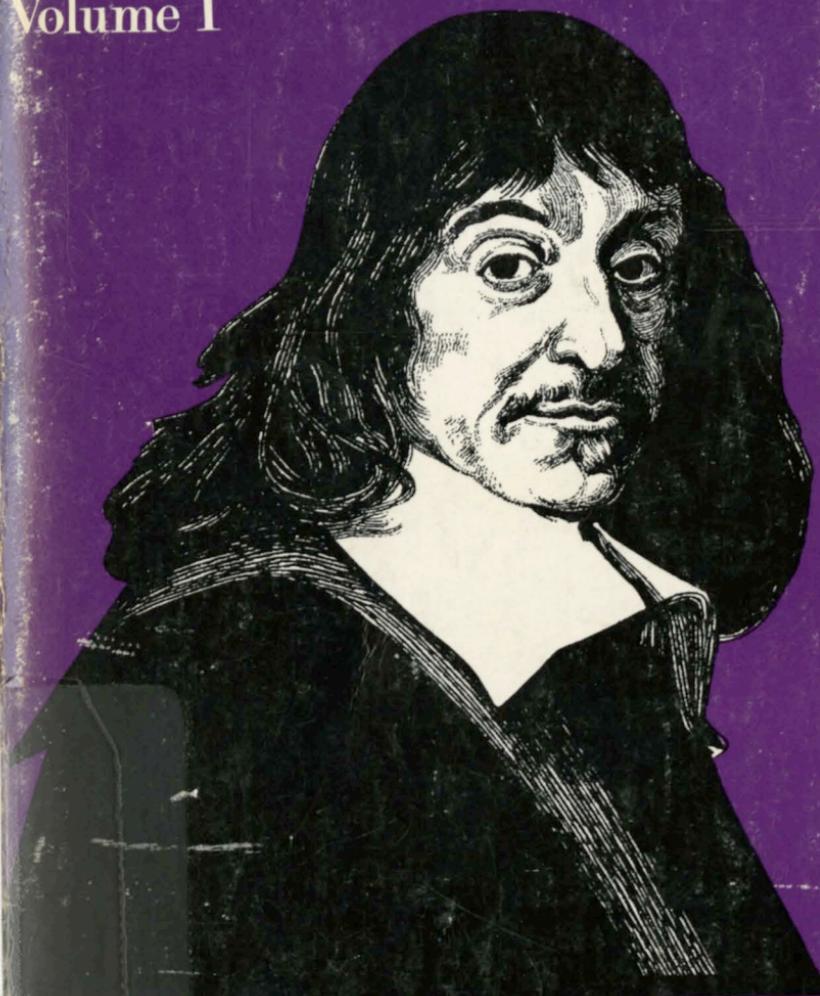


The Philosophical Works of Descartes

Translated by Elizabeth S. Haldane
and G.R.T. Ross

Volume I



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THE PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS
OF
DESCARTES

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I



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in some degree our liberty. Not that I hold in low esteem those laws which, in order to remedy the inconstancy of feeble souls, permit, when we have a good object in our view, that certain vows be taken, or contracts made, which oblige us to carry out that object. This sanction is even given for security in commerce where designs are wholly indifferent. But because I saw nothing in all the world remaining constant, and because for my own part I promised myself gradually to get my judgments to grow better and never to grow worse, I should have thought that I had committed a serious sin against commonsense if, because I approved of something at one time, I was obliged to regard it similarly at a later time, after it had possibly ceased to meet my approval, or after I had ceased to regard it in a favourable light.

My second maxim was that of being as firm and resolute in my actions as I could be, and not to follow less faithfully opinions the most dubious, when my mind was once made up regarding them, than if these had been beyond doubt. In this I should be following the example of travellers, who, finding themselves lost in a forest, know that they ought not to wander first to one side and then to the other, nor, still less, to stop in one place, but understand that they should continue to walk as straight as they can in one direction, not diverging for any slight reason, even though it was possibly chance alone that first determined them in their choice. By this means if they do not go exactly where they wish, they will at least arrive somewhere at the end, where probably they will be better off than in the middle of a forest. And thus since often enough in the actions of life no delay is permissible, it is very certain that, when it is beyond our power to discern the opinions which carry most truth, we should follow the most probable; and even although we notice no greater probability in the one opinion than in the other, we at least should make up our minds to follow a particular one and afterwards consider it as no longer doubtful in its relationship to practice, but as very true and very certain, inasmuch as the reason which caused us to determine upon it is known to be so. And henceforward this principle was sufficient to deliver me from all the penitence and remorse which usually affect the mind and agitate the conscience of those weak and vacillating creatures who allow themselves to keep changing their procedure, and practise as good, things which they afterwards judge to be evil.

My third maxim was to try always to conquer myself rather than fortune, and to alter my desires rather than change the order

of the world, and generally to accustom myself to believe that there is nothing entirely within our power but our own thoughts: so that after we have done our best in regard to the things that are without us, our ill-success cannot possibly be failure on our part¹. And this alone seemed to me sufficient to prevent my desiring anything in the future beyond what I could actually obtain, hence rendering me content; for since our will does not naturally induce us to desire anything but what our understanding represents to it as in some way possible of attainment, it is certain that if we consider all good things which are outside of us as equally outside of our power, we should not have more regret in resigning those goods which appear to pertain to our birth, when we are deprived of them for no fault of our own, than we have in not possessing the kingdoms of China or Mexico. In the same way, making what is called a virtue out of a necessity, we should no more desire to be well if ill, or free, if in prison, than we now do to have our bodies formed of a substance as little corruptible as diamonds, or to have wings to fly with like birds. I allow, however, that to accustom oneself to regard all things from this point of view requires long exercise and meditation often repeated; and I believe that it is principally in this that is to be found the secret of those philosophers who, in ancient times, were able to free themselves from the empire of fortune, or, despite suffering or poverty, to rival their gods in their happiness. For, ceaselessly occupying themselves in considering the limits which were prescribed to them by nature, they persuaded themselves so completely that nothing was within their own power but their thoughts, that this conviction alone was sufficient to prevent their having any longing for other things. And they had so absolute a mastery over their thoughts that they had some reason for esteeming themselves as more rich and more powerful, and more free and more happy than other men, who, however favoured by nature or fortune they might be, if devoid of this philosophy, never could arrive at all at which they aim.

And last of all, to conclude this moral code, I felt it incumbent on me to make a review of the various occupations of men in this life in order to try to choose out the best; and without wishing to say anything of the employment of others I thought that I could

¹ "So that whatever does not eventuate after we have done all in our power that it should happen is to be accounted by us as among the things which evidently cannot be done and which in philosophical phrase are called impossible." Latin Version.

hither and thither, trying to be a spectator rather than an actor in all the comedies the world displays. More especially did I reflect in each matter that came before me as to anything which could make it subject to suspicion or doubt, and give occasion for mistake, and I rooted out of my mind all the errors which might have formerly crept in. Not that indeed I imitated the sceptics, who only doubt for the sake of doubting, and pretend to be always uncertain; for, on the contrary, my design was only to provide myself with good ground for assurance, and to reject the quicksand and mud in order to find the rock or clay. In this task it seems to me, I succeeded pretty well, since in trying to discover the error or uncertainty of the propositions which I examined, not by feeble conjectures, but by clear and assured reasonings, I encountered nothing so dubious that I could not draw from it some conclusion that was tolerably secure, if this were no more than the inference that it contained in it nothing that was certain. And just as in pulling down an old house we usually preserve the debris to serve in building up another, so in destroying all those opinions which I considered to be ill-founded, I made various observations and acquired many experiences, which have since been of use to me in establishing those which are more certain. And more than this, I continued to exercise myself in the method which I had laid down for my use; for besides the fact that I was careful as a rule to conduct all my thoughts according to its maxims, I set aside some hours from time to time which I more especially employed in practising myself in the solution of mathematical problems according to the Method, or in the solution of other problems which though pertaining to other sciences, I was able to make almost similar to those of mathematics, by detaching them from all principles of other sciences which I found to be not sufficiently secure. You will see the result in many examples which are expounded in this volume¹. And hence, without living to all appearance in any way differently from those who, having no occupation beyond spending their lives in ease and innocence, study to separate pleasure from vice, and who, in order to enjoy their leisure without weariness, make use of all distractions that are innocent and good, I did not cease to prosecute my design, and to profit perhaps even more in my study of Truth than if I had done nothing but read books or associate with literary people.

¹ The Dioptrics, Meteors and Geometry were published originally in the same volume.

These nine years thus passed away before I had taken any definite part in regard to the difficulties as to which the learned are in the habit of disputing, or had commenced to seek the foundation of any philosophy more certain than the vulgar. And the example of many excellent men who had tried to do the same before me, but, as it appears to me, without success, made me imagine it to be so hard that possibly I should not have dared to undertake the task, had I not discovered that someone had spread abroad the report that I had already reached its conclusion. I cannot tell on what they based this opinion; if my conversation has contributed anything to it, this must have arisen from my confessing my ignorance more ingenuously than those who have studied a little usually do. And perhaps it was also due to my having shown forth my reasons for doubting many things which were held by others to be certain, rather than from having boasted of any special philosophic system. But being at heart honest enough not to desire to be esteemed as different from what I am, I thought that I must try by every means in my power to render myself worthy of the reputation which I had gained. And it is just eight years ago that this desire made me resolve to remove myself from all places where any acquaintances were possible, and to retire to a country such as this¹, where the long-continued war has caused such order to be established that the armies which are maintained seem only to be of use in allowing the inhabitants to enjoy the fruits of peace with so much the more security; and where, in the crowded throng of a great and very active nation, which is more concerned with its own affairs than curious about those of others, without missing any of the conveniences of the most populous towns, I can live as solitary and retired as in deserts the most remote.

PART IV.

I do not know that I ought to tell you of the first meditations there made by me, for they are so metaphysical and so unusual that they may perhaps not be acceptable to everyone. And yet at the same time, in order that one may judge whether the foundations which I have laid are sufficiently secure, I find myself constrained in some measure to refer to them. For a long time I had remarked that it is sometimes requisite in common life to follow opinions which one knows to be most uncertain, exactly as though they were indisputable, as has been said above. But because in this case

¹ i.e. Holland, where Descartes settled in 1629.

I wished to give myself entirely to the search after Truth, I thought that it was necessary for me to take an apparently opposite course, and to reject as absolutely false everything as to which I could imagine the least ground of doubt, in order to see if afterwards there remained anything in my belief that was entirely certain. Thus, because our senses sometimes deceive us, I wished to suppose that nothing is just as they cause us to imagine it to be; and because there are men who deceive themselves in their reasoning and fall into paralogisms, even concerning the simplest matters of geometry, and judging that I was as subject to error as was any other, I rejected as false all the reasons formerly accepted by me as demonstrations. And since all the same thoughts and conceptions which we have while awake may also come to us in sleep, without any of them being at that time true, I resolved to assume that everything that ever entered into my mind was no more true than the illusions of my dreams. But immediately afterwards I noticed that whilst I thus wished to think all things false, it was absolutely essential that the 'I' who thought this should be somewhat, and remarking that this truth '*I think, therefore I am*' was so certain and so assured that all the most extravagant suppositions brought forward by the sceptics were incapable of shaking it, I came to the conclusion that I could receive it without scruple as the first principle of the Philosophy for which I was seeking.

And then, examining attentively that which I was, I saw that I could conceive that I had no body, and that there was no world nor place where I might be; but yet that I could not for all that conceive that I was not. On the contrary, I saw from the very fact that I thought of doubting the truth of other things, it very evidently and certainly followed that I was; on the other hand if I had only ceased from thinking, even if all the rest of what I had ever imagined had really existed, I should have no reason for thinking that I had existed. From that I knew that I was a substance the whole essence or nature of which is to think, and that for its existence there is no need of any place, nor does it depend on any material thing; so that this 'me,' that is to say, the soul by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from body, and is even more easy to know than is the latter; and even if body were not, the soul would not cease to be what it is.

After this I considered generally what in a proposition is requisite in order to be true and certain; for since I had just discovered one which I knew to be such, I thought that I ought

semblance of reason if regarded by itself, is found to be very perfect if regarded as part of the whole universe; and although, since I resolved to doubt all things, I as yet have only known certainly my own existence and that of God, nevertheless since I have recognised the infinite power of God, I cannot deny that He may have produced many other things, or at least that He has the power of producing them, so that I may obtain a place as a part of a great universe.

Whereupon, regarding myself more closely, and considering what are my errors (for they alone testify to there being any imperfection in me), I answer that they depend on a combination of two causes, to wit, on the faculty of knowledge that rests in me, and on the power of choice or of free will—that is to say, of the understanding and at the same time of the will. For by the understanding alone I [neither assert nor deny anything, but] apprehend¹ the ideas of things as to which I can form a judgment. But no error is properly speaking found in it, provided the word error is taken in its proper signification; and though there is possibly an infinitude of things in the world of which I have no idea in my understanding, we cannot for all that say that it is deprived of these ideas [as we might say of something which is required by its nature], but simply it does not possess these; because in truth there is no reason to prove that God should have given me a greater faculty of knowledge than He has given me; and however skilful a workman I represent Him to be, I should not for all that consider that He was bound to have placed in each of His works all the perfections which He may have been able to place in some. I likewise cannot complain that God has not given me a free choice or a will which is sufficient, ample and perfect, since as a matter of fact I am conscious of a will so extended as to be subject to no limits. And what seems to me very remarkable in this regard is that of all the qualities which I possess there is no one so perfect and so comprehensive that I do not very clearly recognise that it might be yet greater and more perfect. For, to take an example, if I consider the faculty of comprehension which I possess, I find that it is of very small extent and extremely limited, and at the same time I find the idea of another faculty much more ample and even infinite, and seeing that I can form the idea of it, I recognise from this very fact that it pertains to the nature of God. If in the same way I examine the memory, the imagination, or some other faculty, I do not find any which is not

¹ percipio.

small and circumscribed, while in God it is immense [or infinite]. It is free-will alone or liberty of choice which I find to be so great in me that I can conceive no other idea to be more great; it is indeed the case that it is for the most part this will that causes me to know that in some manner I bear the image and similitude of God. For although the power of will is incomparably greater in God than in me, both by reason of the knowledge and the power which, conjoined with it, render it stronger and more efficacious, and by reason of its object, inasmuch as in God it extends to a great many things; it nevertheless does not seem to me greater if I consider it formally and precisely in itself: for the faculty of will consists alone in our having the power of choosing to do a thing or choosing not to do it (that is, to affirm or deny, to pursue or to shun it), or rather it consists alone in the fact that in order to affirm or deny, pursue or shun those things placed before us by the understanding, we act so that we are unconscious that any outside force constrains us in doing so. For in order that I should be free it is not necessary that I should be indifferent as to the choice of one or the other of two contraries; but contrariwise the more I lean to the one—whether I recognise clearly that the reasons of the good and true are to be found in it, or whether God so disposes my inward thought—the more freely do I choose and embrace it. And undoubtedly both divine grace and natural knowledge, far from diminishing my liberty, rather increase it and strengthen it. Hence this indifference which I feel, when I am not swayed to one side rather than to the other by lack of reason, is the lowest grade of liberty, and rather evinces a lack or negation in knowledge than a perfection of will: for if I always recognised clearly what was true and good, I should never have trouble in deliberating as to what judgment or choice I should make, and then I should be entirely free without ever being indifferent.

From all this I recognise that the power of will which I have received from God is not of itself the source of my errors—for it is very ample and very perfect of its kind—any more than is the power of understanding; for since I understand nothing but by the power which God has given me for understanding, there is no doubt that all that I understand, I understand as I ought, and it is not possible that I err in this. Whence then come my errors? They come from the sole fact that since the will is much wider in its range and compass than the understanding, I do not restrain it within the same bounds, but extend it also to things which I do not under-

stand: and as the will is of itself indifferent to these, it easily falls into error and sin, and chooses the evil for the good, or the false for the true.

For example, when I lately examined whether anything existed in the world, and found that from the very fact that I considered this question it followed very clearly that I myself existed, I could not prevent myself from believing that a thing I so clearly conceived was true: not that I found myself compelled to do so by some external cause, but simply because from great clearness in my mind there followed a great inclination of my will; and I believed this with so much the greater freedom or spontaneity as I possessed the less indifference towards it. Now, on the contrary, I not only know that I exist, inasmuch as I am a thinking thing, but a certain representation of corporeal nature is also presented to my mind; and it comes to pass that I doubt whether this thinking nature which is in me, or rather by which I am what I am, differs from this corporeal nature, or whether both are not simply the same thing; and I here suppose that I do not yet know any reason to persuade me to adopt the one belief rather than the other. From this it follows that I am entirely indifferent as to which of the two I affirm or deny, or even whether I abstain from forming any judgment in the matter.

And this indifference does not only extend to matters as to which the understanding has no knowledge, but also in general to all those which are not apprehended with perfect clearness at the moment when the will is deliberating upon them: for, however probable are the conjectures which render me disposed to form a judgment respecting anything, the simple knowledge that I have that those are conjectures alone and not certain and indubitable reasons, suffices to occasion me to judge the contrary. Of this I have had great experience of late when I set aside as false all that I had formerly held to be absolutely true, for the sole reason that I remarked that it might in some measure be doubted.

But if I abstain from giving my judgment on any thing when I do not perceive it with sufficient clearness and distinctness, it is plain that I act rightly and am not deceived. But if I determine to deny or affirm, I no longer make use as I should of my free will, and if I affirm what is not true, it is evident that I deceive myself; even though I judge according to truth, this comes about only by chance, and I do not escape the blame of misusing my freedom; for the light of nature teaches us that the knowledge of the understanding should always precede the determination of the will.

And it is in the misuse of the free will that the privation which constitutes the characteristic nature of error is met with. Privation, I say, is found in the act, in so far as it proceeds from me, but it is not found in the faculty which I have received from God, nor even in the act in so far as it depends on Him.

For I have certainly no cause to complain that God has not given me an intelligence which is more powerful, or a natural light which is stronger than that which I have received from Him, since it is proper to the finite understanding not to comprehend a multitude of things, and it is proper to a created understanding to be finite; on the contrary, I have every reason to render thanks to God who owes me nothing and who has given me all the perfections I possess, and I should be far from charging Him with injustice, and with having deprived me of, or wrongfully withheld from me, these perfections which He has not bestowed upon me.

I have further no reason to complain that He has given me a will more ample than my understanding, for since the will consists only of one single element, and is so to speak indivisible, it appears that its nature is such that nothing can be abstracted from it [without destroying it]; and certainly the more comprehensive it is found to be, the more reason I have to render gratitude to the giver.

And, finally, I must also not complain that God concurs with me in forming the acts of the will, that is the judgment in which I go astray, because these acts are entirely true and good, inasmuch as they depend on God; and in a certain sense more perfection accrues to my nature from the fact that I can form them, than if I could not do so. As to the privation in which alone the formal reason of error or sin consists, it has no need of any concurrence from God, since it is not a thing [or an existence], and since it is not related to God as to a cause, but should be termed merely a negation [according to the significance given to these words in the Schools]. For in fact it is not an imperfection in God that He has given me the liberty to give or withhold my assent from certain things as to which He has not placed a clear and distinct knowledge in my understanding; but it is without doubt an imperfection in me not to make a good use of my freedom, and to give my judgment readily on matters which I only understand obscurely. I nevertheless perceive that God could easily have created me so that I never should err, although I still remained free, and endowed with a limited knowledge, viz. by giving to my understanding a clear and distinct intelligence of all things as to which I should ever have to

deliberate; or simply by His engraving deeply in my memory the resolution never to form a judgment on anything without having a clear and distinct understanding of it, so that I could never forget it. And it is easy for me to understand that, in so far as I consider myself alone, and as if there were only myself in the world, I should have been much more perfect than I am, if God had created me so that I could never err. Nevertheless I cannot deny that in some sense it is a greater perfection in the whole universe that certain parts should not be exempt from error as others are than that all parts should be exactly similar. And I have no right to complain if God, having placed me in the world, has not called upon me to play a part that excels all others in distinction and perfection.

And further I have reason to be glad on the ground that if He has not given me the power of never going astray by the first means pointed out above, which depends on a clear and evident knowledge of all the things regarding which I can deliberate, He has at least left within my power the other means, which is firmly to adhere to the resolution never to give judgment on matters whose truth is not clearly known to me; for although I notice a certain weakness in my nature in that I cannot continually concentrate my mind on one single thought, I can yet, by attentive and frequently repeated meditation, impress it so forcibly on my memory that I shall never fail to recollect it whenever I have need of it, and thus acquire the habit of never going astray.

And inasmuch as it is in this that the greatest and principal perfection of man consists, it seems to me that I have not gained little by this day's Meditation, since I have discovered the source of falsity and error. And certainly there can be no other source than that which I have explained; for as often as I so restrain my will within the limits of my knowledge that it forms no judgment except on matters which are clearly and distinctly represented to it by the understanding, I can never be deceived; for every clear and distinct conception¹ is without doubt something, and hence cannot derive its origin from what is nought, but must of necessity have God as its author—God, I say, who being supremely perfect, cannot be the cause of any error; and consequently we must conclude that such a conception [or such a judgment] is true. Nor have I only learned to-day what I should avoid in order that I may not err, but also how I should act in order to arrive at a knowledge of the

¹ perceptio.

to be infinite who appear to find it necessary to investigate such questions. And for our part, while we regard things in which, in a certain sense, we observe no limits, we shall not for all that state that they are infinite, but merely hold them to be indefinite. Thus because we cannot imagine an extension so great that we cannot at the same time conceive that there may be one yet greater, we shall say that the magnitude of possible things is indefinite. And because we cannot divide a body into parts which are so small that each part cannot be divided into others yet smaller, we shall consider that the quantity may be divided into parts whose number is indefinite. And because we cannot imagine so many stars that it is impossible for God to create more, we shall suppose the number to be indefinite, and so in other cases.

PRINCIPLE XXVII.

What is the difference between the indefinite and the infinite?

And we shall name these things indefinite rather than infinite in order to reserve to God alone the name of infinite, first of all because in Him alone we observe no limitation whatever, and because we are quite certain that He can have none, and in the second place in regard to other things, because we do not in the same way positively understand them to be in every part unlimited, but merely negatively admit that their limits, if they exist, cannot be discovered by us¹.

PRINCIPLE XXVIII.

That we must not inquire into the final, but only into the efficient causes of created things.

Finally we shall not seek for the reason of natural things from the end which God or nature has set before him in their creation²; for we should not take so much upon ourselves as to believe that God could take us into His counsels. But regarding Him as the efficient cause of all things, we shall merely try to discover by the

¹ 'As regards other things we know that they are not thus absolutely perfect because although we observe in them certain properties which appear to have no limit, we yet know that this proceeds from our lack of understanding and not from their natures.' (This, the French, translation is to obviate the use of the terms positive and negative.)

² 'We shall not stop to consider the ends which God has set before Himself in the creation of the world and we shall entirely set aside from our philosophy the search for final causes.' French version.

PRINCIPLE XXXIV.

That the will is requisite for judgment as well as the understanding.

I admit that we can judge of nothing unless our understanding is made use of, because there is no reason to suppose we can judge of what we in no wise apprehend; but the will is absolutely essential for our giving our assent to what we have in some manner perceived. Nor, in order to form any judgment whatever, is it necessary that we should have a perfect and entire knowledge of a thing; for we often give our assent to things of which we have never had any but a very obscure and confused knowledge.

PRINCIPLE XXXV.

That the will is more extended than the understanding, and that our errors proceed from this cause.

Further, the perception of the understanding only extends to the few objects which present themselves to it, and is always very limited. The will, on the other hand, may in some measure be said to be the infinite, because we perceive nothing which may be the object of some other will, even of the immensity of the will that is in God, to which our will cannot also extend, so that we easily extend it beyond that which we apprehend clearly. And when we do this there is no wonder if it happens that we are deceived.

PRINCIPLE XXXVI.

Our errors cannot be imputed to God.

And although God has not given us an understanding which is omnipotent, we must not for that reason consider that He is the originator of our errors. For all created understanding is finite, and it is of the nature of finite understanding not to embrace all things.

PRINCIPLE XXXVII.

That the principal perfection of man is to have the power of acting freely or by will, and that this is what renders him deserving of either praise or blame.

That will should extend widely is in accordance with its nature, and it is the greatest perfection in man to be able to act by its

us employed His unlimited powers in deceiving us in every way, we perceived in ourselves a liberty such that we were able to abstain from believing what was not perfectly certain and indubitable. But that of which we could not doubt at such a time is as self-evident and clear as anything we can ever know.

PRINCIPLE XL.

That we likewise know certainly that everything is pre-ordained of God.

But because that which we have already learnt about God proves to us that His power is so immense that it would be a crime for us to think ourselves ever capable of doing anything which He had not already pre-ordained, we should soon be involved in great difficulties if we undertook to make His pre-ordinances harmonise with the freedom of our will, and if we tried to comprehend them both at one time.

PRINCIPLE XLI.

How the freedom of the will may be reconciled with Divine pre-ordination.

Instead of this, we shall have no trouble at all if we recollect that our thought is finite, and that the omnipotence of God, whereby He has not only known from all eternity that which is or can be, but also willed and pre-ordained it, is infinite. In this way we may have intelligence enough to come clearly and distinctly to know that this power is in God, but not enough to comprehend how He leaves the free action of man indeterminate; and, on the other hand, we are so conscious of the liberty and indifference which exists in us, that there is nothing that we comprehend more clearly and perfectly. For it would be absurd to doubt that of which we inwardly experience and perceive as existing within ourselves, just because we do not comprehend a matter which from its nature we know to be incomprehensible.

PRINCIPLE XLII.

How, although we do not will to err, we yet err by our will.

But inasmuch as we know that all our errors depend on our will, and as no one desires to deceive himself we may wonder that we err at all. We must, however, observe that there is a great

these modes or qualities are in substance we term them *attributes*. And because in God any variableness is incomprehensible, we cannot ascribe to Him modes or qualities; but simply attributes. And even in created things that which never exists in them in any diverse way, like existence and duration in the existing and enduring thing, should be called not qualities or modes, but attributes.

PRINCIPLE LVII.

That there are attributes which pertain to things and others to thought; and what duration and time are.

Some of the attributes are in things themselves and others are only in our thought. Thus time, for example, which we distinguish from duration taken in its general sense and which we describe as the measure of movement, is only a mode of thinking¹; for we do not indeed apprehend that the duration of things which are moved is different from that of the things which are not moved, as is evident from the fact that if two bodies are moved for the space of an hour, the one quickly, the other slowly, we do not count the time longer in one case than in the other, although there is much more movement in one of the two bodies than in the other. But in order to comprehend the duration of all things under the same measure, we usually compare their duration with the duration of the greatest and most regular motions, which are those that create years and days, and these we term time. Hence this adds nothing to the notion of duration, generally taken, but a mode of thinking.

PRINCIPLE LVIII.

That number and all universals are simply modes of thought.

Similarly number when we consider it abstractly or generally and not in created things, is but a mode of thinking; and the same is true of all that which [in the schools] is named *universals*.

PRINCIPLE LIX.

How Universals are formed and what are the five common ones:—genus, species, difference, property and accident.

Universals arise solely from the fact that we avail ourselves of one and the same idea in order to think of all individual things

¹ 'is only a mode of thinking that duration,' French version.

ARTICLE LVI.

Love and hatred.

And all the preceding passions may be excited in us without our in any way perceiving if the object which causes them is good or evil. But when a matter is presented as relatively to us good, i.e. as agreeable to us, that causes us to have love for it, and when it is represented as evil or hurtful to us, that excites hatred in us.

ARTICLE LVII.

Desire.

From the same consideration of good and evil all the other passions originate; but in order to place them in order I make distinctions as to time, and considering that they lead us to regard much more the future than the present or the past, I commence with desire. For not only when we desire to acquire a good which we do not yet have, or avoid an evil which we judge may occur; but also when we only anticipate the conservation of a good or absence of an evil, which is as far as this passion may extend, it is evident that it ever regards the future.

ARTICLE LVIII.

Hope, fear, jealousy, confidence and despair.

It suffices to reflect that the acquisition of a good or removal of an evil is possible in order to be incited to desire it. But when besides that we consider whether there is much or little prospect that we shall obtain what we desire, that which represents to us that there is much probability of this excites in us hope, and that which represents to us that there is little, excites fear, of which jealousy is a species. When hope is excessive it changes its nature and is called confidence or assurance. Just as on the other hand extreme fear becomes despair.

ARTICLE LIX.

Irresolution, courage, bravery, emulation, cowardice, and terror.

And we can thus hope and fear although the issue of what we expect in no way depends on us; but when it is represented to us as dependent there may be a difficulty in the selection of the means or in carrying them into execution. From the first proceeds the irresolution which disposes us to deliberate and take council. To the latter courage or bravery is opposed, of which emulation is a species. And cowardice is contrary to courage, as fear or terror is to bravery.

which disposes the soul in the same way to pause over all the other objects which present themselves, provided that they appear to it to be ever so little new. And this is what causes the continuance of the malady of those who suffer from a blind curiosity—that is, who seek out things that are rare solely to wonder at them, and not for the purpose of really knowing them: for little by little they become so given over to wonder, that things of no importance are no less capable of arresting their attention than those whose investigation is more useful.

ARTICLE LXXIX.

The definition of love and hate.

Love is an emotion of the soul caused by the movement of the spirits which incites it to join itself willingly to objects which appear to it to be agreeable. And hatred is an emotion caused by the spirits which incite the soul to desire to be separated from the objects which present themselves to it as hurtful. I say that these emotions are caused by the spirits in order to distinguish love and hate, which are passions and depend on the body, both from the judgments which also induce the soul by its free will to unite itself with the things which it esteems to be good, and to separate itself from those it holds to be evil, and from the emotions which these judgments excite of themselves in the soul.

ARTICLE LXXX.

What it is to join or separate oneself by one's free will.

For the rest, by the word will I do not here intend to talk of desire, which is a passion apart, and one which relates to the future, but of the consent by which we consider ourselves from this time forward as united with what we love, so that we imagine a whole of which we conceive ourselves as only constituting one part, while the thing loved constitutes another part. In the case of hatred, on the other hand, we consider ourselves only and as a whole, entirely separated from the matter for which we possess an aversion.

ARTICLE LXXXI.

Of the distinction usually made between the love belonging to concupiscence and that of benevolence.

And two sorts of love are usually distinguished, the one of which is named the love of benevolence, that is to say the love which

ARTICLE LXXXV

*Of delight and revulsion*¹.

And I only find one distinct characteristic of any note which is alike in both. It consists in the fact that the objects both of love and hatred may be represented to the soul by the external senses, or else by the internal, and by its own reason: for we commonly denominate good or evil that which our interior senses or our reason make us judge to be agreeable or the contrary to our nature; but we term beautiful or ugly that which is so represented to us by our outward senses, principally by that of sight, which alone is more considered than the others; hence two sorts of love originate, i.e. that which we have for good things, and that which we have for beautiful things, to which we may give the name of attraction or delight in order not to confound it with the other, nor yet with desire, to which we often attribute the name of love. And from thence also, two kinds of hatred in the same way take their rise, the one of which relates to evil things, the other to ugly things; and this last may be called horror or aversion in order to distinguish it. But what is most remarkable here is that these passions of delight and detestation or horror are usually more violent than the other sorts of love or hate, because what comes to the soul by the senses touches it more forcibly than what is represented to it by its reason, and that even though these first passions have usually less truth; so that of all the passions it is these which deceive the most, and against which we should guard ourselves most carefully.

ARTICLE LXXXVI.

The definition of Desire.

The passion of desire is an agitation of the soul caused by the spirits which dispose it to wish for the future the things which it represents to itself as agreeable. Thus we do not only desire the presence of the absent good, but also the conservation of the present, and further, the absence of evil, both of that which we already have, and of that which we believe we might experience in time to come.

ARTICLE LXXXVII.

That it is a passion which has no opposite.

I know very well that usually in the Schools the passion which makes for the search after the good which alone is called desire is

¹ De l'agrément et de l'horreur.

is instituted by nature to represent to the soul a sudden and unexpected death, so that although it is sometimes but the touch of a grub, or the sound of a trembling leaf, or one's own shadow, which causes us to be seized with horror, we at once feel as much emotion as though a very evident peril of death offered itself to the senses; and this is what suddenly produces the agitation which causes the soul to employ all its forces in order to avoid an evil so present; and it is this kind of desire which we commonly call avoidance and aversion.

ARTICLE XC.

That which springs from delight.

On the other hand, delight is specially instituted by nature to represent the enjoyment of that which gives pleasure as the greatest of all the good things which pertain to man, which causes us to desire this enjoyment very ardently. It is true that there are various sorts of delight and that the desires which take their origin in these diverse varieties are not all equally powerful. For, to take an example, the beauty of flowers incites us only to look at them, and that of fruits to eat them. But the principal one is that which proceeds from the perfections which we imagine in a person whom we think may become another self; for with the difference of sex which nature has placed in men, as in the animals without reason, it has also placed certain impressions in the brain which bring it to pass that at a certain age, and in a certain time, they consider themselves defective, and as though they were but the half of a whole, of which an individual of the other sex should be the other half. In this way the acquisition of this half is confusedly represented by nature as the greatest of all imaginable goods. And although we see many persons of this other sex, we do not for all that desire several at the same time, inasmuch as nature does not cause us to imagine that we have need of more than one half. But when we observe something in one which is more agreeable than what we at the same time observe in others, that determines the soul to feel only for the first all the inclination which nature gives it to seek for the good which that nature represents to it as the greatest that can be possessed; and this inclination or desire which thus springs from delight more usually receives the name of love than the passion of love which has above been described. It has likewise stranger effects and it is what provides the principal material for the writers of romances and for poets.

a sadness whose cause is true. But I dare not say the same of love in respect of hate; for when hatred is just, it only removes us from the subject which contains the evil from which it is good to be separated, while the love which is unjust unites us to things which may hurt, or at least which do not deserve to be so much considered by us as they are, which demeans and degrades us.

ARTICLE CXLIII.

Of the same passions inasmuch as they relate to Desire.

And we must be very careful to remark that what I have just said of these four passions takes place only when they are considered precisely in themselves, and do not incite us to any action. For in so far as they excite in us desire by means of which they regulate our habits, it is certain that all those whose cause is false may harm, and that on the contrary all those whose cause is just may be of use, and, even when they are equally badly founded, joy is usually more hurtful than sadness, since the latter, by providing restraint and fear, disposes in a certain degree to prudence, while the other makes those who abandon themselves to it rash and imprudent.

ARTICLE CXLIV.

Of Desires whose accomplishment depends only on us.

But because these passions can only bring us to any kind of action by the intervention of the desire which they excite, it is this desire particularly which we should be careful to regulate, and it is in this that the principal use of morality consists. And, as I have just said that desire is always good when it follows a true knowledge, so it cannot fail to be bad when it is founded on some error. And it seems to me that the error which we most ordinarily commit in respect to desires is that of not sufficiently distinguishing the things which entirely depend on us from those which do not so depend. For as to those which only depend on us, *i.e.* on our free will, it is sufficient to know that they are good, not to have it in our power to desire them with too much ardour, because it is following after virtue to perform good actions which depend on ourselves, and it is certain that we cannot have a too ardent desire for virtue. Besides which, since that which we in this way desire is incapable of failing to succeed with us, as it is on ourselves

alone that it depends, we shall always receive from it all the satisfaction that we have expected from it. But the fault which is usually committed in this is never in desiring too much, but only in desiring too little; and the sovereign remedy against that is to free the mind as much as possible from all kinds of other less useful desires, and then to try to know very clearly and to consider with attention the goodness of that which is to be desired.

ARTICLE CXLV

Of those Desires which depend only on other things, and what is the meaning of chance.

As to the things which in nowise depend on us, good as they may be, we should never desire them with passion, not only because they may not happen and thus may vex us so much the more in proportion to the strength of our desire for them, but principally because, in occupying our thought, they turn us away from applying our affection to other things, the acquisition of which depends on us. And there are two general remedies for these vain desires: the first is generosity, of which I shall speak later: the second is that we ought frequently to cause ourselves to reflect on divine Providence and represent to ourselves that it is impossible that anything should happen in any other way than as it has been determined by this Providence from all eternity. In this way it is, so to speak, a fatality or an immutable necessity, which must be opposed to chance, in order to destroy it by treating it as a chimera which only proceeds from the error of our understanding. For we can desire nothing but that which we hold to be in some manner possible, and we can only hold to be possible those things that do not depend on us, in so far as we reflect that they depend on chance, *i.e.* that we judge that they may happen, and that similar things have formerly happened. And this opinion is founded only on the fact that we do not know all the facts that contribute to each effect; for when a thing that we have judged to depend on chance does not come to pass, that shows that some one of the causes that were necessary in order to produce it has failed, and in consequence that it was absolutely impossible, and that no such thing has ever happened—that is, a thing in the production of which a similar cause was also lacking—so that if we had not been ignorant of that beforehand, we should not have ever judged it possible, nor consequently have desired it.

ARTICLE CXLVI.

Of those that depend on us and on others.

We must, then, entirely set aside the vulgar opinion that there is outside of us a Fortune which causes things to happen or not to happen in accordance with its pleasure, and we must recognize that all is conducted by divine Providence, whose eternal decree is so infallible and immutable, that, excepting the things that this same decree has willed to leave dependent on our free will, we ought to reflect that in relation to us nothing happens which is not necessary, and so to speak decreed by fate, and that thus we cannot without error desire that it should happen otherwise. But because the greater part of our desires extends to things which do not depend entirely on us, nor entirely on others, we ought to distinguish exactly in them what depends only on us, in order to extend our desire to that alone; and as to what remains, although we ought in this to hold success to be absolutely decreed by fate and immutable, in order that our desire may not occupy itself therewith, we should not omit to consider the reasons which make it more or less to be hoped for, in order that they may serve to regulate our actions. Thus, to take an example, if we have business in some particular place to which we may go by two different roads, the one of which is usually much safer than the other, although the decree of Providence is perhaps such that, if we go by the road which we judge to be safest, we shall not escape being robbed by so doing, while, on the other hand, we might pass by the other without danger, we should not for all that be indifferent as to which one we choose, nor rest on the immutable fatality of the said decree. But reason desires us to choose the road which is usually most safe, and our desire should be accomplished in respect to that when we have followed it, whatever evil may thus befall us, because this evil, having been relatively to us inevitable, we have had no reason to expect exemption from it, but merely claim to have done the best that our understanding has been able to point out, as I suppose to have been the case. And it is certain that when we exercise ourselves in thus distinguishing fatality from fortune, we easily accustom ourselves so to regulate our desires, that, in as far as their accomplishment depends only on us, they may always provide us with complete satisfaction.

ARTICLE CXLVII.

Of the interior emotions of the soul.

I shall only add here a consideration which, it seems to me, we shall find of much service in preventing us from suffering any inconvenience from the passions; and that is that our good and our harm depend mainly on the interior emotions which are only excited in the soul by the soul itself, in which respect they differ from its passions, which always depend on some movement of the spirits. And, although these emotions of the soul are frequently united to the passions which are similar to them, they may likewise often be met with along with others, and even take their origin from those which are contrary to them. For example, when a husband laments his dead wife whom (as sometimes happens) he would be sorry to see brought to life again, it may be that his heart is oppressed by the sadness that the appurtenances of woe and the absence of one to whose conversation he was used excite in him; and it may be that some remnants of love or pity which present themselves to his imagination draw sincere tears from his eyes, notwithstanding that he yet feels a secret joy in the inmost parts of his heart, the emotion of which possesses so much power that the sadness and the tears which accompany it can do nothing to diminish its force. And when we read of strange adventures in a book, or see them represented in a theatre, which sometimes excite sadness in us, sometimes joy, or love, or hatred, and generally speaking all the passions, according to the diversity of the objects which are offered to our imagination; but along with that we have pleasure in feeling them excited in us, and this pleasure is an intellectual joy which may as easily take its origin from sadness as from any of the other passions.

ARTICLE CXLVIII.

That the exercise of virtue is a sovereign remedy against the passions.

And, inasmuch as these inward emotions touch us most nearly, and in consequence have much more power over us than the passions from which they differ, and which are met with in conjunction with them, it is certain that, provided our soul is always possessed of something to content itself with inwardly, none of the troubles that come from elsewhere have any power to harm it, but rather serve

himself of a firm and constant resolution to use it well, that is to say, never to fail of his own will to undertake and execute all the things which he judges to be the best—which is to follow perfectly after virtue.

ARTICLE CLIV.

That Generosity prevents our despising others.

Those who have this knowledge and feeling about themselves easily persuade themselves that every other man can also have them in his own case, because there is nothing in this that depends on another. That is why they never despise anyone; and, although they often see that others commit faults which make their feebleness apparent, they are at the same time more inclined to excuse than to blame them, and to believe that it is rather by lack of knowledge than by lack of good-will that they commit them. And, as they do not think of themselves as being much inferior to those who have more goods or honours, or even who have more mental gifts, more knowledge, more beauty, or, generally speaking, who surpass them in some other perfections, they do not at the same time esteem themselves much above those whom they surpass, because all these things seem to them to be of very small account as compared with the good-will for which alone they esteem themselves, and which they also suppose to exist, or at least to be capable of, existing in all other men.

ARTICLE CLV.

In what consists a virtuous humility.

The most high-minded are thus usually the most humble; and virtuous humility simply consists in the fact that the reflection which we make on the infirmity of our nature and on the faults which we may formerly have committed, or are capable of committing, which are not less than those which may be committed by others, is the reason that we do not prefer ourselves to any one else, and that we think that others, having their free-will as well as we, can likewise use it as well as we.

ARTICLE CLVI.

What are the properties of generosity, and how it serves as a remedy against the disorders of the passions.

Those who are generous in this way are naturally impelled to do great things and at the same time to undertake nothing of

which they do not feel themselves capable. And because they do not hold anything more important than to do good to other men and to disdain their individual interests, they are for this reason always perfectly courteous, affable and obliging towards everyone. And along with that, they are entirely masters of their passions, particularly of the desires, of jealousy and envy, because there is nothing the acquisition of which does not depend on them, which they think of sufficient worth to merit being much sought after; they are likewise free of hatred to other men because they hold all in esteem; and of fear, because the confidence which they have in their virtue assures them; and finally of anger, because, esteeming very little all those things that depend on others, they never give so much advantage to their enemies as to recognise that they are hurt by them.

ARTICLE CLVII.

Of Pride.

All those who form a good opinion of themselves for some other reason, whatever it may be, have not a true generosity, but merely a pride which is always very vicious, although it is all the more so, the more the cause for which we esteem ourselves is unjust. And the most unjust cause of all is when we are proud without any reason, that is to say, without our thinking so far as this goes that there is in us any merit for which we ought to be esteemed, simply taking the view that merit is not taken into consideration at all, and that as glory is regarded as nothing but usurpation, those who ascribe most of it to themselves really possess the greatest amount of it. This vice is so unreasonable and absurd, that I should scarcely have believed that there were men who could allow themselves to give way to it, if no one were ever unjustly praised; but flattery is everywhere so common that there is no man so defective that he does not often see himself esteemed for things that do not merit any praise, or even that merit blame; and this gives occasion to the most ignorant and stupid to fall into this species of pride.

ARTICLE CLVIII.

That its effects are contrary to those of generosity.

But whatever may be the reason for which we esteem ourselves, if it is other than the will which we feel in ourselves always to make good use of our free-will, from which I have stated that generosity

them esteem themselves; at the same time we may say that these things are so wonderful (i.e. the power of making use of one's free-will, which causes us to value ourselves, and the infirmities of the subject in whom this power rests, which cause us not to place too high a regard on ourselves) that on every occasion on which we present them to ourselves anew, they always supply a new cause for wonder.

ARTICLE CLXI.

How Generosity may be acquired.

And it must be observed that what we commonly name virtues are habitudes in the soul, which dispose it to certain thoughts in such a way that they are different from these thoughts, but can produce them, and reciprocally can be produced by them. It must also be observed that these thoughts may be produced by the soul alone, but that it often happens that some movement of the spirits fortifies them, and that then they are actions of virtue, and at the same time passions of the soul. Thus, while there is no virtue to which it appears as though good native qualities contribute so much as to that which causes us only to esteem ourselves at a just value, and as it is easy to believe that all the souls that God places in human bodies are not equally noble and strong (which is the reason for my having called this virtue generosity, following the usage of our language, rather than magnanimity, following the usage of the Schools where it is not much known) it is yet certain that good instruction serves much in correcting the faults of birth, and that, if we frequently occupy ourselves in the consideration of what free-will is, and how great are the advantages which proceed from a firm resolution to make a good use of it, as also, on the other hand, how vain and useless are all the cares which exercise the ambitions, we may excite in ourselves the passion, and then acquire the virtue of generosity, which, being so to speak the key of all other virtues, and a general remedy for all the disorders of the passions, it appears to me that this consideration is well worthy of notice.

ARTICLE CLXII.

Of Veneration.

Veneration, or respect, is an inclination of the soul not only to esteem the object which it reveres, but also to submit itself thereto with some fear, in order to try to render it favourably inclined. In this way we possess veneration only for free causes which we judge

- XVI. The thought of the mind is twofold: intellect and will.
 XVII. Intellect is perception and judgment.
 XVIII. Perception is sense, memory, and imagination.
 XIX. All sensation is the perception of some corporeal movement, which requires no intentional images¹ and it is effected, not in the outward channels of sense, but in the brain alone.
 XX. The will is free, and inclines indifferently to opposites in nature, as our self-consciousness bears us witness.
 XXI. Will is self-determined, and is to be termed blind no more than vision is to be termed deaf.

'No men more easily attain a great reputation for piety than the superstitious and the hypocrites².'

The following is an examination of the programme.

Notes to the Title.

I observe in the title³ a promise is made, not of bare assertions regarding the rational soul, but of an explanation of it, so that we must needs believe that in this programme are contained all, or at least, the principal arguments⁴, which the author had, not only for proving his propositions, but also for unfolding them, and that no other arguments are to be expected from him. In that he terms the *rational soul* 'the human mind⁵,' he has my approbation, for thus he avoids the ambiguity of the word *soul*⁶ and in this point follows me.

Notes to the Individual Articles.

In the first article⁷ he seems to aim at a definition of the rational soul, with imperfect success, for he omits the genus (i.e. that it is a substance, or a mode, or something else) and he expounds only the *differentia*, which he has borrowed from me, for no one before me, so far as I know, asserted that mind consisted in *one thing alone*, namely the *faculty of thinking and the inward source* (sc. of thinking).

In the second article⁸ he begins to speculate about its genus, and

¹ species intentionales.

² vide 'Principles,' Vol. I, p. 217. This aphorism reproduced at the end of Regius' poster is a saying of Descartes.

³ p. 432.

⁴ rationes.

⁵ p. 433.

⁶ anima.

⁷ p. 432.

⁸ p. 432.

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Passions: 402: (generosity)
396: desire (= wild), 359
395: 29 ³/₄ spir.

Inclinations: I have no right to
complain - passions -
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~~434~~