

"LOCKE, JOHN.

Posthumous Works. Viz. I. Of the Conduct of Understanding. II. An Examination of P. Malebranche's Opinion of ""Seeing all things in Gord"". III. A Discourse of Miracles. IV. Part of a Fourth Letter for Toleration. V. Memoires Relating to the Life of Ant... - [THE UNCOMPLETED FINAL CHAPTER OF LOCKE'S ""ESSAY""]

Référence : 51322

London, Printed for W.B. and J. Churchill, 1706. 8vo. Nice contemporary brown full calf, very neatly rebacked. Title-page and second leaf strengthened at fore-margin. A bit of brownspotting to last quire, otherwise very nice. (4), 336 pp.

Commentaire : First edition of this influential collection of Locke's posthumous works, in which we find the first printing of his highly important ""On the Conduct of Understanding"" (takes up the larger part of the volume, namely pp. (1) - 137), which he himself considered of the utmost importance. He had actually intended it to be the final and largest chapter of his ""Essay"", his seminal magnum opus which constitutes ""the first modern attempt to analyze [human knowledge]"" (PMM 164), but he did not completely finish it before his death (1704) and it thus didn't make it into the fourth edition of the ""Essay"", where Locke had planned to make it the greatest part and the concluding chapter. ""In 1697, Locke had written to Molyneux: ""I have lately got a little leisure to think of some additions to my book [the Essay], against the next edition, and within these few days have fallen upon a subject that I know not how far it will lead me. I have written several pages on it, but the matter, the farther I go, opens the more upon me, and I cannot yet get sight of any end of it. The title of the chapter will be Of the Conduct of the Understanding, which, if I shall pursue, as far as I imagine it will reach, and as it deserves, will, I conclude, make the largest chapter of my Essay."" [Locke #847, vol. 6:87] The new chapter was intended as a new final chapter to be added to the 4th edition (1700) [Locke #231], but Locke did not complete it. It was published in 1706 by King and Collins and has often been reprinted, independently, with other works by Locke or with Bacon's Essays."" (Attig, Locke Bibliography, Pennsylvania State University). Before his death, Locke had left instructions for his literary executors, Anthony Collins and Peter King. These instructions mentioned four works which did not see publication in his life-time, but which he felt deserved publication, among these were ""On the Conduct of the understanding,"" ""Seeing all things in God,"" and ""A Discourse on Miracles"", which were all published for the first time in the present collection of ""Posthumous Works"". As will be seen from the title-page, the collection also contained the unfinished ""Fourth letter for toleration"", some notes for a biography of the first Earl of Shaftesbury, and an English translation of ""Méthode nouvelle de dresser un recueil"". All these posthumous works were included in the collected edition of Locke's ""Works"" from 1714 as well as in all subsequent editions. The work of the greatest consequence included in this collection is no doubt ""Of the Conduct of Understanding"" which takes up more than a third of the volume. It became one of Locke's most read and popular works" during the 18th century alone, it was printed no less than 8 times and is now, as it were, considered a most important part of Locke's writings and an essential part of all collections of Locke's works. It was first published separately in 1754.

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Cet article vous est proposé par :

Herman H. J. Lynge & Son

herman@lynge.com

Tél. +45 33 155 335

Silkegade 11

1113 Copenhagen

Danemark

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