

dom their antisocial ones, their envy or jealousy, their arrogance or contemptuousness : but most commonly, their desires or fears for themselves—their legitimate or illegitimate self-interest.”⁽²⁹⁾ So, too, is it with men’s opinions on what is true or false. Not even were we able to unify this multifariousness, and to define exactly what it is that leads men to accept and retain with the utmost obstinacy, any one position in defiance of the claims of all others, and which, in ordinary language, goes by the phrase of “being certain,” but which very commonly means being led by natural propensity or prejudication, not even then, could we call the object of such definition the “illative sense.” But, indeed, it is absurd so to attempt to unify such intricate influences. Even when we have to the best of our ability banished prejudice,—to the best of our ability, for is it possible ever entirely to do so, except perhaps in the matter of some abstract or wholly impersonal science?—and acted upon, as far as we see, purely rational grounds, our opinions are determined, not, surely, by an illative sense, but by the combined effect of all those impressions which previous observation and reflection have left upon the mind, the several links of which, though so entangled by oblivion that no power can exhibit their natural sequence, yet retain, despite perchance some little rust, an invincible force. And the certitude that results does not fulfil the duties of the Reverend Doctor’s illative sense ; such influences merely bring about that sort of assurance which suffices for common things and every-

29. *On Liberty*. John Stuart Mill. Ch. I.