

the words, an unthinking, inactive substance cannot be the cause, or occasion, or instrument, of our perceptions. Should it finally be urged that perhaps matter, an unthinking, inactive something, of which we have no positive idea whatever, exists without the mind: Berkeley replies (and here the weak point of his Ontology becomes apparent) that in affirming that matter may exist, while at the same time we acknowledge that we attach no positive idea to the term, we mean nothing. I quote the following passage from the 2nd dialogue between Hylas and Philonous. *Phil.*—"Can any more be required to prove the absolute impossibility of a thing, than the proving it impossible in every particular sense that either you or any one else understands it in?" *Hyl.*—"But I am not so thoroughly satisfied that you have proved the impossibility of matter in the last most obscure, abstracted and indefinite sense." *Phil.*—"When is a thing shown to be impossible?" *Hyl.*—"When a repugnancy is demonstrated between the ideas comprehended in its definition." *Phil.*—"But where there are no ideas, there no repugnancy can be demonstrated between ideas?" *Hyl.*—"I agree with you." *Phil.*—"Now in that which you call the obscure indefinite sense of the word *matter*, it is plain by your own confession, there was included no idea at all, no sense except an unknown sense, which is the same thing as none. You are not therefore to expect I should prove a repugnancy between ideas, where there are no ideas, or the impossibility of matter taken in an unknown sense, that is, no sense at all. My business was only to shew that you meant nothing, and this you were brought to own. So that in all your various senses you have been shewed either to mean nothing at all, or if any thing an absurdity. And if this be not sufficient to prove the impossibility of a thing, I desire you will let me know what is." *Hyl.*—"I acknowledge you have proved that matter is impossible; nor do I see what more can be said in reference to it." Now, in my judgment, Hylas was a fool to give up his case in this fashion. The impossibility of a substance different from spirit, is *not* proved, by proving its impossibility under any particular notion of it that we can form. But, says Berkeley, in affirming the possibility of matter, in some unknown sense of the word, you mean nothing. Well, what then? We may not be able, attaching any positive meaning to our words, to assert the possibility of an existence distinct from spirits; but this does not imply that such an existence is impossible. Existence may not be limited to what we are capable of conceiving. "Where there are no ideas there no repugnancy can be demonstrated between ideas." Most true. Con-