

moderate our Perswasions. In Order whereunto, I shall pursue this following Method.

*First*, I shall enquire into the *Original* of those *Idea's*, Notions, or whatever else you please to call them, which a Man observes, and is conscious to himself he has in his Mind; and the ways whereby the Understanding comes to be furnished with them.

*Secondly*, I shall endeavour to shew, what *Knowledge* the Understanding hath by those *Idea's*; and the Certainty, Evidence, and Extent of it.

*Thirdly*, I shall make some Enquiry into the Nature and Grounds of *Faith*, or *Opinion*: whereby I mean that Assent, which we give to any Proposition as true, of whose Truth yet we have no certain Knowledge: And here we shall have Occasion to examine the Reasons and Degrees of Assent.

§. 4. If by this Enquiry into the Nature of the Understanding, I can discover the Powers thereof; at *how far* they reach; to which things they are in any Degree proportionate; and where they fail us, I suppose it may be of use, to prevail with the busie Mind of Man, to be more cautious in meddling with things exceeding its Comprehension; to stop, when it is at the utmost Extent of its Tether; and to sit down in a quiet Ignorance of those Things, which, upon Examination, are found to be beyond the reach of our Capacities. We should not then perhaps be so forward, out of an Affectation of an universal Knowledge, to raise Questions, and perplex our selves and others with Disputes about Things, to which our Understandings are not suited; and of which we cannot frame in our Minds any clear or distinct Perceptions, or whereof (as it has perhaps too often happen'd) we have not any Notions at all. If we can find out, how far the Understanding can extend its view; how far it has Faculties to attain Certainty; and in what Cases it can only judge and guess, we may learn to content our selves with what is attainable by us in this State.

§. 5. For though the *Comprehension* of our Understandings, comes exceeding short of the vast Extent of Things; yet, we shall have Cause enough to magnifie the bountiful Author of our Being, for that Portion, and Degree of Knowledge, he has bestowed on us, so far above all the rest of the Inhabitants of this our Mansion. Men have Reason to be well satisfied with what God hath thought fit for them, since he has given them (as St. *Peter* says, *πολλά πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσεβείαν*, Whatsoever is necessary for the Conveniences of Life, and Information of Vertue; and has put within the reach of their Discovery the Provisions, that may support, or sweeten this Life, and the Way that leads to a better. How short soever their Knowledge may come of an universal, or perfect Comprehension of whatsoever is, it yet secures their great Concernments, that they have Light enough to lead them to the Knowledge of their Maker, and the Discovery of their own Duties. Men may find Matter sufficient to busie their Heads, and employ their Hands with Variety, Delight, and Satisfaction; if they will not boldly quarrel with their own Constitution, and throw away the Blessings their Hands are fill'd with, because they are not big enough to grasp every thing. We shall not have much Reason to complain of the narrowness of our Minds, if we will but employ them about what may be of use to us; for of that they are very capable: And it will be an unpardonable, as well as Childish Peevishness, if we undervalue the Advantages of our Knowledge, and neglect to improve it to the ends for which it was given us, because there are some Things that are set out of the reach of it. It will be no Excuse to an idle and untoward Servant, who would

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