New Essays on Human Understanding
Book II: Ideas

G. W. Leibniz

[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis . . . . indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth.—Longer omissions are [explained] as they occur. Very small bold unbracketed numerals indicate the corresponding section number in Locke's *Essay*; most of these are provided by Leibniz. This version does not follow Leibniz's practice of always avoiding Locke's name in favour of 'this author', 'our gifted author', etc.

First launched: February 2005 Last amended: April 2008

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Chapter xx: Modes of pleasure and pain

Philalethes: **1** Bodily sensations, like the thoughts of the mind, may be either indifferent or followed by pleasure or pain. Like other simple ideas these sensations can't be described, nor can their names be defined.

Theophilus: I believe that there are no perceptions that are matters of complete indifference to us; but a perception can be so described if it isn't a notable one, for pleasure and pain appear to consist in *notable* helps and hindrances. In saying this, I'm not giving a •nominal definition of them—·i.e. one that suffices to pick out pleasure (pain) from other states·—and •that can't be given.

Phil: **2** The *good* is whatever is apt to cause or increase pleasure, or diminish or cut short pain in us. *Evil* is apt to produce or increase pain, or diminish · or cut short· pleasure in us.

Theo: That is my opinion too. The good is divided into the •virtuous, the •pleasing, and the •useful; though I believe that basically something good must either be pleasing in itself or •conducive to something else that can give us a pleasant feeling. That is, the good is either pleasing or •useful; and virtue itself consists in a pleasure of the mind.

Phil: **3** From pleasure and pain come the passions. **4** One has *love* for something that can produce pleasure, and **5** the thought of the sorrow or pain that anything present or absent is apt to produce is *hatred*. But when we hate or love beings who are themselves capable of happiness or misery, this is often an unpleasure or a contentment that we find in ourselves arising ·not from a thought about what they might do to us, but merely· from thinking about the fact that they exist, or the fact that they are happy.

Theo: That definition of love is almost the same as one I have given. . . ., when I said that to love is to be disposed to take pleasure in the perfection, well-being or happiness of the object of one's love. This involves not thinking about or asking for any pleasure of one's own except what one can get from the happiness or pleasure of the loved one. On this account, whatever is incapable of pleasure or of happiness isn't strictly an object of *love*; our enjoyment of things of that nature isn't love of them unless we personify them and play with the idea of their enjoying their own perfection. When we say 'I *love* that painting' because of the pleasure one gets from taking in its perfections, that isn't strictly love. But it is permissible to extend the sense of a term, and in the case of 'love' usage varies. Philosophers, and even theologians, distinguish two kinds of love:

- •Concupiscence, which is merely the desire or the feeling we have towards what gives pleasure to us, without our caring whether it receives any pleasure; and
- •Benevolence, which is the feeling we have for something by whose pleasure or happiness we are pleased or made happy.

The former fixes our view on our own pleasure; the latter on the pleasure of others, but as something that produces or rather constitutes our own pleasure. If it didn't reflect back on us somehow, we couldn't care about it, because it is impossible (whatever they say) to disengage from a concern for one's own good. That is the way to understand disinterested love [= 'love that is not *self*-interested'] if we are properly to grasp its nobility and yet not succumb to fantasies about it.

Phil: **6** What we call 'desire' is the *uneasiness* a man has be-

cause of the absence of something whose present enjoyment carries the idea of delight with it. Uneasiness is the •chief spur to human action—and perhaps the •only one. If the absence of some good—*any* good—gives me no unpleasure or pain, if I am easy and content without it, then I have no *desire* for it and don't try to get it. All I have is a bare *velleity*: this term is used to signify the lowest degree of desire, next door to the state of total indifference; in velleity there is so little unpleasure caused by the absence of x that it takes a man no further than a faint wish for x without doing anything to get it. A person's uneasiness about x may be removed or soothed by his believing that x *cannot* be had, and in that case desire is stopped or lessened. I should add that these remarks about uneasiness [French *inquiétude*] come from Locke. I have been in some difficulty about what the English word 'uneasiness' signifies; but the able French translator remarks in a footnote that Locke uses this word to designate the state of a man who isn't at his ease—a lack of ease or tranquillity in the soul, the latter being in this respect purely passive; and that he had to translate it by *inquiétude*, which doesn't express exactly the same idea but which comes closest to doing so. This warning is especially necessary, he adds, in connection with the next chapter, on Power, where this kind of *inquiétude* plays a large role in the argument; for if one didn't associate the word with the idea just indicated, one couldn't properly understand the contents of that chapter, which are the subtlest and most important in the whole work.

Theo: The translator is right. As I have seen from reading Locke for myself, this treatment of *inquiétude* is an important matter in which the author makes especially evident the depth and penetration of his mind. So I have given it some thought; and after thorough reflection I am now almost inclined to think that the word *inquiétude*, even if it doesn't express very well •what Locke has in mind, nevertheless fits pretty well •the nature of the thing itself, and that the term 'uneasiness'—if that indicated an unpleasure, an irritation, a discomfort, in short an actual suffering—wouldn't fit it. For I would rather say that a desire in itself involves only a disposition to suffering, a preparation for it, rather than suffering itself. It's true that this perception sometimes differs only in degree from what is involved in suffering; but it is of the essence of suffering to be of a certain degree, for it is a notable perception. (It is the same with the difference between appetite and hunger: when the disturbance of the stomach becomes too strong it causes discomfort, ·thus ratcheting appetite up to the state of hunger·.) So this is another case requiring my doctrine about perceptions that are too tiny for us to be aware of them; for if what goes on in us when we have appetite and desire were sufficiently amplified, it *would* cause suffering. That is why ·God·, the infinitely wise author of our being, was acting in our interests when he brought it about that we are often ignorant and subject to confused perceptions—so that we can act the more quickly by instinct, and not be troubled by excessively distinct sensations of hosts of objects which, though they are necessary to nature's plan, aren't entirely agreeable to us. How many insects we swallow without being aware of it, how many people we observe who are troubled by having too fine a sense of smell, and how many disgusting objects we would see if our eyesight were keen enough! By the same device, nature has given us the spurs of desire in the form of the rudiments or elements of suffering, semi-suffering one might say, or (to put it extravagantly just for the sake of emphasis) of tiny little sufferings of which we can't be aware. This lets us enjoy the advantage of evil without enduring its inconveniences; for otherwise, if this perception were

too distinct, one would always be miserable when looking forward to something good; whereas our continual victory over these semi-sufferings—a victory we feel when we follow our desires and somehow satisfy this or that appetite or itch—provides us with many semi-pleasures; and the continuation and accumulation of these. . . .eventually becomes a whole, genuine pleasure. In fact, without these semi-sufferings there would be no pleasure at all, nor any way of being aware that something is helping and relieving us by removing obstacles that stand between us and our ease. . . . This account of tiny aids, imperceptible little escapes and releases of a thwarted endeavour, which finally generate notable pleasure, also provides a somewhat clearer knowledge of our inevitably confused ideas of pleasure and of pain; just as the sensation of warmth or of light results from many tiny motions that, as I said earlier (viii.13), express the motions in objects, and only *appear* to be different from them, simply because we aren't aware of this analysed multiplicity. As against this view, some contemporaries believe that

> our ideas of sensible qualities differ entirely from motions and from what occurs in the objects, and are something primary and unexplainable and even arbitrary; as though God had made the soul sense whatever he had a whim that it should sense, rather than whatever happens in the body

—which is nowhere near the right analysis of our ideas. But to return to *disquiet*, i.e. to the imperceptible little urges that keep us constantly in suspense: these are confused stimuli, so that we often don't know what it is that we lack. With inclinations and passions, on the other hand, we at least know what we want; though confused perceptions come into their way of acting too, and though passions give rise further to the disquiet or itch that is under discussion. These impulses are like so many little springs trying to unwind and so driving our machine along. And I have already remarked that that's why we are never evenly balanced, even when we appear to be most so, as for instance over whether to turn left or right at the end of a lane. For the choice that we make arises from these insensible stimuli. They mingle with the effects of ·outer· objects and other events in our bodily interiors, making us find one direction of movement more comfortable than the other. In German, the word for the balance of a clock is *Unruhe*—which also means 'disquiet'; and we can take that for a model of how it is in our bodies, which can never be perfectly at their ease. For if one's body *were* at ease ·for a moment·, some new effect of objects—some small change in the sense-organs, and in the viscera and bodily cavities—would at once alter the balance and compel those parts of the body to exert some tiny effort to get back into the best state possible; with the result that there is a perpetual conflict that makes up, so to speak, the disquiet of our clock; so that this German label is rather to my liking.

Phil: 7 *Joy* is a delight that the soul gets from the thought of the present possession of a good or the approach of a future good. To 'possess' a good is to have it in our power in such a way that we can use it when we please.

Theo: Languages don't have terms that are specific enough to distinguish neighbouring notions. Perhaps this definition of 'joy' comes nearer to the Latin *gaudium* than to *laetitia*. The latter is also translated as 'joy', but then joy appears to me to signify a state in which pleasure predominates in us; for during the deepest sorrow and amidst sharpest anguish one can have some pleasure, e.g. from drinking or from hearing music, although unpleasure predominates; and similarly in the midst of the most acute agony the mind can be joyful, as used to happen with martyrs.

Phil: **8** Sorrow is a disquiet of the soul from the thought of a lost good that might have been enjoyed longer; or of being tormented by a present evil.

Theo: Sorrow can be brought on not only by a present evil but also by the fear of a future one; so I think that the definitions I have just given of joy and sorrow are more true to common usage. Suffering involves more than mere disquiet, and so sorrow does also. Also, there is disquiet even in joy, for joy makes a man alert, active, and hopeful of further success. . . .

Phil: **9** Hope is the contentment of the soul that thinks of a probable future enjoyment of a thing that is likely to delight it. **10** Fear is a disquiet of the soul coming from the thought of future evil that may occur.

Theo: If 'disquiet' signifies an unpleasure (·which it does for you·), I grant that it always accompanies •fear; but taking it ·in my sense, as standing· for that undetectable spur that urges us on, it is also relevant to •hope. The Stoics took the passions to be beliefs: thus for them hope was the belief in a future good, and fear the belief in a future evil. But I would rather say that the passions aren't contentments or unpleasures ·on the one side· or beliefs ·on the other·, but *endeavours*. . . .that *arise from* beliefs or opinions and *are accompanied by* pleasure or unpleasure.

Phil: **11** Despair is the thought of some good thing as unattainable; it can cause •distress and sometimes causes •lassitude.

Theo: Despair, viewed as passion, will be a kind of strong endeavour that is utterly thwarted, resulting in violent conflict and much •unpleasure. But when the despair is accompanied by •lassitude and inactivity, it will be a belief rather than a passion.

Phil: **12** Anger is the disquiet or upset that we feel when we receive an injury, accompanied by a present desire for revenge.

Theo: Anger seems to be something simpler and more general than that, since it can occur in beasts, which can't be subjected to injury. [Locke used 'injury' to mean what we mean by it; his translator used the French *injure*, which Leibniz understood in its normal meaning of 'insult'.] Anger involves a violent effort to rid oneself of an evil. The desire for vengeance can remain when one is cool, and when the emotion one has is hatred rather than anger.

Phil: **13** Envy is the disquiet (the unpleasure) of the soul that comes from the thought of something good that we desire being obtained by someone who we think shouldn't have had it before us.

Theo: According to that notion of it, envy would always be a commendable passion, and would always be legitimate, at least in one's own opinion. But I suspect that envy is often directed towards someone else's acknowledged *merit*. . . . One may even envy people's having something good that one wouldn't care to have for oneself: one would merely like to see them deprived of it, without thought of getting it for oneself—and even with no possible hope of getting it, for some goods are like wall-paintings, which can be destroyed but can't be moved.

Phil: **17** Most of the passions in many people cause various changes in the body, not always ones that can be sensed. For instance, shame, which is a disquiet of the soul that one feels on the thought of having done something that is indecent or will lessen the esteem that others have for us, isn't always accompanied by blushing.

Theo: If men were more thorough in observing the overt movements that accompany the passions, it would be hard to disguise them. As for shame, it is worth thinking about the fact that modest people sometimes feel agitations like those of shame merely on *witnessing* an indecent action.

Chapter xxi: Power and freedom

Philalethes: **1** The mind •notices how one thing goes out of existence and how another comes into existence, •concludes that in the future similar things will be produced by similar agents, •has the thought of one thing's ability to have its simple ideas [here = 'qualities'] changed and of another's ability to make that change—and in that way the mind •comes by the idea of *power*.

Theophilus: If power corresponds to the Latin *potentia*, it is contrasted with *act*, and the transition from power into act—·from being able to do something to actually *doing* it·—is change. . . . Power in general, then, can be described as the possibility of change. But since change—or the making-actual of that possibility—is •action in one thing and •passion [= 'being acted on'] in another, there will be *two* powers, one active and one passive. The active power can be called a 'faculty', and the passive one might be called a 'capacity' or 'receptivity'. It is true that 'active power' is sometimes understood in a fuller sense, in which it implies not just a mere •faculty but also an •endeavour ·or •effort·; and that's how I understand it in my theorizing about dynamics. One could reserve the word 'force' for that. *Force* divides into *entelechy* and *effort*. 'Entelechy' is Aristotle's word, and he gives it a very general meaning in which it covers all action and all effort; but it seems to me more suitable to apply

> 'entelechy' to primary ·or basic· acting forces, and
> 'effort' to derivative ones.

When an entelechy—i.e. a primary or substantial endeavour—is accompanied by perception, it is a soul. And ·it's not only 'active power' that divides into two; the same holds for 'passive power'·. There is a kind of passive power that is more special ·than the one you speak of, and· that carries more reality with it. It's a power that matter has, for matter has not only •mobility (i.e. the ability to be moved, ·which is your kind of passive power·) but also •resistance, which includes both impenetrability and inertia.

Phil: **3** The idea of power expresses something relative—but then which of our ideas doesn't? Consider our ideas of extension, duration and number: don't they all contain in them a secret relation of the parts? Shape and motion even more obviously have something relative in them; and as for sensible qualities [here = 'secondary qualities'], ·they are doubly relative·: what they *are* are powers that various bodies have in relation to our perception; and what they *depend on* are relations amongst the bodies' parts—relations that we express by speaking of their bulk, shape, texture and motion of the parts. So our idea of power, I think, may

well have a place amongst other simple ideas.

Theo: The ideas that you have just listed are basically ·not simple but· composite. •Those of sensible qualities retain their place among the simple ideas only because of our ignorance ·of their real complexity·. The others, of which we have clear knowledge, are called 'simple' merely as a courtesy title—one that they shouldn't be given. It is somewhat like our way of counting as 'axioms'—meaning *basic* truths—commonly accepted principles that could be and should be demonstrated along with the rest of the theorems. This polite false-labelling does more harm than you might think, though admittedly we aren't always in a position to avoid it.

Phil: **4** If you think hard about it, you'll see that we don't get as clear and distinct an idea of active power from •bodies through our •senses as we get from •the operations of our minds through •reflection. I think there are only two sorts of action of which we have any idea—namely •thinking and •moving. Bodies give us no idea at all of thinking; for an idea of that we must go to reflection. And bodies give us no idea of the beginning of motion.

Theo: These are very good points. You use the word 'thinking' ·more broadly than I would, taking it· so generally that it covers all perception; but I don't want to quarrel about the use of words.

Phil: When a body is moving, this motion is an action on its part rather than a passion; but when a ball obeys the stroke of a billiard-cue, the ball doesn't *act* but is merely *acted on*.

Theo: There is something to be said about that, namely that bodies wouldn't receive motion with the stroke, in conformity to the laws they are observed to obey, unless they already contained motion within themselves; but let us not dwell on that point now.

Phil: Similarly, when the moving ball y bumps into another ball z and starts it moving, all y does is to communicate [here = 'passes along'] to z the motion it has previously received from something else x, and y loses as much motion as z receives.

Theo: This erroneous opinion that bodies lose as much motion as they give, which was made fashionable by the Cartesians, is now refuted by experiment and by theoretical considerations; and it has been abandoned even by the distinguished Malebranche, who published an article just for the purpose of retracting it. But I see ·from Locke's performance· that the view can still mislead able people into building their theories on ruinous foundations.

Phil: The transfer of motion gives us only a very obscure idea of an active power of moving in body, when all we observe is motion being *transferred*, not *produced*.

Theo: I am not sure whether you are contending that motion passes from thing to thing—i.e. that the numerically same motion is taken across, ·so that the basic truth about the collision is not merely that

z comes to move more while y moves less,

but that

z comes to have some of *the very same movement* that y had before the collision·.

I do know that some people have gone that way,. . . .but I doubt that this is your view or that of your able friends, who usually stay well clear of such fantasies. However, if the very same motion *doesn't* go across, it must be admitted that a new motion is produced in z, and so y is truly active, although at the same time it passively undergoes a loss of force. For although it isn't true that a body always loses as

much •motion as it gives, it does always lose some motion, and it always loses as much •force as it gives, as I have explained elsewhere. Thus, we must always allow that it has force or active power, taking 'power' in the more elevated sense that I explained a little way back, in which there is effort as well as faculty = possibility. I still agree with you, though, that the clearest idea of active power comes to us from the mind. So •active power occurs only in things that are analogous to minds—i.e. in *entelechies*—for strictly matter exhibits only •passive power.

Phil: **5** We find in ourselves a power to begin or not begin, to continue or end, various actions of our soul and movements of our bodies, merely by a thought or preference of our mind when it commands (as it were) the doing or not doing of the action in question. This power is what we call 'the will', and the actual exercise of it is called 'volition'. When someone does something (or doesn't do it) because of such a command of the soul, his doing it (or not doing it) is called 'voluntary'. And any action that is performed without such a direction of the soul is called 'involuntary'.

Theo: That all strikes me as sound and true. However, to speak more directly and perhaps to go a little deeper, I shall say that *volition* is the effort or endeavour to move towards what one finds good and away from what one finds bad, the endeavour arising immediately out of one's awareness of those things. This definition has as a corollary the famous axiom that

> From will and power together action follows;

because any endeavour results in action unless it is prevented. So it isn't only the voluntary inner acts of our minds that follow from this endeavour, but outer ones as well, i.e. voluntary movements of our bodies, thanks to the union of body and soul that I have explained elsewhere. There are other efforts, arising from perceptions that we aren't aware of; I prefer to call these 'appetitions' rather than 'volitions', because the labels 'voluntary' and 'volition' are customarily applied only to actions one can be aware of—ones that are accessible to reflection when some consideration of good and bad comes up. . . .

Phil: The power of perceiving is what we call 'understanding': there is the perception of •ideas, the perception of •the signification [here = 'meanings'] of signs, and the perception of •the agreement or disagreement between any ·two· of our ideas.

Theo: We are *aware of* many things, within ourselves and around us, that we don't *understand*. We understand them when we have clear ideas of them accompanied by the power to •reflect and to •derive necessary truths from those ideas. That is why the beasts have no understanding, at least in this sense; although they are capable of being aware of the more conspicuous and outstanding impressions. . . . So understanding in my sense is what in Latin is called *intellectus*, and the exercise of this faculty is called 'intellection', which is

> a distinct perception combined with an ability to reflect,

which the beasts don't have. Any perception that is combined with this ability is a *thought*, and I don't think that beasts have thought any more than they have understanding. So one can say that intellection occurs when the thought is clear. A final point: the perception of the •signification of signs doesn't need here to be distinguished from the perception of the •ideas that are signified.

Phil: **6** In ordinary usage, the understanding and the will are two 'faculties' of the soul, and that word is proper enough if it

is used (as all words should be) with a care not to breed any confusion in men's thoughts—as I suspect *has* happened in this matter of ·the 'faculties' of· the soul. When we are told that

> the will is the superior faculty of the soul that rules and commands all things,
> the will is free (or isn't free),
> the will determines the inferior faculties, and
> the will follows the dictates of the understanding,

though these turns of phrase may be understood in a clear and distinct sense, I'm afraid they have misled many people into a confused idea of a person's *will* ·not as a power that he has, but· as an independent agent acting within him.

Theo: Are the soul's faculties distinct things from the soul itself? And is one faculty a distinct thing from another faculty? The scholastics have worried away at this for years. The realists have said Yes ·to both questions·, and the nominalists have said No; and the same question has been debated concerning the reality—·the status as *things*·—of various other abstract beings that must stand or fall with faculties. But I don't think that we need here plunge into the brambles in an attempt to settle this question, despite the fact that Episcopius, I remember, attached such importance to it that he thought that if the faculties of the soul were *things* then human freedom would be untenable. However, even if they were distinct things, it would still be extravagant to speak of them as real *agents*. Faculties or qualities don't act; rather, substances act through faculties.

Phil: **8** So far as a man has the power to think or not think, to move or not move, according to the preference or direction of his own mind, to that extent he is free.

Theo: The term 'freedom' is highly ambiguous. There is freedom in law, and freedom in fact. In law, a slave is not free and a subject is not entirely free; but a poor man is as free as a rich one. Freedom in fact, on the other hand, consists either in •the power to do what one wills or in •the power to will as one should. Your topic is *freedom to do*, and there are different degrees and varieties of this. Speaking generally, a man is **free to do what he wills** in proportion as he has the means to do so; but there is also a special meaning in which freedom is a matter of having the use of things that are customarily in our power, and above all with the free use of our body; and so prison and illness, which prevent us from moving our bodies and our limbs as we want to and as we ordinarily can, detract from our freedom. It is in that way that a prisoner isn't free, and that a paralytic doesn't have the free use of his limbs. The **freedom to will** is also understood in two different senses: •one of them stands in contrast with the imperfection or bondage of the mind, which is an imposition or constraint, though an inner one like that which the passions impose; and •the other sense is employed when freedom is contrasted with necessity. Employing the former sense, the Stoics said that only the wise man is free; and one's mind is indeed not free when it is possessed by a great passion, for then one can't will as one should, i.e. with proper deliberation. It is in that way that God alone is perfectly free, and that created minds are free only in proportion as they are above passion; and this is a kind of freedom that pertains strictly to our •understanding. But the freedom of mind that is contrasted with necessity pertains to the bare •will, in so far as this is distinguished from the understanding. It's what is known as 'free will': it consists in the view that

> the strongest reasons or impressions that the understanding presents to the will don't prevent the act of the will from being contingent, and don't confer on it an absolute or (so to speak) metaphysical necessity.

It is in this sense that I always say that the understanding can determine the will. . . .in a manner that, although it is certain and infallible, inclines without necessitating.

Phil: **9** It is worth noting that no-one takes a tennis-ball to be a free agent when it is moving after being struck by a racquet or when it is lying still on the ground. That's because we don't think of a tennis-ball as thinking or as having any volition that would make it prefer motion to rest.

Theo: If •acting without impediment were enough to make a thing •free, then a ball that had been set in motion along a smooth trajectory *would* be a free agent. But Aristotle has rightly said that we aren't prepared to call an action 'free' unless as well as being unconstrained it is also deliberate.

Phil: That is why the ball's motion and rest fit our idea of what is *necessary.*

Theo: The term 'necessary' should be handled just as warily as 'free'. This conditional truth—

> If the ball is in motion in a smooth trajectory without any impediment, it will continue the same motion

—may be regarded as in a way necessary. But this non-conditional proposition—

> This ball is now in motion in this plane

—is an entirely contingent truth, and in this sense the ball is a contingent unfree agent. (Actually, the conditional proposition ·isn't strictly necessary, because it· depends not just on geometry but also on an assumption ·about a theological matter of fact·. It is based on the wisdom of God, who doesn't change his influence—·e.g. changing the trajectory of the ball·—unless he has some reason to do so, and there is assumed to be no such reason in the case in question.)

Phil: **10** Suppose that a sleeping man is taken into a room where there is someone he has been anxious to see and speak with, and the door is then locked; he wakes up, is glad to find himself with this person, and thus remains in the room with pleasure. I think it is obvious that he stays there •voluntarily; and yet he isn't •free to leave if he wants to. So that liberty ·or freedom· is not an idea belonging to volition.

Theo: This strikes me as a most apt example for bringing out that there is a sense in which an action or state can be voluntary without being free. Still, when philosophers and theologians dispute about 'free will' they have a quite different sense in mind.

Phil: **11** If paralysis hinders someone's legs from obeying the commands of his mind, there is a lack of •freedom; yet as long as the paralytic *prefers* sitting still to walking away, his sitting may be •voluntary. So •'voluntary' is opposed not to •'necessary' but to •'involuntary'.

Theo: This preciseness of expression would suit me well enough, but it doesn't fit ordinary usage. And when people contrast •freedom with •necessity they mean to talk not about ·the freedom of· outer actions but about ·the freedom of· the very act of willing.

Phil: **12** When a man is awake, it's not up to him whether he thinks or not, any more than it's up to him whether he does or doesn't prevent his body from touching another body. But he can often choose whether to think about *this* rather than *that*, and at those times he is at liberty in respect of his ideas; just as he is at liberty is in respect of where he stands, when he can choose whether to stand *here* or *there*. But some ideas. . . .are so fixed in the mind that in certain circumstances it can't get rid of them, however hard it tries. A man on the rack isn't at liberty to set aside the idea of pain; and sometimes a boisterous passion hurries our mind, as a hurricane does our bodies.

Theo: Thoughts are ordered and interconnected, as motions are, for the one corresponds perfectly to the other. This correspondence holds despite the fact that

> motions are determined in a •blindly compelling manner,

whereas

> thoughts are determined in a manner that is •free, i.e. accompanied by choice.

A thinking being isn't *forced* by considerations of good and bad, but only *inclined* by them. For the soul keeps its perfections while representing the body; and although in involuntary actions the mind depends on the body, in voluntary actions the dependence runs the other way—the body depends on the mind. But this dependence is only a •metaphysical one, which comes down to this:

> x depends on y if and only if God takes account of y when he assigns x its life history ·and settles y without taking x into account·, or takes *more* account of y in settling x than he does of x in settling y.

Which one God takes (more) account of depends on which one is inherently more perfect. If the dependences between mind and body were •physical [here = 'real, causal'] dependence, there would be an immediate ·causal· influence that the dependent one would receive from the other. A further point: involuntary thoughts come to us partly from •outside us through objects affecting our senses, and partly from •within, as a result of the (often undetectable) traces left behind by earlier perceptions that continue to operate and mingle with new ones. We are passive in this respect; and even while awake we are visited by images—which I take to include representations not only of shapes but also of sounds and other sensible qualities—which come to us unbidden, as in dreams. . . . It's like a magic lantern with which one can make figures appear on the wall by turning something on the inside. But our mind on becoming aware of some image that occurs in it can say Stop! and bring it to a halt, so to speak. What is more, the mind embarks as it sees fit on certain trains of thought that lead it to others. But that applies when neither kind of impression—those from within or those from without—has the upper hand. People differ greatly in this respect, according to their temperaments and to the use they have made of their powers of self-control; so that one person may be able to rise above impressions by which another would be swept along.

Phil: **13** Wherever there is no thought, there is necessity. When this occurs in an agent who is *capable of* volition, we get what I call 'constraint', namely

> some action of his is begun or continued contrary to the preference of his mind,

or what I call 'restraint', namely

> some action is hindered or stopped contrary to his volition.

Agents that have no thought, no volition at all, are necessary agents all the time.

Theo: It seems to me that even though volitions are contingent, strictly speaking necessity should be contrasted not with volition but with contingency, as I have already pointed out in **9**. And determination shouldn't be confused with necessity: there is just as much connection or determination among thoughts as among motions (since being determined isn't at all the same as being forced or pushed in a constraining way). If we don't always notice the reason that determines us, or rather by which we determine ourselves, that's because we can't •be aware of all the workings of our mind and of its usually confused and imperceptible thoughts, any more than we can •sort out all the mechanisms that nature puts to work in bodies. If by 'necessity' we understood

> a man's being inevitably determined, so that his behaviour could be predicted by a perfect mind that had complete knowledge of everything going on outside and inside that man,

then indeed every free act *would* be necessary, because thoughts *are* as determined as the movements they represent. But we should distinguish what is •necessary from what is •contingent though determined. Not only are contingent truths not necessary, but the links between them aren't always absolutely necessary either: when one thing follows from another in the contingent realm, the kind of determining that is involved isn't the same as when one thing follows from another in the realm of the necessary. Geometrical and metaphysical 'followings' •necessitate, but physical and moral ones •incline without necessitating. Even the physical realm involves a moral and voluntary element because of its relation to God: the laws of motion are ·laws because God *chooses* that they shall be laws; so they are· necessitated only by what is best—for God always chooses the best, and is determined to do so although he chooses freely. Bodies don't choose for themselves, because God has chosen for them; so in common usage they have come to be called 'necessary' agents. I have no objection to this, provided that no-one confuses the •necessary with the •determined and goes on to suppose that free beings act in an undetermined way, ·so that even a perfectly and perfectly well-informed mind couldn't predict their behaviour·. This error has prevailed in certain minds, and destroys the most important truths, even the basic axiom that **nothing happens without a reason**, which is needed if we are properly to demonstrate the existence of God and other great truths. As for 'constraint': it is useful to distinguish two sorts of constraint. There is •physical constraint, as when a man is imprisoned against his will or thrown off a precipice; and there is •moral constraint, as for example ·when someone acts in a certain way because of his· fear of a greater evil. In a case of moral constraint, although the action is in a way •compelled, it is nevertheless •voluntary. One can also be compelled by the thought of a greater good, as when a man is tempted by the offer of a benefit that is so great that he can't resist, though this isn't usually called 'constraint'.

Phil: **14** Let us see if we can't now put an end to the question of whether a man's will is free or not. The question has been debated for ages, but I think it's an unreasonable question—unreasonable because unintelligible!

Theo: There is good reason to exclaim at the strange behaviour of men who torment themselves over misconceived questions. . . .

Phil: Liberty is a *power*, and only agents—·*things*· *that act*—can have it. The will can't have liberty—·can't be free·—because the will is itself ·not a thing but· only a power.

Theo: You are right, if the words are used properly. Still, the common way of talking ·about freedom of the will· can be defended in a fashion. Asking whether a man's will is free is a way of asking whether a man is free when he wills. This is like saying 'Heat has the power to melt wax' meaning that if a body is hot *it* has the power to melt wax.

Phil: **15** Liberty ·or freedom· is the power a man has to do or not-do any action according to what he wills to do.

Theo: If that were all that people meant by 'freedom' when they ask if the will or choice is free, then the question *would* be truly absurd, ·as you say it is·. But we shall soon see what they are really asking, and indeed I have already touched on it. It's true that what they are asking for—many of them at least—*is* indeed absurd and impossible, but for a reason different from the one you have given. It is because they

are asking for an utterly imaginary and futile *freedom of equilibrium*, which would be no use to them even if it were possible for them to have it; having it would be having the 'freedom' to will contrary to all the impressions that may come from the understanding; which would *destroy* true liberty, and destroy reason along with it, and would bring us down below the beasts.

Phil: **17** People have often said things like this:

> The will directs the understanding, and the understanding does or doesn't obey the will.

This is as improper and unintelligible as saying:

> The power of speaking directs the power of singing, and the power of singing does or doesn't obey the power of speaking.

·In each case, the absurdity lies in talking about a *power* as though it were an active *thing*·. **18** Yet this way of talking about 'the will' has become common, and I think it has produced great confusion. In fact, the •power of thinking doesn't act on the •power of choosing, or vice versa, any more than the •power of singing acts on the •power of dancing.

19 I grant that this or that thought may provide the *occasion* for a man to exercise his power to choose; and that the choice of his mind may be the cause of his actually having this or that thought, just as the actual singing of this tune may be the occasion of someone's dancing that dance.

Theo: Rather more is involved here than the providing of *occasions*: there is also an element of dependence between a thought and a choice. [Both men here use the word 'occasion' in a special sense that had been common among philosophers. It was rooted in the idea that nothing can *cause* God to do anything but that events in the created world may give God the 'occasion' to act in a certain way. This was supposed to create reliable correlations between worldly events and God's actions, without attributing to God the slightest passivity or being-acted-on or—using Theophilus's word—dependence.] For we can only will what we think good, and the more developed the faculty of understanding is the better are the choices of the will. . . .

Phil: **21** The right question to ask is not 'Is the will free?' but 'Is the man free?' And my answer to *that* is:

> A person is free to the extent that he can, by the direction or choice of his mind, prefer the occurrence of some action to its non-occurrence or vice versa, so that the action occurs or doesn't occur according to what he wills.

We'll be hard put to it to imagine anyone being freer than *to be able to do what he wills*. Thus, with respect to any action that is within the reach of that power in a man—·i.e. any action that he can perform if he wants to·—the man seems to be as free as freedom can make him, if I may so put it.

Theo: In reasonings about the freedom of the will, or about free will, the question is not *Can a man do what he wills to do?* which raises the question of •whether his legs are free and or •whether he has room to move about. Rather, the question is *How independent is his will?* which asks •whether he has a free mind and what that consists in. With 'freedom' thus understood as freedom of the mind, intellects will differ in how free they are, and God's supreme intellect will possess a perfect freedom of which created beings are not capable.

Phil: **22** But the busy minds of men, who want to clear themselves as far as they can from all thoughts of guilt (even if they do it by putting themselves into a worse state than that of utter inevitable necessity), aren't content with this ·view that a man is free so long as there are no obstacles to his doing what he wills to do·. Unless there is more to freedom than *that*, they aren't satisfied ·because by that

standard they have been acting freely in all their wicked actions·. They think that the plea 'I wasn't free when I did x' holds good unless the man was not only •free to do what he willed but also •free to will. **23** As to that, I think that once an action that is in a man's power has been proposed to his mind, he can't be free in respect of a particular act of willing regarding it. The reason for this is clear: •it is unavoidable that the action depending on his will either *will* occur or *won't* occur; and •its occurrence or non-occurrence has to follow perfectly the determination and choice of his will; so •he can't avoid willing the occurrence or non-occurrence of that action.

Theo: I should have thought that we can and very frequently do suspend choice, particularly when other thoughts break into our deliberations. So that, although the action about which we are deliberating must occur or not occur, it doesn't follow that we must necessarily decide on its occurrence or non-occurrence; for its non-occurrence may come about because we *didn't* decide.

Phil: To make a man free in this ·spurious· way we must make his act of the will depend on his will! So there must be another underlying will or faculty of willing, to determine the acts of this will, and yet another to determine *that*, and so on ad infinitum: for wherever one stops, the actions of the will one stops at cannot be free.

Theo: We certainly speak very incorrectly when we speak of willing to will. We don't will to *will*, but rather will to *do*; and if we did will to will, we would will to will to will, and so on ad infinitum. Still, through our voluntary actions we often indirectly prepare the way for other voluntary actions; and although we can't will what we want to, just as we cannot believe what we want to, we *can* act ahead of time in such a way that we shall eventually believe or will what we would like to be able to believe or will today. We attach ourselves to people, reading material and ways of thinking that are favourable to a certain faction, and we ignore whatever comes from the opposite faction; and by means of these and countless other devices, which we usually employ unknowingly unwittingly with no set purpose, we succeed in deceiving ourselves or at least changing our minds, and so we achieve our own conversion or perversion depending on what our experience has been.

Phil: **25** Since it obviously isn't up to a man whether he wills or not, the next question that is raised is: Is a man at liberty to will which of the two he pleases, e.g. moving or staying still? But this question is so obviously absurd that anyone who reflects on it might become convinced that liberty doesn't concern the will. For to ask 'Is a man at liberty to will either moving or staying still, speaking or keeping silent?' is to ask 'Can a man will what he wills, or be pleased with what he's pleased with?'—a question that hardly needs an answer!

Theo: For all that, people *do* have a difficulty about this that deserves to be cleared up. They say that after everything is known and taken account of, it is still in their power to will not only •what pleases them most but also •the exact opposite, doing this just to show their freedom. But what has to be borne in mind is that even this whim or impulse—or at least this reason that prevents them following the other reasons—weighs in the balance and makes pleasing to them something that would otherwise not be; so that their choice is always determined ·by their total state of mind·. . . . Since men mainly fail to sort out all these separate considerations, it isn't surprising that they are in such a muddle about this question, with all its hidden twists and turns.

Phil: **29** To the question 'What determines the will?' the true and proper answer is 'The mind'. If this doesn't answer the

question, the questioner must have meant to ask:

> What moves the mind in each particular instance to exert its general power of directing how the body moves, in such a way that the body moves just precisely thus or so?

My answer to *that* is: What makes us •continue in the same state or action is only our present •satisfaction in it; what moves us to •change is always some •disquiet.

Theo: As I showed in the preceding chapter, this disquiet isn't always an unpleasure, just as one's state of ease isn't always a satisfaction or a pleasure. Often it is an insensible perception—one that we can't discern or single out—which makes us lean one way rather than the other without being able to say why.

Phil: **30** Will and desire shouldn't be confused: a man •desires to be relieved of the gout, but he realizes that removing the pain may force the poison over into some more vital part of his system, so he doesn't ever •will any action that might serve to remove this pain.

Theo: Such a desire is a kind of velleity—·a half-strength volition·—as contrasted with a complete volition. When that occurs, the person *would* will if he weren't afraid of incurring a greater evil (or perhaps losing a greater good) through getting what he wants. We could say that your man *does* will to be rid of his gout, doing so with a certain intensity of volition but not one that ever rises to full strength. . . .

Phil: **31** It is as well to bear in mind that what determines the will to action is *not* (as is generally supposed) •the greater good, but rather some •disquiet—usually the most pressing disquiet. This can be called desire, which is a disquiet of the mind caused by the lack of some absent good—or the desire to be relieved of pain. It is *not* the case that someone's lacking a good always causes him pain proportional to how great the good is or how great he thinks it is, because the lack of a good *isn't* always an evil, and therefore absent good can be thought about without pain. On the other hand, all pain causes a desire that is intense in proportion as the pain is great, because the presence of pain *is* always an evil. . . .

And whenever there is any strength of desire, there is an equal strength of disquiet. **34** When a man is perfectly •content with the state he is in, which is when he is perfectly •free of all disquiet, what is left for him to will except to continue in this state? That is why ·God·, our all-wise Maker, has put into man the discomforts of hunger and thirst and other natural desires—to move and determine their wills for their own individual preservation and the survival of their species. **35** As for the maxim that

> *What determines the will is* ***good****, the* ***greater*** *good,*

this seems to be so established and settled that I'm not in the least surprised that I used to take it for granted. But when I look into it carefully, I'm forced to conclude that even when we know and admit that that something *is* the greater good, our will is not determined by it until our desire for it. . . .makes us *unquiet* from the lack of it. Take a man who is utterly convinced of the advantages of •*virtue* and knows that it is necessary for anyone who has any great aims in this world or hopes for the after-life; until he 'hungers and thirsts after righteousness' his will won't be aimed at any action in pursuit of •this excellent good; and any other disquiet that gets in the way of his pursuing virtue will drive his will in other directions. On the other side, take a drunkard who sees that his health is decaying, that he is moving towards poverty, and that the course he is following will lead to discredit and diseases and the lack of everything—even of his beloved drink. Despite all this, when his disquiet from missing his companions becomes

strong enough it drives him to the tavern at his usual time, even though he can see the prospect of losing health and wealth and perhaps of the joys of the after-life—joys that he can't regard as inconsiderable, and indeed admits are far better than the pleasure of drinking or the idle chat of a drinking club. Why does he persists in his dissolute ways? Not because he doesn't see what is best! He *does* •see it, and •admits its excellence; and at times between his drinking hours he •resolves to pursue this greatest good; but when the disquiet from missing his accustomed delight returns to torment him, the good that he admits is better than the good of drinking loses its hold on his mind, and the *present disquiet* determines the will to the accustomed action. . . . And thus he is sometimes reduced to saying 'I see and esteem the better; I follow the worse' [quoted from Ovid]. We all know from experience that people often see the better and follow the worse; my account in terms of 'disquiet' lets us see *how* this can happen—and there may be no other account that does so.

Theo: There is merit and substance in these thoughts. Still, I wouldn't want them to encourage people to think they should give up the old axiom that

> *The will pursues the greatest good, and flees the greatest evil, that it can detect.*

The main reason we neglect things that are truly good is that on topics and in circumstances where our senses aren't much engaged our thoughts are for the most part what I call 'blind thoughts'. I mean that they are empty of perception and sensibility, and consist in the wholly unaided use of *symbols*—like people doing algebraic geometry and mostly not attending to the geometrical figures that are being dealt with. Usually words are in this respect like the symbols of arithmetic and algebra. We often reason in •words, with the •object itself virtually absent from our mind. This sort of 'knowledge' can't influence us—something livelier is needed if we are to be moved. Yet this is how people usually think about God, virtue and happiness; they speak and reason without explicit ideas. It's not that they *can't* have the ideas, for the ideas are there in their minds; the trouble is that they don't take the trouble to think their ideas through. Sometimes they have the idea of an absent good or evil, but only very faintly, so it's no wonder that it has almost no influence on them. Thus, if we prefer the worse it is because we have a sense of the good it contains but not of the evil it contains or of the good that exists on the opposite side. We assume and believe—or rather we tell ourselves, merely on the credit of someone else's word or at best of our recollection of having thought it all out in the past—that the greater good is on the better side and the greater evil on the other. But when we don't have them actively in mind, the •thoughts and reasonings that oppose our feelings are a kind of parroting that adds nothing to the mind's present contents; and if we don't take steps to improve •them they will come to nothing. . . . The finest moral precepts and the best prudential rules in the world have weight only in a soul that is as sensitive to them as to what opposes them—if not directly sensitive (which isn't always possible), then at least indirectly sensitive, as I shall explain shortly. . . . It isn't surprising that in the struggle between flesh and spirit it's so often spirit that loses, because it fails to make good use of its advantages. This struggle is nothing but the conflict between different endeavours—those that come from •confused thoughts and those that come from •clear ones. Confused thoughts often make themselves vividly sensed, whereas clear ones are usually only potentially vivid: they *could* be actually so, if we would only apply ourselves to getting through to the meanings of the words or symbols;

but since we are too rushed or too careless to do that, what we oppose lively feelings with are bare words or at best images that are too faint. . . . If the mind made good use of its advantages it would triumph nobly. The first step would have to be in education, which should be conducted in such a way that true goods and evils are made as thoroughly sensible as they can be, by clothing one's notions of them in details that are more appropriate to this end. And a grown man who missed this excellent education should still (better late than never !) begin to seek out •enlightened and rational pleasures to bring against the •confused but powerful pleasures of the senses. And indeed divine grace itself is a pleasure that brings enlightenment. Thus when a man is in a good frame of mind he ought to make for himself laws and rules for the future, and then carry them out strictly, drawing himself away—abruptly or gradually, depending on the nature of the case—from situations that are capable of corrupting him. A lover will be cured by a voyage undertaken just for that purpose; a period of seclusion will stop us from keeping company with people who reinforce our bad habits. . . . To dangerous interests we will oppose innocent ones like farming or gardening; we'll avoid idleness, we'll collect curiosities, both natural and artificial, we'll carry out experiments and inquiries, we'll take up some compelling occupation if we don't already have one, or engage in useful and agreeable conversation or reading. In short, we should take advantage of our good impulses to make effective resolutions, as though they were the voice of God calling us. Since we can't always *think through* the notions of true good and true evil far enough to see the pleasures and pains they involve, and thus be influenced by them, we must make this rule for ourselves once and for all:

> Wait till you have the findings of reason and from then on follow them, even if you ordinarily have them in mind only as 'blind thoughts' that are devoid of sensible charms.

We need this rule so as finally to gain control both of our passions and of our insensible inclinations, or disquiets, by getting the *habit* of acting in conformity with reason—a habit that makes virtue a pleasure and second nature to us. But it isn't my purpose here to offer and instil moral precepts, or spiritual procedures and skills for the practice of true piety. It will be enough if by thinking about how our souls operate we see the *source* of our frailties; knowledge of the •source provides knowledge of the •remedies.

Phil: **36** The only thing that acts on our will is our present disquiet. It *naturally* determines the will in pursuit of the happiness that we all aim at in all our actions, because everyone regards pain and uneasiness—i.e. the disquiet or rather discomfort that prevents us from being at our ease—as inconsistent with happiness, ·and as constituting· a little pain that spoils all the pleasure we rejoice in. And so it's a matter of course that what determines the choice of our will regarding our next action will always be the removing of any pain that we have, as the first and necessary step towards happiness.

Theo: If you take uneasiness or disquiet to be a genuine unpleasure, then I don't agree that it's the only thing that spurs us on. What usually drives us are those tiny insensible perceptions that could be called *sufferings that we can't become aware of*, if it weren't for the fact that the notion of suffering involves awareness. These tiny impulses consist in our continually overcoming small obstacles—our nature works at this without our thinking about it. This is what is really going on in the disquiet that we sense without explicitly noticing it; it makes us act not only when we are worked up but also when we appear most calm—for we are never

without *some* activity and motion, simply because nature continually works to be more completely at ease. And it is what determines us also. . . .in the cases that appear to us the most evenly balanced ·between two courses of action·, because we are *never* completely in equilibrium and can *never* be evenly balanced between two options. Now, if these *elements* of suffering. . . .were *real* suffering, we would be continually wretched as long as we pursued our own good restlessly and zealously. However, quite the opposite is the case. As I said earlier (xx.6), nature's accumulation of continual little triumphs, in which it puts itself more and more at ease—drawing closer to the good and enjoying the image of it, or reducing the feeling of suffering—is itself a considerable pleasure, often better than the actual enjoyment of the good. Far from such disquiet's being inconsistent with happiness, I find that it is essential to the happiness of created beings; their happiness never consists in complete attainment, which would make them insensate and stupefied, but in continual and uninterrupted progress towards greater goods. Such progress is inevitably accompanied by desire or at least by constant disquiet, but of the kind I have just explained: it doesn't amount to discomfort, but is restricted to the elements or rudiments of suffering, which we can't be aware of in themselves but which act as spurs to stimulate the will. That is what a healthy man's appetite does, unless it amounts to that discomfort which unsettles us and gives us a tormenting obsession with the idea of whatever it is that we don't have. These 'appetitions', whether small or large, are. . . .the first steps that nature makes us take; not so much towards •happiness ·in the long run· as towards •joy ·right now·, since in them one looks only to the present; but experience and reason teach us to govern and moderate them so that they can lead us to happiness. I spoke about this earlier (I.ii.3). Appetitions are like a stone's endeavour to follow the shortest (perhaps not the best) route to the centre of the earth; it can't foresee that it will smash against rocks that it might have avoided, coming goal if, it had had the wit and the means to swerve aside. Similarly, by rushing straight at a present pleasure we sometimes fall into the abyss of misery. That is why reason opposes appetition with images of greater goods or evils to come, and with a firm policy and practice of thinking before acting and then standing by whatever is found to be best, even when the sensible grounds that lead to it are no longer present to the mind, and consist in little but faint images or even in the blind thoughts that are generated by words or signs that have no concrete interpretation. So it is all a matter of

- •'Think about it carefully!'—making laws ·for oneself·, and
- •'Remember!'—so as to follow the laws even when we don't remember the reasons that first led us to them.

It is wise to keep those reasons in mind as much as possible, though, so that one's soul may be filled with rational joy and enlightened pleasure.

Phil: **37** These precautions are undoubtedly the more necessary since the idea of an absent good can't counterbalance any feeling of disquiet or unpleasure that is troubling us right now, until ·our lack of· this good raises our desire. There are ever so many people •who have before their minds lively representations of the unspeakable joys of Heaven, which they acknowledge to be not merely possible but probable, and •who are nevertheless content to settle for happiness in *this* life. And so the disquiets of their present desires get the upper hand. . . .determine their wills to seek the pleasures of the present life—and all through this they are entirely insensitive to the good things of the life hereafter.

Theo: This is partly because men are often not really con-

vinced: whatever they may say, a secret doubt holds sway in the depths of their souls. They lack one or other of the two things that are required for real belief: either •they have never understood the sound reasons for believing in that immortality of the soul that is worthy of divine justice and is the basis of true religion; or •they no longer remember having understood those reasons. As for the future life as represented by true religion and even true reason. few people even think of as *possible*; so far are they from thinking it *probable*—let alone *certain*. Their thoughts about it are all mere parroting or else crude and shallow imagery, Moslem fashion—and they don't find much plausibility in the imagery, for they are far from being influenced by it. . . . Still, nothing would be more powerful than the truth if we set ourselves to know it thoroughly and to show it off to good advantage; without doubt there are ways of disposing men powerfully towards it. When I consider how great an effect •ambition and •greed have on anyone who has entered into that way of life—one almost entirely devoid of present sensible charms—I give up no cause for lost! Given that virtue is accompanied by so many substantial benefits, I think it would have infinitely more effect if some transformation in human kind at last brought virtue into favour—made it *fashionable*, so to speak. It's quite certain that young people could be made accustomed to getting their greatest pleasure from virtuous behaviour. And even grown men could make laws for themselves and make a practice of following them, so that they would •be strongly disposed to abide by them, and when deflected from them would •suffer as much disquiet as the drunkard suffers when prevented from going to the tavern! I'm pleased to add these thoughts about how such remedies for our ills are possible and even easily available, instead of helping to discourage men from pursuing true goodness by harping on their frailties.

Phil: It is almost entirely a matter of making them constantly desire the true good. **39** When we act •voluntarily there is usually some •desire involved, which is why the •will and •desire are so often run together ·as though they were the same thing·. But there is also some involvement of the disquiet that is a part, or at least a result, of most of the other passions. Aversion, fear, anger, envy, shame—each of these has its disquiet, through which it influences the will. I don't think that any of these passions exists simple and alone. Indeed, I think there is hardly any passion that doesn't have desire joined with it. Wherever there is disquiet there is desire, I am sure. As our eternity doesn't depend on the present moment, we look beyond, no matter what pleasures we are now enjoying; and desire goes with our foresight, carrying the will with it. So that even in joy itself, what keeps up the action on which the enjoyment depends is the •desire to continue the enjoyment and the •fear of losing it; and as soon as a greater disquiet than *that* takes hold of the mind, it immediately determines the mind to some new action, and the present delight is neglected.

Theo: Various perceptions and inclinations combine to produce a complete volition: it is the result of the conflict amongst them. •Some that are imperceptible in themselves add up to a disquiet that impels us without our seeing why. •Others join forces with one another and carry us towards or away from some object, in which case there is desire or fear, also accompanied by a disquiet but not always one amounting to pleasure or unpleasure. Finally, •some impulses are accompanied by actual pleasure or suffering. All these perceptions are either new sensations or the lingering images of past ones (whether or not accompanied by memory): these images revive the charms that were associated with them in those earlier sensations, and that lets them also revive

the former impulses in proportion to how vividly they are imagined. The upshot of all these impulses is the *prevailing effort*, which makes a full volition. . . . So it's easy to see that volition can hardly exist without desire and without 'avoidance', which I suggest as a name for the opposite of desire. Disquiet occurs not merely in uncomfortable passions like

aversion, fear, anger, envy and shame,

but also in their opposites—

love, hope, calmness, generosity and pride.

It can be said that wherever there is desire there will be disquiet; but the converse doesn't always hold, since one is often in a state of disquiet without knowing what one wants, in which case there is no fully developed desire.

Phil: **40** The disquiet that determines the will to action is usually the most pressing one among all the disquiets that the person thinks are capable of being removed at that time.

Theo: Since the final result is determined by how things weigh against one another, I think that the most pressing disquiet won't always prevail; for even if it prevails over each of the contrary endeavours taken singly, it may be outweighed by all of them taken together. The mind can even avail itself of the *trick of dichotomies*, to make first one prevail and then another; just as in a meeting one can arrange the *order* in which questions are put to the vote in such a way as to ensure that the faction one favours will prevail by getting a majority of votes. The mind should prepare for this in advance, for once battle has been engaged there is no time left to make use of such tricks; everything that then impinges on us weighs in the balance and contributes to determining a resultant direction. . . .

Phil: **41** If you ask 'What moves desire?' I answer 'Happiness and nothing else'. Happiness and misery are the names of two extremes; we don't know what either is like at its uttermost outer limit,. . . .but of both we have lively impressions, made by various kinds of delight and joy, torment and sorrow. For brevity's sake I shall bring these under the names 'pleasure' and 'pain', because there are pleasures and pains of the mind as well as of the body. Actually, it would be more accurate to say that they are all of the mind, though some are caused in the mind by thoughts whereas others are caused in the body by movement of bits of matter. **42** Thus,

- all-out happiness is the utmost pleasure we are capable of,
- all-out misery is the utmost pain we are capable of, and
- ·minimal happiness·, the weakest that can be called 'happiness' at all, is the pain-free state in which one enjoys a level of present pleasure such that one couldn't be content with less.

What is apt to produce pleasure in us we call 'good', and what is apt to give us pain we call 'evil'. Yet we often don't use those labels when one or other of those goods or evils comes into competition with a greater good or greater evil.

Theo: I doubt that a greatest pleasure is possible; I'm inclined to believe that pleasure can increase ad infinitum, for we don't know how far our knowledge and our organs may develop in the course of the eternity that lies before us. So I would think that happiness is a lasting pleasure, which can't occur without a continual progress to new pleasures. Thus of two people, one of whom progresses much faster and by way of greater pleasures than the other, each will be happy in himself although their happinesses will be very unequal. So we might describe happiness as *a pathway through pleasures*, with pleasure being only a single step: it

is the most direct move towards happiness that we can see right now, but it isn't always the best, as I said near the end of **36**. We can miss the right road by trying to follow the shortest one, just as the stone by falling straight down may encounter obstacles that prevent it from getting close to the centre of the earth. This shows that

> reason and will are what lead us towards happiness, whereas sensibility and appetite lead us only towards pleasure.

Now, although 'pleasure' can't be given a nominal definition, any more than 'light' or 'heat' can, pleasure can—like light and heat—be defined causally. I believe that basically pleasure is a sense of perfection, and pain a sense of imperfection, each being notable enough for one to become aware of it. For the tiny insensible perceptions of some perfection or imperfection, which are as it were components of pleasure and of pain, constitute •inclinations and •propensities but not outright •passions. So there are **(1)** insensible inclinations of which we aren't aware. There are also **(2)** sensible ones: we are acquainted with their existence and their objects, but have no sense of how they are constituted; these are confused inclinations that we attribute to our bodies although there is always something corresponding to them in the mind. Finally there are **(3)** distinct inclinations that reason gives us: we have a sense both of their strength and of how they are constituted. Pleasures of this ·third· kind, which occur in the knowledge and production of order and harmony, are the most valuable. Locke is right to say that in general these inclinations, passions, pleasures and pains belong only to the mind or to the soul; to which I will add that although in metaphysical strictness the origin of each of them is in the soul, one is justified in saying that confused thoughts 'come from the body', because it is by considering the body and not by considering the mind that we can discover something distinct and intelligible concerning them. *Good* is what provides or conduces to pleasure, as *evil* is what conduces to pain; but when we sacrifice a greater good to a lesser one that conflicts with it, the latter can become really an evil in so far as it contributes to the pain that must result.

Phil: **47** The soul has a power to suspend the satisfaction of any of its desires, and is thus at liberty to consider them one after another and to compare them. That is the liberty man that has, and all the various mistakes, errors and faults that we run into when we rush into making decisions comes from our not making proper use of this liberty. This, incidentally, is what is usually called 'free will'—I think wrongly.

Theo: Our attempt to satisfy our desire is suspended or prevented when the desire isn't strong enough to arouse us and to overcome the difficulty or discomfort involved in satisfying it. This difficulty sometimes consists merely in an insensible laziness or slackness that inhibits us without our paying any attention to it; it is greatest in people who were brought up lazy, or are temperamentally hard to stir, or are discouraged by old age or failure. Even when the desire is strong enough in itself to arouse us if nothing hinders it, it can be held back by contrary inclinations. . . . But as these contrary inclinations, propensities and desires must already exist in the soul, it doesn't have them within its power; and consequently it couldn't resist them in any free and voluntary way in which reason could play a part, if it didn't have another method, namely to turn the mind in a different direction. But how can we ensure that it occurs to us to do this whenever the need arises?—that is the problem, especially when one is in the grip of a strong passion. The solution is for the mind to be prepared in advance, and to be already stepping from thought to thought, so that it won't

be too much held up when the path becomes slippery and treacherous. It helps with this if one accustoms oneself in general to touching on certain topics only in passing, the better to preserve one's freedom of mind. Best of all, we should get used to proceeding methodically and sticking to sequences of thoughts for which reason. . . .provides the thread. It helps with this if one becomes accustomed to withdrawing into oneself occasionally, rising above the hubbub of present impressions—as it were getting away from one's own situation and asking oneself 'Why am I here?', 'Where am I going?', 'How far have I come?', or saying 'I must come to the point, I must set to work!'. . . . Once we are in a position •to stop our desires and passions from taking effect, i.e. •to suspend action, we can find ways of fighting against them, either by contrary desires and inclinations or by diversion, that is by occupying ourselves with other matters. It is through these methods and tricks that we become masters of ourselves, and can bring it about that we have certain thoughts and that when the time comes we'll will according to our present preference *and* according to reason's decrees. However, this always takes place in determinate ways and never without reasons—never by the fictitious principle of total indifference or equilibrium. Some people would claim the latter to be the essence of freedom, as if one could determine oneself without reasons and even against all reasons, going directly contrary to the prevailing impressions and propensities. Without reasons, I say, i.e. •without other inclinations going the opposite way, •without being already in the process of turning the mind to other matters, and •without any other such intelligible means. If we allow this, we are resorting to chimeras. . . .in which there is neither rhyme nor reason. [Here and later, 'chimera' is used to mean 'wild and fanciful conception'.]

Phil: I too am in favour of this intellectual determination of the will by what is contained in perception and in the understanding. It's not a •fault but a •perfection of our nature to will and act according to the last result of a fair examination. **48** This is so far from being a •restraint or •lessening of freedom that it is •our freedom at its best; and the •further we are from that sort of determination, the •nearer we are to misery and slavery. If you suppose a perfect and absolute indifference in the mind, that can't be determined by its most recent judgment of good or evil, you will put it into a very imperfect state.

Theo: I like all that very much. It shows that the mind has no complete and direct power to block its desires at any time. If it did, it would •never be settled, whatever investigation it might make and whatever good reasons or effective sentiments it might have, and would •remain forever irresolute, fluctuating endlessly between fear and hope. . . .

Phil: However, a man is at liberty to lift up his hand to his head or let it stay at his side: he is perfectly indifferent in either; and it would be an imperfection in him if he didn't have *that* power.

Theo: Strictly speaking, one is never indifferent with regard to two alternatives—*any* two, e.g. whether to turn right or left. . . . We do one or the other without thinking about it, which is a sign that various internal dispositions and external impressions—all of them insensible—have worked together to settle us on the alternative that we adopt. It doesn't outweigh its rival by much, however, and we are bound to seem indifferent about the matter, since the slightest *sensible* consideration that arises for us can easily determine us to go the other way instead. There is a little difficulty in raising an arm to put a hand on one's head, but it is so small that we easily overcome it. I concede

that it would be a great imperfection in man if he couldn't easily to determine himself to lift his arm and couldn't easily determine himself not to lift his arm.

Phil: But it would be as great an imperfection if he had the same ·evenly balanced· indifference in all situations, e.g. when •he wants to save his head from a blow that he sees coming and •all that is involved is a movement he could easily make and could easily not make, just like the cases we have been speaking of, where it is almost a matter of indifference. If it were almost a matter of indifference to him in cases like *that*, he wouldn't be brought to move vigorously or swiftly enough when he needs to. So determination is frequently useful and necessary to us; and if we were only weakly determined in every sort of situation, and more or less insensitive to reasons drawn from perceptions of good and bad, we would be without effective choice. If we were determined by anything but the last result of our own mind's judgment about the good or evil of an action, we wouldn't be free.

Theo: Nothing could be more true; those who seek some other kind of freedom don't know what they are asking for.

Phil: **49** Those superior beings who enjoy perfect happiness are more steadily determined in their choice of good than we are, and yet we have no reason to think they are less free than we are. . . . I even think that if it were fit for such poor finite creatures as we are to say anything about what infinite wisdom and goodness could do, we might say that God himself cannot choose what isn't good; his freedom doesn't prevent him from being determined by what is best.

Theo: I am so convinced of this truth that I believe we can assert it boldly, 'poor finite creatures' though we are, and indeed that we would be very wrong to doubt it. In doing so we would detract from God's wisdom, his goodness and his other infinite perfections. But a choice, however much the will is determined to make it, shouldn't be called absolutely and in the strict sense *necessary*: a predominance of goods of which one is aware inclines without necessitating, although, all things considered, this inclination is determining and never fails to have its effect.

Phil: To be determined by reason to the best is to be most free. **50** Would anyone want to be an imbecile because an imbecile is less determined by wise considerations than a wise man? If shaking off reason's yoke is liberty, then madmen and fools are the only freemen! I think that someone who chose to be mad for the sake of that kind of 'liberty' would have to be mad already.

Theo: Some people these days think it clever to sneer at reason and to treat it as intolerable pedantry. I see little pamphlets whose self-congratulating authors have nothing to say, and sometimes I even see verses so fine that they shouldn't be used to express such false thoughts. In fact, if those who make fun of reason were speaking in earnest this would be a new kind of absurdity, unknown in past centuries. To speak against reason is to speak against the truth, for reason is a chain of truths. This is to speak against oneself, and against one's own good, since the principal use of reason consists in knowing the good and pursuing it.

Phil: **51** The highest perfection of any thinking being lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true happiness; so the foundation of our liberty is our taking care not to mistake imaginary happiness for the real thing. The more strongly and unalterably we are committed to the pursuit of happiness in general, with our desires always aiming at that, the more free we are from any necessary determination of our will by a desire for some particular good that we haven't

properly examined to see whether or not it agrees with our real happiness.

Theo: True happiness *ought* always to be the object of our desires, but there is some reason to doubt that it *is*. For often we hardly think of it, and, as I have more than once pointed out here, unless appetite is directed by reason it aims at present pleasure rather than the lasting pleasure that is called 'happiness'—although it does try to make the pleasure last (see **36** and **41**). . . .

Phil: No-one should claim that he *can't* govern his passions or hinder them from breaking out and forcing him into action. Of course he *could* govern his passions if he were in the presence of a monarch or a great man; and what he could do in those circumstances he can also do, if he wants to, when he is alone or in the presence of God.

Theo: That is an excellent point and worthy of frequent reflection.

Phil: **54** Yet the various and contrary choices that men make show that the same thing is not good to every man alike. If our only concern was this present life, the explanation of this variety—some men choosing luxury and debauchery for example, and others preferring sobriety to sensuality—would be merely that different things made them happy.

Theo: That *is* the explanation of the variety of choices, even as things actually are—though men all do or *should* have before them the common goal of a future life. The fact is that a regard for real happiness, *even in this life*, would require us to prefer virtue to sensuality, because sensuality takes us away from happiness; although the need for virtue wouldn't then be as strong or as decisive ·as it is when the after-life is taken into account·. It is also true that men's tastes differ, and it is said that one shouldn't argue about matters of taste. But tastes are only confused perceptions, and we should rely on them only when their objects have been examined and found to be insignificant and harmless. If someone acquired a taste for poisons that would kill him or make him wretched, it would be absurd to say that we oughtn't to argue with him about his tastes.

Phil: **55** If there is nothing to look forward to beyond the grave, the ·famous· inference is certainly right: *Let us eat and drink, let us enjoy what we delight in, for tomorrow we shall die.*

Theo:. . . .Aristotle, the Stoics and some other ancient philosophers held a different view, and I think they were right. If there were nothing beyond this life, •tranquillity of soul and •bodily health would still be preferable to •pleasures incompatible with them. And even if a good isn't going to last for ever, that's no reason to disregard it. But in some cases it can't be shown that the most honourable thing is also the most useful. So only a regard for God and immortality makes the obligations of virtue and justice *absolutely* binding.

Phil: **58** It seems to me that our judgment of *present* good or evil is always right. And as regards *present* happiness and misery, when a man is thinking only about that and not considering consequences, he never chooses wrongly.

Theo: That is, if everything were restricted to this present moment there would be no reason to refuse any pleasure that is offered. As things are, although every pleasure is a sense of perfection. . . .certain perfections bring with them greater imperfections. If someone devoted his entire life to throwing peas at pins, trying to get the knack of skewering them every time,. . . . he would achieve a sort of perfection, but a very trivial one that couldn't stand comparison with all the essential perfections that he had let go. In the same way,

the perfection involved in certain present pleasures should be made to yield, above all, to the cultivation of perfections that are needed if one isn't to be plunged into misery, which is the state of going from imperfection to imperfection, from suffering to suffering. But if there were only the present, one would have to settle for •the perfections that it offered, i.e. for •present pleasure.

Phil: **62** No-one would willingly make his state miserable except through wrong judgments. I'm not speaking of the mistakes that result from *invincible* error, which hardly deserve to be called 'wrong judgment'; but of ones that everyone must confess to be wrong judgments. **63** Firstly, then, the soul makes mistakes when we compare •present pleasure or pain with a •future pleasure or pain, measuring them according to their different ·temporal· distances from us. We are like a spendthrift heir who renounces a great inheritance that was certain to come to him, in exchange for some small present gain. Everyone must agree that this *is* a wrong judgment, for the •future will become •present and will then have the same advantage of nearness! A man wouldn't ever let wine touch his lips if the pleasure of drinking were accompanied, at the very moment when the drink was swallowed, by the nausea and headache that will in fact follow a few hours later. If a small interval of time (·a few hours·) can produce such a great illusion, there is all the more reason to expect a larger distance to have the same effect.

Theo: •Distances between times are in this respect somewhat like •distances between places. But there is also this difference: a •visible thing's effect on our eyesight is inversely proportional, more or less, to its distance from us, but the same doesn't hold for the effect on our minds and imaginations of •things in the future. Light rays are straight lines, and move apart at a steady rate. But there are curves which after some distance appear to meet a straight line, and are no longer perceptibly separated from it. With a curve that asymptotically approaches a straight line, the apparent distance between the two disappears, though really they stay apart for ever. We find that even the apparent size of objects eventually stops decreasing in proportion to their distance from us, because the appearance soon disappears entirely although the object isn't infinitely distant. That is how a small distance of time can completely hide the future from us, just as though the object had disappeared. Often nothing remains of it in the mind but the name, together with thoughts of a kind I have already mentioned—*blind* thoughts that can't influence anyone unless he has made provision for them through being methodical and through practice.

Phil: I shan't discuss the kind of wrong judgment through which absent things are not merely lessened but reduced to *nothing* in the minds of men, when they enjoy whatever they can get in the present and conclude that no harm will come to them from this conduct.

Theo: ·This covers two different kinds of case·. •In one of them, the person's expectation of good or evil is abolished through his denying or doubting truths about what the consequences will be of his present conduct. •The other way of reducing to nothing the sense of the future is through the false judgment—already discussed—that results from having too weak a representation of the future and paying little or no attention to it. Another point: it might be worthwhile here to distinguish •false judgment from •defective taste. Often ·judgment doesn't come into it·: one doesn't even *raise the question* of whether the future good is preferable—one acts solely on impressions, with no thought of bringing

them under scrutiny. When someone *does* give thought to the future, one of two things happens: either •he isn't thorough enough in his thinking, and drops the question without having followed it through; or •he pursues his critical scrutiny and reaches a conclusion. Either way, there is sometimes a certain lingering sense of wrongdoing; but sometimes there are absolutely no scruples, no deterrent fears—whether because the mind sheers right away from them or because it is hoodwinked by its snap judgments.

Phil: **64** The cause of our judging wrongly in comparing goods or evils is the narrowness of our minds. We can't properly enjoy two pleasures at once, much less any pleasure while pain possesses us. A little bitter mingled in our cup leaves no taste of the sweet. The pain that someone actually feels now is worse than any other, and he cries out 'Any rather than this!'

Theo: That varies a lot according to individual temperament, the intensity of what a person feels, and the habits he has acquired. A man with gout may be overjoyed because a great fortune has come to him, and a man who bathes in pleasure and could live at his ease on his estates is deep in sorrow because of a disgrace at court. When pleasure is mixed with pain, the occurrence of joy or sorrow is a result—it depends on which component prevails in the mixture. . . . There are people who have some illness or handicap that causes them great pain whenever they eat or drink, or when they satisfy other appetites; and yet they satisfy those appetites, even going beyond what they need and what is proper. Others are so soft or delicate that they reject any pleasure that is mixed with any pain, nastiness or discomfort. There are people who rise right above the minor pleasures and pains of the present and act almost entirely on the basis of hope and fear; others are so effeminate that they complain of the slightest discomfort and chase after the slightest of present sensible pleasures—almost like children. To these people, the pain or sensual pleasure of the *present* always seems to be the greatest. . . . Still, despite all these individual differences, it remains true that everyone acts only according to his present perceptions: when the future affects someone, it does so either through his image of it or else through his having made a policy and practice of being guided by the mere name or some other arbitrary symbol of the future without any image or natural sign of it. The latter case depends on the fact that one can't go against a •policy one has firmly adopted—still less against one's established •practice—without a certain disquiet and sometimes a certain feeling of distress.

Phil: **65** Men are apt enough to under-estimate the value of future pleasure, convincing themselves that it may well turn out not to match their hopes or what people generally think about it; because they have often found through their own experience not only that •what others have magnified has appeared very insipid to them, but also that •what they have themselves been delighted by at one time has shocked and displeased them at another.

Theo: That is how the sensualist reasons, mostly, but the ambitious man (and the miser) are usually found to think quite differently about honours and riches. ·They may *expect* honours (or riches) to be very satisfying, but· when they have honours (or riches) they get only feeble pleasure from them and often almost none at all, because their thoughts are always on the next move. Nature the architect did very well, it seems to me, making men so alert to things that have so little effect on the senses. If we weren't capable of becoming ambitious or miserly, it would be hard for us—in the present state of human nature—to become virtuous and rational enough to work towards our own perfection in face of the

present pleasures that distract us from it.

Phil: **66** Concerning the good or bad consequences of our conduct—its likelihood of bringing us good or evil—we judge wrongly in several ways ·of which I mention two·. We judge wrongly when •we underestimate *how bad* the consequences of our conduct will be, and when •we underestimate *how likely* it is that an admittedly bad consequence will ensue—thinking that things may work out differently, or that *we* may be able to fend off the bad consequences by hard work, skill, change of conduct or repentance.

Theo: The first of these is the kind of false judgment, discussed earlier, in which future good or evil is badly represented. So all we have to discuss now is the second kind of false judgment, namely the one where it is doubted that the result will ensue.

Phil: It would be easy to show, case by case, that these evasions that I have mentioned are wrong ways of judging; but I shall only make the general point that it is very wrong and irrational to risk a greater good in order to get a lesser one, or to expose oneself to misery in order to achieve a small good or avoid a small harm, doing this on the basis of flimsy guesswork before the matter has been properly looked into.

Theo: There is no way of comparing •how inevitable a result is with •how good or bad it is. In trying to compare them, moralists have become muddled, as can be seen from writings on probability. The fact is that in this as in other assessments that are entirely different, heterogeneous, having more than one dimension (so to speak), the item's 'magnitude' is made up out of two estimates—as a rectangle is measured by its length and its breadth. As for the inevitability of the result, and degrees of probability, we don't yet possess the branch of logic that would let them be estimated. And most theorists of applied ethics who have written on probability haven't so much as understood the nature of it: they have sided with Aristotle in founding it on •authority, rather than on •likelihood as they ought to have, authority being only *one* of the reasons for something's likelihood.

Phil: Here are some of the usual causes of this wrong judgment. **67** The first is ignorance. The second is carelessness, when a man *overlooks* even the things he does know. This is an affected and present ignorance, which misleads our judgments as well as our wills. [Locke seems to use 'affected' in its now obsolete sense of 'afflicted, tainted'. His French translator put *affectée*, which couldn't mean that. Leibniz seems to equate it with the mediaeval *ignorantia affectata* = 'wilful ignorance'.]

Theo: It is always present, but it isn't always affected: sometimes when a person needs to think of something that he knows and would call to mind if he had perfect control of his memory, it doesn't occur to him to do so. Affected ignorance always involves some heeding for as long as it is affected, though commonly there can be heedlessness later on. If someone discovered a technique for bringing to mind *at the right time* the things that one knows, it would be of prime importance; but so far as I can see no-one has even tried to develop the beginnings of such a technique. Many have written about the art of memory, but that is quite different.

Phil: If therefore the reasons on either side are added up in haste, and several of the sums that should have gone into the reckoning are overlooked and left out, this rush causes as many wrong judgments as if it were a perfect ignorance.

Theo: Indeed, for the right decision to be made in a case where reasons have to be weighed against one another, many things are needed. [He illustrates this with the way merchants use their account books. Then:] So if we are to make

good use of the art of inference, we need •a technique for bringing things to mind, •another for estimating probabilities, and also •knowledge of how to evaluate goods and ills; and we need •to be attentive and on top of all that •to have the patience to carry our calculations through. Finally, we need •to be firmly and steadily resolved to act on our conclusions; and we need •skills, methods, rules of thumb, and well-entrenched habits to make us true to our resolve later on when the considerations that led us to it are no longer present to our minds. God has seen to it that in regard to what matters most—what concerns the most important thing, namely happiness and misery—one doesn't need as great an array of •knowledge, aids and skills as would be needed for sound judgment in a council of state or of war, in a court of law, in a medical consultation, in a theological or historical debate, or in a problem of mathematics or mechanics. But as against that, where the great matter of happiness and virtue is concerned one needs more •firmness and regularity of conduct if one is always to make good resolves and to abide by them. In short, true happiness requires less •knowledge but greater •strength and goodness of will, so that the dullest mentally defective person can achieve it just as easily as can the cleverest and most educated person.

Phil: So it can be seen that *understanding without liberty would be useless*. If a man could see what would do him good (or harm) without being able to move one step towards (or away) from it, what advantage would there be for him in being able to see? It would only make him more miserable still, for he would uselessly hanker for the good ·that he saw to be unreachable· and fear the harm that he saw to be unavoidable. And *liberty without understanding would be nothing*. Someone who is at liberty to ramble in perfect darkness—how is he better off than if he were driven up and down by the force of the wind?

Theo: He would satisfy his whims a little better, but he would be no better placed to encounter good and avoid harm. . . .

Phil: **69** The last question: Is it in a man's power to change the pleasantness and unpleasantness that goes with some particular action? In many cases he can. Men can and should correct their palates, and make them appreciate things. The soul's tastes can also be altered by a due consideration, practice, application and custom. That is how one becomes accustomed to tobacco, which eventually becomes enjoyable through use and familiarity. [Locke had written that sensible people persist with tobacco until they can enjoy it, because it has been 'shown to be useful to health'.] It's the same with regard to virtue: habits have great charms, and can't be given up without disquiet. It may be thought a paradox that men can make things or actions more or less pleasing to themselves, so greatly neglected is this task.

Theo: That is what I said too, near the end of **37** above and again near the end of **47**. One can induce oneself to want something and to develop a taste for it.

Phil: **70** When morality rests on its true foundations, it is bound to determine one to be virtuous: all that is needed is the *possibility* of infinite happiness or misery in an after-life. It can't be denied that

> a virtuous life with the expectation of possible everlasting bliss

is preferable to

> a vicious life with the fear of a dreadful state of misery or at best the terrible uncertain hope of annihilation.

It is obvious that this is so, and would be even if on earth the virtuous life had nothing but pain and the vicious life had continual pleasure. And for the most part that is *not*

how things stand; for I think that even in this life the wicked fare worse, all things considered, than others.

Theo: So even if there were nothing beyond the tomb, an Epicurean life wouldn't be the most rational one. I'm very pleased that you are now correcting the contrary claim that you seemed to make in **55** [page 90].

Phil: Who would be so mad as to decide (if he thought hard about it) to expose himself to a possible danger of being infinitely miserable, with nothing to •hope for except sheer annihilation; rather than putting himself in the position of the good man, who can hope for eternal happiness and has nothing to •fear but annihilation? I'm not saying anything here about the certainty or the probability of a future state, because all I want is to show to anyone who makes a wrong judgment on this matter that it is wrong even on his own principles.

Theo: The wicked are powerfully drawn to the belief that there can't be an after-life. But their only reason for this is that we shouldn't go beyond what we learn from our senses, and that no-one they know has returned from the other world. There was a time when by that argument one could have denied the existence of the Antipodes, if one weren't prepared to augment popular notions with mathematical ones; and that would have been every bit as justifiable as it is now to deny the after-life because one refuses to augment the notions of imagination with true metaphysics. There are three levels of notions or ideas—popular, mathematical, and metaphysical. The first weren't enough to make people believe in the Antipodes, and the first two still don't suffice to make one believe in the world of the after-life, though even they create a presumption in its favour. Notions of the second kind conclusively established the existence of the Antipodes in advance of our present experience of them (I'm referring not to the •inhabitants but to the •place that geographers and geometers assigned to them, from their knowledge of the roundness of the earth); and notions of the third kind can provide just as much certainty that there is an after-life—certainty that we can have right now, before we have gone to see.

Phil: This chapter is supposed to have •power as its general topic, freedom being merely one species of power, though a most important one. Let us return to power ·in general·. **72** It will be to our purpose, and help to clarify our thoughts about power, if we look more carefully at what is called 'action'. I said at the start of our discussion of power that we have ideas of only two sorts of action, namely motion and thought.

Theo: I think one might replace 'thought' by the more general term 'perception', attributing thought only to •minds whereas perception belongs to all •entelechies, ·i.e. all things that are in some basic way analogous to minds· [see page 74 above]. But I wouldn't challenge anyone's right to use 'thought' with that same generality, and I may sometimes have carelessly done so myself.

Phil: But although motion and thought are given the name •'action', it turns out not always to be perfectly suitable to them because there are instances ·of motion and of thought· that will be recognized rather to be •passions. In these instances, the substance that has the motion or thought receives purely from outside itself the impression that puts it into that 'action', and so it acts only through its ability to receive that impression, which is a merely •passive power. Sometimes the substance or agent puts *itself* into action by its own power, and this is •active power strictly so-called.

Theo: As I have already said, anything that occurs in what is strictly a *substance* must be a case of 'action' in the

metaphysically rigorous sense of 'something that occurs in the substance spontaneously, arising out of its own depths'; for no created substance can have an influence on any other, so that everything comes to a substance from itself (though *ultimately* from God). But if we •·define the 'active'/'passive' line differently, and· take *action* to be an endeavour towards perfection and *passion* to be the opposite, then genuine substances are

> active only when their perceptions are becoming better developed and clearer,

just as they are

> passive only when their perceptions are becoming more confused.

(Notice that I do grant perceptions, ·though not thoughts·, to all substances.) Consequently, in substances that are capable of pleasure and pain every action is a move towards pleasure, every passion a move towards pain.

[Theophilus will now rely on a doctrine of Leibniz's concerning matter. Leibniz's case for it, expanding the sketchy one at the end of this speech, is as follows:

•A substance strictly so-called is indestructible, so
•Substances strictly so-called have no parts, so
•Substances are not extended, so
•No mass of matter is a collection of substances, so
•No mass of matter is basically real, so
•Every mass of matter is something 'phenomenal', i.e. is the *appearance* of something, so
•Properties of masses of matter—e.g. being-in-motion—are also in that sense 'phenomenal'.]

As for motion: it has only phenomenal reality, because it belongs to matter or mass which isn't strictly speaking a substance ·or collection of substances·. Still, there is a semblance of •action in •motion, as there is a semblance of •substance in •mass, ·and this allows us to use a kind of active/passive distinction with matter, though not a strict and basic one·. Using that non-basic distinction, we can say these:

> •a body 'acts' when there is spontaneity in its change,
> •a body 'passively undergoes' when it is pushed or blocked by another body;

just as with the genuine action or passion of a genuine substance we can say these:

> •a substance is active in any change that brings it closer to its own perfection, and
> •a substance is passive in any change that brings it further from its own perfection.

(In the latter case, the change can be attributed to an outside cause, though not one acting *immediately* on the substance.) The rationale for *this* use of 'active'/'passive' is that when a substance comes closer to being perfect this change can be explained in an intelligible way by reference to the substance itself, whereas its moving further from being perfect can be intelligibly explained by reference to other things . I say that bodies have only *a semblance of* substance and of action because something made up of parts isn't strictly speaking a substance, any more than a herd is. Still, we can allow that a body may involve *something substantial*, something that gets its unity—which makes it like one being—from thought.

Phil: It has been my view that a power to receive ideas or thoughts through the operation of an external substance is called a 'power of thinking', although basically this is a merely •passive power. (I'm setting aside here the reflections and inner changes that always *accompany* the image that is received; ·there *are* always such accompanying changes·, for the expression that occurs in the soul is like what there would be in a *living* mirror.) But when one voluntarily brings into view ideas that are out of sight, or chooses which ideas to compare with which others, one is exercising what is truly an •active power.

Theo: Those procedures involve transitions to a more perfect state, so what you say about them agrees with the notions I have just been putting forward. Yet I should have thought that *sensations* also involve action, because they present us with perceptions that stand out more, and thus with opportunities for observation and for self-development, ·which is another way of coming closer to one's own perfection·.

Phil: **73** Now I believe that our primary, original ideas seem to fall into the following few groups. **(1)** The ones that come to us through our senses:

Extension,
Solidity,
Mobility (i.e. passive power or capacity to be moved).

(2) The ones that come into our minds by way of reflection:

Perceptivity and Motivity (i.e. active power or faculty of moving).

(3) Those that come to us by both ways, from sensation and from reflection:

Existence,
Duration,
Number.

For I think that in terms of these ·eight· we could explain the nature of colours, sounds, tastes, smells and all the other ideas we have, if only we had faculties acute enough to perceive the different motions of the tiny bodies that produce those sensations.

Theo: To speak frankly, I don't think that many of those ideas *are* thoroughly original and primary ·and thus simple and unanalysable·, as you have claimed they are. In my opinion most of them can be further decomposed. Yet I don't blame you for stopping there and not pushing the analysis back further. There is another point: although by further analysis we could take some items *off* your list of 'primary original' ideas, I think we could also *add* to your list some other ideas that are just as original ·as yours·, if not more so. As for how they should be arranged: if we are to follow the order of *analysis* I think we should put

existence before all the others,
number before extension, and
duration before motivity and mobility.

Not that this analytic order is the usual order in which events prompt us to think of these ideas. The senses provide us with *materials* for reflections: we couldn't think even about •thought if we didn't think about •something else, i.e. about the particular facts that the senses provide. I'm convinced that created minds and souls never lack organs and never lack sensations, as they can't reason without symbols. Some people have wanted to maintain a complete separation of body from soul, and to endow the separated soul with thought-processes that couldn't be explained by anything we know, and which would be remote not only from our present experience but also—and far more important—from the general order of things. They have given too much of an opening to the self-described 'free-thinkers', and have made many people sceptical about the finest and greatest truths, because their position deprives them of various good ways of proving those truths—ways that are provided by the general order of things.