

on all great questions concerning human nature, so that those who begin their moral studies here may be enabled to lay a good foundation, whereon, in maturer manhood, they may build in safety.

Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding" and Paley's "Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy" have long formed such prominent subjects of instruction in this University, that the remarks I have time to make on our metaphysical and ethical studies will be almost confined to these two works.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary for me to inform you, that Locke supposed the mind to be first of all "as white paper, void of all characters," and that all its subsequent ideas—all its materials of reason and knowledge—are derived from two sources, sensation and reflexion. By ideas from sensation he means the natural perceptions we have of external things through our senses; by reflexion he understands the notice the mind takes of what passes within itself, "whereby it becomes furnished with ideas of its own operations:" and he affirms, "that however great the mass of knowledge lodged within the mind, there can be nothing there which did not come in by one of these two ways."

It is incontestably true, that the senses are the first avenues of our knowledge, and that through them we become first acquainted with external things. In describing the modes in which the mind is furnished with knowledge through the senses, the "Essay on the Human Understanding" is, I think, rather to be considered as defective in execution, than faulty in principle. Since its publication, much good service has been done in this department of inquiry, by Reid and other writers;