

Locke and the Problem of Weakness of the Will

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I defend three interconnected points relating to Locke's discussion of akrasia in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (II 21). First, insofar as Locke's account of weakness of the will calls for some sort of freedom, the freedom required is freedom of thinking, not freedom of willing. Secondly, Locke's conception of akrasia is relatively mild in that it does not involve a particularly deep form of practical irrationality. Thirdly, although in the second and subsequent editions of the *Essay* Locke loosens the strong connection between judging and willing that was characteristic of the first edition, it is mistaken to claim, as some commentators do, that Locke entirely gives up intellectualism, for his final position retains several strong elements of the former.