

*Second rule.* Before we determine to follow the dictates of conscience, we should examine thoroughly whether we have the necessary lights and helps to judge of the thing before us. If we happen to want these lights and helps, we can neither decide, nor much less undertake any thing, without an inexcusable and dangerous temerity. And yet nothing is commoner than to transgress against this rule. What multitudes, for example, determine on religious disputes, or difficult questions concerning morality or politics, tho' they are no way capable of judging or reasoning about them?

*Third rule.* Supposing that in general we have necessary lights and helps to judge of the affair before us, we must afterwards see whether we have actually made use of them; insomuch that without a new inquiry we may follow what our conscience suggests. It happens every day that for want of attending to this rule, we let ourselves be quietly prevailed upon to do a great many things, which we might easily discover to be unjust, had we given heed to certain clear principles, the justice and necessity whereof is universally acknowledged.

When we have made use of the rules here laid down, we have done whatever we could and ought; and 'tis morally certain that by thus proceeding we can be neither mistaken in our judgments, nor wrong in our determinations. But if notwithstanding all these precautions, we should happen to be mistaken, which is not absolutely impossible; this would be a fault of infirmity, inseparable from human nature, and would carry its excuse along with it in the eyes of the supreme legislator.