

he will find in the following Treatise. It being that Term, which, I think, serves best to stand for whatsoever is the Object of the Understanding when a Man thinks, I have used it to express whatever is meant by *Phantasm*, *Notion*, *Species*, or whatever it is, which the Mind can be employ'd about in thinking; and I could not avoid frequently using it.

I presume it will be easily granted me, that there are such *Idea's* in Men's Minds; every one is conscious of them in himself, and a Man's Words and Actions will satisfy him, that they are in others.

Our first Enquiry then shall be how they come into the Mind.

CHAP. II.

No innate Principles in the Mind.

§. 1. **I**T is an established Opinion amongst some Men, That there are in the Understanding certain *innate Principles*; some primary Notions, *κοινὰ εἴηαι*, Characters, as it were stamped upon the Mind of Man, which the Soul receives in its very first Being; and brings into the World with it. It would be sufficient to convince unprejudiced Readers of the falseness of this Supposition, if I should only shew (as I hope I shall in the following Parts of this Discourse) how Men, barely by the Use of their natural Faculties, may attain to all the Knowledge they have, without the help of any innate Impressions; and may arrive at Certainty, without any such Original Notions or Principles. For I imagine any one will easily grant, That it would be impertinent to suppose the *Idea's* 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 our selves Faculties, fit to attain as easie 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 consider'd by those, who with me dispose themselves to embrace Truth, where-ever 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 the constant Impressions, which the Souls of Men receive in their first Beings, and which they bring into the World with them, as necessarily and really as they do any of their inherent Faculties.

§. 3. This Argument, drawn from *Universal Consent*, has this Misfortune in it, That if it were true in matter of Fact, that there were certain Truths, wherein all Mankind agreed, it would not prove them innate, if there can be any other way shewn how Men may come to that Universal Agreement in the things they do consent in; which I presume may be done.

§. 4. But, which is worse, this Argument of universal Consent, which is made use of to prove innate Principles, seems to me a Demonstration that