

IV, 201. That imperceptible particles of bodies exist.

I also consider, in individual bodies, many particles which are not perceived by sense: which may not be approved by those who take their senses as the measure of the things we can know. Yet, if only he considers what is added each hour to those bodies which are gradually being increased, or what is removed from those which are being decreased; who can doubt that there are many bodies so tiny that we do not perceive them by our senses?... Nor do I think that anyone who is using his reason will be prepared to deny that it is far better to judge of things which occur in tiny bodies (which escape our senses solely because of their smallness) on the model of those which our senses perceive occurring in large bodies, than it is to devise I know not what new things, having no similarity with those things that are observed, in order to give an account (*explicanda*) of those things.

IV, 203. How we know the figures and movements of imperceptible particles.

But I attribute determined figures, and sizes, and movements to the imperceptible particles of bodies, as if I had seen them. ... Some readers may perhaps ask how I therefore know what they are like. To which I reply: that I first generally considered, from the simplest and best known principles (the knowledge of which is imparted by nature), what the principal differences in the sizes, figure, and situations of bodies which are imperceptible solely on account of their smallness could be, and what perceptible effects would follow from their various encounters. And next, when I noticed some similar effects in perceptible things, I judged that these things had been created by similar encounters of such imperceptible bodies; *especially when it seemed that no other way of explaining these things could be devised.* ... Natural effects almost always depend on some devices so minute that they escape our senses. And there are absolutely no judgments in Mechanics which do not also pertain to Physics, of which Mechanics is a part or type.... Accordingly, just as when those who are accustomed to considering automata know the use of some machine and see some of its parts, they easily conjecture from this how the other parts which they do not see are made: so from the perceptible effects and parts of natural bodies, I have attempted to investigate the nature of their causes and of their imperceptible parts. [emphasis added]

IV, 204. That it suffices if I have explained what imperceptible things may be like, even if perhaps they are not so.

And although perhaps in this way it may be understood (*intelligatur*) how all natural things could have been created, it should not therefore be concluded that they were in fact so created.... And indeed I most willingly concede this to be true, and will think that I have achieved enough if those things which I have written are only such that they correspond accurately to all phenomena of nature. And indeed this will also suffice for the needs of everyday life, because Medicine and Mechanics, and all other arts which can be perfected with the help of Physics, have as their goal only those effects which are perceptible and which accordingly ought to be numbered among the phenomena of nature.

IV, 205. That those things which I have explained [*explicui*] here do seem at least morally certain, however

However, lest some injury to truth may occur here, it must be considered that there are things which are held to be morally certain, that is, to a degree which suffices for the needs of everyday life; although, if compared to the absolute power of God, they are uncertain. Thus, for example, if someone wishes to read a message written [i.e. encrypted] in Latin letters, to which their true meaning has not been given and if, upon conjecturing [a key to the cypher] ... he finds by this means certain Latin words are formed by these letters: he will not doubt that the true meaning of that message is contained in these words, even if he knows this solely by conjecture, and even though it may perhaps be the case that the person who wrote the message did not [follow that key, but some other] ..., and thus concealed a different meaning in the message. It would however be so difficult for this to happen, {especially if the message contains many words}, that it does not seem credible. But those who notice how many things concerning the magnet, fire, and the fabric of the entire World have been deduced here from so few principles (even though they may suppose these principles only by chance and without reason), will perhaps still know that it could scarcely have occurred that so many things should be consistent with one another, if they were false.

IV, 206. That on the contrary they seem more than morally certain.

Besides, there are, even among natural things, some which we judge to be absolutely and more than morally certain; basing our judgment on the Metaphysical foundation that God is supremely good and by no means deceitful, and that, accordingly, the faculty which He gave us to distinguish the true from the false cannot err when we use it correctly and perceive something clearly with its help. Such are Mathematical demonstrations; such is the knowledge that material things exist; and such are all evident demonstrations which are made concerning material things. These reasonings of ours will perhaps be included among the number of these absolutely certain things by those who consider how they have been deduced in a continuous series from the first and simplest principles of human knowledge. Especially if they sufficiently understand that we can feel no external objects unless some local movement is excited by them in our nerves; and that such movement cannot be excited by the fixed stars, very distant from here, unless some movement also occurs in these and in the whole intermediate heaven: for once these things have been accepted, it will scarcely seem possible for all the rest, at least the more general things which I have written about the World and the Earth, to be understood otherwise than as I have explained [*explicata*] them.

From Chambers Murray Latin-English Dictionary, 1933

***explano, explanare.* to make completely level;**

- a. *to set forth clearly;*
- b. *to expound, make clear, explain;*
- c. *to pronounce or utter clearly.*

***explico, explicare.* to unfold, unroll, unfurl;**

- 1. *to extend, display;*
- 2.a. *to unravel* a complicated or difficult matter, *to disentangle, set in order, settle, adjust;*
- b. By words: *to develop, unfold, set forth in detail,* and so, *to make clear and intelligible;*
- c. *to disentangle, set free.*