thought maturely of the causes of things, and traced them to their original; from whom other less considering people having once received so important a notion, it could not easily be lost again 2.

11. This is all could be inferred from the notion of a God, were it to be found universally in all the tribes of mankind, and generally acknowledged, by men grown to maturity in all countries. For the generality of the acknowledging of a God, as I imagine, is extended no further than that; which, if it be sufficient to prove the idea of God innate, will as well prove the idea of fire innate; since I think it may be truly said, that there is not a person in the world who has a notion of a God, who has not also the idea of fire. I doubt not but if a colony of young children should be placed in an island where no fire was, they would certainly neither have any notion of such

1 But are the ideas of 'fire' and of 'God,' or supreme active Reason, when we do have them, alike, in being intellectually necessary to the philosophic conception of the universe? Are they equally implied in the logic of natural and moral experience? Locke himself recognises the difference, in holding as he does that the existence of God is as demonstrable as any conclusion in pure mathematics, which the existence of fire is not.

2 The idea appears in degrees of development so various that the term 'God' suggests very different ideas in different ages and nations, as well as in individual minds in the same age or nation.

3 The argument for the existence, if not for the complex idea, of God, founded on the 'common consent of mankind,'—the consensus genium as the vox naturae, formulated in the quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,—cannot claim the weight which might be due to the inevitable conscious conviction of every human being, children and adults, savages and philosophers; for in that case atheists and agnostics would be impossible phenomena, and arguments would be superseded. It can only claim the deference proper to convictions commonly experienced, in successive ages and various nations, to which Cicero and the Fathers of the Church appealed; and not even this if, as Reid puts it, 'we could show some prejudice as universal as that consent is, which might be the cause of it.'
parts, faculties, and powers industriously that way, but contented themselves with the opinions, fashions, and things of their country, as they found them, without looking any further. Had you or I been born at the Bay of Soldania, possibly our thoughts and notions had not exceeded those brutish ones of the Hottentots that inhabit there. And had the Virginia king Apochancana been educated in England, he had been perhaps as knowing a divine, and as good a mathematician as any in it; the difference between him and a more improved Englishman lying barely in this, that the exercise of his faculties was bounded within the ways, modes, and notions of his own country, and never directed to any other or further inquiries. And if he had not any idea of a God, it was only because he pursued not those thoughts that would have led him to it.

13. I grant that if there were any ideas to be found imprinted on the minds of men, we have reason to expect it should be the notion of his Maker, as a mark God set on his own workmanship, to mind man of his dependence and duty; and that herein should appear the first instances of human knowledge. But how late is it before any such notion is discoverable in children? And when we find it there, how much more does it resemble the opinion and notion of the teacher, than represent the true God? He that shall observe in children the progress whereby their minds attain the knowledge they have, will think that the objects they do first and most familiarly converse with are those that make the first impressions on their understandings; nor will he find the least footsteps of any other. It is easy to take notice how their thoughts enlarge themselves, only as they come to be acquainted with a greater variety of sensible objects; to retain the ideas of them in their memories; and to get the skill to compound and enlarge them, and several ways put them together. How, by these means, they come to frame in their minds an idea men have of a Deity, I shall hereafter show.

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1 Things are what they are, and are not other things; why therefore should we desire to be deceived?  
2 This so far recognises potential innateness, although it does not take account of the necessary rational implications in the 'natural faculties,' manifested when they operate adequately.
14. Can it be thought that the ideas men have of God are the characters and marks of himself, engraved in their minds by his own finger, when we see that, in the same country, under one and the same name, men have far different, nay often contrary and inconsistent ideas and conceptions of him? Their agreeing in a name, or sound, will scarce prove an innate notion of him.

15. What true or tolerable notion of a Deity could they have, who acknowledged and worshipped hundreds? Every deity that they owned above one was an infallible evidence of their ignorance of Him, and a proof that they had no true notion of God, where unity, infinity, and eternity were excluded. To which, if we add their gross conceptions of corporeity, expressed in their images and representations of their deities; the amours, marriages, copulations, lusts, quarrels, and other mean qualities attributed by them to their gods; we shall have little reason to think that the heathen world, i.e. the greatest part of mankind, had such ideas of God in their minds as he himself, out of care that they should not be mistaken about him, was author of. And this universality of consent, so much argued, if it prove any native impressions, it will be only this:—that God imprinted on the minds of all men speaking the same language, a name for himself, but not any idea; since those people who agreed in the name, had, at the same time, far different apprehensions about the thing signified. If they say that the variety of deities worshipped by the heathen world were but figurative ways of expressing the several attributes of that incomprehensible Being, or several parts of his providence, I answer: what they might be in the original I will not here inquire; but that they were so in the thoughts of the vulgar I think nobody will affirm. And he that will consult the voyage of the Bishop of Beryte,

1 c. 13, (not to mention other testimonies,) will find that the theology of the Siamites professedly owns a plurality of gods: or, as the Abbé de Choisy more judiciously remarks in his Journal du Voyage de Siam, it consists properly in acknowledging no God at all.

1 The Bishop of Beryus's land and life journey, through India, into Siam, written by a priest who went with him. See Journal des Savans, v. i., p. 591.

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

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

Secondly, it seems to me plainly to prove, that the truest and best notions men have of God were not imprinted, but acquired by thought and meditation, and a right use of their faculties: since the wise and considerate men of the world, by a right and careful employment of their thoughts and reason, attained true notions in this as well as other things; whilst the lazy and inconsiderate part of men, making far the greater number, took up their notions by chance, from common tradition and vulgar conceptions, without much beating their heads about them. And if it be a reason to think the notion of God innate, because all wise men had it, virtue too must be thought innate; for that wise men have always had.

17. This was evidently the case of all Gentilism. Nor hath Odd, low, and pitiful ideas of God common amongst men. 

1 That is, patent or conscious, not latent or unconscious, universality. The process of making patent may cost much reflective effort on the part of the individual theologian or philosopher.

2 Locke's "innate ideas" are supposed by him to have been originally "imprinted" consciously in each man at birth, and so not "acquired by the use of his faculties in experience."
Christians many of that opinion. Talk but with country people, almost of any age, or young people almost of any condition, and you shall find that, though the name of God be frequently in their mouths, yet the notions they apply to this name are so odd, low, and pitiful, that nobody can imagine they were taught by a rational man; much less that they were characters written by the finger of God himself. Nor do I see how it derogates more from the goodness of God, that he has given us minds unfurnished with these ideas of himself, than that he hath sent us into the world with bodies unclothed; and that there is no art or skill born with us. For, being fitted with faculties to attain these, it is want of industry and consideration in us, and not of bounty in him, if we have them not. It is as certain that there is a God, as that the opposite angles made by the intersection of two straight lines are equal. There was never any rational creature that set himself sincerely to examine the truth of these propositions that could fail to assent to them; though yet it be past doubt that there are many men, who, having not applied their thoughts that way, are ignorant both of the one and the other. If any one think fit to call this (which is the utmost of its extent) universal consent, such an one I easily allow; but such an universal consent as this proves not the idea of God, any more than it does the idea of such angles, innate.

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

18. Since then though the knowledge of a God be the most natural discovery of human reason, yet the idea of him is not innate, as I think is evident from what has been said; I imagine there will be scarce any other idea found that can pretend to it. Since if God hath set any impression, any character, on the understanding of men, it is most reasonable to expect it should have been some clear and uniform idea of Himself; as far as our weak capacities were capable to receive so incomprehensible and infinite an object. But our minds being at first void of that idea which we are most concerned

1 While he thus acknowledges the mathematical certainty to which we may ultimately rise in our search after God, he rejects innateness in the knowledge and idea, because it is only after effort that we rise to it, and this effort is inconsistent with his idea of innateness.

3 This is really a concession of "innate principles" and "universal consent," in the only meaning of "innateness" which needs to be considered.

19. I confess there is another idea which would be of general use for mankind to have, as it is of general talk as if they had it; and that is the idea of substance; which we neither have nor can have by sensation or reflection. If nature took care to provide us any ideas, we might well expect they should be such as by our own faculties we cannot procure to ourselves; but we see, on the contrary, that since, by those ways whereby other ideas are brought into our minds, this is not, we have no such clear idea at all; and therefore signify nothing by the word substance but only an uncertain supposition of we know not what, i.e. of something whereof
to have, it is a strong presumption against all other innate characters. I must own, as far as I can observe, I can find none, and would be glad to be informed by any other.

1 See Bk. II. ch. xii. §§ 17-20; ch. xxiii. passim, for Locke's account of our idea of substance, our ideas of particular substances, and how those ideas are formed.

2 Stillingfleet, assuming that Locke rest ed all certainty on ideas that are clear and distinct, alleged that, in denying that we have a clear idea of substance, he excludes the notion out of rational discourse, i.e., a charge, 'which,' Locke replies, 'concerns not me, for I lay not all foundation of certainty as to matters of faith upon clear and distinct ideas.' Of substance I do not say that we have any clear or distinct idea; but barely that we take it to be something, we know not what. (Third Letter, pp. 381, &c.) In fact we can have no positive idea of any substance abstracted from all its phenomena; in its perceived phenomena the substance is partially manifested, and we can say of it that it is so far what it is thus perceived to be.

3 'Uncertain' may here mean a supposition that, taken abstractly, is vague and obscure, although it is practically equivalent to the grammatical rule that an adjective presupposes a substantive. "There are multitudes of things," Stillingfleet objects, 'which we are not able to conceive, and yet it is not allowed us to suppose what we think fit upon that account.' It does not therefore follow,' Locke answers, 'that we may not with certainty suppose or infer that which is an undeniable consequence of such inability to conceive, or repugnancy to our conceptions. . . . Your lordshipgrounds the idea of substance upon reason, or because it is a repugnancy to our just conceptions of things that modes or accidents should subsist in themselves; and I conclude the same thing. What the difference of certainty is from a repugnancy to our conceptions, and from our not being able to conceive, I am not acute enough to discern.' (Third Letter, pp. 375, &c.; also First Letter, pp. 27, &c.) Locke offers no proof of this repugnancy; nor can any proof of it be given, if it is a first principle. But he elsewhere 'agrees' with one of his correspondents, that 'the ideas of the modes and actions (i.e. phenomena) of substances are usually in men's minds before the idea of substance itself.' (Letter to Samuel Bold, 15 May, 1699.)
we have no [1 particular distinct positive] idea, which we take to be the substratum, or support, of those ideas we do know.

20. Whatever then we talk of innate, either speculative or practical, principles, it may with as much probability be said, that a man hath £100 sterling in his pocket, and yet denied that he hath there either penny, shilling, crown, or other coin out of which the sum is to be made up; as to think that certain propositions are innate when the ideas about which they are can by no means be supposed to be so. The general reception and assent that is given doth not at all prove, that the ideas expressed in them are innate; for in many cases, however the ideas came there, the assent to words expressing the agreement or disagreement of such ideas, will necessarily follow. Every one that hath a true idea of God and worship, will assent to this proposition, 'That God is to be worshipped,' when expressed in a language he understands; and every rational man that hath not thought on it to-day, may be ready to assent to this proposition to-morrow; and yet millions of men may be well supposed to want one or both

1 Added in fourth edition, to meet objections of Stillingfleet.
2 Regarding as a mere datum of sense, added to the other sense data which constitute the 'qualities' of a thing, 'substance' would be a meaningless term; and so by those ways whereby ideas are brought into our minds, this is not.
3 But he acknowledges elsewhere that an 'obscure' concept of substance (not an idea-image) is necessarily formed in the human mind. 'I never said,' he tells Stillingfleet, 'that (complex) ideas of relations, such as that of substance, come in as simple ideas of sensation or reflection.' I never denied that the mind could form for itself ideas of relation, and that it is obliged to do so. . . . I conclude there is substance, because we cannot conceive how qualities should subsist by themselves. . . . Sensible qualities carry the supposition of substance along with them, but not introsumed by the senses with them. . . . By carrying with them a supposition, I mean that sensible qualities imply a substratum to exist in.' (Third Letter to Stillingfleet.) Substance, in short, is the concrete permanent in changing phenomena; these are correlative, neither intelligible without the other,—which Locke seems to imply, though his language is inadequate. When he denies that we have an idea of substance, he uses idea for mental image, and so in its anti-Platonic meaning.
4 That is to say, all propositions presuppose terms. But there may be an innate intellectual obligation to perceive relations among those ideas that are themselves data of experience, e.g. to recognize necessary causal relations between sense-given sequences. Connection of ideas might be thus innate, although the connected ideas are not.

1 This loses sight of the distinction between propositions which, after they emerge in consciousness, are seen to be eternally and absolutely, and those that seem to be only temporarily and conditionally true; to which last category Locke himself refers all propositions concerning matters of fact, except the existence of God.
2 This section was added in the second edition.
3 Here Locke grants that our acquired knowledge exists in a latent or unconscious state, during the intervals
the actual perception of any idea without memory, the idea appears perfectly new and unknown before to the understanding. Whenever the memory brings any idea into actual view, it is with a consciousness that it had been there before, and was not wholly a stranger to the mind. Whether this be not so, I appeal to every one's observation. And then I desire an instance of an idea, pretended to be innate, which (before any impression of it by ways hereafter to be mentioned) any one could revive and remember, as an idea he had formerly known; without which consciousness of a former perception there is no remembrance; and whatever idea comes into the mind without that consciousness is not remembered, or comes not out of the memory, nor can be said to be in the mind before that appearance. For what is not either actually in view or in the memory, is in the mind no way at all, and is all one as if it had never been there. Suppose a child had the use of his eyes till he knows and distinguishes colours; but then cataracts shut the windows, and he is forty or fifty years perfectly in the dark; and in that time perfectly loses all memory of the ideas of colours he once had. This was the case of a blind man I once talked with, who lost his sight by the small-pox when he was a child, and had no more notion of colours than one born blind. I ask whether any one can say this man had then any ideas of colours in his mind, any more than one born blind? And I think nobody will say that either of them had in his mind any ideas of colours at all. His cataracts are couched, and then he has the ideas (which he remembers not) of colours, de novo, by his restored sight, conveyed to his mind, and that without any consciousness of a former acquaintance. And these now he can revive and call to mind in the dark. In this case all these ideas of colours, in which it is not actually and consciously present. He gives no sufficient reason for confining latency to acquired knowledge, thus excluding latent reason, and a priority in the nature of things. Acquired ideas, he says, are either actual, i.e. conscious, perceptions, or latent power of memory to re-perceive.

1 This suggests Plato's theory, that our knowledge of those truths which, when awakened in us, are seen to be intellectually necessary, is of the nature of reminiscence; though unaccompanied by the recognition of them as formerly ours of which we are conscious in ordinary memory.

2 This is a dogmatic assumption.

which, when out of view, can be revived with a consciousness of a former acquaintance, being thus in the memory, are said to be in the mind. The use I make of this is, that whatever idea, being not actually in view, is in the mind, is there only by being in the memory; and if it be not in the memory, it is not in the mind; and if it be in the memory, it cannot by the memory be brought into actual view without a perception that it comes out of the memory; which is this, that it had been known before, and is now remembered. If therefore there be any innate ideas, they must be in the memory, or else nowhere in the mind; and if they be in the memory, they can be revived without any impression from without; and whenever they are brought into the mind they are remembered, i.e. they bring with them a perception of their not being wholly new to it. This being a constant and distinguishing difference between what is, and what is not in the memory, or in the mind—that what is not in the memory, whenever it appears there, appears perfectly new and unknown before; and what is in the memory, or in the mind, whenever it is suggested by the memory, appears not to be new, but the mind finds it in itself, and knows it was there before. By this it may be tried whether there be any innate ideas in the mind before impression from sensation or reflection. I would fain meet with the man who, when he came to the use of reason, or at any other time, remembered any of them; and to whom, after he was born, they were never new. If any one will say, there are ideas in the mind that are not in the memory, I desire him to explain himself, and make what he says intelligible.

22. Besides what I have already said, there is another reason why I doubt that neither these nor any other principles are innate. I that am fully persuaded that the infinitely wise God made all things in perfect wisdom, cannot satisfy myself why he should be supposed to print upon the

1 What Locke had to disprove was the alleged fact, that there are ideas and principles contained in knowledge which are seen on reflection to be intellectually necessary to its constitution, and in this respect to be not 'wholly new,' while they are not recognised because formerly experienced, as in memory, and are therefore to be spoken of as 'reminiscences' only by a metaphor.
minds of men some universal principles; whereof those that are pretended innate, and concern speculation, are of no great use; and those that concern practice, not self-evident; and neither of them distinguishable from some other truths not allowed to be innate. For, to what purpose should characters be graven on the mind by the finger of God, which are not clearer there than those which are afterwards introduced, or cannot be distinguished from them? If any one thinks there are such innate ideas and propositions, which by their clearness and usefulness are distinguishable from all that is adventitious in the mind and acquired, it will not be a hard matter for him to tell us which they are; and then every one will be a fit judge whether they be so or no. Since if there be such innate ideas and impressions, plainly different from all other perceptions and knowledge, every one will find it true in himself. Of the evidence of these supposed innate maxims, I have spoken already: of their usefulness I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter.

23. To conclude: some ideas forwardly offer themselves to all men's understanding; and some truths result from any ideas, as soon as the mind puts them into propositions: other truths require a train of ideas placed in order, a due comparing of them, and deductions made with attention, before they can be discovered and ascertained to. Some of

1 Nature, as Leibniz remarks, has not needlessly given herself the trouble of impressing upon us innate principles; for without them there would be no means of arriving at actual knowledge in demonstration, or at the reason of facts, and we should have only animal experiences. We build on those (innate) general maxims as we do on a suppressed premise when we reason in enthymemes, when it is always true that the force of the conclusion is determined by the latent premise. There is latent principle, too, in all reasoning about the future. Why should the future resemble the past? Not because it has always been so; this would involve the contradiction that the future is already past, while of the future, as such, we can never have had any experience.

2 Incompletely evidenced, or merely probable, propositions are those with which human life is mainly concerned, according to Locke.

3 On the criteria of the truths in question, see note 3, p. 60.

4 It is the permanent task of philosophy to evolve them from the experience in which they are implicitly contained, and thus to reach a distinct consciousness of them in their organic unity.

5 Br. IV. ch. vii.

6 Self-evident truths.

7 It must never be forgotten that

the first sort, because of their general and easy reception, have been mistaken for innate: but the truth is, ideas and notions are no more born with us than arts and sciences; though some of them indeed offer themselves to our faculties more readily than others; and therefore are more generally received: though that too be according as the organs of our bodies and powers of our minds happen to be employed; God having fitted men with faculties and means to discover, receive, and retain truths, according as they are employed. The great difference that is to be found in the notions of mankind is, from the different use they put their faculties to. Whilst some (and those the most) taking things upon trust, misemploy their power of assent, by lazily enslaving their minds to the dictates and dominion of others, in doctrines which it is their duty carefully to examine, and not blindly, with an implicit faith, to swallow; others, employing their thoughts only about some few things, grow acquainted sufficiently with them, attain great degrees of knowledge in them, and are ignorant of all other, having never let their thoughts loose in the search of other inquiries. Thus, that the three angles of a triangle are quite equal to two right ones is a truth

Locke's method is chronological—
i.e. the historical method—that from the outset he awakes the transcendent questions that refer to Being, and the ultimate principles presupposed in mental operations—that he assumes without criticism the possibility of an experience of what is real, and the premises which are necessary for demonstrating the existence of God. It was by the counter assumption of 'innate ideas and principles'—not acquired in the methodical exercise of our faculties, but so introduced consciously into each mind at birth as to be independent of the circumstances and experience of individuals—that, as it seemed to him, men had been losing themselves in 'the ocean of Being,' instead of beginning tentatively at the other end, among the facts presented in experience.

1 Locke dreads innateness—that is, the sort of innateness which necessarily implies consciousness of the innate—because it is apt to supersede the exercise of our faculties. This the only innateness worth inquiring about has no such tendency, consciousness of the 'innate' elements in human knowledge depending upon the active exercise of the individual faculties; and distinct recognition of them in their universal or philosophic form depending upon the exercise of our higher faculties.

2 In this sentence we find the moral of the prolonged argument of the First Book—to arouse men to active exercise of their higher faculties and thus to withdraw from them the idolatrous service of assumptions indolently taken upon trust, and engage them in the worship and service of God who is truth.
Men must think and

24. What censure doubting thus of innate principles may

The received maxims of all mankind, which used to be the touchstone by which to try truth, must, it seems, be tried themselves; and in the meantime are to be reckoned purely artificial, and wholly owing to the powerful influence of custom and education. (Lee, Anti-Scepticism.)

Opinionatretety, i.e. obstinate adherence to opinion. Occasionally used by Locke; also Brown, Vulgar Errors, Ek. VII. ch. ix.
who gathers them. Such borrowed wealth, like fairy money, though it were gold in the hand from which he received it, will be but leaves and dust when it comes to use.

25. When men have found some general propositions that could not be doubted of as soon as understood, it was, I know, a short and easy way to conclude them innate. This being once received, it eased the lazy from the pain of search, and stopped the inquiry of the doubtful concerning all that was once styled innate. And it was of no small advantage to those who affected to be masters and teachers, to make this the principle of principles,—that principles must not be questioned. For, having once established this tenet,—that there are innate principles, it put their followers upon a necessity of receiving some doctrines as such; which was to take them off from the use of their own reason and judgment, and put them on believing and taking them upon trust without further examination: in which posture of blind credulity, they might be more easily governed by, and made useful to some sort of men, who had the skill and office to principle and guide them. Nor is it a small power it gives one man over another, to have the authority to be the dictator of principles, and teacher of unquestionable truths; and to make a man swallow that for an innate principle which may serve to his purpose who teacheth them. Whereas had they

1 Self-evident principles, he means to say, were falsely assumed to be innate, or seen to be necessarily true from birth by all men. He deprecates this uncritical assumption of them, because it encourages laziness, and opens the door to innumerable prejudices, under the specious name of innate principles. He protestst against the indolence which thus blindly resistes the opinions of the community, and which gudges the private judgment by which each man is detached from the community and becomes himself. This development of the individual, in isolation from the race, Locke exaggerates, making it an end in itself, instead of a means to the higher end of an improved or more developed Common Reason. Cf. Conduct of Understanding, § 41.

2 Hence Locke's hostility to them. "Si le dessein de l'auteur est de conseiller qu'on cherche les preuves des verités qui en peuvent recevoir sans distinguer si elles sont innes ou non, nous sommes entièrement d'accord; et l'opinion des verités innes, de la manière que je les prends, n'en doit détourner personne." (Leibniz, Novae, Exerc.

3 This is another expression of the moral purpose of Locke's warfare with innateness of knowledge,—understood by him as knowledge got without personal exertion, and without the contact and suggestions of experience.

4 Not abstract reasonings about Being considered a priori,—which is to begin at the wrong end, and to lose ourselves in the vast ocean of abstract ontology; but beginning at the other end, a posteriori, among the phenomena of mind and sense organism, sensuous and spiritual, in which concrete beings are manifested in part, and may be gradually interpreted, to the extent that is necessary for us, as men sensuous and spiritual,—this is the intellectual ideal of the Essay.

The First Book is not part of Locke's positive explanation of Human Understanding. It does not appear in the abstract of the Essay published by Le Clerc. In this section he projects a transition from the deductive argument with which he opens, to experience and observation, and an inductive interpretation of phenomena. But inductive interpretation involves unconscious presuppositions as well as deductive argument; and philosophy is the reflective organisation of the presuppositions of both, which are implied in all the phenomena of nature and spirit.

5 In the First Book the author is very elaborate in the proof that there are no innate ideas, and consequently propositions, which are compounded of ideas—in order to remove the rubbish which encumbered the foundation on which he intended to erect his new scheme of knowledge. All which, I think, might have been saved, in the strict sense which is put upon the word innate; for therein surely he has no adversary. For no one does, or at least can reasonably assert, that the minds of embryos, in the first moment after their creation or union to their organised bodies, are ready furnished with conscious ideas, or have any propositions or principles consciously implanted in them or stamped upon them; that is an idle supposition. Such expressions are to be understood figuratively, to signify that the ideas over their origin to the constitution of human nature, as it stands necessarily related to other parts of the universe. (Lee, Anti-Scepticism, Preface, p. 1.) Locke's determination to purge the human mind of its idola—to have a tabula rasa from which to start on the march of modern enlightenment—leads him in this First Book to attack what no one worth arguing with would care to defend; while his recognition of self-evident ultimate truths is a concession to the principle of innateness, which,
And since the arguments which are against them do, some of them, rise from common received opinions, I have been forced to take several things for granted; which is hardly avoidable to any one, whose task is to show the falsehood or improbability of any tenet;—it happening in controversial discourses as it does in assaulting of towns; where, if the ground be but firm whereon the batteries are erected, there is no further inquiry of whom it is borrowed, nor whom it belongs to, so it affords but a fit rise for the present purpose. But in the future part of this Discourse, designing to raise an edifice uniform and consistent with itself, as far as my own experience and observation will assist me, I hope to erect it on such a basis that I shall not need to shore it up with props and buttresses, leaning on borrowed or begged foundations; or at least, if mine prove a castle in the air, I will endeavour it shall be all of a piece and hang together. Wherein I warn the reader not to expect undeniable cogent demonstrations, unless I may be allowed the privilege, not seldom assumed by others, to take my principles for granted¹; and then, I doubt not, but I can demonstrate too. All that I shall say for the principles I proceed on is, that I can only appeal to men's own unprejudiced experience and observation² whether they be true or not; and this is enough for a man who professes no more than to lay down candidly and freely his own conjectures, concerning a subject lying somewhat in the dark, without any other design than an unbiased inquiry after truth.

If he had carried it out, might have brought him into harmony with its philosophical advocates.

¹ As little in the remaining, as in the preceding part of this Discourse, can he advance without presuppositions. The trustworthiness and supremacy of active Reason in the universe, and necessary implicates of Reason, are consciously or unconsciously assumed. Only complete sceptics surrender all principles, and then they become incapable of making any propositions.

² Yet Cousin regards the whole Essay as a gratuitous hypothesis, in which the facts presented by the human understanding are made to conform to a foregone theory or conclusion. According to Green and others, it is a mass of incoherent and mutually contradictory propositions; but Locke in this paragraph designs that, even if 'a castle in the air,' it should at least be 'an edifice uniform and consistent with itself,' 'all of a piece,' and that 'hangs together.'