Essay on Truth.

The love of Truth has ever been accounted a good principle; where it prevails integrity and steadiness are expected, and a temper of mind favourable to every Virtue, and tending to the advancement of public utility.

Truth seems to be considered by all mankind as something fixed unchangeable and eternal; the vindicating the permanency of truth may appear disputing without an adversary; few would dare to day the following questions, ~~are proposed~~ is there such a thing as truth? are truth and falsehood different and opposite? is truth permanent and eternal? ~~for all these to deny them~~ yet attempts have been made to undermine the foundations of truth, and to render their stability questionable.

It is scarce possible to give a definition of truth, but it may be so described as to point out what is meant by the Word. ~~It will be sufficient to propose instances~~ That 2 and 2 are 4, that things equal to one and the same thing are equal to one another, that the sun rose to day, that there is a God, that ingratitude is blameable and ~~punishable~~ are self evident propositions the mind readily admits. They are conformable to the nature of things.

By the Nature of things is meant that internal feeling and suggestion which

induces Man to think that every thing in nature is determined to exist agreeably to established Laws.

Truths are of different kinds, some certain, others only probable, the act of the mind in perceiving the former we call conviction, the the latter Assent.

Reason is that faculty which enables the from the relations of ideas that are known, to investigate such as are unknown and without which we never could proceed in the discovery of truth beyond first principles or intuitive axioms.

Common Sense or Natural Instinct perceives truth or commands belief, by an instantaneous and irresistible impulse, derived neither from Education nor Habit, but from Nature, acting independently of our Will, whenever its object is presented according to an established Law, and in a similar Manner upon all or at least the Majority of mankind.

The following remarks will evince that there is an essential difference between these two faculties, that Common Sense cannot be accounted for by being called the perfection of Reason, nor Reason by being resolved into Common Sense. 1. We are conscious that the energy of understanding which perceives intuitive Truth, is different from

that which unites a conclusion with a first principle, by a gradual Chain of intermediate relations; 2.° We cannot discern any necessary connection between Reason and common sense; through ~~because~~ a defect of common sense we do not ~~commonly conceive~~ doubt about principles; but supposing our principles true, our reasoning is often unacceptable; 3.rd the one is more in our power than the other, reasoning by culture may be greatly improved, whilst common sense like other instincts arrives at maturity with scarce any care; a man defective of common sense may acquire learning may possess genius to a certain degree, but will be ever distinguished by deplorable credulity, or levity to the end of his life; indeed common sense may languish for want of exercise, and yet be improved to a certain degree,