

Bennett's "translation" of the first half of the Locke selection →

4. So when we talk or think of any particular sort of corporeal substances—e.g. horse, stone, etc.—although our idea of it is nothing but the collection of simple ideas of qualities that we usually find united in the thing called 'horse' or 'stone', still we think of these qualities as existing in and supported by some common subject; and we give this support the name 'substance', though we have no clear or distinct idea of what it is. We are led to think in this way because we can't conceive how qualities could exist unsupported or with only one another for support.

5. The same thing happens concerning the operations of the mind—thinking, reasoning, fearing, etc. These can't exist by themselves, we think, nor can we see how they could belong

to body or be produced by it; so we are apt to think that they are the actions of some other substance, which we call 'spirit'. We have as clear a notion of the substance of \*spirit as we have of \*body. The latter is supposed (without knowing what it is) to be \*the substratum of those simple ideas that come to us from the outside, and the former is supposed (still not knowing what it is) to be \*the substratum of the mental operations we experience within ourselves. Clearly, then, we have as poor a grasp of the idea of bodily substance as we have of spiritual substance or spirit. So we shouldn't infer that there is no such thing as spirit because we have no notion of the substance of spirit, any more than we should conclude that there is no such thing as body because we have no clear and distinct idea of the substance of matter.

CORPOREAL AND SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCES

WHEN WE TALK OR THINK of any particular sort of corporeal substances, as horse, stone, etc., though the idea we have of either of them be but the complication or collection of those several simple ideas of sensible qualities, which we used to find united in the thing called horse or stone; yet, because we cannot conceive how they should subsist alone, nor one in another; we suppose them existing in and supported by some common subject; which support we denote by the name substance, though it be certain we have no clear or distinct idea of that thing we suppose a support.

The same thing happens concerning the operations of the mind, viz. thinking, reasoning, fearing, etc., which we conclude not to subsist of themselves, nor apprehending how they can belong to body, or be produced by it, we are apt to think these the actions of some other substance, which we call spirit; whereby yet it is evident that, having no other idea of notion of matter, but something wherein those many sensible qualities which affect our senses do subsist; by supposing a substance wherein thinking, knowing, doubting, and a power of moving, etc., do subsist, we have as clear a notion of the substance of spirit, as we have of body; the one being supposed to be (without knowing what it is) the substratum to those simple ideas we

have from without; and the other supposed (with a like ignorance of what it is) to be the substratum to those operations we experiment in ourselves within. It is plain then, that the idea of corporeal substance in matter is as remote from our conceptions and apprehensions, as that of spiritual substance, or spirit; and therefore, from our not having any notion of the substance of spirit, we can no more conclude its non-existence, than we can, for the same reason, deny the existence of body; it being as rational to affirm there is no body, because we have no clear and distinct idea of the substance of matter, as to say there is no spirit, because we have no clear and distinct idea of the substance of a spirit. . . .

So that, in short, the idea we have of spirit, compared with the idea we have of body, stands thus: the substance of spirits is unknown to us; and so is the substance of body equally unknown to us. Two primary qualities or properties of body, viz. solid coherent parts and impulse, we have distinct clear ideas of: so likewise we know, and have distinct [and] clear ideas, of two primary qualities or properties of spirit, viz. thinking, and a power of action; i.e. a power of beginning or stopping several thoughts or motions. We have also the ideas of several qualities inherent in bodies, and have the clear distinct ideas of them; which qualities are but the various modifications of the extension of cohering solid parts, and their motion. We have likewise the ideas of the several modes of thinking viz.

believing, doubting, intending, fearing, hoping; all which are but the several modes of thinking. We have also the ideas of willing, and moving the body consequent to it, and with the body itself too; for, as has been shown, spirit is capable of motion.

. . . If this notion of immaterial spirit may have, perhaps, some difficulties in it not easily to be explained, we have therefore no more reason to deny or doubt the existence of such spirits, than we have to deny or doubt the existence of body. . . .